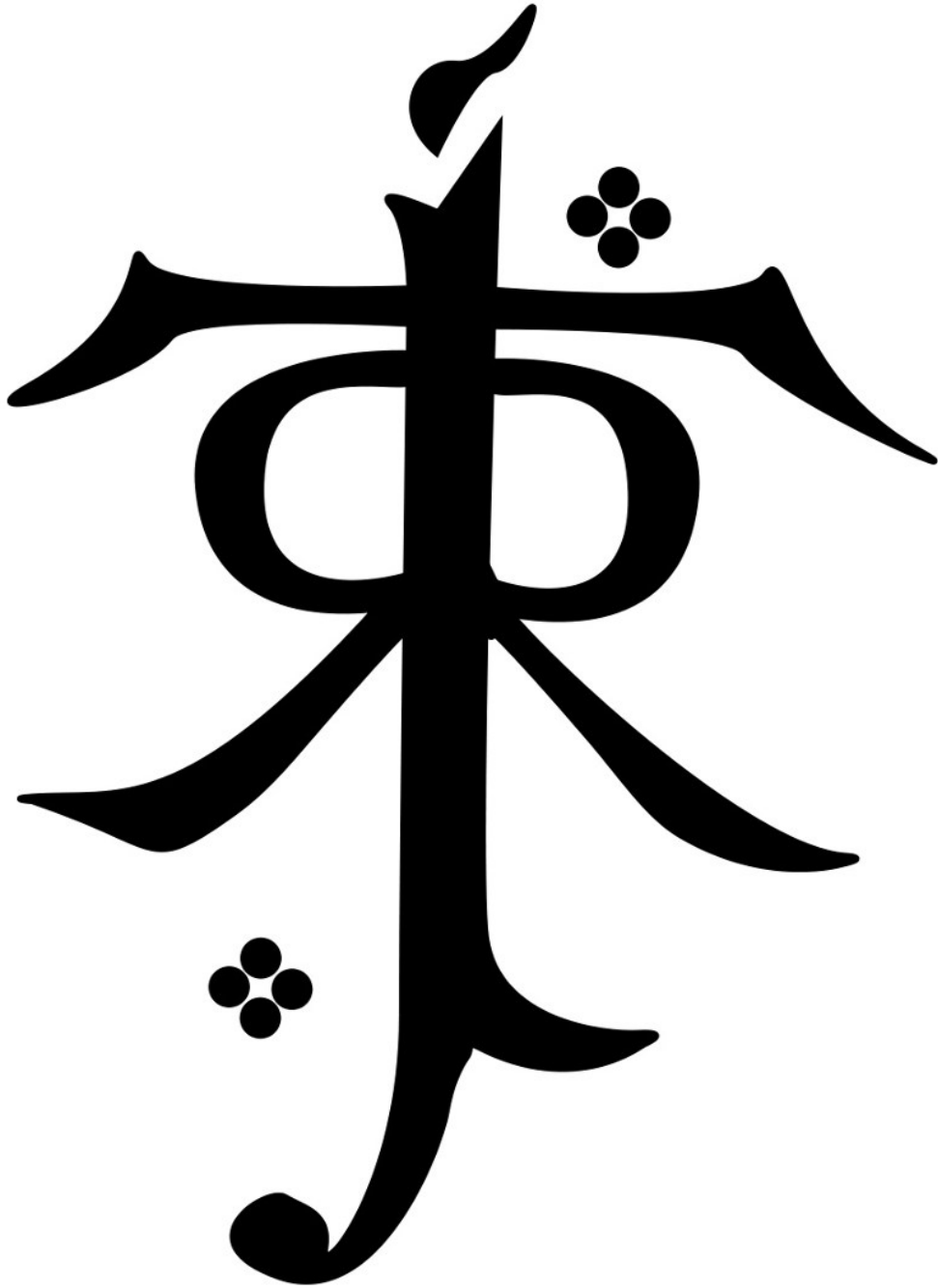


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## Notes On This Compilation

[15<sup>th</sup> October 2022. This volume was originally created in 2014 for my own purposes. In light of the recent completion of the lamentably bad first series of Amazon Prime Video's "The Lord of the Rings – The Rings Of Power" I decided to share this compilation of Professor Tolkien's main Middle Earth works that were available in electronic format in 2014.]

Compilation created by *PapaLazzaru*, November 2014. Referred to herein as P.L.

This compilation was created using as sources the HarperCollins electronic editions of *The Silmarillion*, *The Lord of the Rings*, *Unfinished Tales* and *The Children of Húrin*, and the Houghton Mifflin Harcourt electronic (enhanced) edition of *The Hobbit*. See the individual pieces for publication details.

Page numbers as they appear in the original texts have been retained throughout—apart from page references in the Indices (see the [Note From The Index Of Names In The Silmarillion](#))—whilst endnote numbers have been rearranged and are valid only in this compilation. This rearrangement is due to the main [Appendices](#) having been moved to the end of the compilation, whilst chapter appendices such as the [Appendices](#) to the [History Of Galadriel And Celeborn](#) and the [Appendix](#) to [The Quest Of Erebor](#) have been left in their original place. See also the [Note](#) preceding the Index Of Names, and the [Note](#) to the Map Of Middle-Earth in *Unfinished Tales*.

It also seemed appropriate to move the [Note on Pronunciation](#) which in the HarperCollins Ebook appears near the end of *The Silmarillion* to the beginning of this compilation.

Some obvious mistakes that still appear in the official electronic editions despite the publishers' claims to near-perfection (see for instance the [Note On The 50th Anniversary Edition in The Lord of the Rings](#)) were corrected. For [example](#), from the HarperCollins Ebook version of *The Lord of the Rings*,

'Then you can wish again,' said the growling voice. '***I am Uglúk. command.*** I return to Isengard by the shortest road.' (Emphasis added.)

was corrected to read

'Then you can wish again,' said the growling voice. '***I am Uglúk. I command.*** I return to Isengard by the shortest road.' (Emphasis added.)



## About The Author

J.R.R. Tolkien was born on January 3rd 1892. Apart from his long and distinguished academic career, he is best known for his extraordinary works of fiction *The Hobbit*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion*. His works are translated into over 40 languages and have sold many millions of copies worldwide. He was awarded the CBE, and an honorary Doctorate of Letters from Oxford University in 1972. He died in 1973 at the age of 81.



## Works By J.R.R. Tolkien

The Hobbit

Leaf by Niggle

On Fairy-Stories

Farmer Giles of Ham

The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth

The Lord of the Rings

The Adventures of Tom Bombadil

The Road Goes Ever On (with Donald Swann)

Smith of Wootton Major

### *Works Published Posthumously*

Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Pearl and Sir Orfeo

The Father Christmas Letters

The Silmarillion

Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien

Unfinished Tales

The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien

Finn and Hengest

Mr Bliss

The Monsters and the Critics & Other Essays

Roverandom

The Children of Húrin

The Legend of Sigurd and Gudrún

### *The History Of Middle-Earth—By Christopher Tolkien*

I. The Book of Lost Tales, Part One

II. The Book of Lost Tales, Part Two

III. The Lays of Beleriand

IV. The Shaping of Middle-earth

V. The Lost Road and Other Writings

VI. The Return of the Shadow

VII. The Treason of Isengard

VIII. The War of the Ring

IX. Sauron Defeated

X. Morgoth's Ring

XI. The War of the Jewels

XII. The Peoples of Middle-earth



## Note On Pronunciation

The following note is intended simply to clarify a few main features in the pronunciation of names in the Elvish languages, and is by no means exhaustive. For a fuller explanation of the subject see *The Lord of the Rings* [Appendix E](#).

### Consonants

**C:**—always has the value of *k*, never of *s*; thus *Celebros* is ‘*Kelebros*’, not ‘*Selebros*’.

**CH:**—always has the value of *ch* in Scots *loch* or German *buch*, never that of *ch* in English *church*; examples are *Anach*, *Narn i Chîn Húrin*.

**DH:**—is always used to represent the sound of a voiced (‘soft’) *th* in English, that is the *th* in *then*, not the *th* in *thin*. Examples are *Glóredhel*, *Eledhwen*, *Maedhros*.

**G:**—always has the sound of English *g* in *get*; thus *Region* is not pronounced like English *region*, and the first syllable of *Ginglith* is as in English *begin*, not as in *gin*.

Consonants written twice are pronounced long; thus *Yavanna* has the long *n* heard in English *unnamed*, *penknife*, not the short *n* in *unaimed*, *penny*.

### Vowels

**AI:**—has the sound of English *eye*; thus the second syllable of *Edain* is like English *dine*, not *Dane*.

**AU:**—has the value of English *ow* in *town*; thus the first vowel of *Sauron* is like English *sour*, not *sore*.

**EI:**—as in *Teiglin* has the sound of English *grey*.

**IE:**—should not be pronounced as in English *piece*, but with both the vowels *i* and *e* sounded, and run together; thus *Ni-enor*, not ‘*Neenor*’.

**UI:**—as in *Uinen* has the sound of English *ruin*.

**AE:**—as in *Aegnor*, *Nirnaeth*, is a combination of the individual vowels, *a-e*, but may be pronounced in the same way as **AI**.

**EA, EO:**—are not run together, but constitute two syllables; these combinations are written *ĕa* and *ĕo*, as in *Bĕor*, or at the beginning of names *Eä*, *Eö*, as in *Eärendil*.

**Ú:**—in names like *Húrin*, *Túrin*, should be pronounced *oo*; thus ‘*Toorin*’, not ‘*Tyoorin*’.

**ER, IR, UR:**—before a consonant (as in *Nerdanel*, *Cirdan*, *Gurthang*) or at the end of a word (as in *Ainur*) should not be pronounced as in English *fern*, *fir*, *fur*, but as in English *air*, *eer*, *oor*.

**E:**—at the end of words is always pronounced as a distinct vowel, and in this position is written *ĕ*. It is always pronounced in the middle of words like *Celebros*, *Menegroth*.

A circumflex accent in stressed monosyllables in Sindarin denotes the particularly long vowel heard in such words (thus *Hîn*, *Húrin*); but in Adûnaic (Númenórean) and Khuzdul (Dwarvish) names the circumflex is simply used to denote long vowels.



J.R.R. TOLKIEN  
**The Silmarillion**

edited by  
CHRISTOPHER TOLKIEN

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QUENTA SILMARILLION

(The History of the Silmarils)

together with

AINULINDALĒ

(The Music of the Ainur)

and

VALAQUENTA

(Account of the Valar)

To which is appended

AKALLABĒTH

(The Downfall of Númenor)

and

OF THE RINGS OF POWER AND THE THIRD AGE



*The Silmarillion* is an account of the Elder Days, or the First Age of Tolkien's World. It is the ancient drama to which the characters in *The Lord of the Rings* look back, and in whose events some of them, such as Elrond and Galadriel, took part. The tales of *The Silmarillion* are set in an age when Morgoth, the first Dark Lord, dwelt in Middle-earth, and the High Elves made war upon him for the recovery of the Silmarils.

The three Silmarils were jewels created by Fëanor, most gifted of the Elves. Within them were imprisoned the Light of the Two Trees of Valinor before the Trees themselves were destroyed by Morgoth. Thereafter the unsullied Light of Valinor lived on only in the Silmarils; but they were seized by Morgoth and set in his crown, guarded in the fortress of Angband in the north of Middle-earth.

*The Silmarillion* is the history of the rebellion of Fëanor and his kindred against the gods, their exile from Valinor and return to Middle-earth and their war, hopeless despite their heroism, against the great Enemy. Included in the book are several shorter works. The *Ainulindalë* is a myth of the Creation and in the *Valaquenta* the nature and powers of each of the gods is described. The *Akallabêth* recounts the downfall of the great island kingdom of Númenor at the end of the Second Age and *Of the Rings of Power* tells of the great events at the end of the Third Age, which are narrated in *The Lord of the Rings*.



## Foreword

*The Silmarillion*, now published four years after the death of its author, is an account of the Elder Days, or the First Age of the World. In *The Lord of the Rings* were narrated the great events at the end of the Third Age; but the tales of *The Silmarillion* are legends deriving from a much deeper past, when Morgoth, the first Dark Lord, dwelt in Middle-earth, and the High Elves made war upon him for the recovery of the Silmarils.

Not only, however, does *The Silmarillion* relate the events of a far earlier time than those of *The Lord of the Rings*; it is also, in all the essentials of its conception, far the earlier work. Indeed, although it was not then called *The Silmarillion*, it was already in being half a century ago; and in battered notebooks extending back to 1917 can still be read the earliest versions, often hastily pencilled, of the central stories of the mythology. But it was never published (though some indication of its content could be gleaned from *The Lord of the Rings*), and throughout my father's long life he never abandoned it, nor ceased even in his last years to work on it. In all that time *The Silmarillion*, considered simply as a large narrative structure, underwent relatively little radical change; it became long ago a fixed tradition, and background to later writings. But it was far indeed from being a fixed text, and did not remain unchanged even in certain fundamental ideas concerning the nature of the world it portrays; while the same legends came to be retold in longer and shorter forms, and in different styles. As the years passed the changes and variants, both in detail and in larger perspectives, became so complex, so pervasive, and so many-layered that a final and definitive version seemed unattainable. Moreover the old legends ("old" now not only in their derivation from the remote First Age, but also in terms of my father's life) became the vehicle and depository of his profoundest reflections. In his later writing mythology and poetry sank down behind his theological and philosophical preoccupations: from which arose incompatibilities of tone.

On my father's death it fell to me to try to bring the work into publishable form. It became clear to me that to attempt to present, within the covers of a single book, the diversity of the materials—to show *The Silmarillion* as in truth a continuing and evolving creation extending over more than half a century—would in fact lead only to confusion and the submerging of what is essential. I set myself therefore to work out a single text, selecting and arranging in such a way as seemed to me to produce the most coherent and internally self-consistent narrative. In this work the concluding chapters (from the death of Túrin Turambar) introduced peculiar difficulties, in that they had remained unchanged for many years, and were in some respects in serious disharmony with more developed conceptions in other parts of the book.

A complete consistency (either within the compass of *The Silmarillion* itself or between *The Silmarillion* and other published writings of my father's) is not to be looked for, and could only be achieved, if at all, at heavy and needless cost. Moreover, my father had come to conceive *The Silmarillion* as a compilation, a compendious narrative, made long afterwards from sources of great diversity (poems, and annals, and oral tales) that had survived in a long tradition; and this conception has indeed its parallel in the actual history of the book, for a great deal of earlier prose and poetry does underlie it, and it is to some extent a compendium in fact and not only in theory. To this may be ascribed the varying speed of the narrative and fullness of detail in different parts, the contrast (for example) of the precise recollections of place and motive in the legend of Túrin Turambar beside the high and remote account of the end of the First Age, when Thangorodrim was broken and Morgoth overthrown; and also some differences of tone and portrayal, some obscurities, and, here and there, some lack of cohesion. In the case of the *Valaquenta*, for instance, we have to assume that while it contains much that must go back to the earliest days of the Eldar in Valinor, it was remodelled in later times; and thus explain its continual shifting of tense and viewpoint, so that the divine powers seem now present and active in the world, now remote, a vanished order known only to memory.

The book, though entitled as it must be *The Silmarillion*, contains not only the *Quenta Silmarillion*, or *Silmarillion* proper, but also four other short works. The *Ainulindalë* and *Valaquenta*, which are given at the beginning, are indeed closely associated with *The Silmarillion*; but the *Akallabêth* and *Of the Rings of Power*, which appear at the end, are (it must be emphasised) wholly separate and independent. They are included according to my father's explicit intention, and by their inclusion the entire history is set forth from the Music of the Ainur in which the world began to the passing of the Ringbearers from the Havens of Mithlond at the end of the Third Age.

The number of names that occur in the book is very large, and I have provided a full [index](#); but the number of persons (Elves and Men) who play an important part in the narrative of the First Age is very much smaller, and all of these will be found in the [Genealogical Tables](#). In addition I have provided a table setting out the rather complex naming of the different Elvish peoples; a note on the pronunciation of Elvish names, and a list of some of the chief elements found in these names; and a map. It may be noted that the great mountain range in the east, Ered Luin or Ered Lindon, the Blue Mountains, appears in the extreme west of the [map](#) in *The Lord of the Rings*. In the body of the book there is a smaller map: the intention of this is to make clear at a glance where lay the kingdoms of the Elves after the return of the Noldor to Middle-earth. I have not burdened the book further with any sort of commentary or annotation.

In the difficult and doubtful task of preparing the text of the book I was very greatly assisted by Guy Kay, who worked with me in 1974-1975.

—Christopher Tolkien

1977



## Preface To The Second Edition

Probably towards the end of 1951, when *The Lord of the Rings* was completed but difficulties lay in the way of its publication, my father wrote a very long letter to his friend Milton Waldman, at that time an editor at the publishing house of Collins. The context and occasion of this letter lay in the painful differences that arose over my father's insistence that *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings* should be published in "conjunction or in connexion" "as one long Saga of the Jewels and the Rings". There is however no need to enter into this matter here. The letter that he wrote with a view to justifying and explaining his contention emerged as a brilliant exposition of his conception of the earlier Ages (the latter part of the letter, as he himself said, was no more than "a long and yet bald résumé" of the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings*), and it is for this reason that I believe that it merits inclusion within the covers of *The Silmarillion*, as is done in this edition.

The original letter is lost, but Milton Waldman had a typescript made of it, and sent a copy to my father: it was from this copy that the letter was printed (in part) in *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien* (1981), no. 131. The text given here is that in *Letters*, pp. 143-157, with minor corrections and the omission of some of the footnotes. There were many errors in the typescript, especially in names; these were very largely corrected by my father, but he did not observe the sentence on p. xviii: "There was nothing wrong essentially in their lingering against counsel, *still sadly with* the mortal lands of their old heroic deeds." Here the typist certainly omitted words in the manuscript, and perhaps misread those given as well.

I have removed a number of errors in the text and index which until now have escaped correction in the hardback printings (only) of *The Silmarillion*. Chief among these are those that concern the numbering in sequence of certain of the rulers of Númenor (for these errors and an explanation of how they arose see *Unfinished Tales* (1980), p. 226, note 133, and *The Peoples of Middle-earth* (1996), p. 154, §31).

—Christopher Tolkien

1999



## From A Letter By J.R.R. Tolkien To Milton Waldman, 1951

My dear Milton,

You asked for a brief sketch of my stuff that is connected with my imaginary world. It is difficult to say anything without saying too much: the attempt to say a few words opens a floodgate of excitement, the egoist and artist at once desires to say how the stuff has grown, what it is like, and what (he thinks) he means or is trying to represent by it all. I shall inflict some of this on you; but I will append a mere résumé of its contents: which is (may be) all that you want or will have use or time for.

In order of time, growth and composition, this stuff began with me—though I do not suppose that that is of much interest to anyone but myself. I mean, I do not remember a time when I was not building it. Many children make up, or begin to make up, imaginary languages. I have been at it since I could write. But I have never stopped, and of course, as a professional philologist (especially interested in linguistic aesthetics), I have changed in taste, improved in theory, and probably in craft. Behind my stories is now a nexus of languages (mostly only structurally sketched). But to those creatures which in English I call misleadingly Elves are assigned two related languages more nearly completed, whose history is written, and whose forms (representing two different sides of my own linguistic taste) are deduced scientifically from a common origin. Out of these languages are made nearly all the *names* that appear in my legends. This gives a certain character (a cohesion, a consistency of linguistic style, and an illusion of historicity) to the nomenclature, or so I believe, that is markedly lacking in other comparable things. Not all will feel this as important as I do, since I am cursed by acute sensibility in such matters.

But an equally basic passion of mine *ab initio* was for myth (not allegory!) and for fairy-story, and above all for heroic legend on the brink of fairy-tale and history, of which there is far too little in the world (accessible to me) for my appetite. I was an undergraduate before thought and experience revealed to me that these were not divergent interests—opposite poles of science and romance—but integrally related. I am *not* “learned”<sup>1</sup> in the matters of myth and fairy-story, however, for in such things (as far as known to me) I have always been seeking material, things of a certain tone and air, and not simple knowledge. Also—and here I hope I shall not sound absurd—I was from early days grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and soil), not of the quality that I sought, and found (as an ingredient) in legends of other lands. There was Greek, and Celtic, and Romance, Germanic, Scandinavian, and Finnish (which greatly affected me); but nothing English, save impoverished chap-book stuff. Of course there was and is all the Arthurian world, but powerful as it is, it is imperfectly naturalized, associated with the soil of Britain but not with English; and does not replace what I felt to be missing. For one thing its “faerie” is too lavish, and fantastical, incoherent and repetitive. For another and more important thing: it is involved in, and explicitly contains the Christian religion.

For reasons which I will not elaborate, that seems to me fatal. Myth and fairy-story must, as all art, reflect and contain in solution elements of moral and religious truth (or error), but not explicit, not in the known form of the primary “real” world. (I am speaking, of course, of our present situation, not of ancient pagan, pre-Christian days. And I will not repeat what I tried to say in my essay, which you read.)

Do not laugh! But once upon a time (my crest has long since fallen) I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story—the larger

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<sup>1</sup> Though I have thought *about* them a good deal.

founded on the lesser in contact with the earth, the lesser drawing splendour from the vast backcloths—which I could dedicate simply to: to England; to my country. It should possess the tone and quality that I desired, somewhat cool and clear, be redolent of our “air” (the clime and soil of the North West, meaning Britain and the hither parts of Europe: not Italy or the Aegean, still less the East), and, while possessing (if I could achieve it) the fair elusive beauty that some call Celtic (though it is rarely found in genuine ancient Celtic things), it should be “high”, purged of the gross, and fit for the more adult mind of a land long now steeped in poetry. I would draw some of the great tales in fullness, and leave many only placed in the scheme, and sketched. The cycles should be linked to a majestic whole, and yet leave scope for other minds and hands, wielding paint and music and drama. Absurd.

Of course, such an overweening purpose did not develop all at once. The mere stories were the thing. They arose in my mind as “given” things, and as they came, separately, so too the links grew. An absorbing, though continually interrupted labour (especially since, even apart from the necessities of life, the mind would wing to the other pole and spend itself on the linguistics): yet always I had the sense of recording what was already “there”, somewhere: not of “inventing”.

Of course, I made up and even wrote lots of other things (especially for my children). Some escaped from the grasp of this branching acquisitive theme, being ultimately and radically unrelated: *Leaf by Niggle* and *Farmer Giles*, for instance, the only two that have been printed. *The Hobbit*, which has much more essential life in it, was quite independently conceived: I did not know as I began it that it belonged. But it proved to be the discovery of the completion of the whole, its mode of descent to earth, and merging into “history”. As the high Legends of the beginnings are supposed to look at things through Elvish minds, so the middle tale of the Hobbit takes a virtually human point of view—and the last tale blends them.

I dislike Allegory—the conscious and intentional allegory—yet any attempt to explain the purport of myth or fairytale must use allegorical language. (And, of course, the more “life” a story has the more readily will it be susceptible of allegorical interpretations: while the better a deliberate allegory is made the more nearly will it be acceptable just as a story.) Anyway all this stuff<sup>2</sup> is mainly concerned with Fall, Mortality, and the Machine. With Fall inevitably, and that motive occurs in several modes. With Mortality, especially as it affects art and the creative (or as I should say, sub-creative) desire which seems to have no biological function, and to be apart from the satisfactions of plain ordinary biological life, with which, in our world, it is indeed usually at strife. This desire is at once wedded to a passionate love of the real primary world, and hence filled with the sense of mortality, and yet unsatisfied by it. It has various opportunities of “Fall”. It may become possessive, clinging to the things made as its own, the sub-creator wishes to be the Lord and God of his private creation. He will rebel against the laws of the Creator—especially against mortality. Both of these (alone or together) will lead to the desire for Power, for making the will more quickly effective,—and so to the Machine (or Magic). By the last I intend all use of external plans or devices (apparatus) instead of developments of the inherent inner powers or talents—or even the use of these talents with the corrupted motive of dominating: bulldozing the real world, or coercing other wills. The Machine is our more obvious modern form though more closely related to Magic than is usually recognised.

I have not used “magic” consistently, and indeed the Elven-queen Galadriel is obliged to remonstrate with the Hobbits on their confused use of the word both for the devices and operations of the Enemy, and for those of the Elves. I have not, because there is not a word for the latter (since all human stories have suffered the same confusion). But the Elves are there (in my tales) to demonstrate the difference. Their “magic” is Art, delivered from many of its human limitations: more effortless, more quick, more complete (product, and vision in unflawed correspondence). And its object is Art not Power, sub-creation not domination and tyrannous reforming of Creation. The “Elves” are “immortal”, at least as far as this world goes: and hence are concerned rather with the griefs and burdens of deathlessness in time and change, than with death. The Enemy in successive forms is always “naturally” concerned with sheer Domination, and so the Lord of magic and

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<sup>2</sup> It is, I suppose, fundamentally concerned with the problem of the relation of Art (and Sub-creation) and Primary Reality.



machines; but the problem: that this frightful evil can and does arise from an apparently good root, the desire to benefit the world and others<sup>3</sup>—speedily and according to the benefactors own plans—is a recurrent motive.

The cycles begin with a cosmogonical myth: the *Music of the Ainur*. God and the Valar (or powers: Englished as gods) are revealed. These latter are as we should say angelic powers, whose function is to exercise delegated authority in their spheres (of rule and government, *not* creation, making or re-making). They are “divine”, that is, were originally “outside” and existed “before” the making of the world. Their power and wisdom is derived from their Knowledge of the cosmogonical drama, which they perceived first as a drama (that is as in a fashion we perceive a story composed by someone else), and later as a “reality”. On the side of mere narrative device, this is, of course, meant to provide beings of the same order of beauty, power, and majesty as the “gods” of higher mythology, which can yet be accepted—well, shall we say baldly, by a mind that believes in the Blessed Trinity.

It moves then swiftly to the *History of the Elves*, or the *Silmarillion* proper; to the world as we perceive it, but of course transfigured in a still half-mythical mode: that is it deals with rational incarnate creatures of more or less comparable stature with our own. The Knowledge of the Creation Drama was incomplete: incomplete in each individual “god”, and incomplete if all the knowledge of the pantheon were pooled. For (partly to redress the evil of the rebel Melkor, partly for the completion of all in an ultimate finesse of detail) the Creator had not revealed all. The making, and nature, of the Children of God, were the two chief secrets. All that the gods knew was that they would come, at appointed times. The Children of God are thus primevally related and akin, and primevally different. Since also they are something wholly “other” to the gods, in the making of which the gods played no part, they are the object of the special desire and love of the gods. These are the *First-born*, the Elves; and the *Followers* Men. The doom of the Elves is to be immortal, to love the beauty of the world, to bring it to full flower with their gifts of delicacy and perfection, to last while it lasts, never leaving it even when “slain”, but returning—and yet, when the Followers come, to teach them, and make way for them, to “fade” as the Followers grow and absorb the life from which both proceed. The Doom (or the Gift) of Men is mortality, freedom from the circles of the world. Since the point of view of the whole cycle is the Elvish, mortality is not explained mythically: it is a mystery of God of which no more is known than that “what God has purposed for Men is hidden”: a grief and an envy to the immortal Elves.

As I say, the legendary *Silmarillion* is peculiar, and differs from all similar things that I know in not being anthropocentric. Its centre of view and interest is not Men but “Elves”. Men come in inevitably: after all the author is a man, and if he has an audience they will be Men and Men must come in to our tales, as such, and not merely transfigured or partially represented as Elves, Dwarfs, Hobbits, etc. But they remain peripheral—late comers, and however growingly important, not principals.

In the cosmogony there is a fall: a fall of Angels we should say. Though quite different in form, of course, to that of Christian myth. These tales are “new”, they are not directly derived from other myths and legends, but they must inevitably contain a large measure of ancient wide-spread motives or elements. After all, I believe that legends and myths are largely made of “truth”, and indeed present aspects of it that can only be received in this mode; and long ago certain truths and modes of this kind were discovered and must always reappear. There cannot be any “story” without a fall—all stories are ultimately about the fall—at least not for human minds as we know them and have them.

So, proceeding, the Elves have a fall, before their “history” can become storial. (The first fall of Man, for reasons explained, nowhere appears—Men do not come on the stage until all that is long past, and there is only a rumour that for a while they fell under the domination of the Enemy and that some repented.) The main body of the tale, the *Silmarillion* proper, is about the fall of the most gifted kindred of the Elves, their exile from Valinor (a kind of Paradise, the home of the Gods) in the furthest West, their re-entry into Middle-earth, the

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<sup>3</sup> Not in the Beginner of Evil: his was a sub-creative Fall, and hence the Elves (the representatives of sub-creation par excellence) were peculiarly his enemies, and the special object of his desire and hate—and open to his deceits. Their Fall is into possessiveness and (to a less degree) into perversion of their art to power.



land of their birth but long under the rule of the Enemy, and their strife with him, the power of Evil still visibly incarnate. It receives its name because the events are all threaded upon the fate and significance of the *Silmarilli* (“radiance of pure light”) or Primeval Jewels. By the making of gems the sub-creative function of the Elves is chiefly symbolized, but the *Silmarilli* were more than just beautiful things as such. There was Light. There was the Light of Valinor made visible in the Two Trees of Silver and Gold.<sup>4</sup> These were slain by the Enemy out of malice, and Valinor was darkened, though from them, ere they died utterly, were derived the lights of Sun and Moon. (A marked difference here between these legends and most others is that the Sun is not a divine symbol, but a second-best thing, and the “light of the Sun” (the world under the sun) become terms for a fallen world, and a dislocated imperfect vision).

But the chief artificer of the Elves (Fëanor) had imprisoned the Light of Valinor in the three supreme jewels, the *Silmarilli*, before the Trees were sullied or slain. This Light thus lived thereafter only in these gems. The fall of the Elves comes about through the possessive attitude of Fëanor and his seven sons to these gems. They are captured by the Enemy, set in his Iron Crown, and guarded in his impenetrable stronghold. The sons of Fëanor take a terrible and blasphemous oath of enmity and vengeance against all or any, even of the gods, who dares to claim any part or right in the *Silmarilli*. They pervert the greater part of their kindred, who rebel against the gods, and depart from paradise, and go to make hopeless war upon the Enemy. The first fruit of their fall is war in Paradise, the slaying of Elves by Elves, and this and their evil oath dogs all their later heroism, generating treacheries and undoing all victories. The *Silmarillion* is the history of the War of the Exiled Elves against the Enemy, which all takes place in the North-west of the world (Middle-earth). Several tales of victory and tragedy are caught up in it; but it ends with catastrophe, and the passing of the Ancient World, the world of the long *First Age*. The jewels are recovered (by the final intervention of the gods) only to be lost for ever to the Elves, one in the sea, one in the deeps of earth, and one as a star of heaven. This legendarium ends with a vision of the end of the world, its breaking and remaking, and the recovery of the *Silmarilli* and the “light before the Sun”—after a final battle which owes, I suppose, more to the Norse vision of Ragnarök than to anything else, though it is not much like it.

As the stories become less mythical, and more like stories and romances, Men are interwoven. For the most part these are “good Men”—families and their chiefs who rejecting the service of Evil, and hearing rumours of the Gods of the West and the High Elves, flee westward and come into contact with the Exiled Elves in the midst of their war. The Men who appear are mainly those of the Three Houses of the Fathers of Men, whose chieftains become allies of the Elflords. The contact of Men and Elves already fore-shadows the history of the later Ages, and a recurrent theme is the idea that in Men (as they now are) there is a strand of “blood” and inheritance, derived from the Elves, and that the art and poetry of Men is largely dependent on it, or modified by it.<sup>5</sup> There are thus two marriages of mortal and elf—both later coalescing in the kindred of Eärendil, represented by Elrond the Halfelven who appears in all the stories, even *The Hobbit*. The chief of the stories of *The Silmarillion*, and the one most fully treated is the *Story of Beren and Lúthien the Elfmaiden*. Here we meet, among other things, the first example of the motive (to become dominant in Hobbits) that the great policies of world history, “the wheels of the world”, are often turned not by the Lords and Governors, even gods, but by the seemingly unknown and weak—owing to the secret life in creation, and the part unknowable to all wisdom but One, that resides in the intrusions of the Children of God into the Drama. It is Beren the outlawed mortal who succeeds (with the help of Lúthien, a mere maiden even if an elf of royalty) where all the armies and

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<sup>4</sup> As far as all this has symbolical or allegorical significance, Light is such a primeval symbol in the nature of the Universe, that it can hardly be analysed. The Light of Valinor (derived from light before any fall) is the light of art undivorced from reason, that sees things both scientifically (or philosophically) and imaginatively (or sub-creatively) and says that they are good—as beautiful. The Light of Sun (or Moon) is derived from the Trees only after they were sullied by Evil.

<sup>5</sup> Of course in reality this only means that my “elves” are only a representation or an apprehension of a part of human nature, but that is not the legendary mode of talking.

warriors have failed: he penetrates the stronghold of the Enemy and wrests one of the Silmarilli from the Iron Crown. Thus he wins the hand of Lúthien and the first marriage of mortal and immortal is achieved.

As such the story is (I think a beautiful and powerful) heroic-fairy-romance, receivable in itself with only a very general vague knowledge of the background. But it is also a fundamental link in the cycle, deprived of its full significance out of its place therein. For the capture of the Silmaril, a supreme victory, leads to disaster. The oath of the sons of Fëanor becomes operative, and lust for the Silmaril brings all the kingdoms of the Elves to ruin.

There are other stories almost equally full in treatment, and equally independent and yet linked to the general history. There is the *Children of Húrin*, the tragic tale of Túrin Turambar and his sister Níniel—of which Túrin is the hero: a figure that might be said (by people who like that sort of thing, though it is not very useful) to be derived from elements in Sigurd the Volsung, Oedipus, and the Finnish Kullervo. There is the *Fall of Gondolin*: the chief Elvish stronghold. And the tale, or tales, of *Eärendil the Wanderer*. He is important as the person who brings *the Silmarillion* to its end, and as providing in his offspring the main links to and persons in the tales of later Ages. His function, as a representative of both Kindreds, Elves and Men, is to find a sea-passage back to the Land of the Gods, and as ambassador persuade them to take thought again for the Exiles, to pity them, and rescue them from the Enemy. His wife Elwing descends from Lúthien and still possesses the Silmaril. But the curse still works, and Eärendil's home is destroyed by the sons of Fëanor. But this provides the solution: Elwing casting herself into the Sea to save the Jewel comes to Eärendil, and with the power of the great Gem they pass at last to Valinor, and accomplish their errand—at the cost of never being allowed to return or dwell again with Elves or Men. The gods then move again, and great power comes out of the West, and the Stronghold of the Enemy is destroyed; and he himself [is] thrust out of the World into the Void, never to reappear there in incarnate form again. The remaining two Silmarils are regained from the Iron Crown—only to be lost. The last two sons of Fëanor, compelled by their oath, steal them, and are destroyed by them, casting themselves into the sea, and the pits of the earth. The ship of Eärendil adorned with the last Silmaril is set in heaven as the brightest star. So ends *The Silmarillion* and the tales of the First Age.

The next cycle deals (or would deal) with the Second Age. But it is on Earth a dark age, and not very much of its history is (or need be) told. In the great battles against the First Enemy the lands were broken and ruined, and the West of Middle-earth became desolate. We learn that the Exiled Elves were, if not commanded, at least sternly counselled to return into the West, and there be at peace. They were not to dwell permanently in Valinor again, but in the Lonely Isle of Eressëa within sight of the Blessed Realm. The Men of the Three Houses were rewarded for their valour and faithful alliance, by being allowed to dwell “westernmost of all mortals”, in the great “Atlantis” isle of *Númenóre*. The doom or gift of God, of mortality, the gods of course cannot abrogate, but the Númenóreans have a great span of life. They set sail and leave Middle-earth, and establish a great kingdom of mariners just within furthest sight of Eressëa (but not of Valinor). Most of the High Elves depart also back into the West. Not all. Some men akin to the Númenóreans remain in the land not far from the shores of the Sea. Some of the Exiles will not return, or delay their return (for the way west is ever open to the immortals and in the Grey Havens ships are ever ready to sail away for ever). Also the Orcs (goblins) and other monsters bred by the First Enemy are not wholly destroyed. And there is *Sauron*. In the *Silmarillion* and Tales of the First Age Sauron was a being of Valinor perverted to the service of the Enemy and becoming his chief captain and servant. He repents in fear when the First Enemy is utterly defeated, but in the end does not do as was commanded, return to the judgement of the gods. He lingers in Middle-earth. Very slowly, beginning with fair motives: the reorganising and rehabilitation of the ruin of Middle-earth, “neglected by the gods”, he becomes a re-incarnation of Evil, and a thing lusting for Complete Power—and so consumed ever more fiercely with hate (especially of gods and Elves). All through the twilight of the Second Age the Shadow is growing in the East of Middle-earth, spreading its sway more and more over Men—who multiply as the Elves begin to fade. The three main themes are thus The Delaying Elves that lingered in Middle-earth; Sauron's growth to a new Dark Lord, master and god of Men; and Númenor-Atlantis. They are dealt with annalistically, and in two Tales or Accounts, *The Rings of Power* and the *Downfall of Númenor*. Both are the essential background to *The Hobbit* and its sequel.

In the first we see a sort of second fall or at least “error” of the Elves. There was nothing wrong essentially in their lingering against counsel, still sadly with<sup>6</sup> the mortal lands of their old heroic deeds. But they wanted to have their cake without eating it. They wanted the peace and bliss and perfect memory of “The West”, and yet to remain on the ordinary earth where their prestige as the highest people, above wild Elves, dwarves, and Men, was greater than at the bottom of the hierarchy of Valinor. They thus became obsessed with “fading”, the mode in which the changes of time (the law of the world under the sun) was perceived by them. They became sad, and their art (shall we say) antiquarian, and their efforts all really a kind of embalming—even though they also retained the old motive of their kind, the adornment of earth, and the healing of its hurts. We hear of a lingering kingdom, in the extreme North-west more or less in what was left in the old lands of *The Silmarillion*, under Gilgalad; and of other settlements, such as Imladris (Rivendell) under Elrond; and a great one at Eregion at the Western feet of the Misty Mountains, adjacent to the Mines of Moria, the major realm of the Dwarves in the Second Age. There arose a friendship between the usually hostile folk (of Elves and Dwarves) for the first and only time, and smithcraft reached its highest development. But many of the Elves listened to Sauron. He was still fair in that early time, and his motives and those of the Elves seemed to go partly together: the healing of the desolate lands. Sauron found their weak point in suggesting that, helping one another, they could make Western Middle-earth as beautiful as Valinor. It was really a veiled attack on the gods, an incitement to try and make a separate independent paradise. Gilgalad repulsed all such overtures, as also did Elrond. But at Eregion great work began—and the Elves came their nearest to falling to “magic” and machinery. With the aid of Sauron’s lore they made *Rings of Power* (“power” is an ominous and sinister word in all these tales, except as applied to the gods).

The chief power (of all the rings alike) was the prevention or slowing of *decay* (i.e. “change” viewed as a regrettable thing), the preservation of what is desired or loved, or its semblance—this is more or less an Elvish motive. But also they enhanced the natural powers of a possessor—thus approaching “magic”, a motive easily corruptible into evil, a lust for domination. And finally they had other powers, more directly derived from Sauron (“the Necromancer”: so he is called as he casts a fleeting shadow and presage on the pages of *The Hobbit*): such as rendering invisible the material body, and making things of the invisible world visible.

The Elves of Eregion made Three supremely beautiful and powerful rings, almost solely of their own imagination, and directed to the preservation of beauty: they did not confer invisibility. But secretly in the subterranean Fire, in his own Black Land, Sauron made One Ring, the Ruling Ring that contained the powers of all the others, and controlled them, so that its wearer could see the thoughts of all those that used the lesser rings, could govern all that they did, and in the end could utterly enslave them. He reckoned, however, without the wisdom and subtle perceptions of the Elves. The moment he assumed the One, they were aware of it, and of his secret purpose, and were afraid. They hid the Three Rings, so that not even Sauron ever discovered where they were and they remained unsullied. The others they tried to destroy.

In the resulting war between Sauron and the Elves Middle-earth, especially in the west, was further ruined. Eregion was captured and destroyed, and Sauron seized many Rings of Power. These he gave, for their ultimate corruption and enslavement, to those who would accept them (out of ambition or greed). Hence the “ancient rhyme” that appears as the leit-motif of *The Lord of the Rings*,

*Three Rings for the Elven-Kings under the sky,  
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,  
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,  
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne,  
In the Land of Mordor where the shadows lie.*

Sauron became thus almost supreme in Middle-earth. The Elves held out in secret places (not yet revealed). The last Elf-Kingdom of Gilgalad is maintained precariously on the extreme west-shores, where are the havens of the Ships. Elrond the Halfelven, son of Eärendil, maintains a kind of enchanted sanctuary at *Imladris* (in

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<sup>6</sup> Some words of the original manuscript were omitted by the typist in this sentence.

English *Rivendell*) on the extreme eastern margin of the western lands.<sup>7</sup> But Sauron dominates all the multiplying hordes of Men that have had no contact with the Elves and so indirectly with the true and unfallen Valar and gods. He rules a growing empire from the great dark tower of Barad-dûr in Mordor, near to the Mountain of Fire, wielding the One Ring.

But to achieve this he had been obliged to let a great part of his own inherent power (a frequent and very significant motive in myth and fairy-story) pass into the One Ring. While he wore it, his power on earth was actually enhanced. But even if he did not wear it, that power existed and was in “rapport” with himself: he was not “diminished”. Unless some other seized it and became possessed of it. If that happened, the new possessor could (if sufficiently strong and heroic by nature) challenge Sauron, become master of all that he had learned or done since the making of the One Ring, and so overthrow him and usurp his place. This was the essential weakness he had introduced into his situation in his effort (largely unsuccessful) to enslave the Elves, and in his desire to establish a control over the minds and wills of his servants. There was another weakness: if the One Ring was actually *unmade*, annihilated, then its power would be dissolved, Sauron’s own being would be diminished to vanishing point, and he would be reduced to a shadow, a mere memory of malicious will. But that he never contemplated nor feared. The Ring was unbreakable by any smithcraft less than his own. It was indissoluble in any fire, save the undying subterranean fire where it was made—and that was unapproachable, in Mordor. Also so great was the Ring’s power of lust, that anyone who used it became mastered by it; it was beyond the strength of any will (even his own) to injure it, cast it away, or neglect it. So he thought. It was in any case on his finger.

Thus, as the Second Age draws on, we have a great Kingdom and evil theocracy (for Sauron is also the god of his slaves) growing up in Middle-earth. In the West—actually the North-West is the only part clearly envisaged in these tales—lie the precarious refuges of the Elves, while Men in those parts remain more or less uncorrupted if ignorant. The better and nobler sort of Men are in fact the kin of those that had departed to Númenor, but remain in a simple “Homeric” state of patriarchal and tribal life.

Meanwhile *Númenor* has grown in wealth, wisdom, and glory, under its lines of great kings of long life, directly descended from Elros, Eärendil’s son, brother of Elrond. The *Downfall of Númenor*, the Second Fall of Man (or Man rehabilitated but still mortal), brings on the catastrophic end, not only of the Second Age, but of the Old World, the primeval world of legend (envisaged as flat and bounded). After which the Third Age began, a Twilight Age, a Medium Aevum, the first of the broken and changed world; the last of the lingering dominion of visible fully incarnate Elves, and the last also in which Evil assumes a single dominant incarnate shape.

*The Downfall* is partly the result of an inner weakness in Men—consequent, if you will, upon the first Fall (unrecorded in these tales), repented but not finally healed. Reward on earth is more dangerous for men than punishment! The Fall is achieved by the cunning of Sauron in exploiting this weakness. Its central theme is (inevitably, I think, in a story of Men) a Ban, or Prohibition.

The Númenóreans dwell within far sight of the easternmost “immortal” land, Eressëa; and as the only men to speak an Elvish tongue (learned in the days of their Alliance) they are in constant communication with their ancient friends and allies, either in the bliss of Eressëa, or in the kingdom of Gilgalad on the shores of Middle-earth. They became thus in appearance, and even in powers of mind, hardly distinguishable from the Elves—but they remained mortal, even though rewarded by a triple, or more than a triple, span of years. Their reward is their undoing—or the means of their temptation. Their long life aids their achievements in art and wisdom, but breeds a possessive attitude to these things, and desire awakes for more *time* for their enjoyment. Foreseeing

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<sup>7</sup> Elrond symbolises throughout the ancient wisdom, and his House represents Lore—the preservation in reverent memory of all tradition concerning the good, wise, and beautiful. It is not a scene of *action* but of *reflection*. Thus it is a place visited on the way to all deeds, or “adventures”. It may prove to be on the direct road (as in *The Hobbit*); but it may be necessary to go from there in a totally unexpected course. So necessarily in *The Lord of the Rings*, having escaped to Elrond from the imminent pursuit of present evil, the hero departs in a wholly new direction: to go and face it at its source.

this in part, the gods laid a Ban on the Númenóreans from the beginning: they must never sail to Eressëa, nor westward out of sight of their own land. In all other directions they could go as they would. They must not set foot on “immortal” lands, and so become enamoured of an immortality (within the world), which was against their law, the special doom or gift of Ilúvatar (God), and which their nature could not in fact endure.<sup>8</sup>

There are three phases in their fall from grace. First acquiescence, obedience that is free and willing, though without complete understanding. Then for long they obey unwillingly, murmuring more and more openly. Finally they rebel—and a rift appears between the King’s men and rebels, and the small minority of persecuted Faithful.

In the first stage, being men of peace, their courage is devoted to sea-voyages. As descendants of Eärendil, they became the supreme mariners, and being barred from the West, they sail to the uttermost north, and south, and east. Mostly they come to the west-shores of Middle-earth, where they aid the Elves and Men against Sauron, and incur his undying hatred. In those days they would come amongst Wild Men as almost divine benefactors, bringing gifts of arts and knowledge, and passing away again—leaving many legends behind of kings and gods out of the sunset.

In the second stage, the days of Pride and Glory and grudging of the Ban, they begin to seek wealth rather than bliss. The desire to escape death produced a cult of the dead, and they lavished wealth and art on tombs and memorials. They now made settlements on the west-shores, but these became rather strongholds and “factories” of lords seeking wealth, and the Númenóreans became tax-gatherers carrying off over the sea ever more and more goods in their great ships. The Númenóreans began the forging of arms and engines.

This phase ended and the last began with the ascent of the throne by the thirteenth<sup>9</sup> king of the line of Elros, Tar-Calion the Golden, the most powerful and proud of all kings. When he learned that Sauron had taken the title of King of Kings and Lord of the World, he resolved to put down the “pretender”. He goes in strength and majesty to Middle-earth, and so vast is his armament, and so terrible are the Númenóreans in the day of their glory that Sauron’s servants will not face them. Sauron humbles himself, does homage to Tar-Calion, and is carried off to Númenor as hostage and prisoner. But there he swiftly rises by his cunning and knowledge from servant to chief counsellor of the king, and seduces the king and most of the lords and people with his lies. He denies the existence of God, saying that the One is a mere invention of the jealous Valar of the West, the oracle of their own wishes. The chief of the gods is he that dwells in the Void, who will conquer in the end, and in the void make endless realms for his servants. The Ban is only a lying device of fear to restrain the Kings of Men from seizing everlasting life and rivalling the Valar.

A new religion, and worship of the Dark, with its temple under Sauron arises. The Faithful are persecuted and sacrificed. The Númenóreans carry their evil also to Middle-earth and there become cruel and wicked lords of necromancy, slaying and tormenting men; and the old legends are overlaid with dark tales of horror. This does not happen, however, in the North West; for thither, because of the Elves, only the Faithful who remain Elf-friends will come. The chief haven of the good Númenóreans is near the mouth of the great river Anduin. Thence the still beneficent influence of Númenor spreads up the River and along the coasts as far north as the realm of Gilgalad, as a Common Speech grows up.

But at last Sauron’s plot comes to fulfilment, Tar-Calion feels old age and death approaching, and he listens to the last prompting of Sauron, and building the greatest of all armadas, he sets sail into the West, breaking the Ban, and going up with war to wrest from the gods “everlasting life within the circles of the world”. Faced by

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<sup>8</sup> The view is taken (as clearly reappears later in the case of the Hobbits that have the Ring for a while) that each “Kind” has a natural span, integral to its biological and spiritual nature. This cannot really be *increased* qualitatively or quantitatively; so that prolongation in time is like stretching a wire out ever tauter, or “spreading butter ever thinner” it becomes an intolerable torment.

<sup>9</sup> When this letter was written the original history of the rulers of Númenor, whereby Tar-Calion (Ar-Pharazôn) was the thirteenth and not as afterwards the twenty-fifth, was still present.

this rebellion, of appalling folly and blasphemy, and also real peril (since the Númenóreans directed by Sauron could have wrought ruin in Valinor itself) the Valar lay down their delegated power and appeal to God, and receive the power and permission to deal with the situation; the old world is broken and changed. A chasm is opened in the sea and Tar-Calion and his armada is engulfed. Númenor itself on the edge of the rift topples and vanishes for ever with all its glory in the abyss. Thereafter there is no visible dwelling of the divine or immortal on earth. Valinor (or Paradise) and even Eressëa are removed, remaining only in the memory of the earth. Men may sail now West, if they will, as far as they may, and come no nearer to Valinor or the Blessed Realm, but return only into the east and so back again; for the world is round, and finite, and a circle inescapable—save by death. Only the “immortals”, the lingering Elves, may still if they will, wearying of the circle of the world, take ship and find the “straight way”, and come to the ancient or True West, and be at peace.

So the end of the Second Age draws on in a major catastrophe; but it is not yet quite concluded. From the cataclysm there are survivors: *Elendil* the Fair, chief of the Faithful (his name means *Elf-friend*), and his sons *Isildur* and *Anarion*. Elendil, a Noachian figure, who has held off from the rebellion, and kept ships manned and furnished off the east coast of Númenor, flees before the overwhelming storm of the wrath of the West, and is borne high upon the towering waves that bring ruin to the west of the Middle-earth. He and his folk are cast away as exiles upon the shores. There they establish the Númenórean kingdoms of Arnor in the north close to the realm of Gilgalad, and Gondor about the mouths of Anduin further south. Sauron, being an immortal, hardly escapes the ruin of Númenor and returns to Mordor, where after a while he is strong enough to challenge the exiles of Númenor.

The Second Age ends with the *Last Alliance* (of Elves and Men), and the great siege of Mordor. It ends with the overthrow of Sauron and destruction of the second visible incarnation of evil. But at a cost, and with one disastrous mistake. Gilgalad and Elendil are slain in the act of slaying Sauron. Isildur, Elendil's son, cuts the ring from Sauron's hand, and his power departs, and his spirit flees into the shadows. But the evil begins to work. Isildur claims the Ring as his own, as “the Weregild of his father”, and refuses to cast it into the Fire nearby. He marches away, but is drowned in the Great River, and the Ring is lost, passing out of all knowledge. But it is not unmade, and the Dark Tower built with its aid still stands, empty but not destroyed. So ends the Second Age with the coming of the Númenórean realms and the passing of the last kingship of the High Elves.



[illegible]



There was Eru, the One, who in Arda is called Ilúvatar; and he made first the Ainur, the Holy Ones, that were the offspring of his thought, and they were with him before aught else was made. And he spoke to them, propounding to them themes of music; and they sang before him, and he was glad. But for a long while they sang only each alone, or but few together, while the rest hearkened; for each comprehended only that part of the mind of Ilúvatar from which he came, and in the understanding of their brethren they grew but slowly. Yet ever as they listened they came to deeper understanding, and increased in unison and harmony.

And it came to pass that Ilúvatar called together all the Ainur and declared to them a mighty theme, unfolding to them things greater and more wonderful than he had yet revealed; and the glory of its beginning and the splendour of its end amazed the Ainur, so that they bowed before Ilúvatar and were silent.

Then Ilúvatar said to them: “Of the theme that I have declared to you, I will now that ye make in harmony together a Great Music. And since I have kindled you with the Flame Imperishable, ye shall show forth your powers in adorning this theme, each with his own thoughts and devices, if he will. But I will sit and hearken, and be glad that through you great beauty has been wakened into song.”

Then the voices of the Ainur, like unto harps and lutes, and pipes and trumpets, and viols and organs, and like unto countless choirs singing with words, began to fashion the theme of Ilúvatar to a great music; and a sound arose of endless interchanging melodies woven in harmony that passed beyond hearing into the depths and into the heights, and the places of the dwelling of Ilúvatar were filled to overflowing, and the music and the echo of the music went out into the Void, and it was not void. Never since have the Ainur made any music like to this music, though it has been said that a greater still shall be made before Ilúvatar by the choirs of the Ainur and the Children of Ilúvatar after the end of days. Then the themes of Ilúvatar shall be played aright, and take Being in the moment of their utterance, for all shall then understand fully his intent in their part, and each shall know the comprehension of each, and Ilúvatar shall give to their thoughts the secret fire, being well pleased.

But now Ilúvatar sat and hearkened, and for a great while it seemed good to him, for in the music there were no flaws. But as the theme progressed, it came into the heart of Melkor to interweave matters of his own imagining that were not in accord with the theme of Ilúvatar; for he sought therein to increase the power and glory of the part assigned to himself. To Melkor among the Ainur had been given the greatest gifts of power and knowledge, and he had a share in all the gifts of his brethren. He had gone often alone into the void places seeking the Imperishable Flame; for desire grew hot within him to bring into Being things of his own, and it seemed to him that Ilúvatar took no thought for the Void, and he was impatient of its emptiness. Yet he found not the Fire, for it is with Ilúvatar. But being alone he had begun to conceive thoughts of his own unlike those of his brethren.

Some of these thoughts he now wove into his music, and straightway discord arose about him, and many that sang nigh him grew despondent, and their thought was disturbed and their music faltered; but some began to attune their music to his rather than to the thought which they had at first. Then the discord of Melkor spread ever wider, and the melodies which had been heard before foundered in a sea of turbulent sound. But Ilúvatar sat and hearkened until it seemed that about his throne there was a raging storm, as of dark waters that made war one upon another in an endless wrath that would not be assuaged.

Then Ilúvatar arose, and the Ainur perceived that he smiled; and he lifted up his left hand, and a new theme began amid the storm, like and yet unlike to the former theme, and it gathered power and had new beauty. But the discord of Melkor rose in uproar and contended with it, and again there was a war of sound more violent than before, until many of the Ainur were dismayed and sang no longer, and Melkor had the mastery. Then again Ilúvatar arose, and the Ainur perceived that his countenance was stern; and he lifted up his right hand, and behold! a third theme grew amid the confusion, and it was unlike the others. For it seemed at first soft and sweet, a mere rippling of gentle sounds in delicate melodies; but it could not be quenched, and it took to itself



power and profundity. And it seemed at last that there were two musics progressing at one time before the seat of Ilúvatar, and they were utterly at variance. The one was deep and wide and beautiful, but slow and blended with an immeasurable sorrow, from which its beauty chiefly came. The other had now achieved a unity of its own; but it was loud, and vain, and endlessly repeated; and it had little harmony, but rather a clamorous unison as of many trumpets braying upon a few notes. And it essayed to drown the other music by the violence of its voice, but it seemed that its most triumphant notes were taken by the other and woven into its own solemn pattern.

In the midst of this strife, whereat the halls of Ilúvatar shook and a tremor ran out into the silences yet unmoved, Ilúvatar arose a third time, and his face was terrible to behold. Then he raised up both his hands, and in one chord, deeper than the Abyss, higher than the Firmament, piercing as the light of the eye of Ilúvatar, the Music ceased.

Then Ilúvatar spoke, and he said: "Mighty are the Ainur, and mightiest among them is Melkor; but that he may know, and all the Ainur, that I am Ilúvatar, those things that ye have sung, I will show them forth, that ye may see what ye have done. And thou, Melkor, shalt see that no theme may be played that hath not its uttermost source in me, nor can any alter the music in my despite. For he that attempteth this shall prove but mine instrument in the devising of things more wonderful, which he himself hath not imagined."

Then the Ainur were afraid, and they did not yet comprehend the words that were said to them; and Melkor was filled with shame, of which came secret anger. But Ilúvatar arose in splendour, and he went forth from the fair regions that he had made for the Ainur; and the Ainur followed him.

But when they were come into the Void, Ilúvatar said to them: "Behold your Music!" And he showed to them a vision, giving to them sight where before was only hearing; and they saw a new World made visible before them, and it was globed amid the Void, and it was sustained therein, but was not of it. And as they looked and wondered this World began to unfold its history, and it seemed to them that it lived and grew. And when the Ainur had gazed for a while and were silent, Ilúvatar said again: "Behold your Music! This is your minstrelsy; and each of you shall find contained herein, amid the design that I set before you, all those things which it may seem that he himself devised or added. And thou, Melkor, wilt discover all the secret thoughts of thy mind, and wilt perceive that they are but a part of the whole and tributary to its glory."

And many other things Ilúvatar spoke to the Ainur at that time, and because of their memory of his words, and the knowledge that each has of the music that he himself made, the Ainur know much of what was, and is, and is to come, and few things are unseen by them. Yet some things there are that they cannot see, neither alone nor taking counsel together; for to none but himself has Ilúvatar revealed all that he has in store, and in every age there come forth things that are new and have no foretelling, for they do not proceed from the past. And so it was that as this vision of the World was played before them, the Ainur saw that it contained things which they had not thought. And they saw with amazement the coming of the Children of Ilúvatar, and the habitation that was prepared for them; and they perceived that they themselves in the labour of their music had been busy with the preparation of this dwelling, and yet knew not that it had any purpose beyond its own beauty. For the Children of Ilúvatar were conceived by him alone; and they came with the third theme, and were not in the theme which Ilúvatar propounded at the beginning, and none of the Ainur had part in their making. Therefore when they beheld them, the more did they love them, being things other than themselves, strange and free, wherein they saw the mind of Ilúvatar reflected anew, and learned yet a little more of his wisdom, which otherwise had been hidden even from the Ainur.

Now the Children of Ilúvatar are Elves and Men, the Firstborn and the Followers. And amid all the splendours of the World, its vast halls and spaces, and its wheeling fires, Ilúvatar chose a place for their habitation in the Deeps of Time and in the midst of the innumerable stars. And this habitation might seem a little thing to those who consider only the majesty of the Ainur, and not their terrible sharpness; as who should take the whole field of Arda for the foundation of a pillar and so raise it until the cone of its summit were more bitter than a needle; or who consider only the immeasurable vastness of the World, which still the Ainur are shaping, and not the minute precision to which they shape all things therein. But when the Ainur had beheld this habitation in a vision and had seen the Children of Ilúvatar arise therein, then many of the most mighty among them bent all their thought and their desire towards that place. And of these Melkor was the chief, even as he was in the

beginning the greatest of the Ainur who took part in the Music. And he feigned, even to himself at first, that he desired to go thither and order all things for the good of the Children of Ilúvatar, controlling the turmoils of the heat and the cold that had come to pass through him. But he desired rather to subdue to his will both Elves and Men, envying the gifts with which Ilúvatar promised to endow them; and he wished himself to have subjects and servants, and to be called Lord, and to be a master over other wills.

But the other Ainur looked upon this habitation set within the vast spaces of the World, which the Elves call Arda, the Earth; and their hearts rejoiced in light, and their eyes beholding many colours were filled with gladness; but because of the roaring of the sea they felt a great unquiet. And they observed the winds and the air, and the matters of which Arda was made, of iron and stone and silver and gold and many substances: but of all these water they most greatly praised. And it is said by the Eldar that in water there lives yet the echo of the Music of the Ainur more than in any substance else that is in this Earth; and many of the Children of Ilúvatar hearken still unsated to the voices of the Sea, and yet know not for what they listen.

Now to water had that Ainu whom the Elves call Ulmo turned his thought, and of all most deeply was he instructed by Ilúvatar in music. But of the airs and winds Manwë most had pondered, who is the noblest of the Ainur. Of the fabric of Earth had Aulë thought, to whom Ilúvatar had given skill and knowledge scarce less than to Melkor; but the delight and pride of Aulë is in the deed of making, and in the thing made, and neither in possession nor in his own mastery; wherefore he gives and hoards not, and is free from care, passing ever on to some new work.

And Ilúvatar spoke to Ulmo, and said: “Seest thou not how here in this little realm in the Deeps of Time Melkor hath made war upon thy province? He hath bethought him of bitter cold immoderate, and yet hath not destroyed the beauty of thy fountains, nor of thy clear pools. Behold the snow, and the cunning work of frost! Melkor hath devised heats and fire without restraint, and hath not dried up thy desire nor utterly quelled the music of the sea. Behold rather the height and glory of the clouds, and the everchanging mists; and listen to the fall of rain upon the Earth! And in these clouds thou art drawn nearer to Manwë, thy friend, whom thou lovest.”

Then Ulmo answered: “Truly, Water is become now fairer than my heart imagined, neither had my secret thought conceived the snowflake, nor in all my music was contained the falling of the rain. I will seek Manwë, that he and I may make melodies for ever to thy delight!” And Manwë and Ulmo have from the beginning been allied, and in all things have served most faithfully the purpose of Ilúvatar.

But even as Ulmo spoke, and while the Ainur were yet gazing upon this vision, it was taken away and hidden from their sight; and it seemed to them that in that moment they perceived a new thing, Darkness, which they had not known before except in thought. But they had become enamoured of the beauty of the vision and engrossed in the unfolding of the World which came there to being, and their minds were filled with it; for the history was incomplete and the circles of time not full-wrought when the vision was taken away. And some have said that the vision ceased ere the fulfilment of the Dominion of Men and the fading of the Firstborn; wherefore, though the Music is over all, the Valar have not seen as with sight the Later Ages or the ending of the World.

Then there was unrest among the Ainur; but Ilúvatar called to them, and said: “I know the desire of your minds that what ye have seen should verily be, not only in your thought, but even as ye yourselves are, and yet other. Therefore I say: *Eä!* Let these things Be! And I will send forth into the Void the Flame Imperishable, and it shall be at the heart of the World, and the World shall Be; and those of you that will may go down into it.” And suddenly the Ainur saw afar off a light, as it were a cloud with a living heart of flame; and they knew that this was no vision only, but that Ilúvatar had made a new thing: *Eä*, the World that Is.

Thus it came to pass that of the Ainur some abode still with Ilúvatar beyond the confines of the World; but others, and among them many of the greatest and most fair, took the leave of Ilúvatar and descended into it. But this condition Ilúvatar made, or it is the necessity of their love, that their power should thenceforward be contained and bounded in the World, to be within it for ever, until it is complete, so that they are its life and it is theirs. And therefore they are named the Valar, the Powers of the World.

But when the Valar entered into *Eä* they were at first astounded and at a loss, for it was as if naught was yet made which they had seen in vision, and all was but on point to begin and yet unshaped, and it was dark. For

the Great Music had been but the growth and flowering of thought in the Timeless Halls, and the Vision only a foreshowing; but now they had entered in at the beginning of Time, and the Valar perceived that the World had been but foreshadowed and foresung, and they must achieve it. So began their great labours in wastes unmeasured and unexplored, and in ages uncounted and forgotten, until in the Deeps of Time and in the midst of the vast halls of Eä there came to be that hour and that place where was made the habitation of the Children of Ilúvatar. And in this work the chief part was taken by Manwë and Aulë and Ulmo; but Melkor too was there from the first, and he meddled in all that was done, turning it if he might to his own desires and purposes; and he kindled great fires. When therefore Earth was yet young and full of flame Melkor coveted it, and he said to the other Valar: "This shall be my own kingdom; and I name it unto myself!"

But Manwë was the brother of Melkor in the mind of Ilúvatar, and he was the chief instrument of the second theme that Ilúvatar had raised up against the discord of Melkor; and he called unto himself many spirits both greater and less, and they came down into the fields of Arda and aided Manwë, lest Melkor should hinder the fulfilment of their labour for ever, and Earth should wither ere it flowered. And Manwë said unto Melkor: "This kingdom thou shalt not take for thine own, wrongfully, for many others have laboured here no less than thou." And there was strife between Melkor and the other Valar; and for that time Melkor withdrew and departed to other regions and did there what he would; but he did not put the desire of the Kingdom of Arda from his heart.

Now the Valar took to themselves shape and hue; and because they were drawn into the World by love of the Children of Ilúvatar, for whom they hoped, they took shape after that manner which they had beheld in the Vision of Ilúvatar, save only in majesty and splendour. Moreover their shape comes of their knowledge of the visible World, rather than of the World itself; and they need it not, save only as we use raiment, and yet we may be naked and suffer no loss of our being. Therefore the Valar may walk, if they will, unclad, and then even the Eldar cannot clearly perceive them, though they be present. But when they desire to clothe themselves the Valar take upon them forms some as of male and some as of female; for that difference of temper they had even from their beginning, and it is but bodied forth in the choice of each, not made by the choice, even as with us male and female may be shown by the raiment but is not made thereby. But the shapes wherein the Great Ones array themselves are not at all times like to the shapes of the kings and queens of the Children of Ilúvatar; for at times they may clothe themselves in their own thought, made visible in forms of majesty and dread.

And the Valar drew unto them many companions, some less, some well nigh as great as themselves, and they laboured together in the ordering of the Earth and the curbing of its tumults. Then Melkor saw what was done, and that the Valar walked on Earth as powers visible, clad in the raiment of the World, and were lovely and glorious to see, and blissful, and that the Earth was becoming as a garden for their delight, for its turmoils were subdued. His envy grew then the greater within him; and he also took visible form, but because of his mood and the malice that burned in him that form was dark and terrible. And he descended upon Arda in power and majesty greater than any other of the Valar, as a mountain that wades in the sea and has its head above the clouds and is clad in ice and crowned with smoke and fire; and the light of the eyes of Melkor was like a flame that withers with heat and pierces with a deadly cold.

Thus began the first battle of the Valar with Melkor for the dominion of Arda; and of those tumults the Elves know but little. For what has here been declared is come from the Valar themselves, with whom the Eldalië spoke in the land of Valinor, and by whom they were instructed; but little would the Valar ever tell of the wars before the coming of the Elves. Yet it is told among the Eldar that the Valar endeavoured ever, in despite of Melkor, to rule the Earth and to prepare it for the coming of the Firstborn; and they built lands and Melkor destroyed them; valleys they delved and Melkor raised them up; mountains they carved and Melkor threw them down; seas they hollowed and Melkor spilled them; and naught might have peace or come to lasting growth, for as surely as the Valar began a labour so would Melkor undo it or corrupt it. And yet their labour was not all in vain; and though nowhere and in no work was their will and purpose wholly fulfilled, and all things were in hue and shape other than the Valar had at first intended, slowly nonetheless the Earth was fashioned and made firm. And thus was the habitation of the Children of Ilúvatar established at the last in the Deeps of Time and amidst the innumerable stars.

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## VALAQUENTA



### ACCOUNT OF THE VALAR AND MAIAR ACCORDING TO THE LORE OF THE ELДАР

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In the beginning Eru, the One, who in the Elvish tongue is named Ilúvatar, made the Ainur of his thought; and they made a great Music before him. In this Music the World was begun; for Ilúvatar made visible the song of the Ainur, and they beheld it as a light in the darkness. And many among them became enamoured of its beauty, and of its history which they saw beginning and unfolding as in a vision. Therefore Ilúvatar gave to their vision Being, and set it amid the Void, and the Secret Fire was sent to burn at the heart of the World; and it was called Eä.

Then those of the Ainur who desired it arose and entered into the World at the beginning of Time; and it was their task to achieve it, and by their labours to fulfil the vision which they had seen. Long they laboured in the regions of Eä, which are vast beyond the thought of Elves and Men, until in the time appointed was made Arda, the Kingdom of Earth. Then they put on the raiment of Earth and descended into it, and dwelt therein.



## Of The Valar

The Great among these spirits the Elves name the Valar, the Powers of Arda, and Men have often called them gods. The Lords of the Valar are seven; and the Valier, the Queens of the Valar, are seven also. These were their names in the Elvish tongue as it was spoken in Valinor, though they have other names in the speech of the Elves in Middle-earth, and their names among Men are manifold. The names of the Lords in due order are: Manwë, Ulmo, Aulë, Oromë, Mandos, Lórien, and Tulkas; and the names of the Queens are: Varda, Yavanna, Nienna, Estë, Vairë, Vána, and Nessa. Melkor is counted no longer among the Valar, and his name is not spoken upon Earth.

Manwë and Melkor were brethren in the thought of Ilúvatar. The mightiest of those Ainur who came into the World was in his beginning Melkor; but Manwë is dearest to Ilúvatar and understands most clearly his purposes. He was appointed to be, in the fullness of time, the first of all Kings: lord of the realm of Arda and ruler of all that dwell therein. In Arda his delight is in the winds and the clouds, and in all the regions of the air, from the heights to the depths, from the utmost borders of the Veil of Arda to the breezes that blow in the grass. Súlimo he is surnamed, Lord of the Breath of Arda. All swift birds, strong of wing, he loves, and they come and go at his bidding.

With Manwë dwells Varda, Lady of the Stars, who knows all the regions of Eä. Too great is her beauty to be declared in the words of Men or of Elves; for the light of Ilúvatar lives still in her face. In light is her power and her joy. Out of the deeps of Eä she came to the aid of Manwë; for Melkor she knew from before the making of the Music and rejected him, and he hated her, and feared her more than all others whom Eru made. Manwë and Varda are seldom parted, and they remain in Valinor. Their halls are above the everlasting snow, upon Oiolossë, the uttermost tower of Taniquetil, tallest of all the mountains upon Earth. When Manwë there ascends his throne and looks forth, if Varda is beside him, he sees further than all other eyes, through mist, and through darkness, and over the leagues of the sea. And if Manwë is with her, Varda hears more clearly than all other ears the sound of voices that cry from east to west, from the hills and the valleys, and from the dark places that Melkor has made upon Earth. Of all the Great Ones who dwell in this world the Elves hold Varda most in reverence and love. Elbereth they name her, and they call upon her name out of the shadows of Middle-earth, and uplift it in song at the rising of the stars.

Ulmo is the Lord of Waters. He is alone. He dwells nowhere long, but moves as he will in all the deep waters about the Earth or under the Earth. He is next in might to Manwë, and before Valinor was made he was closest to him in friendship; but thereafter he went seldom to the councils of the Valar, unless great matters were in debate. For he kept all Arda in thought, and he has no need of any resting-place. Moreover he does not love to walk upon land, and will seldom clothe himself in a body after the manner of his peers. If the Children of Eru beheld him they were filled with a great dread; for the arising of the King of the Sea was terrible, as a mounting wave that strides to the land, with dark helm foam-crested and raiment of mail shimmering from silver down into shadows of green. The trumpets of Manwë are loud, but Ulmo's voice is deep as the deeps of the ocean which he only has seen.

Nonetheless Ulmo loves both Elves and Men, and never abandoned them, not even when they lay under the wrath of the Valar. At times he will come unseen to the shores of Middle-earth, or pass far inland up firths of the sea, and there make music upon his great horns, the Ulumúri, that are wrought of white shell; and those to whom that music comes hear it ever after in their hearts, and longing for the sea never leaves them again. But mostly Ulmo speaks to those who dwell in Middle-earth with voices that are heard only as the music of water. For all seas, lakes, rivers, fountains and springs are in his government; so that the Elves say that the spirit of

Ulmo runs in all the veins of the world. Thus news comes to Ulmo, even in the deeps, of all the needs and griefs of Arda, which otherwise would be hidden from Manwë.

Aulë has might little less than Ulmo. His lordship is over all the substances of which Arda is made. In the beginning he wrought much in fellowship with Manwë and Ulmo; and the fashioning of all lands was his labour. He is a smith and a master of all crafts, and he delights in works of skill, however small, as much as in the mighty building of old. His are the gems that lie deep in the Earth and the gold that is fair in the hand, no less than the walls of the mountains and the basins of the sea. The Noldor learned most of him, and he was ever their friend. Melkor was jealous of him, for Aulë was most like himself in thought and in powers; and there was long strife between them, in which Melkor ever marred or undid the works of Aulë, and Aulë grew weary in repairing the tumults and disorders of Melkor. Both, also, desired to make things of their own that should be new and unthought of by others, and delighted in the praise of their skill. But Aulë remained faithful to Eru and submitted all that he did to his will; and he did not envy the works of others, but sought and gave counsel. Whereas Melkor spent his spirit in envy and hate, until at last he could make nothing save in mockery of the thought of others, and all their works he destroyed if he could.

The spouse of Aulë is Yavanna, the Giver of Fruits. She is the lover of all things that grow in the earth, and all their countless forms she holds in her mind, from the trees like towers in forests long ago to the moss upon stones or the small and secret things in the mould. In reverence Yavanna is next to Varda among the Queens of the Valar. In the form of a woman she is tall, and robed in green; but at times she takes other shapes. Some there are who have seen her standing like a tree under heaven, crowned with the Sun; and from all its branches there spilled a golden dew upon the barren earth, and it grew green with corn; but the roots of the tree were in the waters of Ulmo, and the winds of Manwë spoke in its leaves. Kementári, Queen of the Earth, she is surnamed in the Eldarin tongue.

The Fëanturi, masters of spirits, are brethren, and they are called most often Mandos and Lórien. Yet these are rightly the names of the places of their dwelling, and their true names are Námo and Irmo.

Námo the elder dwells in Mandos, which is westward in Valinor. He is the keeper of the Houses of the Dead, and the summoner of the spirits of the slain. He forgets nothing; and he knows all things that shall be, save only those that lie still in the freedom of Ilúvatar. He is the Doomsman of the Valar; but he pronounces his dooms and his judgements only at the bidding of Manwë. Vairë the Weaver is his spouse, who weaves all things that have ever been in Time into her storied webs, and the halls of Mandos that ever widen as the ages pass are clothed with them.

Irmo the younger is the master of visions and dreams. In Lórien are his gardens in the land of the Valar, and they are the fairest of all places in the world, filled with many spirits. Estë the gentle, healer of hurts and of weariness, is his spouse. Grey is her raiment; and rest is her gift. She walks not by day, but sleeps upon an island in the tree-shadowed lake of Lórellin. From the fountains of Irmo and Estë all those who dwell in Valinor draw refreshment; and often the Valar come themselves to Lórien and there find repose and easing of the burden of Arda.

Mightier than Estë is Nienna, sister of the Fëanturi; she dwells alone. She is acquainted with grief, and mourns for every wound that Arda has suffered in the marring of Melkor. So great was her sorrow, as the Music unfolded, that her song turned to lamentation long before its end, and the sound of mourning was woven into the themes of the World before it began. But she does not weep for herself; and those who hearken to her learn pity, and endurance in hope. Her halls are west of West, upon the borders of the world; and she comes seldom to the city of Valimar where all is glad. She goes rather to the halls of Mandos, which are near to her own; and all those who wait in Mandos cry to her, for she brings strength to the spirit and turns sorrow to wisdom. The windows of her house look outward from the walls of the world.

Greatest in strength and deeds of prowess is Tulkas, who is surnamed Astaldo, the Valiant. He came last to Arda, to aid the Valar in the first battles with Melkor. He delights in wrestling and in contests of strength; and he rides no steed, for he can outrun all things that go on feet, and he is tireless. His hair and beard are golden, and his flesh ruddy; his weapons are his hands. He has little heed for either the past or the future, and is of no avail as a counsellor, but is a hardy friend. His spouse is Nessa, the sister of Oromë, and she also is lithe and

fleetfooted. Deer she loves, and they follow her train whenever she goes in the wild; but she can outrun them, swift as an arrow with the wind in her hair. In dancing she delights, and she dances in Valimar on lawns of never-fading green.

Oromë is a mighty lord. If he is less strong than Tulkas, he is more dreadful in anger; whereas Tulkas laughs ever, in sport or in war, and even in the face of Melkor he laughed in battles before the Elves were born. Oromë loved the lands of Middle-earth, and he left them unwillingly and came last to Valinor; and often of old he passed back east over the mountains and returned with his host to the hills and the plains. He is a hunter of monsters and fell beasts, and he delights in horses and in hounds; and all trees he loves, for which reason he is called Aldaron, and by the Sindar Tauron, the Lord of Forests. Nahar is the name of his horse, white in the sun, and shining silver at night. The Valaróma is the name of his great horn, the sound of which is like the upgoing of the Sun in scarlet, or the sheer lightning cleaving the clouds. Above all the horns of his host it was heard in the woods that Yavanna brought forth in Valinor; for there Oromë would train his folk and his beasts for the pursuit of the evil creatures of Melkor. The spouse of Oromë is Vána, the Ever-young; she is the younger sister of Yavanna. All flowers spring as she passes and open if she glances upon them; and all birds sing at her coming.

These are the names of the Valar and the Valier, and here is told in brief their likenesses, such as the Eldar beheld them in Aman. But fair and noble as were the forms in which they were manifest to the Children of Ilúvatar, they were but a veil upon their beauty and their power. And if little is here said of all that the Eldar once knew, that is as nothing compared with their true being, which goes back into regions and ages far beyond our thought. Among them Nine were of chief power and reverence; but one is removed from their number, and Eight remain, the Aratar, the High Ones of Arda: Manwë and Varda, Ulmo, Yavanna and Aulë, Mandos, Nienna, and Oromë. Though Manwë is their King and holds their allegiance under Eru, in majesty they are peers, surpassing beyond compare all others, whether of the Valar and the Maiar, or of any other order that Ilúvatar has sent into Eä.





## Of The Maiar

With the Valar came other spirits whose being also began before the World, of the same order as the Valar but of less degree. These are the Maiar, the people of the Valar, and their servants and helpers. Their number is not known to the Elves, and few have names in any of the tongues of the Children of Ilúvatar; for though it is otherwise in Aman, in Middle-earth the Maiar have seldom appeared in form visible to Elves and Men.

Chief among the Maiar of Valinor whose names are remembered in the histories of the Elder Days are Ilmarë, the handmaid of Varda, and Eönwë, the banner-bearer and herald of Manwë, whose might in arms is surpassed by none in Arda. But of all the Maiar Ossë and Uinen are best known to the Children of Ilúvatar.

Ossë is a vassal of Ulmo, and he is master of the seas that wash the shores of Middle-earth. He does not go in the deeps, but loves the coasts and the isles, and rejoices in the winds of Manwë; for in storm he delights, and laughs amid the roaring of the waves. His spouse is Uinen, the Lady of the Seas, whose hair lies spread through all waters under sky. All creatures she loves that live in the salt streams, and all weeds that grow there; to her mariners cry, for she can lay calm upon the waves, restraining the wildness of Ossë. The Númenóreans lived long in her protection, and held her in reverence equal to the Valar.

Melkor hated the Sea, for he could not subdue it. It is said that in the making of Arda he endeavoured to draw Ossë to his allegiance, promising to him all the realm and power of Ulmo, if he would serve him. So it was that long ago there arose great tumults in the sea that wrought ruin to the lands. But Uinen, at the prayer of Aulë, restrained Ossë and brought him before Ulmo; and he was pardoned and returned to his allegiance, to which he has remained faithful. For the most part; for the delight in violence has never wholly departed from him, and at times he will rage in his wilfulness without any command from Ulmo his lord. Therefore those who dwell by the sea or go up in ships may love him, but they do not trust him.

Melian was the name of a Maia who served both Vána and Estë; she dwelt long in Lórien, tending the trees that flower in the gardens of Irmo, ere she came to Middle-earth. Nightingales sang about her wherever she went.

Wisest of the Maiar was Olórin. He too dwelt in Lórien, but his ways took him often to the house of Nienna, and of her he learned pity and patience.

Of Melian much is told in the [\*Quenta Silmarillion\*](#). But of Olórin that tale does not speak; for though he loved the Elves, he walked among them unseen, or in form as one of them, and they did not know whence came the fair visions or the promptings of wisdom that he put into their hearts. In later days he was the friend of all the Children of Ilúvatar, and took pity on their sorrows; and those who listened to him awoke from despair and put away the imaginations of darkness.



## Of The Enemies

Last of all is set the name of Melkor, He who arises in Might. But that name he has forfeited; and the Noldor, who among the Elves suffered most from his malice, will not utter it, and they name him Morgoth, the Dark Enemy of the World. Great might was given to him by Ilúvatar, and he was coëval with Manwë. In the powers and knowledge of all the other Valar he had part, but he turned them to evil purposes, and squandered his strength in violence and tyranny. For he coveted Arda and all that was in it, desiring the kingship of Manwë and dominion over the realms of his peers.

From splendour he fell through arrogance to contempt for all things save himself, a spirit wasteful and pitiless. Understanding he turned to subtlety in perverting to his own will all that he would use, until he became a liar without shame. He began with the desire of Light, but when he could not possess it for himself alone, he descended through fire and wrath into a great burning, down into Darkness. And darkness he used most in his evil works upon Arda, and filled it with fear for all living things.

Yet so great was the power of his uprising that in ages forgotten he contended with Manwë and all the Valar, and through long years in Arda held dominion over most of the lands of the Earth. But he was not alone. For of the Maiar many were drawn to his splendour in the days of his greatness, and remained in that allegiance down into his darkness; and others he corrupted afterwards to his service with lies and treacherous gifts. Dreadful among these spirits were the Valaraukar, the scourges of fire that in Middle-earth were called the Balrogs, demons of terror.

Among those of his servants that have names the greatest was that spirit whom the Eldar called Sauron, or Gorthaur the Cruel. In his beginning he was of the Maiar of Aulë, and he remained mighty in the lore of that people. In all the deeds of Melkor the Morgoth upon Arda, in his vast works and in the deceits of his cunning, Sauron had a part, and was only less evil than his master in that for long he served another and not himself. But in after years he rose like a shadow of Morgoth and a ghost of his malice, and walked behind him on the same ruinous path down into the Void.

HERE ENDS THE VALAQUENTA

[illegible]





## Chapter 1: Of The Beginning Of Days

It is told among the wise that the First War began before Arda was full-shaped, and ere yet there was anything that grew or walked upon earth; and for long Melkor had the upper hand. But in the midst of the war a spirit of great strength and hardihood came to the aid of the Valar, hearing in the far heaven that there was battle in the Little Kingdom; and Arda was filled with the sound of his laughter. So came Tulkas the Strong, whose anger passes like a mighty wind, scattering cloud and darkness before it; and Melkor fled before his wrath and his laughter, and forsook Arda, and there was peace for a long age. And Tulkas remained and became one of the Valar of the Kingdom of Arda; but Melkor brooded in the outer darkness, and his hate was given to Tulkas for ever after.

In that time the Valar brought order to the seas and the lands and the mountains, and Yavanna planted at last the seeds that she had long devised. And since, when the fires were subdued or buried beneath the primeval hills, there was need of light, Aulë at the prayer of Yavanna wrought two mighty lamps for the lighting of the Middle-earth which he had built amid the encircling seas. Then Varda filled the lamps and Manwë hallowed them, and the Valar set them upon high pillars, more lofty far than are any mountains of the later days. One lamp they raised near to the north of Middle-earth, and it was named Illuin; and the other was raised in the south, and it was named Ormal; and the light of the Lamps of the Valar flowed out over the Earth, so that all was lit as it were in a changeless day.

Then the seeds that Yavanna had sown began swiftly to sprout and to burgeon, and there arose a multitude of growing things great and small, mosses and grasses and great ferns, and trees whose tops were crowned with cloud as they were living mountains, but whose feet were wrapped in a green twilight. And beasts came forth and dwelt in the grassy plains, or in the rivers and the lakes, or walked in the shadows of the woods. As yet no flower had bloomed nor any bird had sung, for these things waited still their time in the bosom of Yavanna; but wealth there was of her imagining, and nowhere more rich than in the midmost parts of the Earth, where the light of both the Lamps met and blended. And there upon the Isle of Almaren in the Great Lake was the first dwelling of the Valar when all things were young, and new-made green was yet a marvel in the eyes of the makers; and they were long content.

Now it came to pass that while the Valar rested from their labours, and watched the growth and unfolding of the things that they had devised and begun, Manwë ordained a great feast; and the Valar and all their host came at his bidding. But Aulë and Tulkas were weary; for the craft of Aulë and the strength of Tulkas had been at the service of all without ceasing in the days of their labour. And Melkor knew of all that was done, for even then he had secret friends and spies among the Maiar whom he had converted to his cause; and far off in the darkness he was filled with hatred, being jealous of the work of his peers, whom he desired to make subject to himself. Therefore he gathered to himself spirits out of the halls of Eä that he had perverted to his service, and he deemed himself strong. And seeing now his time he drew near again to Arda, and looked down upon it, and the beauty of the Earth in its Spring filled him the more with hate.

Now therefore the Valar were gathered upon Almaren, fearing no evil, and because of the light of Illuin they did not perceive the shadow in the north that was cast from afar by Melkor; for he was grown dark as the Night of the Void. And it is sung that in that feast of the Spring of Arda Tulkas espoused Nessa the sister of Oromë, and she danced before the Valar upon the green grass of Almaren.

Then Tulkas slept, being weary and content, and Melkor deemed that his hour had come. And he passed therefore over the Walls of the Night with his host, and came to Middle-earth far in the north; and the Valar were not aware of him.



Now Melkor began the delving and building of a vast fortress, deep under Earth, beneath dark mountains where the beams of Illuin were cold and dim. That stronghold was named Utumno. And though the Valar knew naught of it as yet, nonetheless the evil of Melkor and the blight of his hatred flowed out thence, and the Spring of Arda was marred. Green things fell sick and rotted, and rivers were choked with weeds and slime, and fens were made, rank and poisonous, the breeding place of flies; and forests grew dark and perilous, the haunts of fear; and beasts became monsters of horn and ivory and dyed the earth with blood. Then the Valar knew indeed that Melkor was at work again, and they sought for his hiding place. But Melkor, trusting in the strength of Utumno and the might of his servants, came forth suddenly to war, and struck the first blow, ere the Valar were prepared; and he assailed the lights of Illuin and Ormal, and cast down their pillars and broke their lamps. In the overthrow of the mighty pillars lands were broken and seas arose in tumult; and when the lamps were spilled destroying flame was poured out over the Earth. And the shape of Arda and the symmetry of its waters and its lands was marred in that time, so that the first designs of the Valar were never after restored.

In the confusion and the darkness Melkor escaped, though fear fell upon him; for above the roaring of the seas he heard the voice of Manwë as a mighty wind, and the earth trembled beneath the feet of Tulkas. But he came to Utumno ere Tulkas could overtake him; and there he lay hid. And the Valar could not at that time overcome him, for the greater part of their strength was needed to restrain the tumults of the Earth, and to save from ruin all that could be saved of their labour; and afterwards they feared to rend the Earth again, until they knew where the Children of Ilúvatar were dwelling, who were yet to come in a time that was hidden from the Valar.

Thus ended the Spring of Arda. The dwelling of the Valar upon Almaren was utterly destroyed, and they had no abiding place upon the face of the Earth. Therefore they departed from Middle-earth and went to the Land of Aman, the westernmost of all lands upon the borders of the world; for its west shores looked upon the Outer Sea, that is called by the Elves Ekkaia, encircling the Kingdom of Arda. How wide is that sea none know but the Valar; and beyond it are the Walls of the Night. But the east shores of Aman were the uttermost end of Belegaer, the Great Sea of the West; and since Melkor was returned to Middle-earth and they could not yet overcome him, the Valar fortified their dwelling, and upon the shores of the sea they raised the Pelóri, the Mountains of Aman, highest upon Earth. And above all the mountains of the Pelóri was that height upon whose summit Manwë set his throne. Taniquetil the Elves name that holy mountain, and Oiolossë Everlasting Whiteness, and Elerrína Crowned with Stars, and many names beside; but the Sindar spoke of it in their later tongue as Amon Uilos. From their halls upon Taniquetil Manwë and Varda could look out across the Earth even into the furthest East.

Behind the walls of the Pelóri the Valar established their domain in that region which is called Valinor; and there were their houses, their gardens, and their towers. In that guarded land the Valar gathered great store of light and all the fairest things that were saved from the ruin; and many others yet fairer they made anew, and Valinor became more beautiful even than Middle-earth in the Spring of Arda; and it was blessed, for the Deathless dwelt there, and there naught faded nor withered, neither was there any stain upon flower or leaf in that land, nor any corruption or sickness in anything that lived; for the very stones and waters were hallowed.

And when Valinor was full-wrought and the mansions of the Valar were established, in the midst of the plain beyond the mountains they built their city, Valmar of many bells. Before its western gate there was a green mound, Ezellohar, that is named also Corollairë; and Yavanna hallowed it, and she sat there long upon the green grass and sang a song of power, in which was set all her thought of things that grow in the earth. But Nienna thought in silence, and watered the mould with tears. In that time the Valar were gathered together to hear the song of Yavanna, and they sat silent upon their thrones of council in the Máhanaxar, the Ring of Doom near to the golden gates of Valmar; and Yavanna Kementári sang before them and they watched.

And as they watched, upon the mound there came forth two slender shoots; and silence was over all the world in that hour, nor was there any other sound save the chanting of Yavanna. Under her song the saplings grew and became fair and tall, and came to flower; and thus there awoke in the world the Two Trees of Valinor. Of all things which Yavanna made they have most renown, and about their fate all the tales of the Elder Days are woven.

The one had leaves of dark green that beneath were as shining silver, and from each of his countless flowers a dew of silver light was ever falling, and the earth beneath was dappled with the shadows of his fluttering leaves.

The other bore leaves of a young green like the new-opened beech; their edges were of glittering gold. Flowers swung upon her branches in clusters of yellow flame, formed each to a glowing horn that spilled a golden rain upon the ground; and from the blossom of that tree there came forth warmth and a great light. Telperion the one was called in Valinor, and Silpion, and Ninquelótë, and many other names; but Laurelin the other was, and Malinalda, and Culúrien, and many names in song beside.

In seven hours the glory of each tree waxed to full and waned again to naught; and each awoke once more to life an hour before the other ceased to shine. Thus in Valinor twice every day there came a gentle hour of softer light when both trees were faint and their gold and silver beams were mingled. Telperion was the elder of the trees and came first to full stature and to bloom; and that first hour in which he shone, the white glimmer of a silver dawn, the Valar reckoned not into the tale of hours, but named it the Opening Hour, and counted from it the ages of their reign in Valinor. Therefore at the sixth hour of the First Day, and of all the joyful days thereafter, until the Darkening of Valinor, Telperion ceased his time of flower; and at the twelfth hour Laurelin her blossoming. And each day of the Valar in Aman contained twelve hours, and ended with the second mingling of the lights, in which Laurelin was waning but Telperion was waxing. But the light that was spilled from the trees endured long, ere it was taken up into the airs or sank down into the earth; and the dews of Telperion and the rain that fell from Laurelin Varda hoarded in great vats like shining lakes, that were to all the land of the Valar as wells of water and of light. Thus began the Days of the Bliss of Valinor; and thus began also the Count of Time.

But as the ages drew on to the hour appointed by Ilúvatar for the coming of the Firstborn, Middle-earth lay in a twilight beneath the stars that Varda had wrought in the ages forgotten of her labours in Eä. And in the darkness Melkor dwelt, and still often walked abroad, in many shapes of power and fear, and he wielded cold and fire, from the tops of the mountains to the deep furnaces that are beneath them; and whatsoever was cruel or violent or deadly in those days is laid to his charge.

From the beauty and bliss of Valinor the Valar came seldom over the mountains to Middle-earth, but gave to the land beyond the Pelóri their care and their love. And in the midst of the Blessed Realm were the mansions of Aulë, and there he laboured long. For in the making of all things in that land he had the chief part, and he wrought there many beautiful and shapely works both openly and in secret. Of him comes the lore and knowledge of the Earth and of all things that it contains: whether the lore of those that make not, but seek only for the understanding of what is, or the lore of all craftsmen: the weaver, the shaper of wood, and the worker in metals; and the tiller and husbandman also, though these last and all that deal with things that grow and bear fruit must look also to the spouse of Aulë, Yavanna Kementári. Aulë it is who is named the Friend of the Noldor, for of him they learned much in after days, and they are the most skilled of the Elves; and in their own fashion, according to the gifts which Ilúvatar gave to them, they added much to his teaching, delighting in tongues and in scripts, and in the figures of broidery, of drawing, and of carving. The Noldor also it was who first achieved the making of gems; and the fairest of all gems were the Silmarils, and they are lost.

But Manwë Súlimo, highest and holiest of the Valar, sat upon the borders of Aman, forsaking not in his thought the Outer Lands. For his throne was set in majesty upon the pinnacle of Taniquetil, the highest of the mountains of the world, standing upon the margin of the sea. Spirits in the shape of hawks and eagles flew ever to and from his halls; and their eyes could see to the depths of the seas, and pierce the hidden caverns beneath the world. Thus they brought word to him of well nigh all that passed in Arda; yet some things were hidden even from the eyes of Manwë and the servants of Manwë, for where Melkor sat in his dark thought impenetrable shadows lay.

Manwë has no thought for his own honour, and is not jealous of his power, but rules all to peace. The Vanyar he loved best of all the Elves, and of him they received song and poetry; for poetry is the delight of Manwë, and the song of words is his music. His raiment is blue, and blue is the fire of his eyes, and his sceptre is of sapphire, which the Noldor wrought for him; and he was appointed to be the vicegerent of Ilúvatar, King of the world of Valar and Elves and Men, and the chief defence against the evil of Melkor. With Manwë dwelt Varda the most beautiful, she who in the Sindarin tongue is named Elbereth, Queen of the Valar, maker of the stars; and with them were a great host of spirits in blessedness.

But Ulmo was alone, and he abode not in Valinor, nor ever came thither unless there were need for a great council; he dwelt from the beginning of Arda in the Outer Ocean, and still he dwells there. Thence he governs the flowing of all waters, and the ebbing, the courses of all rivers and the replenishment of springs, the distilling of all dews and rain in every land beneath the sky. In the deep places he gives thought to music great and terrible; and the echo of that music runs through all the veins of the world in sorrow and in joy; for if joyful is the fountain that rises in the sun, its springs are in the wells of sorrow unfathomed at the foundations of the Earth. The Teleri learned much of Ulmo, and for this reason their music has both sadness and enchantment. Salmar came with him to Arda, he who made the horns of Ulmo that none may ever forget who once has heard them; and Ossë and Uinen also, to whom he gave the government of the waves and the movements of the Inner Seas, and many other spirits beside. And thus it was by the power of Ulmo that even under the darkness of Melkor life coursed still through many secret lodes, and the Earth did not die; and to all who were lost in that darkness or wandered far from the light of the Valar the ear of Ulmo was ever open; nor has he ever forsaken Middle-earth, and whatsoever may since have befallen of ruin or of change he has not ceased to take thought for it, and will not until the end of days.

And in that time of dark Yavanna also was unwilling utterly to forsake the Outer Lands; for all things that grow are dear to her, and she mourned for the works that she had begun in Middle-earth but Melkor had marred. Therefore leaving the house of Aulë and the flowering meads of Valinor she would come at times and heal the hurts of Melkor; and returning she would ever urge the Valar to that war with his evil dominion that they must surely wage ere the coming of the Firstborn. And Oromë tamer of beasts would ride too at whiles in the darkness of the unlit forests; as a mighty hunter he came with spear and bow, pursuing to the death the monsters and fell creatures of the kingdom of Melkor, and his white horse Nahar shone like silver in the shadows. Then the sleeping earth trembled at the beat of his golden hooves, and in the twilight of the world Oromë would sound the Valaróma his great horn upon the plains of Arda; whereat the mountains echoed, and the shadows of evil fled away, and Melkor himself quailed in Utumno, foreboding the wrath to come. But even as Oromë passed the servants of Melkor would gather again; and the lands were filled with shadows and deceit.

Now all is said concerning the manner of the Earth and its rulers in the beginning of days, and ere the world became such as the Children of Ilúvatar have known it. For Elves and Men are the Children of Ilúvatar; and since they understood not fully that theme by which the Children entered into the Music, none of the Ainur dared to add anything to their fashion. For which reason the Valar are to these kindreds rather their elders and their chieftains than their masters; and if ever in their dealings with Elves and Men the Ainur have endeavoured to force them when they would not be guided, seldom has this turned to good, howsoever good the intent. The dealings of the Ainur have indeed been mostly with the Elves, for Ilúvatar made them more like in nature to the Ainur, though less in might and stature; whereas to Men he gave strange gifts.

For it is said that after the departure of the Valar there was silence, and for an age Ilúvatar sat alone in thought. Then he spoke and said: "Behold I love the Earth, which shall be a mansion for the Quendi and the Atani! But the Quendi shall be the fairest of all earthly creatures, and they shall have and shall conceive and bring forth more beauty than all my Children; and they shall have the greater bliss in this world. But to the Atani I will give a new gift." Therefore he willed that the hearts of Men should seek beyond the world and should find no rest therein; but they should have a virtue to shape their life, amid the powers and chances of the world, beyond the Music of the Ainur, which is as fate to all things else; and of their operation everything should be, in form and deed, completed, and the world fulfilled unto the last and smallest.

But Ilúvatar knew that Men, being set amid the turmoils of the powers of the world, would stray often, and would not use their gifts in harmony; and he said, "These too in their time shall find that all that they do redounds at the end only to the glory of my work." Yet the Elves believe that Men are often a grief to Manwë, who knows most of the mind of Ilúvatar; for it seems to the Elves that Men resemble Melkor most of all the Ainur, although he has ever feared and hated them, even those that served him.

It is one with this gift of freedom that the children of Men dwell only a short space in the world alive, and are not bound to it, and depart soon whither the Elves know not. Whereas the Elves remain until the end of days, and their love of the Earth and all the world is more single and more poignant therefore, and as the years lengthen ever more sorrowful. For the Elves die not till the world dies, unless they are slain or waste in grief



(and to both these seeming deaths they are subject); neither does age subdue their strength, unless one grow weary of ten thousand centuries; and dying they are gathered to the halls of Mandos in Valinor, whence they may in time return. But the sons of Men die indeed, and leave the world; wherefore they are called the Guests, or the Strangers. Death is their fate, the gift of Ilúvatar, which as Time wears even the Powers shall envy. But Melkor has cast his shadow upon it, and confounded it with darkness, and brought forth evil out of good, and fear out of hope. Yet of old the Valar declared to the Elves in Valinor that Men shall join in the Second Music of the Ainur; whereas Ilúvatar has not revealed what he purposes for the Elves after the World's end, and Melkor has not discovered it.



## Chapter 2: Of Aulë And Yavanna

It is told that in their beginning the Dwarves were made by Aulë in the darkness of Middle-earth; for so greatly did Aulë desire the coming of the Children, to have learners to whom he could teach his lore and his crafts, that he was unwilling to await the fulfilment of the designs of Ilúvatar. And Aulë made the Dwarves even as they still are, because the forms of the Children who were to come were unclear to his mind, and because the power of Melkor was yet over the Earth; and he wished therefore that they should be strong and unyielding. But fearing that the other Valar might blame his work, he wrought in secret: and he made first the Seven Fathers of the Dwarves in a hall under the mountains in Middle-earth.

Now Ilúvatar knew what was done, and in the very hour that Aulë's work was complete, and he was pleased, and began to instruct the Dwarves in the speech that he had devised for them, Ilúvatar spoke to him; and Aulë heard his voice and was silent. And the voice of Ilúvatar said to him: "Why hast thou done this? Why dost thou attempt a thing which thou knowest is beyond thy power and thy authority? For thou hast from me as a gift thy own being only, and no more; and therefore the creatures of thy hand and mind can live only by that being, moving when thou thinkest to move them, and if thy thought be elsewhere, standing idle. Is that thy desire?"

Then Aulë answered: "I did not desire such lordship. I desired things other than I am, to love and to teach them, so that they too might perceive the beauty of Eä, which thou hast caused to be. For it seemed to me that there is great room in Arda for many things that might rejoice in it, yet it is for the most part empty still, and dumb. And in my impatience I have fallen into folly. Yet the making of things is in my heart from my own making by thee; and the child of little understanding that makes a play of the deeds of his father may do so without thought of mockery, but because he is the son of his father. But what shall I do now, so that thou be not angry with me for ever? As a child to his father, I offer to thee these things, the work of the hands which thou hast made. Do with them what thou wilt. But should I not rather destroy the work of my presumption?"

Then Aulë took up a great hammer to smite the Dwarves; and he wept. But Ilúvatar had compassion upon Aulë and his desire, because of his humility; and the Dwarves shrank from the hammer and were afraid, and they bowed down their heads and begged for mercy. And the voice of Ilúvatar said to Aulë: "Thy offer I accepted even as it was made. Dost thou not see that these things have now a life of their own, and speak with their own voices? Else they would not have flinched from thy blow, nor from any command of thy will." Then Aulë cast down his hammer and was glad, and he gave thanks to Ilúvatar, saying: "May Eru bless my work and amend it!"

But Ilúvatar spoke again and said: "Even as I gave being to the thoughts of the Ainur at the beginning of the World, so now I have taken up thy desire and given to it a place therein; but in no other way will I amend thy handiwork, and as thou hast made it, so shall it be. But I will not suffer this: that these should come before the Firstborn of my design, nor that thy impatience should be rewarded. They shall sleep now in the darkness under stone, and shall not come forth until the Firstborn have awakened upon Earth; and until that time thou and they shall wait, though long it seem. But when the time comes I will awaken them, and they shall be to thee as children; and often strife shall arise between thine and mine, the children of my adoption and the children of my choice."

Then Aulë took the Seven Fathers of the Dwarves, and laid them to rest in far-sundered places; and he returned to Valinor, and waited while the long years lengthened.

Since they were to come in the days of the power of Melkor, Aulë made the Dwarves strong to endure. Therefore they are stone-hard, stubborn, fast in friendship and in enmity, and they suffer toil and hunger and hurt of body more hardily than all other speaking peoples; and they live long, far beyond the span of Men, yet not for ever. Aforetime it was held among the Elves in Middle-earth that dying the Dwarves returned to the

earth and the stone of which they were made; yet that is not their own belief. For they say that Aulë the Maker, whom they call Mahal, cares for them, and gathers them to Mandos in halls set apart; and that he declared to their Fathers of old that Ilúvatar will hallow them and give them a place among the Children in the End. Then their part shall be to serve Aulë and to aid him in the remaking of Arda after the Last Battle. They say also that the Seven Fathers of the Dwarves return to live again in their own kin and to bear once more their ancient names: of whom Durin was the most renowned in after ages, father of that kindred most friendly to the Elves, whose mansions were at Khazad-dûm.

Now when Aulë laboured in the making of the Dwarves he kept this work hidden from the other Valar; but at last he opened his mind to Yavanna and told her of all that had come to pass. Then Yavanna said to him: “Eru is merciful. Now I see that thy heart rejoiceth, as indeed it may; for thou hast received not only forgiveness but bounty. Yet because thou hiddest this thought from me until its achievement, thy children will have little love for the things of my love. They will love first the things made by their own hands, as doth their father. They will delve in the earth, and the things that grow and live upon the earth they will not heed. Many a tree shall feel the bite of their iron without pity.”

But Aulë answered: “That shall also be true of the Children of Ilúvatar; for they will eat and they will build. And though the things of thy realm have worth in themselves, and would have worth if no Children were to come, yet Eru will give them dominion, and they shall use all that they find in Arda: though not, by the purpose of Eru, without respect or without gratitude.”

“Not unless Melkor darken their hearts,” said Yavanna. And she was not appeased, but grieved in heart, fearing what might be done upon Middle-earth in days to come. Therefore she went before Manwë, and she did not betray the counsel of Aulë, but she said: “King of Arda, is it true, as Aulë hath said to me, that the Children when they come shall have dominion over all the things of my labour, to do as they will therewith?”

“It is true,” said Manwë. “But why dost thou ask, for thou hadst no need of the teaching of Aulë?”

Then Yavanna was silent and looked into her own thought. And she answered: “Because my heart is anxious, thinking of the days to come. All my works are dear to me. Is it not enough that Melkor should have marred so many? Shall nothing that I have devised be free from the dominion of others?”

“If thou hadst thy will what wouldst thou reserve?” said Manwë. “Of all thy realm what dost thou hold dearest?”

“All have their worth,” said Yavanna, “and each contributes to the worth of the others. But the *kelvar* can flee or defend themselves, whereas the *olvar* that grow cannot. And among these I hold trees dear. Long in the growing, swift shall they be in the felling, and unless they pay toll with fruit upon bough little mourned in their passing. So I see in my thought. Would that the trees might speak on behalf of all things that have roots, and punish those that wrong them!”

“This is a strange thought,” said Manwë.

“Yet it was in the Song,” said Yavanna. “For while thou wert in the heavens and with Ulmo built the clouds and poured out the rains, I lifted up the branches of great trees to receive them, and some sang to Ilúvatar amid the wind and the rain.”

Then Manwë sat silent, and the thought of Yavanna that she had put into his heart grew and unfolded; and it was beheld by Ilúvatar. Then it seemed to Manwë that the Song rose once more about him, and he heeded now many things therein that though he had heard them he had not heeded before. And at last the Vision was renewed, but it was not now remote, for he was himself within it, and yet he saw that all was upheld by the hand of Ilúvatar; and the hand entered in, and from it came forth many wonders that had until then been hidden from him in the hearts of the Ainur.

Then Manwë awoke, and he went down to Yavanna upon Ezellohar, and he sat beside her beneath the Two Trees. And Manwë said: “O Kementári, Eru hath spoken, saying: “Do then any of the Valar suppose that I did not hear all the Song, even the least sound of the least voice? Behold! When the Children awake, then the thought of Yavanna will awake also, and it will summon spirits from afar, and they will go among the *kelvar* and the *olvar*, and some will dwell therein, and be held in reverence, and their just anger shall be feared. For a

time: while the Firstborn are in their power, and while the Secondborn are young.” But dost thou not now remember, Kementári, that thy thought sang not always alone? Did not thy thought and mine meet also, so that we took wing together like great birds that soar above the clouds? That also shall come to be by the heed of Ilúvatar, and before the Children awake there shall go forth with wings like the wind the Eagles of the Lords of the West.”

Then Yavanna was glad, and she stood up, reaching her arms towards the heavens, and she said: “High shall climb the trees of Kementári, that the Eagles of the King may house therein!”

But Manwë rose also, and it seemed that he stood to such a height that his voice came down to Yavanna as from the paths of the winds.”

“Nay,” he said, “only the trees of Aulë will be tall enough. In the mountains the Eagles shall house, and hear the voices of those who call upon us. But in the forests shall walk the Shepherds of the Trees.”

Then Manwë and Yavanna parted for that time, and Yavanna returned to Aulë; and he was in his smithy, pouring molten metal into a mould. “Eru is bountiful,” she said. “Now let thy children beware! For there shall walk a power in the forests whose wrath they will arouse at their peril.”

“Nonetheless they will have need of wood,” said Aulë, and he went on with his smith-work.



## Chapter 3: Of The Coming Of The Elves And The Captivity Of Melkor

Through long ages the Valar dwelt in bliss in the light of the Trees beyond the Mountains of Aman, but all Middle-earth lay in a twilight under the stars. While the Lamps had shone, growth began there which now was checked, because all was again dark. But already the oldest living things had arisen: in the seas the great weeds, and on earth the shadow of great trees; and in the valleys of the night-clad hills there were dark creatures old and strong. To those lands and forests the Valar seldom came, save only Yavanna and Oromë; and Yavanna would walk there in the shadows, grieving because the growth and promise of the Spring of Arda was stayed. And she set a sleep upon many things that had arisen in the Spring, so that they should not age, but should wait for a time of awakening that yet should be.

But in the north Melkor built his strength, and he slept not, but watched, and laboured; and the evil things that he had perverted walked abroad, and the dark and slumbering woods were haunted by monsters and shapes of dread. And in Utumno he gathered his demons about him, those spirits who first adhered to him in the days of his splendour, and became most like him in his corruption: their hearts were of fire, but they were cloaked in darkness, and terror went before them; they had whips of flame. Balrogs they were named in Middle-earth in later days. And in that dark time Melkor bred many other monsters of divers shapes and kinds that long troubled the world; and his realm spread now ever southward over Middle-earth.

And Melkor made also a fortress and armoury not far from the north-western shores of the sea, to resist any assault that might come from Aman. That stronghold was commanded by Sauron, lieutenant of Melkor; and it was named Angband.

It came to pass that the Valar held council, for they became troubled by the tidings that Yavanna and Oromë brought from the Outer Lands; and Yavanna spoke before the Valar, saying: “Ye mighty of Arda, the Vision of Ilúvatar was brief and soon taken away, so that maybe we cannot guess within a narrow count of days the hour appointed. Yet be sure of this: the hour approaches, and within this age our hope shall be revealed, and the Children shall awake. Shall we then leave the lands of their dwelling desolate and full of evil? Shall they walk in darkness while we have light? Shall they call Melkor lord while Manwë sits upon Taniquetil?”

And Tulkas cried: “Nay! Let us make war swiftly! Have we not rested from strife overlong, and is not our strength now renewed? Shall one alone contest with us for ever?”

But at the bidding of Manwë Mandos spoke, and he said: “In this age the Children of Ilúvatar shall come indeed, but they come not yet. Moreover it is doom that the Firstborn shall come in the darkness, and shall look first upon the stars. Great light shall be for their waning. To Varda ever shall they call at need.”

Then Varda went forth from the council, and she looked out from the height of Taniquetil, and beheld the darkness of Middle-earth beneath the innumerable stars, faint and far. Then she began a great labour, greatest of all the works of the Valar since their coming into Arda. She took the silver dew from the vats of Telperion, and therewith she made new stars and brighter against the coming of the Firstborn; wherefore she whose name out of the deeps of time and the labours of Eä was Tintallë, the Kindler, was called after by the Elves Elentári, Queen of the Stars. Carnil and Luinil, Nénar and Lumbar, Alcarinquë and Elemmírë she wrought in that time, and many other of the ancient stars she gathered together and set as signs in the heavens of Arda: Wilwarin, Telumendil, Soronúmë, and Anarríma; and Menelmacar with his shining belt, that forebodes the Last Battle that shall be at the end of days. And high in the north as a challenge to Melkor she set the crown of seven mighty stars to swing, Valacirca, the Sickle of the Valar and sign of doom.

It is told that even as Varda ended her labours, and they were long, when first Menelmacar strode up the sky and the blue fire of Helluin flickered in the mists above the borders of the world, in that hour the Children of the Earth awoke, the Firstborn of Ilúvatar. By the starlit mere of Cuiviénen, Water of Awakening, they rose from the sleep of Ilúvatar; and while they dwelt yet silent by Cuiviénen their eyes beheld first of all things the stars of heaven. Therefore they have ever loved the starlight, and have revered Varda Elentári above all the Valar.

In the changes of the world the shapes of lands and of seas have been broken and remade; rivers have not kept their courses, neither have mountains remained steadfast; and to Cuiviénen there is no returning. But it is said among the Elves that it lay far off in the east of Middle-earth, and northward, and it was a bay in the Inland Sea of Helcar; and that sea stood where aforetime the roots of the mountain of Illuin had been before Melkor overthrew it. Many waters flowed down thither from heights in the east, and the first sound that was heard by the Elves was the sound of water flowing, and the sound of water falling over stone.

Long they dwelt in their first home by the water under stars, and they walked the Earth in wonder; and they began to make speech and to give names to all things that they perceived. Themselves they named the Quendi, signifying those that speak with voices; for as yet they had met no other living things that spoke or sang.

And on a time it chanced that Oromë rode eastward in his hunting, and he turned north by the shores of Helcar and passed under the shadows of the Orocarni, the Mountains of the East. Then on a sudden Nahar set up a great neighing, and stood still. And Oromë wondered and sat silent, and it seemed to him that in the quiet of the land under the stars he heard afar off many voices singing.

Thus it was that the Valar found at last, as it were by chance, those whom they had so long awaited. And Oromë looking upon the Elves was filled with wonder, as though they were beings sudden and marvellous and unforeseen; for so it shall ever be with the Valar. From without the World, though all things may be forethought in music or foreshown in vision from afar, to those who enter verily into Eä each in its time shall be met at unawares as something new and unfortold.

In the beginning the Elder Children of Ilúvatar were stronger and greater than they have since become; but not more fair, for though the beauty of the Quendi in the days of their youth was beyond all other beauty that Ilúvatar has caused to be, it has not perished, but lives in the West, and sorrow and wisdom have enriched it. And Oromë loved the Quendi, and named them in their own tongue Eldar, the people of the stars; but that name was after borne only by those who followed him upon the westward road.

Yet many of the Quendi were filled with dread at his coming; and this was the doing of Melkor. For by after-knowledge the wise declare that Melkor, ever watchful, was first aware of the awakening of the Quendi, and sent shadows and evil spirits to spy upon them and waylay them. So it came to pass, some years ere the coming of Oromë, that if any of the Elves strayed far abroad, alone or few together, they would often vanish, and never return; and the Quendi said that the Hunter had caught them, and they were afraid. And indeed the most ancient songs of the Elves, of which echoes are remembered still in the West, tell of the shadow-shapes that walked in the hills above Cuiviénen, or would pass suddenly over the stars; and of the dark Rider upon his wild horse that pursued those that wandered to take them and devour them. Now Melkor greatly hated and feared the riding of Oromë, and either he sent indeed his dark servants as riders, or he set lying whispers abroad, for the purpose that the Quendi should shun Oromë, if ever they should meet.

Thus it was that when Nahar neighed and Oromë indeed came among them, some of the Quendi hid themselves, and some fled and were lost. But those that had courage, and stayed, perceived swiftly that the Great Rider was no shape out of darkness; for the light of Aman was in his face, and all the noblest of the Elves were drawn towards it.

But of those unhappy ones who were ensnared by Melkor little is known of a certainty. For who of the living has descended into the pits of Utumno, or has explored the darkness of the counsels of Melkor? Yet this is held true by the wise of Eressëa, that all those of the Quendi who came into the hands of Melkor, ere Utumno was broken, were put there in prison, and by slow arts of cruelty were corrupted and enslaved; and thus did Melkor breed the hideous race of the Orcs in envy and mockery of the Elves, of whom they were afterwards the bitterest foes. For the Orcs had life and multiplied after the manner of the Children of Ilúvatar; and naught that

had life of its own, nor the semblance of life, could ever Melkor make since his rebellion in the Ainulindalë before the Beginning: so say the wise. And deep in their dark hearts the Orcs loathed the Master whom they served in fear, the maker only of their misery. This it may be was the vilest deed of Melkor, and the most hateful to Ilúvatar.

Oromë tarried a while among the Quendi, and then swiftly he rode back over land and sea to Valinor and brought the tidings to Valmar; and he spoke of the shadows that troubled Cuiviénen. Then the Valar rejoiced, and yet they were in doubt amid their joy; and they debated long what counsel it were best to take for the guarding of the Quendi from the shadow of Melkor. But Oromë returned at once to Middle-earth and abode with the Elves.

Manwë sat long in thought upon Taniquetil, and he sought the counsel of Ilúvatar. And coming then down to Valmar he summoned the Valar to the Ring of Doom, and thither came even Ulmo from the Outer Sea.

Then Manwë said to the Valar: "This is the counsel of Ilúvatar in my heart: that we should take up again the mastery of Arda, at whatsoever cost, and deliver the Quendi from the shadow of Melkor." Then Tulkas was glad; but Aulë was grieved, foreboding the hurts of the world that must come of that strife. But the Valar made ready and came forth from Aman in strength of war, resolving to assault the fortresses of Melkor and make an end. Never did Melkor forget that this war was made for the sake of the Elves, and that they were the cause of his downfall. Yet they had no part in those deeds, and they know little of the riding of the might of the West against the North in the beginning of their days.

Melkor met the onset of the Valar in the North-west of Middle-earth, and all that region was much broken. But the first victory of the hosts of the West was swift, and the servants of Melkor fled before them to Utumno. Then the Valar passed over Middle-earth, and they set a guard over Cuiviénen; and thereafter the Quendi knew nothing of the great Battle of the Powers, save that the Earth shook and groaned beneath them, and the waters were moved, and in the north there were lights as of mighty fires. Long and grievous was the siege of Utumno, and many battles were fought before its gates of which naught but the rumour is known to the Elves. In that time the shape of Middle-earth was changed, and the Great Sea that sundered it from Aman grew wide and deep; and it broke in upon the coasts and made a deep gulf to the southward. Many lesser bays were made between the Great Gulf and Helcaraxë far in the north, where Middle-earth and Aman came nigh together. Of these the Bay of Balar was the chief; and into it the mighty river Sirion flowed down from the new-raised highlands northwards: Dorthonion, and the mountains about Hithlum. The lands of the far north were all made desolate in those days; for there Utumno was delved exceeding deep, and its pits were filled with fires and with great hosts of the servants of Melkor.

But at the last the gates of Utumno were broken and the halls unroofed, and Melkor took refuge in the uttermost pit. Then Tulkas stood forth as champion of the Valar and wrestled with him, and cast him upon his face; and he was bound with the chain Angainor that Aulë had wrought, and led captive; and the world had peace for a long age.

Nonetheless the Valar did not discover all the mighty vaults and caverns hidden with deceit far under the fortresses of Angband and Utumno. Many evil things still lingered there, and others were dispersed and fled into the dark and roamed in the waste places of the world, awaiting a more evil hour; and Sauron they did not find.

But when the Battle was ended and from the ruin of the North great clouds arose and hid the stars, the Valar drew Melkor back to Valinor, bound hand and foot, and blindfold; and he was brought to the Ring of Doom. There he lay upon his face before the feet of Manwë and sued for pardon; but his prayer was denied, and he was cast into prison in the fastness of Mandos, whence none can escape, neither Vala, nor Elf, nor mortal Man. Vast and strong are those halls, and they were built in the west of the land of Aman. There was Melkor doomed to abide for three ages long, before his cause should be tried anew, or he should plead again for pardon.

Then again the Valar were gathered in council, and they were divided in debate. For some, and of those Ulmo was the chief, held that the Quendi should be left free to walk as they would in Middle-earth, and with their gifts of skill to order all the lands and heal their hurts. But the most part feared for the Quendi in the dangerous world amid the deceits of the starlit dusk; and they were filled moreover with the love of the beauty of the Elves

and desired their fellowship. At the last, therefore, the Valar summoned the Quendi to Valinor, there to be gathered at the knees of the Powers in the light of the Trees for ever; and Mandos broke his silence, saying: "So it is doomed." From this summons came many woes that afterwards befell.

But the Elves were at first unwilling to hearken to the summons, for they had as yet seen the Valar only in their wrath as they went to war, save Oromë alone; and they were filled with dread. Therefore Oromë was sent again to them, and he chose from among them ambassadors who should go to Valinor and speak for their people; and these were Ingwë, Finwë, and Elwë, who afterwards were kings. And coming they were filled with awe by the glory and majesty of the Valar, and desired greatly the light and splendour of the Trees. Then Oromë brought them back to Cuiviënen, and they spoke before their people, and counselled them to heed the summons of the Valar and remove into the West.

Then befell the first sundering of the Elves. For the kindred of Ingwë, and the most part of the kindreds of Finwë and Elwë, were swayed by the words of their lords, and were willing to depart and follow Oromë: and these were known ever after as the Eldar, by the name that Oromë gave to the Elves in the beginning, in their own tongue. But many refused the summons, preferring the starlight and the wide spaces of Middle-earth to the rumour of the Trees; and these are the Avari, the Unwilling, and they were sundered in that time from the Eldar, and met never again until many ages were past.

The Eldar prepared now a great march from their first homes in the east; and they were arrayed in three hosts. The smallest host and the first to set forth was led by Ingwë, the most high lord of all the Elvish race. He entered into Valinor and sits at the feet of the Powers, and all Elves revere his name; but he came never back, nor looked again upon Middle-earth. The Vanyar were his people; they are the Fair Elves, the beloved of Manwë and Varda, and few among Men have spoken with them.

Next came the Noldor, a name of wisdom, the people of Finwë. They are the Deep Elves, the friends of Aulë; and they are renowned in song, for they fought and laboured long and grievously in the northern lands of old.

The greatest host came last, and they are named the Teleri, for they tarried on the road, and were not wholly of a mind to pass from the dusk to the light of Valinor. In water they had great delight, and those that came at last to the western shores were enamoured of the sea. The Sea-elves therefore they became in the land of Aman, the Falmari, for they made music beside the breaking waves. Two lords they had, for their numbers were great: Elwë Singollo (which signifies Greymantle) and Olwë his brother.

These were the three kindreds of the Eldalië, who passing at length into the uttermost West in the days of the Trees are called the Calaquendi, Elves of the Light. But others of the Eldar there were who set out indeed upon the westward march, but became lost upon the long road, or turned aside, or lingered on the shores of Middle-earth; and these were for the most part of the kindred of the Teleri, as is told hereafter. They dwelt by the sea, or wandered in the woods and mountains of the world, yet their hearts were turned towards the West. Those Elves the Calaquendi call the Úmanyar, since they came never to the land of Aman and the Blessed Realm; but the Úmanyar and the Avari alike they call the Moriquendi, Elves of the Darkness, for they never beheld the Light that was before the Sun and Moon.

It is told that when the hosts of the Eldalië departed from Cuiviënen Oromë rode at their head upon Nahar, his white horse shod with gold; and passing northward about the Sea of Helcar they turned towards the west. Before them great clouds hung still black in the North above the ruins of war, and the stars in that region were hidden. Then not a few grew afraid and repented, and turned back, and are forgotten.

Long and slow was the march of the Eldar into the west, for the leagues of Middle-earth were uncounted, and weary and pathless. Nor did the Eldar desire to hasten, for they were filled with wonder at all that they saw, and by many lands and rivers they wished to abide; and though all were yet willing to wander, many feared rather their journey's end than hoped for it. Therefore whenever Oromë departed, having at times other matters to heed, they halted and went forward no more, until he returned to guide them. And it came to pass after many years of journeying in this manner that the Eldar took their course through a forest, and they came to a great river, wider than any they had yet seen; and beyond it were mountains whose sharp horns seemed to pierce the realm of the stars. This river, it is said, was even the river which was after called Anduin the Great, and was ever the frontier of the west-lands of Middle-earth. But the mountains were the Hithaeglir, the Towers of Mist



upon the borders of Eriador; yet they were taller and more terrible in those days, and were reared by Melkor to hinder the riding of Oromë. Now the Teleri abode long on the east bank of that river and wished to remain there, but the Vanyar and the Noldor passed over it, and Oromë led them into the passes of the mountains. And when Oromë was gone forward the Teleri looked upon the shadowy heights and were afraid.

Then one arose in the host of Olwë, which was ever the hindmost on the road; Lenwë he was called. He forsook the westward march, and led away a numerous people, southwards down the great river, and they passed out of the knowledge of their kin until long years were past. Those were the Nandor; and they became a people apart, unlike their kin, save that they loved water, and dwelt most beside falls and running streams. Greater knowledge they had of living things, tree and herb, bird and beast, than all other Elves. In after years Denethor, son of Lenwë, turned again west at last, and led a part of that people over the mountains into Beleriand ere the rising of the Moon.

At length the Vanyar and the Noldor came over Ered Luin, the Blue Mountains, between Eriador and the westernmost land of Middle-earth, which the Elves after named Beleriand; and the foremost companies passed over the Vale of Sirion and came down to the shores of the Great Sea between Drengist and the Bay of Balar. But when they beheld it great fear came upon them, and many withdrew into the woods and highlands of Beleriand. Then Oromë departed, and returned to Valinor to seek the counsel of Manwë, and left them.

And the host of the Teleri passed over the Misty Mountains, and crossed the wide lands of Eriador, being urged on by Elwë Singollo, for he was eager to return to Valinor and the Light that he had beheld; and he wished not to be sundered from the Noldor, for he had great friendship with Finwë their lord. Thus after many years the Teleri also came at last over Ered Luin into the eastern regions of Beleriand. There they halted, and dwelt a while beyond the River Gelion.



## Chapter 4: Of Thingol And Melian

Melían was a Maia, of the race of the Valar. She dwelt in the gardens of Lórien, and among all his people there were none more beautiful than Melian, nor more wise, nor more skilled in songs of enchantment. It is told that the Valar would leave their works, and the birds of Valinor their mirth, that the bells of Valmar were silent and the fountains ceased to flow, when at the mingling of the lights Melian sang in Lórien. Nightingales went always with her, and she taught them their song; and she loved the deep shadows of the great trees. She was akin before the World was made to Yavanna herself; and in that time when the Quendi awoke beside the waters of Cuiviénen she departed from Valinor and came to the Hither Lands, and there she filled the silence of Middle-earth before the dawn with her voice and the voices of her birds.

Now when their journey was near its end, as has been told, the people of the Teleri rested long in East Beleriand, beyond the River Gelion; and at that time many of the Noldor still lay to the westward, in those forests that were afterwards named Neldoreth and Region. Elwë, lord of the Teleri, went often through the great woods to seek out Finwë his friend in the dwellings of the Noldor; and it chanced on a time that he came alone to the starlit wood of Nan Elmoth, and there suddenly he heard the song of nightingales. Then an enchantment fell on him, and he stood still; and afar off beyond the voices of the *lómelindi* he heard the voice of Melian, and it filled all his heart with wonder and desire. He forgot then utterly all his people and all the purposes of his mind, and following the birds under the shadow of the trees he passed deep into Nan Elmoth and was lost. But he came at last to a glade open to the stars, and there Melian stood; and out of the darkness he looked at her, and the light of Aman was in her face.

She spoke no word; but being filled with love Elwë came to her and took her hand, and straightway a spell was laid on him, so that they stood thus while long years were measured by the wheeling stars above them; and the trees of Nan Elmoth grew tall and dark before they spoke any word.

Thus Elwë's folk who sought him found him not, and Olwë took the kingship of the Teleri and departed, as is told hereafter. Elwë Singollo came never again across the sea to Valinor so long as he lived, and Melian returned not thither while their realm together lasted; but of her there came among both Elves and Men a strain of the Ainur who were with Ilúvatar before Eä. In after days he became a king renowned, and his people were all the Eldar of Beleriand; the Sindar they were named, the Grey-elves, the Elves of the Twilight, and King Greymantle was he, Elu Thingol in the tongue of that land. And Melian was his Queen, wiser than any child of Middle-earth; and their hidden halls were in Menegroth, the Thousand Caves, in Doriath. Great power Melian lent to Thingol, who was himself great among the Eldar; for he alone of all the Sindar had seen with his own eyes the Trees in the day of their flowering, and king though he was of Úmanyar, he was not accounted among the Moriquendi, but with the Elves of the Light, mighty upon Middle-earth. And of the love of Thingol and Melian there came into the world the fairest of all the Children of Ilúvatar that was or shall ever be.



## Chapter 5: Of Eldamar And The Princes Of The Eldalië

In time the hosts of the Vanyar and the Noldor came to the last western shores of the Hither Lands. In the north these shores, in the ancient days after the Battle of the Powers, bent ever westward, until in the northernmost parts of Arda only a narrow sea divided Aman, upon which Valinor was built, from the Hither Lands; but this narrow sea was filled with grinding ice, because of the violence of the frosts of Melkor. Therefore Oromë did not lead the hosts of the Eldalië into the far north, but brought them to the fair lands about the River Sirion, that afterwards were named Beleriand; and from those shores whence first the Eldar looked in fear and wonder on the Sea there stretched an ocean, wide and dark and deep, between them and the Mountains of Aman.

Now Ulmo, by the counsel of the Valar, came to the shores of Middle-earth and spoke with the Eldar who waited there, gazing on the dark waves; and because of his words and the music which he made for them on his horns of shell their fear of the sea was turned rather to desire. Therefore Ulmo uprooted an island which long had stood alone amid the sea, far from either shore, since the tumults of the fall of Illuin; and with the aid of his servants he moved it, as it were a mighty ship, and anchored it in the Bay of Balar, into which Sirion poured his water. Then the Vanyar and the Noldor embarked upon that isle, and were drawn over the sea, and came at last to the long shores beneath the Mountains of Aman; and they entered Valinor and were welcomed to its bliss. But the eastern horn of the island, which was deep-grounded in the shoals off the mouths of Sirion, was broken asunder and remained behind; and that, it is said, was the Isle of Balar, to which afterwards Ossë often came.

But the Teleri remained still in Middle-earth, for they dwelt in East Beleriand far from the sea, and they heard not the summons of Ulmo until too late; and many searched still for Elwë their lord, and without him they were unwilling to depart. But when they learned that Ingwë and Finwë and their peoples were gone, then many of the Teleri pressed on to the shores of Beleriand, and dwelt thereafter near the Mouths of Sirion, in longing for their friends that had departed; and they took Olwë, Elwë's brother, to be their king. Long they remained by the coasts of the western sea, and Ossë and Uinen came to them and befriended them; and Ossë instructed them, sitting upon a rock near to the margin of the land, and of him they learned all manner of sea-lore and sea-music. Thus it came to be that the Teleri, who were from the beginning lovers of water, and the fairest singers of all the Elves, were after enamoured of the seas, and their songs were filled with the sound of waves upon the shore.

When many years had passed, Ulmo hearkened to the prayers of the Noldor and of Finwë their king, who grieved at their long sundering from the Teleri, and besought him to bring them to Aman, if they would come. And most of them proved now willing indeed; but great was the grief of Ossë when Ulmo returned to the coasts of Beleriand, to bear them away to Valinor; for his care was for the seas of Middle-earth and the shores of the Hither Lands, and he was ill-pleased that the voices of the Teleri should be heard no more in his domain. Some he persuaded to remain; and those were the Falathrim, the Elves of the Falas, who in after days had dwellings at the havens of Brithombar and Eglarest, the first mariners in Middle-earth and the first makers of ships. Círdan the Shipwright was their lord.

The kinsfolk and friends of Elwë Singollo also remained in the Hither Lands, seeking him yet, though they would fain have departed to Valinor and the light of the Trees, if Ulmo and Olwë had been willing to tarry longer. But Olwë would be gone; and at last the main host of the Teleri embarked upon the isle, and Ulmo drew them far away. Then the friends of Elwë were left behind; and they called themselves Eglath, the Forsaken People. They dwelt in the woods and hills of Beleriand, rather than by the sea, which filled them with sorrow; but the desire of Aman was ever in their hearts.

But when Elwë awoke from his long trance, he came forth from Nan Elmoth with Melian, and they dwelt thereafter in the woods in the midst of the land. Greatly though he had desired to see again the light of the

Trees, in the face of Melian he beheld the light of Aman as in an unclouded mirror, and in that light he was content. His people gathered about him in joy, and they were amazed; for fair and noble as he had been, now he appeared as it were a lord of the Maiar, his hair as grey silver, tallest of all the Children of Ilúvatar; and a high doom was before him.

Now Ossë followed after the host of Olwë, and when they were come to the Bay of Eldamar (which is Elvenhome) he called to them; and they knew his voice, and begged Ulmo to stay their voyage. And Ulmo granted their request, and at his bidding Ossë made fast the island and rooted it to the foundations of the sea. Ulmo did this the more readily, for he understood the hearts of the Teleri, and in the council of the Valar he had spoken against the summons, thinking that it were better for the Quendi to remain in Middle-earth. The Valar were little pleased to learn what he had done; and Finwë grieved when the Teleri came not, and yet more when he learned that Elwë was forsaken, and knew that he should not see him again, unless it were in the halls of Mandos. But the island was not moved again, and stood there alone in the Bay of Eldamar; and it was called Tol Eressëa, the Lonely Isle. There the Teleri abode as they wished under the stars of heaven, and yet within sight of Aman and the deathless shore; and by that long sojourn apart in the Lonely Isle was caused the sundering of their speech from that of the Vanyar and the Noldor.

To these the Valar had given a land and a dwelling-place. Even among the radiant flowers of the Tree-lit gardens of Valinor they longed still at times to see the stars; and therefore a gap was made in the great walls of the Pelóri, and there in a deep valley that ran down to the sea the Eldar raised a high green hill: Túna it was called. From the west the light of the Trees fell upon it, and its shadow lay ever eastward; and to the east it looked towards the Bay of Elvenhome, and the Lonely Isle, and the Shadowy Seas. Then through the Calacirya, the Pass of Light, the radiance of the Blessed Realm streamed forth, kindling the dark waves to silver and gold, and it touched the Lonely Isle, and its western shore grew green and fair. There bloomed the first flowers that ever were east of the Mountains of Aman.

Upon the crown of Túna the city of the Elves was built, the white walls and terraces of Tirion; and the highest of the towers of that city was the Tower of Ingwë, Mindon Eldaliéva, whose silver lamp shone far out into the mists of the sea. Few are the ships of mortal Men that have seen its slender beam. In Tirion upon Túna the Vanyar and the Noldor dwelt long in fellowship. And since of all things in Valinor they loved most the White Tree, Yavanna made for them a tree like to a lesser image of Telperion, save that it did not give light of its own being; Galathilion it was named in the Sindarin tongue. This tree was planted in the courts beneath the Mindon and there flourished, and its seedlings were many in Eldamar. Of these one was afterwards planted in Tol Eressëa, and it prospered there, and was named Celeborn; thence came in the fullness of time, as is elsewhere told, Nimloth, the White Tree of Númenor.

Manwë and Varda loved most the Vanyar, the Fair Elves; but the Noldor were beloved of Aulë, and he and his people came often among them. Great became their knowledge and their skill; yet even greater was their thirst for more knowledge, and in many things they soon surpassed their teachers. They were changeful in speech, for they had great love of words, and sought ever to find names more fit for all things that they knew or imagined. And it came to pass that the masons of the house of Finwë, quarrying in the hills after stone (for they delighted in the building of high towers), first discovered the earth-gems, and brought them forth in countless myriads; and they devised tools for the cutting and shaping of gems, and carved them in many forms. They hoarded them not, but gave them freely, and by their labour enriched all Valinor.

The Noldor afterwards came back to Middle-earth, and this tale tells mostly of their deeds; therefore the names and kinship of their princes may here be told, in that form which these names later bore in the tongue of the Elves of Beleriand.

Finwë was King of the Noldor. The sons of Finwë were Fëanor, and Fingolfin, and Finarfin; but the mother of Fëanor was Míriel Serindë, whereas the mother of Fingolfin and Finarfin was Indis of the Vanyar.

Fëanor was the mightiest in skill of word and of hand, more learned than his brothers; his spirit burned as a flame. Fingolfin was the strongest, the most steadfast, and the most valiant. Finarfin was the fairest, and the most wise of heart; and afterwards he was a friend of the sons of Olwë, lord of the Teleri, and had to wife Eärwen, the swan-maiden of Alqualondë, Olwë's daughter.

The seven sons of Fëanor were Maedhros the tall; Maglor the mighty singer, whose voice was heard far over land and sea; Celegorm the fair, and Caranthir the dark; Curufin the crafty, who inherited most his father's skill of hand; and the youngest Amrod and Amras, who were twin brothers, alike in mood and face. In later days they were great hunters in the woods of Middle-earth; and a hunter also was Celegorm, who in Valinor was a friend of Oromë, and often followed the Vala's horn.

The sons of Fingolfin were Fingon, who was afterwards King of the Noldor in the north of the world, and Turgon, lord of Gondolin; their sister was Aredhel the White. She was younger in the years of the Eldar than her brothers; and when she was grown to full stature and beauty she was tall and strong, and loved much to ride and hunt in the forests. There she was often in the company of the sons of Fëanor, her kin; but to none was her heart's love given. Ar-Feiniel she was called, the White Lady of the Noldor, for she was pale, though her hair was dark, and she was never arrayed but in silver and white.

The sons of Finarfin were Finrod the faithful (who was afterwards named Felagund, Lord of Caves), Orodreth, Angrod, and Aegnor; these four were as close in friendship with the sons of Fingolfin as though they were all brothers. A sister they had, Galadriel, most beautiful of all the house of Finwë; her hair was lit with gold as though it had caught in a mesh the radiance of Laurelin.

Here must be told how the Teleri came at last to the land of Aman. Through a long age they dwelt in Tol Eressëa; but slowly their hearts were changed, and were drawn towards the light that flowed out over the sea to the Lonely Isle. They were torn between the love of the music of the waves upon their shores, and the desire to see again their kindred and to look upon the splendour of Valinor; but in the end desire of the light was the stronger. Therefore Ulmo, submitting to the will of the Valar, sent to them Ossë, their friend, and he though grieving taught them the craft of ship-building; and when their ships were built he brought them as his parting gift many strong-winged swans. Then the swans drew the white ships of the Teleri over the windless sea; and thus at last and latest they came to Aman and the shores of Eldamar.

There they dwelt, and if they wished they could see the light of the Trees, and could tread the golden streets of Valmar and the crystal stairs of Tirion upon Túna, the green hill; but most of all they sailed in their swift ships on the waters of the Bay of Elvenhome, or walked in the waves upon the shore with their hair gleaming in the light beyond the hill. Many jewels the Noldor gave them, opals and diamonds and pale crystals, which they strewed upon the shores and scattered in the pools; marvellous were the beaches of Elendë in those days. And many pearls they won for themselves from the sea, and their halls were of pearl, and of pearl were the mansions of Olwë at Alqualondë, the Haven of the Swans, lit with many lamps. For that was their city, and the haven of their ships; and those were made in the likeness of swans, with beaks of gold and eyes of gold and jet. The gate of that harbour was an arch of living rock sea-carved; and it lay upon the confines of Eldamar, north of the Calacirya, where the light of the stars was bright and clear.

As the ages passed the Vanyar grew to love the land of the Valar and the full light of the Trees, and they forsook the city of Tirion upon Túna, and dwelt thereafter upon the mountain of Manwë, or about the plains and woods of Valinor, and became sundered from the Noldor. But the memory of Middle-earth under the stars remained in the hearts of the Noldor, and they abode in the Calacirya, and in the hills and valleys within sound of the western sea; and though many of them went often about the land of the Valar, making far journeys in search of the secrets of land and water and all living things, yet the peoples of Túna and Alqualondë drew together in those days. Finwë was king in Tirion and Olwë in Alqualondë; but Ingwë was ever held the High King of all the Elves. He abode thereafter at the feet of Manwë upon Taniquetil.

Fëanor and his sons abode seldom in one place for long, but travelled far and wide upon the confines of Valinor, going even to the borders of the Dark and the cold shores of the Outer Sea, seeking the unknown. Often they were guests in the halls of Aulë; but Celegorm went rather to the house of Oromë, and there he got great knowledge of birds and beasts, and all their tongues he knew. For all living things that are or have been in the Kingdom of Arda, save only the fell and evil creatures of Melkor, lived then in the land of Aman; and there also were many other creatures that have not been seen upon Middle-earth, and perhaps never now shall be, since the fashion of the world was changed.



## Chapter 6: Of Fëanor And The Unchaining Of Melkor

Now the Three Kindreds of the Eldar were gathered at last in Valinor, and Melkor was chained. This was the Noontide of the Blessed Realm, the fullness of its glory and its bliss, long in tale of years, but in memory too brief. In those days the Eldar became full-grown in stature of body and of mind, and the Noldor advanced ever in skill and knowledge; and the long years were filled with their joyful labours, in which many new things fair and wonderful were devised. Then it was that the Noldor first bethought them of letters, and Rúmil of Tirion was the name of the loremaster who first achieved fitting signs for the recording of speech and song, some for graving upon metal or in stone, others for drawing with brush or with pen.

In that time was born in Eldamar, in the house of the King in Tirion upon the crown of Túna, the eldest of the sons of Finwë, and the most beloved. Curufinwë was his name, but by his mother he was called Fëanor, Spirit of Fire; and thus he is remembered in all the tales of the Noldor.

Míriel was the name of his mother, who was called Serindë, because of her surpassing skill in weaving and needlework; for her hands were more skilled to fineness than any hands even among the Noldor. The love of Finwë and Míriel was great and glad, for it began in the Blessed Realm in the Days of Bliss. But in the bearing of her son Míriel was consumed in spirit and body; and after his birth she yearned for release from the labour of living. And when she had named him, she said to Finwë: “Never again shall I bear child; for strength that would have nourished the life of many has gone forth into Fëanor.”

Then Finwë was grieved, for the Noldor were in the youth of their days, and he desired to bring forth many children into the bliss of Aman; and he said: “Surely there is healing in Aman? Here all weariness can find rest.” But when Míriel languished still, Finwë sought the counsel of Manwë, and Manwë delivered her to the care of Irmo in Lórien. At their parting (for a little while as he thought) Finwë was sad, for it seemed an unhappy chance that the mother should depart and miss the beginning at least of the childhood days of her son.

“It is indeed unhappy,” said Míriel, “and I would weep, if I were not so weary. But hold me blameless in this, and in all that may come after.”

She went then to the gardens of Lórien and lay down to sleep; but though she seemed to sleep, her spirit indeed departed from her body, and passed in silence to the halls of Mandos. The maidens of Estë tended the body of Míriel, and it remained unwithered; but she did not return. Then Finwë lived in sorrow; and he went often to the gardens of Lórien, and sitting beneath the silver willows beside the body of his wife he called her by her names. But it was unavailing; and alone in all the Blessed Realm he was deprived of joy. After a while he went to Lórien no more.

All his love he gave thereafter to his son; and Fëanor grew swiftly, as if a secret fire were kindled within him. He was tall, and fair of face, and masterful, his eyes piercingly bright and his hair raven-dark; in the pursuit of all his purposes eager and steadfast. Few ever changed his courses by counsel, none by force. He became of all the Noldor, then or after, the most subtle in mind and the most skilled in hand. In his youth, bettering the work of Rúmil, he devised those letters which bear his name, and which the Eldar used ever after; and he it was who, first of the Noldor, discovered how gems greater and brighter than those of the Earth might be made with skill. The first gems that Fëanor made were white and colourless, but being set under starlight they would blaze with blue and silver fires brighter than Helluin; and other crystals he made also, wherein things far away could be seen small but clear, as with the eyes of the eagles of Manwë. Seldom were the hands and mind of Fëanor at rest.

While still in his early youth he wedded Nerdanel, the daughter of a great smith named Mahtan, among those of the Noldor most dear to Aulë; and of Mahtan he learned much of the making of things in metal and in stone.

Nerdanel also was firm of will, but more patient than Fëanor, desiring to understand minds rather than to master them, and at first she restrained him when the fire of his heart grew too hot; but his later deeds grieved her, and they became estranged. Seven sons she bore to Fëanor; her mood she bequeathed in part to some of them, but not to all.

Now it came to pass that Finwë took as his second wife Indis the Fair. She was a Vanya, close kin of Ingwë the High King, golden-haired and tall, and in all ways unlike Míriel. Finwë loved her greatly, and was glad again. But the shadow of Míriel did not depart from the house of Finwë, nor from his heart; and of all whom he loved Fëanor had ever the chief share of his thought.

The wedding of his father was not pleasing to Fëanor; and he had no great love for Indis, nor for Fingolfin and Finarfin, her sons. He lived apart from them, exploring the land of Aman, or busying himself with the knowledge and the crafts in which he delighted. In those unhappy things which later came to pass, and in which Fëanor was the leader, many saw the effect of this breach within the house of Finwë, judging that if Finwë had endured his loss and been content with the fathering of his mighty son, the courses of Fëanor would have been otherwise, and great evil might have been prevented; for the sorrow and the strife in the house of Finwë is graven in the memory of the Noldorin Elves. But the children of Indis were great and glorious, and their children also; and if they had not lived the history of the Eldar would have been diminished.

Now even while Fëanor and the craftsmen of the Noldor worked with delight, foreseeing no end to their labours, and while the sons of Indis grew to their full stature, the Noontide of Valinor was drawing to its close. For it came to pass that Melkor, as the Valar had decreed, completed the term of his bondage, dwelling for three ages in the duress of Mandos, alone. At length, as Manwë had promised, he was brought again before the thrones of the Valar. Then he looked upon their glory and their bliss, and envy was in his heart; he looked upon the Children of Ilúvatar that sat at the feet of the Mighty, and hatred filled him; he looked upon the wealth of bright gems, and he lusted for them; but he hid his thoughts, and postponed his vengeance.

Before the gates of Valmar Melkor abased himself at the feet of Manwë and sued for pardon, vowing that if he might be made only the least of the free people of Valinor he would aid the Valar in all their works, and most of all in the healing of the many hurts that he had done to the world. And Nienna aided his prayer; but Mandos was silent.

Then Manwë granted him pardon; but the Valar would not yet suffer him to depart beyond their sight and vigilance, and he was constrained to dwell within the gates of Valmar. But fair-seeming were all the words and deeds of Melkor in that time, and both the Valar and the Eldar had profit from his aid and counsel, if they sought it; and therefore in a while he was given leave to go freely about the land, and it seemed to Manwë that the evil of Melkor was cured. For Manwë was free from evil and could not comprehend it, and he knew that in the beginning, in the thought of Ilúvatar, Melkor had been even as he; and he saw not to the depths of Melkor's heart, and did not perceive that all love had departed from him for ever. But Ulmo was not deceived, and Tulkas clenched his hands whenever he saw Melkor his foe go by; for if Tulkas is slow to wrath he is slow also to forget. But they obeyed the judgement of Manwë; for those who will defend authority against rebellion must not themselves rebel.

Now in his heart Melkor most hated the Eldar, both because they were fair and joyful and because in them he saw the reason for the arising of the Valar, and his own downfall. Therefore all the more did he feign love for them and seek their friendship, and he offered them the service of his lore and labour in any great deed that they would do. The Vanyar indeed held him in suspicion, for they dwelt in the light of the Trees and were content; and to the Teleri he gave small heed, thinking them of little worth, tools too weak for his designs. But the Noldor took delight in the hidden knowledge that he could reveal to them; and some hearkened to words that it would have been better for them never to have heard. Melkor indeed declared afterwards that Fëanor had learned much art from him in secret, and had been instructed by him in the greatest of all his works; but he lied in his lust and his envy, for none of the Eldalië ever hated Melkor more than Fëanor son of Finwë, who first named him Morgoth; and snared though he was in the webs of Melkor's malice against the Valar he held no converse with him and took no counsel from him. For Fëanor was driven by the fire of his own heart only, working ever swiftly and alone; and he asked the aid and sought the counsel of none that dwelt in Aman, great or small, save only and for a little while of Nerdanel the wise, his wife.



## Chapter 7: Of The Silmarils And The Unrest Of The Noldor

In that time were made those things that afterwards were most renowned of all the works of the Elves. For Fëanor, being come to his full might, was filled with a new thought, or it may be that some shadow of foreknowledge came to him of the doom that drew near; and he pondered how the light of the Trees, the glory of the Blessed Realm, might be preserved imperishable. Then he began a long and secret labour, and he summoned all his lore, and his power, and his subtle skill; and at the end of all he made the Silmarils.

As three great jewels they were in form. But not until the End, when Fëanor shall return who perished ere the Sun was made, and sits now in the Halls of Awaiting and comes no more among his kin; not until the Sun passes and the Moon falls, shall it be known of what substance they were made. Like the crystal of diamonds it appeared, and yet was more strong than adamant, so that no violence could mar it or break it within the Kingdom of Arda. Yet that crystal was to the Silmarils but as is the body to the Children of Ilúvatar: the house of its inner fire, that is within it and yet in all parts of it, and is its life. And the inner fire of the Silmarils Fëanor made of the blended light of the Trees of Valinor, which lives in them yet, though the Trees have long withered and shine no more. Therefore even in the darkness of the deepest treasury the Silmarils of their own radiance shone like the stars of Varda; and yet, as were they indeed living things, they rejoiced in light and received it and gave it back in hues more marvellous than before.

All who dwelt in Aman were filled with wonder and delight at the work of Fëanor. And Varda hallowed the Silmarils, so that thereafter no mortal flesh, nor hands unclean, nor anything of evil will might touch them, but it was scorched and withered; and Mandos foretold that the fates of Arda, earth, sea, and air, lay locked within them. The heart of Fëanor was fast bound to these things that he himself had made.

Then Melkor lusted for the Silmarils, and the very memory of their radiance was a gnawing fire in his heart. From that time forth, inflamed by this desire, he sought ever more eagerly how he should destroy Fëanor and end the friendship of the Valar and the Elves; but he dissembled his purposes with cunning, and nothing of his malice could yet be seen in the semblance that he wore. Long was he at work, and slow at first and barren was his labour. But he that sows lies in the end shall not lack of a harvest, and soon he may rest from toil indeed while others reap and sow in his stead. Ever Melkor found some ears that would heed him, and some tongues that would enlarge what they had heard; and his lies passed from friend to friend, as secrets of which the knowledge proves the teller wise. Bitterly did the Noldor atone for the folly of their open ears in the days that followed after.

When he saw that many leaned towards him, Melkor would often walk among them, and amid his fair words others were woven, so subtly that many who heard them believed in recollection that they arose from their own thought. Visions he would conjure in their hearts of the mighty realms that they could have ruled at their own will, in power and freedom in the East; and then whispers went abroad that the Valar had brought the Eldar to Aman because of their jealousy, fearing that the beauty of the Quendi and the makers' power that Ilúvatar had bequeathed to them would grow too great for the Valar to govern, as the Elves waxed and spread over the wide lands of the world.

In those days, moreover, though the Valar knew indeed of the coming of Men that were to be, the Elves as yet knew naught of it; for Manwë had not revealed it to them. But Melkor spoke to them in secret of Mortal Men, seeing how the silence of the Valar might be twisted to evil. Little he knew yet concerning Men, for engrossed with his own thought in the Music he had paid small heed to the Third Theme of Ilúvatar; but now the whisper went among the Elves that Manwë held them captive, so that Men might come and supplant them in the kingdoms of Middle-earth, for the Valar saw that they might more easily sway this short-lived and weaker race,



defrauding the Elves of the inheritance of Ilúvatar. Small truth was there in this, and little have the Valar ever prevailed to sway the wills of Men; but many of the Noldor believed, or half believed, the evil words.

Thus ere the Valar were aware, the peace of Valinor was poisoned. The Noldor began to murmur against them, and many became filled with pride, forgetting how much of what they had and knew came to them in gift from the Valar. Fiercest burned the new flame of desire for freedom and wider realms in the eager heart of Fëanor; and Melkor laughed in his secrecy, for to that mark his lies had been addressed, hating Fëanor above all, and lusting ever for the Silmarils. But these he was not suffered to approach; for though at great feasts Fëanor would wear them, blazing on his brow, at other times they were guarded close, locked in the deep chambers of his hoard in Tirion. For Fëanor began to love the Silmarils with a greedy love, and grudged the sight of them to all save to his father and his seven sons; he seldom remembered now that the light within them was not his own.

High princes were Fëanor and Fingolfin, the elder sons of Finwë, honoured by all in Aman; but now they grew proud and jealous each of his rights and his possessions. Then Melkor set new lies abroad in Eldamar, and whispers came to Fëanor that Fingolfin and his sons were plotting to usurp the leadership of Finwë and of the elder line of Fëanor, and to supplant them by the leave of the Valar; for the Valar were ill-pleased that the Silmarils lay in Tirion and were not committed to their keeping. But to Fingolfin and Finarfin it was said: "Beware! Small love has the proud son of Míriel ever had for the children of Indis. Now he has become great, and he has his father in his hand. It will not be long before he drives you forth from Túna!"

And when Melkor saw that these lies were smouldering, and that pride and anger were awake among the Noldor, he spoke to them concerning weapons; and in that time the Noldor began the smithying of swords and axes and spears. Shields also they made displaying the tokens of many houses and kindreds that vied one with another; and these only they wore abroad, and of other weapons they did not speak, for each believed that he alone had received the warning. And Fëanor made a secret forge, of which not even Melkor was aware; and there he tempered fell swords for himself and for his sons, and made tall helms with plumes of red. Bitterly did Mahtan rue the day when he taught to the husband of Nerdanel all the lore of metalwork that he had learned of Aulë.

Thus with lies and evil whisperings and false counsel Melkor kindled the hearts of the Noldor to strife; and of their quarrels came at length the end of the high days of Valinor and the evening of its ancient glory. For Fëanor now began openly to speak words of rebellion against the Valar, crying aloud that he would depart from Valinor back to the world without, and would deliver the Noldor from thralldom, if they would follow him.

Then there was great unrest in Tirion, and Finwë was troubled; and he summoned all his lords to council. But Fingolfin hastened to his halls and stood before him, saying: "King and father, wilt thou not restrain the pride of our brother, Curufinwë, who is called the Spirit of Fire, all too truly? By what right does he speak for all our people, as if he were King? Thou it was who long ago spoke before the Quendi, bidding them accept the summons of the Valar to Aman. Thou it was that led the Noldor upon the long road through the perils of Middle-earth to the light of Eldamar. If thou dost not now repent of it, two sons at least thou hast to honour thy words."

But even as Fingolfin spoke, Fëanor strode into the chamber, and he was fully armed: his high helm upon his head, and at his side a mighty sword. "So it is, even as I guessed," he said. "My half-brother would be before me with my father, in this as in all other matters." Then turning upon Fingolfin he drew his sword, crying: "Get thee gone, and take thy due place!"

Fingolfin bowed before Finwë, and without word or glance to Fëanor he went from the chamber. But Fëanor followed him, and at the door of the king's house he stayed him; and the point of his bright sword he set against Fingolfin's breast. "See, half-brother!" he said. "This is sharper than thy tongue. Try but once more to usurp my place and the love of my father, and maybe it will rid the Noldor of one who seeks to be the master of thralls."

These words were heard by many, for the house of Finwë was in the great square beneath the Mindon; but again Fingolfin made no answer, and passing through the throng in silence he went to seek Finarfin his brother.

Now the unrest of the Noldor was not indeed hidden from the Valar, but its seed had been sown in the dark; and therefore, since Fëanor first spoke openly against them, they judged that he was the mover of discontent, being

eminent in self-will and arrogance, though all the Noldor had become proud. And Manwë was grieved, but he watched and said no word. The Valar had brought the Eldar to their land freely, to dwell or to depart; and though they might judge departure to be folly, they might not restrain them from it. But now the deeds of Fëanor could not be passed over, and the Valar were angered and dismayed; and he was summoned to appear before them at the gates of Valmar, to answer for all his words and deeds. There also were summoned all others who had any part in this matter, or any knowledge of it; and Fëanor standing before Mandos in the Ring of Doom was commanded to answer all that was asked of him. Then at last the root was laid bare, and the malice of Melkor revealed; and straightway Tulkas left the council to lay hands upon him and bring him again to judgement. But Fëanor was not held guiltless, for he it was that had broken the peace of Valinor and drawn his sword upon his kinsman; and Mandos said to him: "Thou speakest of thralldom. If thralldom it be, thou canst not escape it: for Manwë is King of Arda, and not of Aman only. And this deed was unlawful, whether in Aman or not in Aman. Therefore this doom is now made: for twelve years thou shalt leave Tirion where this threat was uttered. In that time take counsel with thyself, and remember who and what thou art. But after that time this matter shall be set in peace and held redressed, if others will release thee."

Then Fingolfin said: "I will release my brother." But Fëanor spoke no word in answer, standing silent before the Valar. Then he turned and left the council, and departed from Valmar.

With him into banishment went his seven sons, and northward in Valinor they made a strong place and treasury in the hills; and there at Formenos a multitude of gems were laid in hoard, and weapons also, and the Silmarils were shut in a chamber of iron. Thither also came Finwë the King, because of the love that he bore to Fëanor; and Fingolfin ruled the Noldor in Tirion. Thus the lies of Melkor were made true in seeming, though Fëanor by his own deeds had brought this thing to pass; and the bitterness that Melkor had sown endured, and lived still long afterwards between the sons of Fingolfin and Fëanor.

Now Melkor, knowing that his devices had been revealed, hid himself and passed from place to place as a cloud in the hills; and Tulkas sought for him in vain. Then it seemed to the people of Valinor that the light of the Trees was dimmed, and the shadows of all standing things grew longer and darker in that time.

It is told that for a time Melkor was not seen again in Valinor, nor was any rumour heard of him, until suddenly he came to Formenos, and spoke with Fëanor before his doors. Friendship he feigned with cunning argument, urging him to his former thought of flight from the trammels of the Valar; and he said: "Behold the truth of all that I have spoken, and how thou art banished unjustly. But if the heart of Fëanor is yet free and bold as were his words in Tirion, then I will aid him, and bring him far from this narrow land. For am I not Vala also? Yea, and more than those who sit in pride in Valimar; and I have ever been a friend to the Noldor, most skilled and most valiant of the people of Arda."

Now Fëanor's heart was still bitter at his humiliation before Mandos, and he looked at Melkor in silence, pondering if indeed he might yet trust him so far as to aid him in his flight. And Melkor, seeing that Fëanor wavered, and knowing that the Silmarils held his heart in thrall, said at the last: "Here is a strong place, and well guarded; but think not that the Silmarils will lie safe in any treasury within the realm of the Valar!"

But his cunning overreached his aim; his words touched too deep, and awoke a fire more fierce than he designed; and Fëanor looked upon Melkor with eyes that burned through his fair semblance and pierced the cloaks of his mind, perceiving there his fierce lust for the Silmarils. Then hate overcame Fëanor's fear, and he cursed Melkor and bade him be gone, saying: "Get thee gone from my gate, thou jail-crow of Mandos!" And he shut the doors of his house in the face of the mightiest of all the dwellers in Eä.

Then Melkor departed in shame, for he was himself in peril, and he saw not his time yet for revenge; but his heart was black with anger. And Finwë was filled with great fear, and in haste he sent messengers to Manwë in Valmar.

Now the Valar were sitting in council before their gates, fearing the lengthening of the shadows, when the messengers came from Formenos. At once Oromë and Tulkas sprang up, but even as they set out in pursuit messengers came from Eldamar, telling that Melkor had fled through the Calacirya, and from the hill of Túna the Elves had seen him pass in wrath as a thundercloud. And they said that thence he had turned northward, for the Teleri in Alqualondë had seen his shadow going by their haven towards Araman.

Thus Melkor departed from Valinor, and for a while the Two Trees shone again unshadowed, and the land was filled with light. But the Valar sought in vain for tidings of their enemy; and as a cloud far off that looms ever higher, borne upon a slow cold wind, a doubt now marred the joy of all the dwellers in Aman, dreading they knew not what evil that yet might come.



## Chapter 8: Of The Darkening Of Valinor

When Manwë heard of the ways that Melkor had taken, it seemed plain to him that he purposed to escape to his old strongholds in the north of Middle-earth; and Oromë and Tulkas went with all speed northward, seeking to overtake him if they might, but they found no trace or rumour of him beyond the shores of the Teleri, in the unpeopled wastes that drew near to the Ice. Thereafter the watch was redoubled along the northern fences of Aman; but to no purpose, for ere ever the pursuit set out Melkor had turned back, and in secrecy passed away far to the south. For he was yet as one of the Valar, and could change his form, or walk unclad, as could his brethren; though that power he was soon to lose for ever.

Thus unseen he came at last to the dark region of Avathar. That narrow land lay south of the Bay of Eldamar, beneath the eastern feet of the Pelóri, and its long and mournful shores stretched away into the south, lightless and unexplored. There, beneath the sheer walls of the mountains and the cold dark sea, the shadows were deepest and thickest in the world; and there in Avathar, secret and unknown, Ungoliant had made her abode. The Eldar knew not whence she came; but some have said that in ages long before she descended from the darkness that lies about Arda, when Melkor first looked down in envy upon the Kingdom of Manwë, and that in the beginning she was one of those that he corrupted to his service. But she had disowned her Master, desiring to be mistress of her own lust, taking all things to herself to feed her emptiness; and she fled to the south, escaping the assaults of the Valar and the hunters of Oromë, for their vigilance had ever been to the north, and the south was long unheeded. Thence she had crept towards the light of the Blessed Realm; for she hungered for light and hated it.

In a ravine she lived, and took shape as a spider of monstrous form, weaving her black webs in a cleft of the mountains. There she sucked up all light that she could find, and spun it forth again in dark nets of strangling gloom, until no light more could come to her abode; and she was famished.

Now Melkor came to Avathar and sought her out; and he put on again the form that he had worn as the tyrant of Utumno: a dark Lord, tall and terrible. In that form he remained ever after. There in the black shadows, beyond the sight even of Manwë in his highest halls, Melkor with Ungoliant plotted his revenge. But when Ungoliant understood the purpose of Melkor, she was torn between lust and great fear; for she was loath to dare the perils of Aman and the power of the dreadful Lords, and she would not stir from her hiding. Therefore Melkor said to her: "Do as I bid; and if thou hunger still when all is done, then I will give thee whatsoever thy lust may demand. Yea, with both hands." Lightly he made this vow, as he ever did; and he laughed in his heart. Thus did the great thief set his lure for the lesser.

A cloak of darkness she wove about them when Melkor and Ungoliant set forth: an Unlight, in which things seemed to be no more, and which eyes could not pierce, for it was void. Then slowly she wrought her webs: rope by rope from cleft to cleft, from jutting rock to pinnacle of stone, ever climbing upwards, crawling and clinging, until at last she reached the very summit of Hyarmentir, the highest mountain in that region of the world, far south of great Taniquetil. There the Valar were not vigilant; for west of the Pelóri was an empty land in twilight, and eastward the mountains looked out, save for forgotten Avathar, only upon the dim waters of the pathless sea.

But now upon the mountain-top dark Ungoliant lay; and she made a ladder of woven ropes and cast it down, and Melkor climbed upon it and came to that high place, and stood beside her, looking down upon the Guarded Realm. Below them lay the woods of Oromë, and westward shimmered the fields and pastures of Yavanna, gold beneath the tall wheat of the gods. But Melkor looked north, and saw afar the shining plain, and the silver domes of Valmar gleaming in the mingling of the lights of Telperion and Laurelin. Then Melkor laughed aloud, and leapt swiftly down the long western slopes; and Ungoliant was at his side, and her darkness covered them.

Now it was a time of festival, as Melkor knew well. Though all tides and seasons were at the will of the Valar, and in Valinor there was no winter of death, nonetheless they dwelt then in the Kingdom of Arda, and that was but a small realm in the halls of Eä, whose life is Time, which flows ever from the first note to the last chord of Eru. And even as it was then the delight of the Valar (as is told in the *Ainulindalë*) to clothe themselves as in a vesture in the forms of the Children of Ilúvatar, so also did they eat and drink, and gather the fruits of Yavanna from the Earth, which under Eru they had made.

Therefore Yavanna set times for the flowering and the ripening of all things that grew in Valinor; and at each first gathering of fruits Manwë made a high feast for the praising of Eru, when all the peoples of Valinor poured forth their joy in music and song upon Taniquetil. This now was the hour, and Manwë decreed a feast more glorious than any that had been held since the coming of the Eldar to Aman. For though the escape of Melkor portended toils and sorrows to come, and indeed none could tell what further hurts would be done to Arda ere he could be subdued again, at this time Manwë designed to heal the evil that had arisen among the Noldor; and all were bidden to come to his halls upon Taniquetil, there to put aside the griefs that lay between their princes, and forget utterly the lies of their Enemy.

There came the Vanyar, and there came the Noldor of Tirion, and the Maiar were gathered together, and the Valar were arrayed in their beauty and majesty; and they sang before Manwë and Varda in their lofty halls, or danced upon the green slopes of the Mountain that looked west towards the Trees. In that day the streets of Valmar were empty, and the stairs of Tirion were silent; and all the land lay sleeping in peace. Only the Teleri beyond the mountains still sang upon the shores of the sea; for they recked little of seasons or times, and gave no thought to the cares of the Rulers of Arda, or the shadow that had fallen on Valinor, for it had not touched them, as yet.

One thing only marred the design of Manwë. Fëanor came indeed, for him alone Manwë had commanded to come; but Finwë came not, nor any others of the Noldor of Formenos. For said Finwë: "While the ban lasts upon Fëanor my son, that he may not go to Tirion, I hold myself unkinged, and I will not meet my people." And Fëanor came not in raiment of festival, and he wore no ornament, neither silver nor gold nor any gem; and he denied the sight of the Silmarils to the Valar and the Eldar, and left them locked in Formenos in their chamber of iron. Nevertheless he met Fingolfin before the throne of Manwë, and was reconciled, in word; and Fingolfin set at naught the unsheathing of the sword. For Fingolfin held forth his hand, saying: "As I promised, I do now. I release thee, and remember no grievance."

Then Fëanor took his hand in silence; but Fingolfin said: "Half-brother in blood, full brother in heart will I be. Thou shalt lead and I will follow. May no new grief divide us."

"I hear thee," said Fëanor. "So be it." But they did not know the meaning that their words would bear.

It is told that even as Fëanor and Fingolfin stood before Manwë there came the mingling of the lights, when both Trees were shining, and the silent city of Valmar was filled with a radiance of silver and gold. And in that very hour Melkor and Ungoliant came hastening over the fields of Valinor, as the shadow of a black cloud upon the wind fleets over the sunlit earth; and they came before the green mound Ezellohar. Then the Unlight of Ungoliant rose up even to the roots of the Trees, and Melkor sprang upon the mound; and with his black spear he smote each Tree to its core, wounded them deep, and their sap poured forth as it were their blood, and was spilled upon the ground. But Ungoliant sucked it up, and going then from Tree to Tree she set her black beak to their wounds, till they were drained; and the poison of Death that was in her went into their tissues and withered them, root, branch, and leaf; and they died. And still she thirsted, and going to the Wells of Varda she drank them dry; but Ungoliant belched forth black vapours as she drank, and swelled to a shape so vast and hideous that Melkor was afraid.

So the great darkness fell upon Valinor. Of the deeds of that day much is told in the *Aldudënië*, that Elemmíre of the Vanyar made and is known to all the Eldar. Yet no song or tale could contain all the grief and terror that then befell. The Light failed; but the Darkness that followed was more than loss of light. In that hour was made a Darkness that seemed not lack but a thing with being of its own: for it was indeed made by malice out of Light, and it had power to pierce the eye, and to enter heart and mind, and strangle the very will.

Varda looked down from Taniquetil, and beheld the Shadow soaring up in sudden towers of gloom; Valmar had foundered in a deep sea of night. Soon the Holy Mountain stood alone, a last island in a world that was drowned. All song ceased. There was silence in Valinor, and no sound could be heard, save only from afar there came on the wind through the pass of the mountains the wailing of the Teleri like the cold cry of gulls. For it blew chill from the East in that hour, and the vast shadows of the sea were rolled against the walls of the shore.

But Manwë from his high seat looked out, and his eyes alone pierced through the night, until they saw a Darkness beyond dark which they could not penetrate, huge but far away, moving now northward with great speed; and he knew that Melkor had come and gone.

Then the pursuit was begun; and the earth shook beneath the horses of the host of Oromë, and the fire that was stricken from the hooves of Nahar was the first light that returned to Valinor. But so soon as any came up with the Cloud of Ungoliant the riders of the Valar were blinded and dismayed, and they were scattered, and went they knew not whither; and the sound of the Valaróma faltered and failed. And Tulkas was as one caught in a black net at night, and he stood powerless and beat the air in vain. But when the Darkness had passed, it was too late: Melkor had gone whither he would, and his vengeance was achieved.



## Chapter 9: Of The Flight Of The Noldor

After a time a great concourse gathered about the Ring of Doom; and the Valar sat in shadow, for it was night. But the stars of Varda now glimmered overhead, and the air was clear; for the winds of Manwë had driven away the vapours of death and rolled back the shadows of the sea. Then Yavanna arose and stood upon Ezellohar, the Green Mound, but it was bare now and black; and she laid her hands upon the Trees, but they were dead and dark, and each branch that she touched broke and fell lifeless at her feet. Then many voices were lifted in lamentation; and it seemed to those that mourned that they had drained to the dregs the cup of woe that Melkor had filled for them. But it was not so.

Yavanna spoke before the Valar, saying: “The Light of the Trees has passed away, and lives now only in the Silmarils of Fëanor. Foresighted was he! Even for those who are mightiest under Ilúvatar there is some work that they may accomplish once, and once only. The Light of the Trees I brought into being, and within Eä I can do so never again. Yet had I but a little of that light I could recall life to the Trees, ere their roots decay; and then our hurt should be healed, and the malice of Melkor be confounded.”

Then Manwë spoke and said: “Hearest thou, Fëanor son of Finwë, the words of Yavanna? Wilt thou grant what she would ask?”

There was long silence, but Fëanor answered no word. Then Tulkas cried: “Speak, O Noldo, yea or nay! But who shall deny Yavanna? And did not the light of the Silmarils come from her work in the beginning?”

But Aulë the Maker said: “Be not hasty! We ask a greater thing than thou knowest. Let him have peace yet awhile.”

But Fëanor spoke then, and cried bitterly: “For the less even as for the greater there is some deed that he may accomplish but once only; and in that deed his heart shall rest. It may be that I can unlock my jewels, but never again shall I make their like; and if I must break them, I shall break my heart, and I shall be slain; first of all the Eldar in Aman.”

“Not the first,” said Mandos, but they did not understand his word; and again there was silence, while Fëanor brooded in the dark. It seemed to him that he was beset in a ring of enemies, and the words of Melkor returned to him, saying that the Silmarils were not safe, if the Valar would possess them. “And is he not Vala as are they,” said his thought, “and does he not understand their hearts? Yea, a thief shall reveal thieves!” Then he cried aloud: “This thing I will not do of free will. But if the Valar will constrain me, then shall I know indeed that Melkor is of their kindred.”

Then Mandos said: “Thou hast spoken.” And Nienna arose and went up onto Ezellohar, and cast back her grey hood, and with her tears washed away the defilements of Ungoliant; and she sang in mourning for the bitterness of the world and the Marring of Arda.

But even as Nienna mourned, there came messengers from Formenos, and they were Noldor and bore new tidings of evil. For they told how a blind Darkness came northward, and in the midst walked some power for which there was no name, and the Darkness issued from it. But Melkor also was there, and he came to the house of Fëanor, and there he slew Finwë King of the Noldor before his doors, and spilled the first blood in the Blessed Realm; for Finwë alone had not fled from the horror of the Dark. And they told that Melkor had broken the stronghold of Formenos, and taken all the jewels of the Noldor that were hoarded in that place; and the Silmarils were gone.

Then Fëanor rose, and lifting up his hand before Manwë he cursed Melkor, naming him *Morgoth*, the Black Foe of the World; and by that name only was he known to the Eldar ever after. And he cursed also the

summons of Manwë and the hour in which he came to Taniquetil, thinking in the madness of his rage and grief that had he been at Formenos his strength would have availed more than to be slain also, as Melkor had purposed. Then Fëanor ran from the Ring of Doom, and fled into the night; for his father was dearer to him than the Light of Valinor or the peerless works of his hands; and who among sons, of Elves or of Men, have held their fathers of greater worth?

Many there grieved for the anguish of Fëanor, but his loss was not his alone; and Yavanna wept by the mound, in fear that the Darkness should swallow the last rays of the Light of Valinor for ever. For though the Valar did not yet understand fully what had befallen, they perceived that Melkor had called upon some aid that came from beyond Arda. The Silmarils had passed away, and all one it may seem whether Fëanor had said yea or nay to Yavanna; yet had he said yea at the first, before the tidings came from Formenos, it may be that his after deeds would have been other than they were. But now the doom of the Noldor drew near.

Meanwhile Morgoth escaping from the pursuit of the Valar came to the wastes of Araman. This land lay northward between the Mountains of the Pelóri and the Great Sea, as Avathar lay to the south; but Araman was a wider land, and between the shores and the mountains were barren plains, ever colder as the Ice drew nearer. Through this region Morgoth and Ungoliant passed in haste, and so came through the great mists of Oiomúre to the Helcaraxë, where the strait between Araman and Middle-earth was filled with grinding ice; and he crossed over, and came back at last to the north of the Outer Lands. Together they went on, for Morgoth could not elude Ungoliant, and her cloud was still about him, and all her eyes were upon him; and they came to those lands that lay north of the Firth of Drengist. Now Morgoth was drawing near to the ruins of Angband, where his great western stronghold had been; and Ungoliant perceived his hope, and knew that here he would seek to escape from her, and she stayed him, demanding that he fulfil his promise.

“Blackheart!” she said. “I have done thy bidding. But I hunger still.”

“What wouldst thou have more?” said Morgoth. “Dost thou desire all the world for thy belly? I did not vow to give thee that. I am its Lord.”

“Not so much,” said Ungoliant. “But thou hast a great treasure from Formenos; I will have all that. Yea, with both hands thou shalt give it.”

Then perforce Morgoth surrendered to her the gems that he bore with him, one by one and grudgingly; and she devoured them, and their beauty perished from the world. Huger and darker yet grew Ungoliant, but her lust was unsated. “With one hand thou givest,” she said; “with the left only. Open thy right hand.”

In his right hand Morgoth held close the Silmarils, and though they were locked in a crystal casket, they had begun to burn him, and his hand was clenched in pain; but he would not open it. “Nay!” he said. “Thou hast had thy due. For with my power that I put into thee thy work was accomplished. I need thee no more. These things thou shalt not have, nor see. I name them unto myself for ever.”

But Ungoliant had grown great, and he less by the power that had gone out of him; and she rose against him, and her cloud closed about him, and she enmeshed him in a web of clinging thongs to strangle him. Then Morgoth sent forth a terrible cry, that echoed in the mountains. Therefore that region was called Lammoth; for the echoes of his voice dwelt there ever after, so that any who cried aloud in that land awoke them, and all the waste between the hills and the sea was filled with a clamour as of voices in anguish. The cry of Morgoth in that hour was the greatest and most dreadful that was ever heard in the northern world; the mountains shook, and the earth trembled, and rocks were riven asunder. Deep in forgotten places that cry was heard. Far beneath the ruined halls of Angband, in vaults to which the Valar in the haste of their assault had not descended, Balrogs lurked still, awaiting ever the return of their Lord; and now swiftly they arose, and passing over Hithlum they came to Lammoth as a tempest of fire. With their whips of flame they smote asunder the webs of Ungoliant, and she quailed, and turned to flight, belching black vapours to cover her; and fleeing from the north she went down into Beleriand, and dwelt beneath Ered Gorgoroth, in that dark valley that was after called Nan Dungortheb, the Valley of Dreadful Death, because of the horror that she bred there. For other foul creatures of spider form had dwelt there since the days of the delving of Angband, and she mated with them, and devoured them; and even after Ungoliant herself departed, and went whither she would into the forgotten south of the



world, her offspring abode there and wove their hideous webs. Of the fate of Ungoliant no tale tells. Yet some have said that she ended long ago, when in her uttermost famine she devoured herself at last.

And thus the fear of Yavanna that the Silmarils would be swallowed up and fall into nothingness did not come to pass; but they remained in the power of Morgoth. And he being freed gathered again all his servants that he could find, and came to the ruins of Angband. There he delved anew his vast vaults and dungeons, and above their gates he reared the threefold peaks of Thangorodrim, and a great reek of dark smoke was ever wreathed about them. There countless became the hosts of his beasts and his demons, and the race of the Orcs, bred long before, grew and multiplied in the bowels of the earth. Dark now fell the shadow on Beleriand, as is told hereafter; but in Angband Morgoth forged for himself a great crown of iron, and he called himself King of the World. In token of this he set the Silmarils in his crown. His hands were burned black by the touch of those hallowed jewels, and black they remained ever after; nor was he ever free from the pain of the burning, and the anger of the pain. That crown he never took from his head, though its weight became a deadly weariness. Never but once only did he depart for a while secretly from his domain in the North; seldom indeed did he leave the deep places of his fortress, but governed his armies from his northern throne. And once only also did he himself wield weapon, while his realm lasted.

For now, more than in the days of Utumno ere his pride was humbled, his hatred devoured him, and in the domination of his servants and the inspiring of them with lust of evil he spent his spirit. Nonetheless his majesty as one of the Valar long remained, though turned to terror, and before his face all save the mightiest sank into a dark pit of fear.

Now when it was known that Morgoth had escaped from Valinor and pursuit was unavailing, the Valar remained long seated in darkness in the Ring of Doom, and the Maiar and the Vanyar stood beside them and wept; but the Noldor for the most part returned to Tirion and mourned for the darkening of their fair city. Through the dim ravine of the Calacirya fogs drifted in from the shadowy seas and mantled its towers, and the lamp of the Mindon burned pale in the gloom.

Then suddenly Fëanor appeared in the city and called on all to come to the high court of the King upon the summit of Túna; but the doom of banishment that had been laid upon him was not yet lifted, and he rebelled against the Valar. A great multitude gathered swiftly, therefore, to hear what he would say; and the hill and all the stairs and streets that climbed upon it were lit with the light of many torches that each one bore in hand. Fëanor was a master of words, and his tongue had great power over hearts when he would use it; and that night he made a speech before the Noldor which they ever remembered. Fierce and fell were his words, and filled with anger and pride; and hearing them the Noldor were stirred to madness. His wrath and his hate were given most to Morgoth, and yet well nigh all that he said came from the very lies of Morgoth himself; but he was distraught with grief for the slaying of his father, and with anguish for the rape of the Silmarils. He claimed now the kingship of all the Noldor, since Finwë was dead, and he scorned the decrees of the Valar.

“Why, O people of the Noldor,” he cried, “why should we longer serve the jealous Valar, who cannot keep us nor even their own realm secure from their Enemy? And though he be now their foe, are not they and he of one kin? Vengeance calls me hence, but even were it otherwise I would not dwell longer in the same land with the kin of my father’s slayer and of the thief of my treasure. Yet I am not the only valiant in this valiant people. And have ye not all lost your King? And what else have ye not lost, cooped here in a narrow land between the mountains and the sea?”

“Here once was light, that the Valar begrudged to Middle-earth, but now dark levels all. Shall we mourn here deedless for ever, a shadow-folk, mist-haunting, dropping vain tears in the thankless sea? Or shall we return to our home? In Cuiviénen sweet ran the waters under unclouded stars, and wide lands lay about, where a free people might walk. There they lie still and await us who in our folly forsook them. Come away! Let the cowards keep this city!”

Long he spoke, and ever he urged the Noldor to follow him and by their own prowess to win freedom and great realms in the lands of the East, before it was too late; for he echoed the lies of Melkor, that the Valar had cozened them and would hold them captive so that Men might rule in Middle-earth. Many of the Eldar heard then for the first time of the Aftercomers. “Fair shall the end be,” he cried, “though long and hard shall be the

road! Say farewell to bondage! But say farewell also to ease! Say farewell to the weak! Say farewell to your treasures! More still shall we make. Journey light: but bring with you your swords! For we will go further than Oromë, endure longer than Tulkas: we will never turn back from pursuit. After Morgoth to the ends of the Earth! War shall he have and hatred undying. But when we have conquered and have regained the Silmarils, then we and we alone shall be lords of the unsullied Light, and masters of the bliss and beauty of Arda. No other race shall oust us!”

Then Fëanor swore a terrible oath. His seven sons leapt straightway to his side and took the selfsame vow together, and red as blood shone their drawn swords in the glare of the torches. They swore an oath which none shall break, and none should take, by the name even of Ilúvatar, calling the Everlasting Dark upon them if they kept it not; and Manwë they named in witness, and Varda, and the hallowed mountain of Taniquetil, vowing to pursue with vengeance and hatred to the ends of the World Vala, Demon, Elf or Man as yet unborn, or any creature, great or small, good or evil, that time should bring forth unto the end of days, whoso should hold or take or keep a Silmaril from their possession.

Thus spoke Maedhros and Maglor and Celegorm, Curufin and Caranthir, Amrod and Amras, princes of the Noldor; and many quailed to hear the dread words. For so sworn, good or evil, an oath may not be broken, and it shall pursue oathkeeper and oathbreaker to the world’s end. Fingolfin and Turgon his son therefore spoke against Fëanor, and fierce words awoke, so that once again wrath came near to the edge of swords. But Finarfin spoke softly, as was his wont, and sought to calm the Noldor, persuading them to pause and ponder ere deeds were done that could not be undone: and Orodreth, alone of his sons, spoke in like manner. Finrod was with Turgon, his friend; but Galadriel, the only woman of the Noldor to stand that day tall and valiant among the contending princes, was eager to be gone. No oaths she swore, but the words of Fëanor concerning Middle-earth had kindled in her heart, for she yearned to see the wide unguarded lands and to rule there a realm at her own will. Of like mind with Galadriel was Fingon Fingolfin’s son, being moved also by Fëanor’s words, though he loved him little; and with Fingon stood as they ever did Angrod and Aegnor, sons of Finarfin. But these held their peace and spoke not against their fathers.

At length after long debate Fëanor prevailed, and the greater part of the Noldor there assembled he set aflame with the desire of new things and strange countries. Therefore when Finarfin spoke yet again for heed and delay, a great shout went up: “Nay, let us be gone!” And straightway Fëanor and his sons began to prepare for the marching forth.

Little foresight could there be for those who dared to take so dark a road. Yet all was done in over-haste; for Fëanor drove them on, fearing lest in the cooling of their hearts his words should wane and other counsels yet prevail; and for all his proud words he did not forget the power of the Valar. But from Valmar no message came, and Manwë was silent. He would not yet either forbid or hinder Fëanor’s purpose; for the Valar were aggrieved that they were charged with evil intent to the Eldar, or that any were held captive by them against their will. Now they watched and waited, for they did not yet believe that Fëanor could hold the host of the Noldor to his will.

And indeed when Fëanor began the marshalling of the Noldor for their setting-out, then at once dissension arose. For though he had brought the assembly in a mind to depart, by no means all were of a mind to take Fëanor as King. Greater love was given to Fingolfin and his sons, and his household and the most part of the dwellers in Tirion refused to renounce him, if he would go with them; and thus at the last as two divided hosts the Noldor set forth upon their bitter road. Fëanor and his following were in the van, but the greater host came behind under Fingolfin; and he marched against his wisdom, because Fingon his son so urged him, and because he would not be sundered from his people that were eager to go, nor leave them to the rash counsels of Fëanor. Nor did he forget his words before the throne of Manwë. With Fingolfin went Finarfin also and for like reasons; but most loath was he to depart. And of all the Noldor in Valinor, who were grown now to a great people, but one tithe refused to take the road: some for the love that they bore to the Valar (and to Aulë not least), some for the love of Tirion and the many things that they had made; none for fear of peril by the way.

But even as the trumpet sang and Fëanor issued from the gates of Tirion a messenger came at last from Manwë, saying: “Against the folly of Fëanor shall be set my counsel only. Go not forth! For the hour is evil, and your road leads to sorrow that ye do not foresee. No aid will the Valar lend you in this quest; but neither will they

hinder you; for this ye shall know: as ye came hither freely, freely shall ye depart. But thou Fëanor Finwë's son, by thine oath art exiled. The lies of Melkor thou shalt unlearn in bitterness. Vala he is, thou saist. Then thou hast sworn in vain, for none of the Valar canst thou overcome now or ever within the halls of Eä, not though Eru whom thou namest had made thee thrice greater than thou art."

But Fëanor laughed, and spoke not to the herald, but to the Noldor, saying: "So! Then will this valiant people send forth the heir of their King alone into banishment with his sons only, and return to their bondage? But if any will come with me, I say to them: Is sorrow foreboded to you? But in Aman we have seen it. In Aman we have come through bliss to woe. The other now we will try: through sorrow to find joy; or freedom, at the least."

Then turning to the herald he cried: "Say this to Manwë Súlimo, High King of Arda: if Fëanor cannot overthrow Morgoth, at least he delays not to assail him, and sits not idle in grief. And it may be that Eru has set in me a fire greater than thou knowest. Such hurt at the least will I do to the Foe of the Valar that even the mighty in the Ring of Doom shall wonder to hear it. Yea, in the end they shall follow me. Farewell!"

In that hour the voice of Fëanor grew so great and so potent that even the herald of the Valar bowed before him as one full-answered, and departed; and the Noldor were over-ruled. Therefore they continued their march; and the House of Fëanor hastened before them along the coasts of Elendë: not once did they turn their eyes back to Tirion on the green hill of Túna. Slower and less eagerly came the host of Fingolfin after them. Of those Fingon was the foremost; but at the rear went Finarfin and Finrod, and many of the noblest and wisest of the Noldor; and often they looked behind them to see their fair city, until the lamp of the Mindon Eldaliéva was lost in the night. More than any others of the Exiles they carried thence memories of the bliss they had forsaken, and some even of the things that they had made there they took with them: a solace and a burden on the road.

Now Fëanor led the Noldor northward, because his first purpose was to follow Morgoth. Moreover Túna beneath Taniquetil was set nigh to the girdle of Arda, and there the Great Sea was immeasurably wide, whereas ever northward the sundering seas grew narrower, as the wasteland of Araman and the coasts of Middle-earth drew together. But as the mind of Fëanor cooled and took counsel he perceived over-late that all these great companies would never overcome the long leagues to the north, nor cross the seas at the last, save with the aid of ships; yet it would need long time and toil to build so great a fleet, even were there any among the Noldor skilled in that craft. He resolved now therefore to persuade the Teleri, ever friends to the Noldor, to join with them; and in his rebellion he thought that thus the bliss of Valinor might be further diminished and his power for war upon Morgoth be increased. He hastened then to Alqualondë, and spoke to the Teleri as he had spoken before in Tirion.

But the Teleri were unmoved by aught that he could say. They were grieved indeed at the going of their kinsfolk and long friends, but would rather dissuade them than aid them; and no ship would they lend, nor help in the building, against the will of the Valar. As for themselves, they desired now no other home but the strands of Eldamar, and no other lord than Olwë, prince of Alqualondë. And he had never lent ear to Morgoth, nor welcomed him to his land, and he trusted still that Ulmo and the other great among the Valar would redress the hurts of Morgoth, and that the night would pass yet to a new dawn.

Then Fëanor grew wrathful, for he still feared delay; and hotly he spoke to Olwë. "You renounce your friendship, even in the hour of our need," he said. "Yet you were glad indeed to receive our aid when you came at last to these shores, fainthearted loiterers, and wellnigh emptyhanded. In huts on the beaches would you be dwelling still, had not the Noldor carved out your haven and toiled upon your walls."

But Olwë answered: "We renounce no friendship. But it may be the part of a friend to rebuke a friend's folly. And when the Noldor welcomed us and gave us aid, otherwise then you spoke: in the land of Aman we were to dwell for ever, as brothers whose houses stand side by side. But as for our white ships: those you gave us not. We learned not that craft from the Noldor, but from the Lords of the Sea; and the white timbers we wrought with our own hands, and the white sails were woven by our wives and our daughters. Therefore we will neither give them nor sell them for any league or friendship. For I say to you, Fëanor son of Finwë, these are to us as are the gems of the Noldor: the work of our hearts, whose like we shall not make again."

Thereupon Fëanor left him, and sat in dark thought beyond the walls of Alqualondë, until his host was assembled. When he judged that his strength was enough, he went to the Haven of the Swans and began to man the ships that were anchored there and to take them away by force. But the Teleri withstood him, and cast many of the Noldor into the sea. Then swords were drawn, and a bitter fight was fought upon the ships, and about the lamplit quays and piers of the Haven, and even upon the great arch of its gate. Thrice the people of Fëanor were driven back, and many were slain upon either side; but the vanguard of the Noldor were succoured by Fingon with the foremost of the host of Fingolfin, who coming up found a battle joined and their own kin falling, and rushed in before they knew rightly the cause of the quarrel; some thought indeed that the Teleri had sought to waylay the march of the Noldor at the bidding of the Valar.

Thus at last the Teleri were overcome, and a great part of their mariners that dwelt in Alqualondë were wickedly slain. For the Noldor were become fierce and desperate, and the Teleri had less strength, and were armed for the most part but with slender bows. Then the Noldor drew away their white ships and manned their oars as best they might, and rowed them north along the coast. And Olwë called upon Ossë, but he came not, for it was not permitted by the Valar that the flight of the Noldor should be hindered by force. But Uinen wept for the mariners of the Teleri; and the sea rose in wrath against the slayers, so that many of the ships were wrecked and those in them drowned. Of the Kinslaying at Alqualondë more is told in that lament which is named *Noldolantë*, the Fall of the Noldor, that Maglor made ere he was lost.

Nonetheless the greater part of the Noldor escaped, and when the storm was past they held on their course, some by ship and some by land; but the way was long and ever more evil as they went forward. After they had marched for a great while in the unmeasured night, they came at length to the northern confines of the Guarded Realm, upon the borders of the empty waste of Araman which were mountainous and cold. There they beheld suddenly a dark figure standing high upon a rock that looked down upon the shore. Some say that it was Mandos himself, and no lesser herald of Manwë. And they heard a loud voice, solemn and terrible, that bade them stand and give ear. Then all halted and stood still, and from end to end of the hosts of the Noldor the voice was heard speaking the curse and prophecy which is called the Prophecy of the North, and the Doom of the Noldor. Much it foretold in dark words, which the Noldor understood not until the woes indeed after befell them; but all heard the curse that was uttered upon those that would not stay nor seek the doom and pardon of the Valar.

“Tears unnumbered ye shall shed; and the Valar will fence Valinor against you, and shut you out, so that not even the echo of your lamentation shall pass over the mountains. On the House of Fëanor the wrath of the Valar lieth from the West unto the uttermost East, and upon all that will follow them it shall be laid also. Their Oath shall drive them, and yet betray them, and ever snatch away the very treasures that they have sworn to pursue. To evil end shall all things turn that they begin well; and by treason of kin unto kin, and the fear of treason, shall this come to pass. The Dispossessed shall they be for ever.

“Ye have spilled the blood of your kindred unrighteously and have stained the land of Aman. For blood ye shall render blood, and beyond Aman ye shall dwell in Death’s shadow. For though Eru appointed to you to die not in Eä, and no sickness may assail you, yet slain ye may be, and slain ye shall be: by weapon and by torment and by grief; and your houseless spirits shall come then to Mandos. There long shall ye abide and yearn for your bodies, and find little pity though all whom ye have slain should entreat for you. And those that endure in Middle-earth and come not to Mandos shall grow weary of the world as with a great burden, and shall wane, and become as shadows of regret before the younger race that cometh after. The Valar have spoken.”

Then many quailed; but Fëanor hardened his heart and said: “We have sworn, and not lightly. This oath we will keep. We are threatened with many evils, and treason not least; but one thing is not said: that we shall suffer from cowardice, from cravens or the fear of cravens. Therefore I say that we will go on, and this doom I add: the deeds that we shall do shall be the matter of song until the last days of Arda.”

But in that hour Finarfin forsook the march, and turned back, being filled with grief, and with bitterness against the House of Fëanor, because of his kinship with Olwë of Alqualondë; and many of his people went with him, retracing their steps in sorrow, until they beheld once more the far beam of the Mindon upon Túna still shining in the night, and so came at last to Valinor. There they received the pardon of the Valar, and Finarfin was set to rule the remnant of the Noldor in the Blessed Realm. But his sons were not with him, for they would not

forsake the sons of Fingolfin; and all Fingolfin's folk went forward still, feeling the constraint of their kinship and the will of Fëanor, and fearing to face the doom of the Valar, since not all of them had been guiltless of the Kinslaying at Alqualondë. Moreover Fingon and Turgon were bold and fiery of heart, and loath to abandon any task to which they had put their hands until the bitter end, if bitter it must be. So the main host held on, and swiftly the evil that was foretold began its work.

The Noldor came at last far into the north of Arda; and they saw the first teeth of the ice that floated in the sea, and knew that they were drawing nigh to the Helcaraxë. For between the land of Aman that in the north curved eastward, and the east-shores of Endor (which is Middle-earth) that bore westward, there was a narrow strait, through which the chill waters of the Encircling Sea and the waves of Belegaer flowed together, and there were vast fogs and mists of deathly cold, and the sea-streams were filled with clashing hills of ice and the grinding of ice deep-sunken. Such was the Helcaraxë, and there none yet had dared to tread save the Valar only and Ungoliant.

Therefore Fëanor halted and the Noldor debated what course they should now take. But they began to suffer anguish from the cold, and the clinging mists through which no gleam of star could pierce; and many repented of the road and began to murmur, especially those that followed Fingolfin, cursing Fëanor, and naming him as the cause of all the woes of the Eldar. But Fëanor, knowing all that was said, took counsel with his sons; and two courses only they saw to escape from Araman and come into Endor: by the straits or by ship. But the Helcaraxë they deemed impassable, whereas the ships were too few. Many had been lost upon their long journey, and there remained now not enough to bear across all the great host together; yet none were willing to abide upon the western coast while others were ferried first: already the fear of treachery was awake among the Noldor. Therefore it came into the hearts of Fëanor and his sons to seize all the ships and depart suddenly; for they had retained the mastery of the fleet since the battle of the Haven, and it was manned only by those who had fought there and were bound to Fëanor. And as though it came at his call, there sprang up a wind from the north-west, and Fëanor slipped away secretly with all whom he deemed true to him, and went aboard, and put out to sea, and left Fingolfin in Araman. And since the sea was there narrow, steering east and somewhat south he passed over without loss, and first of all the Noldor set foot once more upon the shores of Middle-earth; and the landing of Fëanor was at the mouth of the firth which was called Drengist and ran into Dor-lómin.

But when they were landed, Maedhros the eldest of his sons, and on a time the friend of Fingon ere Morgoth's lies came between, spoke to Fëanor, saying: "Now what ships and rowers will you spare to return, and whom shall they bear hither first? Fingon the valiant?"

Then Fëanor laughed as one fey, and he cried: "None and none! What I have left behind I count now no loss; needless baggage on the road it has proved. Let those that cursed my name, curse me still, and whine their way back to the cages of the Valar! Let the ships burn!" Then Maedhros alone stood aside, but Fëanor caused fire to be set to the white ships of the Teleri. So in that place which was called Losgar at the outlet of the Firth of Drengist ended the fairest vessels that ever sailed the sea, in a great burning, bright and terrible. And Fingolfin and his people saw the light afar off, red beneath the clouds; and they knew that they were betrayed. This was the firstfruits of the Kinslaying and the Doom of the Noldor.

Then Fingolfin seeing that Fëanor had left him to perish in Araman or return in shame to Valinor was filled with bitterness; but he desired now as never before to come by some way to Middle-earth, and meet Fëanor again. And he and his host wandered long in misery, but their valour and endurance grew with hardship; for they were a mighty people, the elder children undying of Eru Ilúvatar, but new-come from the Blessed Realm, and not yet weary with the weariness of Earth. The fire of their hearts was young, and led by Fingolfin and his sons, and by Finrod and Galadriel, they dared to pass into the bitterest North; and finding no other way they endured at last the terror of the Helcaraxë and the cruel hills of ice. Few of the deeds of the Noldor thereafter surpassed that desperate crossing in hardihood or woe. There Elenwë the wife of Turgon was lost, and many others perished also; and it was with a lessened host that Fingolfin set foot at last upon the Outer Lands. Small love for Fëanor or his sons had those that marched at last behind him, and blew their trumpets in Middle-earth at the first rising of the Moon.



## Chapter 10: Of The Sindar

Now as has been told the power of Elwë and Melian increased in Middle-earth, and all the Elves of Beleriand, from the mariners of Círdan to the wandering hunters of the Blue Mountains beyond the River Gelion, owned Elwë as their lord; Elu Thingol he was called, King Greymantle, in the tongue of his people. They are called the Sindar, the Grey-elves of starlit Beleriand; and although they were Moriquendi, under the lordship of Thingol and the teaching of Melian they became the fairest and the most wise and skilful of all the Elves of Middle-earth. And at the end of the first age of the Chaining of Melkor, when all the Earth had peace and the glory of Valinor was at its noon, there came into the world Lúthien, the only child of Thingol and Melian. Though Middle-earth lay for the most part in the Sleep of Yavanna, in Beleriand under the power of Melian there was life and joy, and the bright stars shone as silver fires; and there in the forest of Neldoreth Lúthien was born, and the white flowers of *niphredil* came forth to greet her as stars from the earth.

It came to pass during the second age of the captivity of Melkor that Dwarves came over the Blue Mountains of Ered Luin into Beleriand. Themselves they named Khazâd, but the Sindar called them Naugrim, the Stunted People, and Gonnhirrim, Masters of Stone. Far to the east were the most ancient dwellings of the Naugrim, but they had delved for themselves great halls and mansions, after the manner of their kind, in the eastern side of Ered Luin; and those cities were named in their own tongue Gabilgathol and Tumunzahar. To the north of the great height of Mount Dolmed was Gabilgathol, which the Elves interpreted in their tongue Belegost, that is Mickleburg; and southward was delved Tumunzahar, by the Elves named Nogrod, the Hollowbold. Greatest of all the mansions of the Dwarves was Khazad-dûm, the Dwarrowdelf, Hadhodrond in the Elvish tongue, that was afterwards in the days of its darkness called Moria; but it was far off in the Mountains of Mist beyond the wide leagues of Eriador, and to the Eldar came but as a name and a rumour from the words of the Dwarves of the Blue Mountains.

From Nogrod and Belegost the Naugrim came forth into Beleriand; and the Elves were filled with amazement, for they had believed themselves to be the only living things in Middle-earth that spoke with words or wrought with hands, and that all others were but birds and beasts. But they could understand no word of the tongue of the Naugrim, which to their ears was cumbrous and unlovely; and few ever of the Eldar have achieved the mastery of it. But the Dwarves were swift to learn and indeed were more willing to learn the Elven-tongue than to teach their own to those of alien race. Few of the Eldar went ever to Nogrod and Belegost, save Eöl of Nan Elmoth and Maeglin his son; but the Dwarves trafficked into Beleriand, and they made a great road that passed under the shoulders of Mount Dolmed and followed the course of the River Ascar, crossing Gelion at Sarn Athrad, the Ford of Stones, where battle after befell. Ever cool was the friendship between the Naugrim and the Eldar, though much profit they had one of the other; but at that time those griefs that lay between them had not yet come to pass, and King Thingol welcomed them. But the Naugrim gave their friendship more readily to the Noldor in after days than to any others of Elves and Men, because of their love and reverence for Aulë; and the gems of the Noldor they praised above all other wealth. In the darkness of Arda already the Dwarves wrought great works, for even from the first days of their Fathers they had marvellous skill with metals and with stone; but in that ancient time iron and copper they loved to work, rather than silver or gold.

Now Melian had much foresight, after the manner of the Maiar; and when the second age of the captivity of Melkor had passed, she counselled Thingol that the Peace of Arda would not last for ever. He took thought therefore how he should make for himself a kingly dwelling, and a place that should be strong, if evil were to awake again in Middle-earth; and he sought aid and counsel of the Dwarves of Belegost. They gave it willingly, for they were unwearied in those days and eager for new works; and though the Dwarves ever demanded a price for all that they did, whether with delight or with toil, at this time they held themselves paid. For Melian taught them much that they were eager to learn, and Thingol rewarded them with many fair pearls. These

Círdan gave to him, for they were got in great number in the shallow waters about the Isle of Balar; but the Naugrim had not before seen their like, and they held them dear. One there was as great as a dove's egg, and its sheen was as starlight on the foam of the sea; Nimpheles it was named, and the chieftain of the Dwarves of Belegost prized it above a mountain of wealth.

Therefore the Naugrim laboured long and gladly for Thingol, and devised for him mansions after the fashion of their people, delved deep in the earth. Where the Esgalduin flowed down, and parted Neldoreth from Region, there rose in the midst of the forest a rocky hill, and the river ran at its feet. There they made the gates of the hall of Thingol, and they built a bridge of stone over the river, by which alone the gates could be entered. Beyond the gates wide passages ran down to high halls and chambers far below that were hewn in the living stone, so many and so great that that dwelling was named Menegroth, the Thousand Caves.

But the Elves also had part in that labour, and Elves and Dwarves together, each with their own skill, there wrought out the visions of Melian, images of the wonder and beauty of Valinor beyond the Sea. The pillars of Menegroth were hewn in the likeness of the beeches of Oromë, stock, bough, and leaf, and they were lit with lanterns of gold. The nightingales sang there as in the gardens of Lórien; and there were fountains of silver, and basins of marble, and floors of many-coloured stones. Carven figures of beasts and birds there ran upon the walls, or climbed upon the pillars, or peered among the branches entwined with many flowers. And as the years passed Melian and her maidens filled the halls with woven hangings wherein could be read the deeds of the Valar, and many things that had befallen in Arda since its beginning, and shadows of things that were yet to be. That was the fairest dwelling of any king that has ever been east of the Sea.

And when the building of Menegroth was achieved, and there was peace in the realm of Thingol and Melian, the Naugrim yet came ever and anon over the mountains and went in traffic about the lands; but they went seldom to the Falas, for they hated the sound of the sea and feared to look upon it. To Beleriand there came no other rumour or tidings of the world without.

But as the third age of the captivity of Melkor drew on, the Dwarves became troubled, and they spoke to King Thingol, saying that the Valar had not rooted out utterly the evils of the North, and now the remnant, having long multiplied in the dark, were coming forth once more and roaming far and wide. "There are fell beasts," they said, "in the land east of the mountains, and your ancient kindred that dwell there are flying from the plains to the hills."

And ere long the evil creatures came even to Beleriand, over passes in the mountains, or up from the south through the dark forests. Wolves there were, or creatures that walked in wolf-shapes, and other fell beings of shadow; and among them were the Orcs, who afterwards wrought ruin in Beleriand: but they were yet few and wary, and did but smell out the ways of the land, awaiting the return of their lord. Whence they came, or what they were, the Elves knew not then, thinking them perhaps to be Avari who had become evil and savage in the wild; in which they guessed all too near, it is said.

Therefore Thingol took thought for arms, which before his people had not needed, and these at first the Naugrim smithied for him; for they were greatly skilled in such work, though none among them surpassed the craftsmen of Nogrod, of whom Telchar the smith was greatest in renown. A warlike race of old were all the Naugrim, and they would fight fiercely against whomsoever aggrieved them: servants of Melkor, or Eldar, or Avari, or wild beasts, or not seldom their own kin, Dwarves of other mansions and lordships. Their smithcraft indeed the Sindar soon learned of them; yet in the tempering of steel alone of all crafts the Dwarves were never outmatched even by the Noldor, and in the making of mail of linked rings, which was first contrived by the smiths of Belegost, their work had no rival.

At this time therefore the Sindar were well-armed, and they drove off all creatures of evil, and had peace again; but Thingol's armouries were stored with axes and with spears and swords, and tall helms, and long coats of bright mail; for the hauberks of the Dwarves were so fashioned that they rusted not but shone ever as if they were new-burnished. And that proved well for Thingol in the time that was to come.

Now as has been told, one Lenwë of the host of Olwë forsook the march of the Eldar at that time when the Teleri were halted by the shores of the Great River upon the borders of the westlands of Middle-earth. Little is known of the wanderings of the Nandor, whom he led away down Anduin: some, it is said, dwelt age-long in

the woods of the Vale of the Great River, some came at last to its mouths and there dwelt by the Sea, and yet others passing by Ered Nimrais, the White Mountains, came north again and entered the wilderness of Eriador between Ered Luin and the far Mountains of Mist. Now these were a woodland people and had no weapons of steel, and the coming of the fell beasts of the North filled them with great fear, as the Naugrim declared to King Thingol in Menegroth. Therefore Denethor, the son of Lenwë, hearing rumour of the might of Thingol and his majesty, and of the peace of his realm, gathered such host of his scattered people as he could, and led them over the mountains into Beleriand. There they were welcomed by Thingol, as kin long lost that return, and they dwelt in Ossiriand, the Land of Seven Rivers.

Of the long years of peace that followed after the coming of Denethor there is little tale. In those days, it is said, Daeron the Minstrel, chief loremaster of the kingdom of Thingol, devised his Runes; and the Naugrim that came to Thingol learned them, and were well-pleased with the device, esteeming Daeron's skill higher than did the Sindar, his own people. By the Naugrim the *Cirth* were taken east over the mountains and passed into the knowledge of many peoples; but they were little used by the Sindar for the keeping of records, until the days of the War, and much that was held in memory perished in the ruins of Doriath. But of bliss and glad life there is little to be said, before it ends; as works fair and wonderful, while still they endure for eyes to see, are their own record, and only when they are in peril or broken for ever do they pass into song.

In Beleriand in those days the Elves walked, and the rivers flowed, and the stars shone, and the night-flowers gave forth their scents; and the beauty of Melian was as the noon, and the beauty of Lúthien was as the dawn in spring. In Beleriand King Thingol upon his throne was as the lords of the Maiar, whose power is at rest, whose joy is as an air that they breathe in all their days, whose thought flows in a tide untroubled from the heights to the deeps. In Beleriand still at times rode Oromë the great, passing like a wind over the mountains, and the sound of his horn came down the leagues of the starlight, and the Elves feared him for the splendour of his countenance and the great noise of the onrush of Nahar; but when the Valaróma echoed in the hills, they knew well that all evil things were fled far away.

But it came to pass at last that the end of bliss was at hand, and the noontide of Valinor was drawing to its twilight. For as has been told and as is known to all, being written in lore and sung in many songs, Melkor slew the Trees of the Valar with the aid of Ungoliant, and escaped, and came back to Middle-earth. Far to the north befell the strife of Morgoth and Ungoliant; but the great cry of Morgoth echoed through Beleriand, and all its people shrank for fear; for though they knew not what it foreboded, they heard then the herald of death. Soon afterwards Ungoliant fled from the north and came into the realm of King Thingol, and a terror of darkness was about her; but by the power of Melian she was stayed, and entered not into Neldoreth, but abode long time under the shadow of the precipices in which Dorthonion fell southward. And they became known as Ered Gorgoroth, the Mountains of Terror, and none dared go thither, or pass nigh them; there life and light were strangled, and there all waters were poisoned. But Morgoth, as has before been told, returned to Angband, and built it anew, and above its doors he reared the reeking towers of Thangorodrim; and the gates of Morgoth were but one hundred and fifty leagues distant from the bridge of Menegroth; far and yet all too near.

Now the Orcs that multiplied in the darkness of the earth grew strong and fell, and their dark lord filled them with a lust of ruin and death; and they issued from Angband's gates under the clouds that Morgoth sent forth, and passed silently into the highlands of the north. Thence on a sudden a great army came into Beleriand and assailed King Thingol. Now in his wide realm many Elves wandered free in the wild, or dwelt at peace in small kindreds far sundered; and only about Menegroth in the midst of the land, and along the Falas in the country of the mariners, were there numerous peoples. But the Orcs came down upon either side of Menegroth, and from camps in the east between Celon and Gelion, and west in the plains between Sirion and Narog, they plundered far and wide; and Thingol was cut off from Círdan at Eglarest. Therefore he called upon Denethor; and the Elves came in force from Region beyond Aros and from Ossiriand, and fought the first battle in the Wars of Beleriand. And the eastern host of the Orcs was taken between the armies of the Eldar, north of the Andram and midway between Aros and Gelion, and there they were utterly defeated, and those that fled north from the great slaughter were waylaid by the axes of the Naugrim that issued from Mount Dolmed: few indeed returned to Angband.



But the victory of the Elves was dear-bought. For those of Ossiriand were light-armed, and no match for the Orcs, who were shod with iron and iron-shielded and bore great spears with broad blades; and Denethor was cut off and surrounded upon the hill of Amon Ereb. There he fell and all his nearest kin about him, before the host of Thingol could come to his aid. Bitterly though his fall was avenged, when Thingol came upon the rear of the Orcs and slew them in heaps, his people lamented him ever after and took no king again. After the battle some returned to Ossiriand, and their tidings filled the remnant of their people with great fear, so that thereafter they came never forth in open war, but kept themselves by wariness and secrecy; and they were called the Laiquendi, the Green-elves, because of their raiment of the colour of leaves. But many went north and entered the guarded realm of Thingol, and were merged with his people.

And when Thingol came again to Menegroth he learned that the Orc-host in the west was victorious, and had driven Círdan to the rim of the sea. Therefore he withdrew all his people that his summons could reach within the fastness of Neldoreth and Region, and Melian put forth her power and fenced all that dominion round about with an unseen wall of shadow and bewilderment: the Girdle of Melian, that none thereafter could pass against her will or the will of King Thingol, unless one should come with a power greater than that of Melian the Maia. And this inner land, which was long named Eglador, was after called Doriath, the guarded kingdom, Land of the Girdle. Within it there was yet a watchful peace; but without there was peril and great fear, and the servants of Morgoth roamed at will, save in the walled havens of the Falas.

But new tidings were at hand, which none in Middle-earth had foreseen, neither Morgoth in his pits nor Melian in Menegroth; for no news came out of Aman, whether by messenger, or by spirit, or by vision in dream, after the death of the Trees. In this same time Fëanor came over the Sea in the white ships of the Teleri, and landed in the Firth of Drengist, and there burned the ships at Losgar.



## Chapter 11: Of The Sun And Moon And The Hiding Of Valinor

It is told that after the flight of Melkor the Valar sat long unmoved upon their thrones in the Ring of Doom; but they were not idle, as Fëanor declared in the folly of his heart. For the Valar may work many things with thought rather than with hands, and without voices in silence they may hold council one with another. Thus they held vigil in the night of Valinor, and their thought passed back beyond Eä and forth to the End; yet neither power nor wisdom assuaged their grief, and the knowing of evil in the hour of its being. And they mourned not more for the death of the Trees than for the marring of Fëanor: of the works of Melkor one of the most evil. For Fëanor was made the mightiest in all parts of body and mind, in valour, in endurance, in beauty, in understanding, in skill, in strength and in subtlety alike, of all the Children of Ilúvatar, and a bright flame was in him. The works of wonder for the glory of Arda that he might otherwise have wrought only Manwë might in some measure conceive. And it was told by the Vanyar who held vigil with the Valar that when the messengers declared to Manwë the answers of Fëanor to his heralds, Manwë wept and bowed his head. But at that last word of Fëanor: that at the least the Noldor should do deeds to live in song for ever, he raised his head, as one that hears a voice far off, and he said: “So shall it be! Dear-bought those songs shall be accounted, and yet shall be well-bought. For the price could be no other. Thus even as Eru spoke to us shall beauty not before conceived be brought into Eä, and evil yet be good to have been.”

But Mandos said: “And yet remain evil. To me shall Fëanor come soon.”

But when at last the Valar learned that the Noldor had indeed passed out of Aman and were come back into Middle-earth, they arose and began to set forth in deeds those counsels which they had taken in thought for the redress of the evils of Melkor. Then Manwë bade Yavanna and Nienna to put forth all their powers of growth and healing; and they put forth all their powers upon the Trees. But the tears of Nienna availed not to heal their mortal wounds; and for a long while Yavanna sang alone in the shadows. Yet even as hope failed and her song faltered, Telperion bore at last upon a leafless bough one great flower of silver, and Laurelin a single fruit of gold.

These Yavanna took; and then the Trees died, and their lifeless stems stand yet in Valinor, a memorial of vanished joy. But the flower and the fruit Yavanna gave to Aulë, and Manwë hallowed them, and Aulë and his people made vessels to hold them and preserve their radiance: as is said in the *Narsilion*, the Song of the Sun and Moon. These vessels the Valar gave to Varda, that they might become lamps of heaven, outshining the ancient stars, being nearer to Arda; and she gave them power to traverse the lower regions of Ilmen, and set them to voyage upon appointed courses above the girdle of the Earth from the West unto the East and to return.

These things the Valar did, recalling in their twilight the darkness of the lands of Arda; and they resolved now to illumine Middle-earth and with light to hinder the deeds of Melkor. For they remembered the Avári that remained by the waters of their awakening, and they did not utterly forsake the Noldor in exile; and Manwë knew also that the hour of the coming of Men was drawn nigh. And it is said indeed that, even as the Valar made war upon Melkor for the sake of the Quendi, so now for that time they forbore for the sake of the Hildor, the Aftercomers, the younger Children of Ilúvatar. For so grievous had been the hurts of Middle-earth in the war upon Utumno that the Valar feared lest even worse should now befall; whereas the Hildor should be mortal, and weaker than the Quendi to withstand fear and tumult. Moreover it was not revealed to Manwë where the beginning of Men should be, north, south, or east. Therefore the Valar sent forth light, but made strong the land of their dwelling.

Isil the Sheen the Vanyar of old named the Moon, flower of Telperion in Valinor; and Anar the Fire-golden, fruit of Laurelin, they named the Sun. But the Noldor named them also Rána, the Wayward, and Vása, the

Heart of Fire, that awakens and consumes; for the Sun was set as a sign for the awakening of Men and the waning of the Elves, but the Moon cherishes their memory.

The maiden whom the Valar chose from among the Maiar to guide the vessel of the Sun was named Arien, and he that steered the island of the Moon was Tilion. In the days of the Trees Arien had tended the golden flowers in the gardens of Vána, and watered them with the bright dew of Laurelin; but Tilion was a hunter of the company of Oromë, and he had a silver bow. He was a lover of silver, and when he would rest he forsook the woods of Oromë, and going into Lórien he lay in dream by the pools of Estë, in Telperion's flickering beams; and he begged to be given the task of tending for ever the last Flower of Silver. Arien the maiden was mightier than he, and she was chosen because she had not feared the heats of Laurelin, and was unhurt by them, being from the beginning a spirit of fire, whom Melkor had not deceived nor drawn to his service. Too bright were the eyes of Arien for even the Eldar to look on, and leaving Valinor she forsook the form and raiment which like the Valar she had worn there, and she was as a naked flame, terrible in the fullness of her splendour.

Isil was first wrought and made ready, and first rose into the realm of the stars, and was the elder of the new lights, as was Telperion of the Trees. Then for a while the world had moonlight, and many things stirred and woke that had waited long in the sleep of Yavanna. The servants of Morgoth were filled with amazement, but the Elves of the Outer Lands looked up in delight; and even as the Moon rose above the darkness in the west, Fingolfin let blow his silver trumpets and began his march into Middle-earth, and the shadows of his host went long and black before them.

Tilion had traversed the heaven seven times, and thus was in the furthest east, when the vessel of Arien was made ready. Then Anar arose in glory, and the first dawn of the Sun was like a great fire upon the towers of the Pelóri: the clouds of Middle-earth were kindled, and there was heard the sound of many waterfalls. Then indeed Morgoth was dismayed, and he descended into the uttermost depths of Angband, and withdrew his servants, sending forth great reek and dark cloud to hide his land from the light of the Daystar.

Now Varda purposed that the two vessels should journey in Ilmen and ever be aloft, but not together; each should pass from Valinor into the east and return, the one issuing from the west as the other turned from the east. Thus the first of the new days were reckoned after the manner of the Trees, from the mingling of the lights when Arien and Tilion passed in their courses, above the middle of the Earth. But Tilion was wayward and uncertain in speed, and held not to his appointed path; and he sought to come near to Arien, being drawn by her splendour, though the flame of Anar scorched him, and the island of the Moon was darkened.

Because of the waywardness of Tilion, therefore, and yet more because of the prayers of Lórien and Estë, who said that sleep and rest had been banished from the Earth, and the stars were hidden, Varda changed her counsel, and allowed a time wherein the world should still have shadow and half-light. Anar rested therefore a while in Valinor, lying upon the cool bosom of the Outer Sea; and Evening, the time of the descent and resting of the Sun, was the hour of greatest light and joy in Aman. But soon the Sun was drawn down by the servants of Ulmo, and went then in haste under the Earth, and so came unseen to the east and there mounted the heaven again, lest night be over-long and evil walk under the Moon. But by Anar the waters of the Outer Sea were made hot and glowed with coloured fire, and Valinor had light for a while after the passing of Arien. Yet as she journeyed under the Earth and drew towards the east the glow faded and Valinor was dim, and the Valar mourned then most for the death of Laurelin. At dawn the shadows of the Mountains of Defence lay heavy on the Blessed Realm.

Varda commanded the Moon to journey in like manner, and passing under Earth to arise in the east, but only after the Sun had descended from heaven. But Tilion went with uncertain pace, as yet he goes, and was still drawn towards Arien, as he shall ever be; so that often both may be seen above the Earth together, or at times it will chance that he comes so nigh that his shadow cuts off her brightness and there is a darkness amid the day.

Therefore by the coming and going of Anar the Valar reckoned the days thereafter until the Change of the World. For Tilion tarried seldom in Valinor, but more often would pass swiftly over the western land, over Avathar, or Araman, or Valinor, and plunge in the chasm beyond the Outer Sea, pursuing his way alone amid the grots and caverns at the roots of Arda. There he would often wander long, and late would return.

Still therefore, after the Long Night, the light of Valinor was greater and fairer than upon Middle-earth; for the Sun rested there, and the lights of heaven drew nearer to Earth in that region. But neither the Sun nor the Moon can recall the light that was of old, that came from the Trees before they were touched by the poison of Ungoliant. That light lives now in the Silmarils alone.

But Morgoth hated the new lights, and was for a while confounded by this unlooked-for stroke of the Valar. Then he assailed Tilion, sending spirits of shadow against him, and there was strife in Ilmen beneath the paths of the stars; but Tilion was victorious. And Arien Morgoth feared with a great fear, but dared not come nigh her, having indeed no longer the power; for as he grew in malice, and sent forth from himself the evil that he conceived in lies and creatures of wickedness, his might passed into them and was dispersed, and he himself became ever more bound to the earth, unwilling to issue from his dark strongholds. With shadows he hid himself and his servants from Arien, the glance of whose eyes they could not long endure; and the lands near his dwelling were shrouded in fumes and great clouds.

But seeing the assault upon Tilion the Valar were in doubt, fearing what the malice and cunning of Morgoth might yet contrive against them. Being unwilling to make war upon him in Middle-earth, they remembered nonetheless the ruin of Almaren; and they resolved that the like should not befall Valinor. Therefore at that time they fortified their land anew, and they raised up the mountain-walls of the Pelóri to sheer and dreadful heights, east, north, and south. Their outer sides were dark and smooth, without foothold or ledge, and they fell in great precipices with faces hard as glass, and rose up to towers with crowns of white ice. A sleepless watch was set upon them, and no pass led through them, save only at the Calacirya: but that pass the Valar did not close, because of the Eldar that were faithful, and in the city of Tirion upon the green hill Finarfin yet ruled the remnant of the Noldor in the deep cleft of the mountains. For all those of elven-race, even the Vanyar and Ingwë their lord, must breathe at times the outer air and the wind that comes over the sea from the lands of their birth; and the Valar would not sunder the Teleri wholly from their kin. But in the Calacirya they set strong towers and many sentinels, and at its issue upon the plains of Valmar a host was encamped, so that neither bird nor beast nor elf nor man, nor any creature beside that dwelt in Middle-earth, could pass that leaguer.

And in that time also, which songs call *Nurtalë Valinóreva*, the Hiding of Valinor, the Enchanted Isles were set, and all the seas about them were filled with shadows and bewilderment. And these isles were strung as a net in the Shadowy Seas from the north to the south, before Tol Eressëa, the Lonely Isle, is reached by one sailing west. Hardly might any vessel pass between them, for in the dangerous sounds the waves sighed for ever upon dark rocks shrouded in mist. And in the twilight a great weariness came upon mariners and a loathing of the sea; but all that ever set foot upon the islands were there entrapped, and slept until the Change of the World. Thus it was that as Mandos foretold to them in Araman the Blessed Realm was shut against the Noldor; and of the many messengers that in after days sailed into the West none came ever to Valinor—save one only: the mightiest mariner of song.



## Chapter 12: Of Men

The Valar sat now behind their mountains at peace; and having given light to Middle-earth they left it for long untended, and the lordship of Morgoth was uncontested save by the valour of the Noldor. Most in mind Ulmo kept the exiles, who gathered news of the Earth through all the waters.

From this time forth were reckoned the Years of the Sun. Swifter and briefer are they than the long Years of the Trees in Valinor. In that time the air of Middle-earth became heavy with the breath of growth and mortality, and the changing and ageing of all things was hastened exceedingly; life teemed upon the soil and in the waters in the Second Spring of Arda, and the Eldar increased, and beneath the new Sun Beleriand grew green and fair.

At the first rising of the Sun the Younger Children of Ilúvatar awoke in the land of Hildórien in the eastward regions of Middle-earth; but the first Sun arose in the West, and the opening eyes of Men were turned towards it, and their feet as they wandered over the Earth for the most part strayed that way. The Atani they were named by the Eldar, the Second People; but they called them also Hildor, the Followers, and many other names: Apanónar, the After-born, Engwar, the Sickly, and Fírimar, the Mortals; and they named them the Usurpers, the Strangers, and the Inscrutable, the Self-cursed, the Heavy-handed, the Night-fearers, the Children of the Sun. Of Men little is told in these tales, which concern the Eldest Days before the waxing of mortals and the waning of the Elves, save of those fathers of men, the Atanatári, who in the first years of the Sun and Moon wandered into the North of the world. To Hildórien there came no Vala to guide Men, or to summon them to dwell in Valinor; and Men have feared the Valar, rather than loved them, and have not understood the purposes of the Powers, being at variance with them, and at strife with the world. Ulmo nonetheless took thought for them, aiding the counsel and will of Manwë; and his messages came often to them by stream and flood. But they have not skill in such matters, and still less had they in those days before they had mingled with the Elves. Therefore they loved the waters, and their hearts were stirred, but they understood not the messages. Yet it is told that ere long they met Dark Elves in many places, and were befriended by them; and Men became the companions and disciples in their childhood of these ancient folk, wanderers of the Elven-race who never set out upon the paths to Valinor, and knew of the Valar only as a rumour and a distant name.

Morgoth had then not long come back into Middle-earth, and his power went not far abroad, and was moreover checked by the sudden coming of great light. There was little peril in the lands and hills; and there new things, devised long ages before in the thought of Yavanna and sown as seed in the dark, came at last to their budding and their bloom. West, North, and South the children of Men spread and wandered, and their joy was the joy of the morning before the dew is dry, when every leaf is green.

But the dawn is brief and the day full often belies its promise; and now the time drew on to the great wars of the powers of the North, when Noldor and Sindar and Men strove against the hosts of Morgoth Bauglir, and went down in ruin. To this end the cunning lies of Morgoth that he sowed of old, and sowed ever anew among his foes, and the curse that came of the slaying at Alqualondë, and the oath of Fëanor, were ever at work. Only a part is here told of the deeds of those days, and most is said of the Noldor, and the Silmarils, and the mortals that became entangled in their fate. In those days Elves and Men were of like stature and strength of body, but the Elves had greater wisdom, and skill, and beauty; and those who had dwelt in Valinor and looked upon the Powers as much surpassed the Dark Elves in these things as they in turn surpassed the people of mortal race. Only in the realm of Doriath, whose queen Melian was of the kindred of Valar, did the Sindar come near to match the Calaquendi of the Blessed Realm.

Immortal were the Elves, and their wisdom waxed from age to age, and no sickness nor pestilence brought death to them. Their bodies indeed were of the stuff of Earth, and could be destroyed; and in those days they were more like to the bodies of Men, since they had not so long been inhabited by the fire of their spirit, which

consumes them from within in the courses of time. But Men were more frail, more easily slain by weapon or mischance, and less easily healed; subject to sickness and many ills; and they grew old and died. What may befall their spirits after death the Elves know not. Some say that they too go to the halls of Mandos; but their place of waiting there is not that of the Elves, and Mandos under Ilúvatar alone save Manwë knows whither they go after the time of recollection in those silent halls beside the Outer Sea. None have ever come back from the mansions of the dead, save only Beren son of Barahir, whose hand had touched a Silmaril; but he never spoke afterward to mortal Men. The fate of Men after death, maybe, is not in the hands of the Valar, nor was all foretold in the Music of the Ainur.

In after days, when because of the triumph of Morgoth Elves and Men became estranged, as he most wished, those of the Elven-race that lived still in Middle-earth waned and faded, and Men usurped the sunlight. Then the Quendi wandered in the lonely places of the great lands and the isles, and took to the moonlight and the starlight, and to the woods and caves, becoming as shadows and memories, save those who ever and anon set sail into the West and vanished from Middle-earth. But in the dawn of years Elves and Men were allies and held themselves akin, and there were some among Men that learned the wisdom of the Eldar, and became great and valiant among the captains of the Noldor. And in the glory and beauty of the Elves, and in their fate, full share had the offspring of elf and mortal, Eärendil, and Elwing, and Elrond their child.



## Chapter 13: Of The Return Of The Noldor

It has been told that Fëanor and his sons came first of the Exiles to Middle-earth, and landed in the waste of Lammoth, the Great Echo, upon the outer shores of the Firth of Drengist. And even as the Noldor set foot upon the strand their cries were taken up into the hills and multiplied, so that a clamour as of countless mighty voices filled all the coasts of the North; and the noise of the burning of the ships at Losgar went down the winds of the sea as a tumult of great wrath, and far away all who heard that sound were filled with wonder.

Now the flames of that burning were seen not only by Fingolfin, whom Fëanor had deserted in Araman, but also by the Orcs and the watchers of Morgoth. No tale has told what Morgoth thought in his heart at the tidings that Fëanor, his bitterest foe, had brought a host out of the West. It may be that he feared him little, for he had as yet no proof of the swords of the Noldor; and soon it was seen that he purposed to drive them back into the sea.

Under the cold stars before the rising of the Moon the host of Fëanor went up the long Firth of Drengist that pierced the Echoing Hills of Ered Lómin, and passed thus from the shores into the great land of Hithlum; and they came at length to the long lake of Mithrim, and upon its northern shore made their encampment in the region that bore the same name. But the host of Morgoth, aroused by the tumult of Lammoth and the light of the burning at Losgar, came through the passes of Ered Wethrin, the Mountains of Shadow, and assailed Fëanor on a sudden, before his camp was full-wrought or put in defence; and there on the grey fields of Mithrim was fought the Second Battle in the Wars of Beleriand. Dagor-nuin-Giliath it is named, the Battle-under-Stars, for the Moon had not yet risen; and it is renowned in song. The Noldor, outnumbered and taken at unawares, were yet swiftly victorious; for the light of Aman was not yet dimmed in their eyes, and they were strong and swift, and deadly in anger, and their swords were long and terrible. The Orcs fled before them, and they were driven forth from Mithrim with great slaughter, and hunted over the Mountains of Shadow into the great plain of Ardgalen, that lay northward of Dorthonion. There the armies of Morgoth that had passed south into the Vale of Sirion and beleaguered Círdan in the Havens of the Falas came up to their aid, and were caught in their ruin. For Celegorm, Fëanor's son, having news of them, waylaid them with a part of the Elven-host, and coming down upon them out of the hills near Eithel Sirion drove them into the Fen of Serech. Evil indeed were the tidings that came at last to Angband, and Morgoth was dismayed. Ten days that battle lasted, and from it returned of all the hosts that he had prepared for the conquest of Beleriand no more than a handful of leaves.

Yet cause he had for great joy, though it was hidden from him for a while. For Fëanor, in his wrath against the Enemy, would not halt, but pressed on behind the remnant of the Orcs, thinking so to come at Morgoth himself; and he laughed aloud as he wielded his sword, rejoicing that he had dared the wrath of the Valar and the evils of the road, that he might see the hour of his vengeance. Nothing did he know of Angband or the great strength of defence that Morgoth had so swiftly prepared; but even had he known it would not have deterred him, for he was fey, consumed by the flame of his own wrath. Thus it was that he drew far ahead of the van of his host; and seeing this the servants of Morgoth turned to bay, and there issued from Angband Balrogs to aid them. There upon the confines of Dor Daedeloeth, the land of Morgoth, Fëanor was surrounded, with few friends about him. Long he fought on, and undismayed, though he was wrapped in fire and wounded with many wounds; but at the last he was smitten to the ground by Gothmog, Lord of Balrogs, whom Ecthelion after slew in Gondolin. There he would have perished, had not his sons in that moment come up with force to his aid; and the Balrogs left him, and departed to Angband.

Then his sons raised up their father and bore him back towards Mithrim. But as they drew near to Eithel Sirion and were upon the upward path to the pass over the mountains, Fëanor bade them halt; for his wounds were mortal, and he knew that his hour was come. And looking out from the slopes of Ered Wethrin with his last sight he beheld far off the peaks of Thangorodrim, mightiest of the towers of Middle-earth, and knew with the

foreknowledge of death that no power of the Noldor would ever overthrow them; but he cursed the name of Morgoth thrice, and laid it upon his sons to hold to their oath, and to avenge their father. Then he died; but he had neither burial nor tomb, for so fiery was his spirit that as it sped his body fell to ash, and was borne away like smoke; and his likeness has never again appeared in Arda, neither has his spirit left the halls of Mandos. Thus ended the mightiest of the Noldor, of whose deeds came both their greatest renown and their most grievous woe.

Now in Mithrim there dwelt Grey-elves, folk of Beleriand that had wandered north over the mountains, and the Noldor met them with gladness, as kinsfolk long sundered; but speech at first was not easy between them, for in their long severance the tongues of the Calaquendi in Valinor and of the Moriquendi in Beleriand had drawn far apart. From the Elves of Mithrim the Noldor learned of the power of Elu Thingol, King in Doriath, and the girdle of enchantment that fenced his realm; and tidings of these great deeds in the north came south to Menegroth, and to the havens of Brithombar and Eglarest. Then all the Elves of Beleriand were filled with wonder and with hope at the coming of their mighty kindred, who thus returned unlooked-for from the West in the very hour of their need, believing indeed at first that they came as emissaries of the Valar to deliver them.

But even in the hour of the death of Fëanor an embassy came to his sons from Morgoth, acknowledging defeat, and offering terms, even to the surrender of a Silmaril. Then Maedhros the tall, the eldest son, persuaded his brothers to feign to treat with Morgoth, and to meet his emissaries at the place appointed; but the Noldor had as little thought of faith as had he. Wherefore each embassy came with greater force than was agreed; but Morgoth sent the more, and there were Balrogs. Maedhros was ambushed, and all his company were slain; but he himself was taken alive by the command of Morgoth, and brought to Angband.

Then the brothers of Maedhros drew back, and fortified a great camp in Hithlum; but Morgoth held Maedhros as hostage, and sent word that he would not release him unless the Noldor would forsake their war, returning into the West, or else departing far from Beleriand into the South of the world. But the sons of Fëanor knew that Morgoth would betray them, and would not release Maedhros, whatsoever they might do; and they were constrained also by their oath, and might not for any cause forsake the war against their Enemy. Therefore Morgoth took Maedhros and hung him from the face of a precipice upon Thangorodrim, and he was caught to the rock by the wrist of his right hand in a band of steel.

Now rumour came to the camp in Hithlum of the march of Fingolfin and those that followed him, who had crossed the Grinding Ice; and all the world lay then in wonder at the coming of the Moon. But as the host of Fingolfin marched into Mithrim the Sun rose flaming in the West; and Fingolfin unfurled his blue and silver banners, and blew his horns, and flowers sprang beneath his marching feet, and the ages of the stars were ended. At the uprising of the great light the servants of Morgoth fled into Angband, and Fingolfin passed unopposed through the fastness of Dor Daedeloith while his foes hid beneath the earth. Then the Elves smote upon the gates of Angband, and the challenge of their trumpets shook the towers of Thangorodrim; and Maedhros heard them amid his torment and cried aloud, but his voice was lost in the echoes of the stone.

But Fingolfin, being of other temper than Fëanor, and wary of the wiles of Morgoth, withdrew from Dor Daedeloith and turned back towards Mithrim, for he had heard tidings that there he should find the sons of Fëanor, and he desired also to have the shield of the Mountains of Shadow while his people rested and grew strong; for he had seen the strength of Angband, and thought not that it would fall to the sound of trumpets only. Therefore coming at length to Hithlum he made his first camp and dwelling by the northern shores of Lake Mithrim. No love was there in the hearts of those that followed Fingolfin for the House of Fëanor, for the agony of those that endured the crossing of the Ice had been great, and Fingolfin held the sons the accomplices of their father. Then there was peril of strife between the hosts; but grievous as were their losses upon the road, the people of Fingolfin and of Finrod son of Finarfin were still more numerous than the followers of Fëanor, and these now withdrew before them, and removed their dwelling to the southern shore; and the lake lay between them. Many of Fëanor's people indeed repented of the burning at Losgar, and were filled with amazement at the valour that had brought the friends whom they had abandoned over the Ice of the North; and they would have welcomed them, but they dared not, for shame.

Thus because of the curse that lay upon them the Noldor achieved nothing, while Morgoth hesitated, and the dread of light was new and strong upon the Orcs. But Morgoth arose from thought, and seeing the division of



his foes he laughed. In the pits of Angband he caused vast smokes and vapours to be made, and they came forth from the reeking tops of the Iron Mountains, and afar off they could be seen in Mithrim, staining the bright airs in the first mornings of the world. A wind came out of the east, and bore them over Hithlum, darkening the new Sun; and they fell, and coiled about the fields and hollows, and lay upon the waters of Mithrim, drear and poisonous.

Then Fingon the valiant, son of Fingolfin, resolved to heal the feud that divided the Noldor, before their Enemy should be ready for war; for the earth trembled in the Northlands with the thunder of the forges of Morgoth underground. Long before, in the bliss of Valinor, before Melkor was unchained, or lies came between them, Fingon had been close in friendship with Maedhros; and though he knew not yet that Maedhros had not forgotten him at the burning of the ships, the thought of their ancient friendship stung his heart. Therefore he dared a deed which is justly renowned among the feats of the princes of the Noldor: alone, and without the counsel of any, he set forth in search of Maedhros; and aided by the very darkness that Morgoth had made he came unseen into the fastness of his foes. High upon the shoulders of Thangorodrim he climbed, and looked in despair upon the desolation of the land; but no passage or crevice could he find through which he might come within Morgoth's stronghold. Then in defiance of the Orcs, who cowered still in the dark vaults beneath the earth, he took his harp and sang a song of Valinor that the Noldor made of old, before strife was born among the sons of Finwë; and his voice rang in the mournful hollows that had never heard before aught save cries of fear and woe.

Thus Fingon found what he sought. For suddenly above him far and faint his song was taken up, and a voice answering called to him. Maedhros it was that sang amid his torment. But Fingon climbed to the foot of the precipice where his kinsman hung, and then could go no further; and he wept when he saw the cruel device of Morgoth. Maedhros therefore, being in anguish without hope, begged Fingon to shoot him with his bow; and Fingon strung an arrow, and bent his bow. And seeing no better hope he cried to Manwë, saying: "O King to whom all birds are dear, speed now this feathered shaft, and recall some pity for the Noldor in their need!"

His prayer was answered swiftly. For Manwë to whom all birds are dear, and to whom they bring news upon Taniquetil from Middle-earth, had sent forth the race of Eagles, commanding them to dwell in the crags of the North, and to keep watch upon Morgoth; for Manwë still had pity for the exiled Elves. And the Eagles brought news of much that passed in those days to the sad ears of Manwë. Now, even as Fingon bent his bow, there flew down from the high airs Thorondor, King of Eagles, mightiest of all birds that have ever been, whose outstretched wings spanned thirty fathoms; and staying Fingon's hand he took him up, and bore him to the face of the rock where Maedhros hung. But Fingon could not release the hell-wrought bond upon his wrist, nor sever it, nor draw it from the stone. Again therefore in his pain Maedhros begged that he would slay him; but Fingon cut off his hand above the wrist, and Thorondor bore them back to Mithrim.

There Maedhros in time was healed; for the fire of life was hot within him, and his strength was of the ancient world, such as those possessed who were nurtured in Valinor. His body recovered from his torment and became hale, but the shadow of his pain was in his heart; and he lived to wield his sword with left hand more deadly than his right had been. By this deed Fingon won great renown, and all the Noldor praised him; and the hatred between the houses of Fingolfin and Fëanor was assuaged. For Maedhros begged forgiveness for the desertion in Araman; and he waived his claim to kingship over all the Noldor, saying to Fingolfin: "If there lay no grievance between us, lord, still the kingship would rightly come to you, the eldest here of the house of Finwë, and not the least wise." But to this his brothers did not all in their hearts agree.

Therefore even as Mandos foretold the House of Fëanor were called the Dispossessed, because the overlordship passed from it, the elder, to the house of Fingolfin, both in Elendë and in Beleriand, and because also of the loss of the Silmarils. But the Noldor being again united set a watch upon the borders of Dor Daedeloth, and Angband was beleaguered from west, and south, and east; and they sent forth messengers far and wide to explore the countries of Beleriand, and to treat with the people that dwelt there.

Now King Thingol welcomed not with a full heart the coming of so many princes in might out of the West, eager for new realms; and he would not open his kingdom, nor remove its girdle of enchantment, for wise with the wisdom of Melian he trusted not that the restraint of Morgoth would endure. Alone of the princes of the

Noldor those of Finarfin's house were suffered to pass within the confines of Doriath; for they could claim close kinship with King Thingol himself, since their mother was Eärwen of Alqualondë, Olwë's daughter.

Angrod son of Finarfin was the first of the Exiles to come to Menegroth, as messenger of his brother Finrod, and he spoke long with the King, telling him of the deeds of the Noldor in the north, and of their numbers, and of the ordering of their force; but being true, and wisehearted, and thinking all griefs now forgiven, he spoke no word concerning the kinslaying, nor of the manner of the exile of the Noldor and the oath of Fëanor. King Thingol hearkened to the words of Angrod; and ere he went he said to him: "Thus shall you speak for me to those that sent you. In Hithlum the Noldor have leave to dwell, and in the highlands of Dorthonion, and in the lands east of Doriath that are empty and wild; but elsewhere there are many of my people, and I would not have them restrained of their freedom, still less ousted from their homes. Beware therefore how you princes of the West bear yourselves; for I am the Lord of Beleriand, and all who seek to dwell there shall hear my word. Into Doriath none shall come to abide but only such as I call as guests, or who seek me in great need."

Now the lords of the Noldor held council in Mithrim, and thither came Angrod out of Doriath, bearing the message of King Thingol. Cold seemed its welcome to the Noldor, and the sons of Fëanor were angered at the words; but Maedhros laughed, saying: "A king is he that can hold his own, or else his title is vain. Thingol does but grant us lands where his power does not run. Indeed Doriath alone would be his realm this day, but for the coming of the Noldor. Therefore in Doriath let him reign, and be glad that he has the sons of Finwë for his neighbours, not the Orcs of Morgoth that we found. Elsewhere it shall go as seems good to us."

But Caranthir, who loved not the sons of Finarfin, and was the harshest of the brothers and the most quick to anger, cried aloud: "Yea more! Let not the sons of Finarfin run hither and thither with their tales to this Dark Elf in his caves! Who made them our spokesmen to deal with him? And though they be come indeed to Beleriand, let them not so swiftly forget that their father is a lord of the Noldor, though their mother be of other kin."

Then Angrod was wrathful and went forth from the council. Maedhros indeed rebuked Caranthir; but the greater part of the Noldor, of both followings, hearing his words were troubled in heart, fearing the fell spirit of the sons of Fëanor that it seemed would ever be like to burst forth in rash word or violence. But Maedhros restrained his brothers, and they departed from the council, and soon afterwards they left Mithrim and went eastward beyond Aros to the wide lands about the Hill of Himring. That region was named thereafter the March of Maedhros; for northwards there was little defence of hill or river against assault from Angband. There Maedhros and his brothers kept watch, gathering all such people as would come to them, and they had few dealings with their kinsfolk westward, save at need. It is said indeed that Maedhros himself devised this plan, to lessen the chances of strife, and because he was very willing that the chief peril of assault should fall upon himself; and he remained for his part in friendship with the houses of Fingolfin and Finarfin, and would come among them at times for common counsel. Yet he also was bound by the oath, though it slept now for a time.

Now the people of Caranthir dwelt furthest east beyond the upper waters of Gelion, about Lake Helevorn under Mount Rerir and to the southward; and they climbed the heights of Ered Luin and looked eastward in wonder, for wild and wide it seemed to them were the lands of Middle-earth. And thus it was that Caranthir's people came upon the Dwarves, who after the onslaught of Morgoth and the coming of the Noldor had ceased their traffic into Beleriand. But though either people loved skill and were eager to learn, no great love was there between them; for the Dwarves were secret and quick to resentment, and Caranthir was haughty and scarce concealed his scorn for the unloveliness of the Naugrim, and his people followed their lord. Nevertheless since both peoples feared and hated Morgoth they made alliance, and had of it great profit; for the Naugrim learned many secrets of craft in those days, so that the smiths and masons of Nogrod and Belegost became renowned among their kin, and when the Dwarves began again to journey into Beleriand all the traffic of the dwarf-mines passed first through the hands of Caranthir, and thus great riches came to him.

When twenty years of the Sun had passed, Fingolfin King of the Noldor made a great feast; and it was held in the spring near to the pools of Ivrin, whence the swift river Narog rose, for there the lands were green and fair at the feet of the Mountains of Shadow that shielded them from the north. The joy of that feast was long remembered in later days of sorrow; and it was called Mereth Aderthad, the Feast of Reuniting. Thither came many of the chieftains and people of Fingolfin and Finrod; and of the sons of Fëanor Maedhros and Maglor,

with warriors of the eastern March; and there came also great numbers of the Grey-elves, wanderers of the woods of Beleriand and folk of the Havens, with Círdan their lord. There came even Green-elves from Ossiriand, the Land of Seven Rivers, far off under the walls of the Blue Mountains; but out of Doriath there came but two messengers, Mablung and Daeron, bearing greetings from the King.

At Mereth Aderthad many counsels were taken in good will, and oaths were sworn of league and friendship; and it is told that at this feast the tongue of the Grey-elves was most spoken even by the Noldor, for they learned swiftly the speech of Beleriand, whereas the Sindar were slow to master the tongue of Valinor. The hearts of the Noldor were high and full of hope, and to many among them it seemed that the words of Fëanor had been justified, bidding them seek freedom and fair kingdoms in Middle-earth; and indeed there followed after long years of peace, while their swords fenced Beleriand from the ruin of Morgoth, and his power was shut behind his gates. In those days there was joy beneath the new Sun and Moon, and all the land was glad; but still the Shadow brooded in the north.

And when again thirty years had passed, Turgon son of Fingolfin left Nevrast where he dwelt and sought out Finrod his friend upon the island of Tol Sirion, and they journeyed southward along the river, being weary for a while of the northern mountains; and as they journeyed night came upon them beyond the Meres of Twilight beside the waters of Sirion, and they slept upon his banks beneath the summer stars. But Ulmo coming up the river laid a deep sleep upon them and heavy dreams; and the trouble of the dreams remained after they awoke, but neither said aught to the other, for their memory was not clear, and each believed that Ulmo had sent a message to him alone. But unquiet was upon them ever after, and doubt of what should befall, and they wandered often alone in untrodden lands, seeking far and wide for places of hidden strength; for it seemed to each that he was bidden to prepare for a day of evil, and to establish a retreat, lest Morgoth should burst from Angband and overthrow the armies of the North.

Now on a time Finrod and Galadriel his sister were the guests of Thingol their kinsman in Doriath. Then Finrod was filled with wonder at the strength and majesty of Menegroth, its treasures and armouries and its many-pillared halls of stone; and it came into his heart that he would build wide halls behind ever-guarded gates in some deep and secret place beneath the hills. Therefore he opened his heart to Thingol, telling him of his dreams; and Thingol spoke to him of the deep gorge of the River Narog, and the caves under the High Faroth in its steep western shore, and when he departed he gave him guides to lead him to that place of which few yet knew. Thus Finrod came to the Caverns of Narog, and began to establish there deep halls and armouries after the fashion of the mansions of Menegroth; and that stronghold was called Nargothrond. In that labour Finrod was aided by the Dwarves of the Blue Mountains; and they were rewarded well, for Finrod had brought more treasures out of Tirion than any other of the princes of the Noldor. And in that time was made for him the Nauglamír, the Necklace of the Dwarves, most renowned of their works in the Elder Days. It was a carcanet of gold, and set therein were gems uncounted from Valinor; but it had a power within it so that it rested lightly on its wearer as a strand of flax, and whatsoever neck it clasped it sat always with grace and loveliness.

There in Nargothrond Finrod made his home with many of his people, and he was named in the tongue of the Dwarves Felagund, Hewer of Caves; and that name he bore thereafter until his end. But Finrod Felagund was not the first to dwell in the caves beside the River Narog.

Galadriel his sister went not with him to Nargothrond, for in Doriath dwelt Celeborn, kinsman of Thingol, and there was great love between them. Therefore she remained in the Hidden Kingdom, and abode with Melian, and of her learned great lore and wisdom concerning Middle-earth.

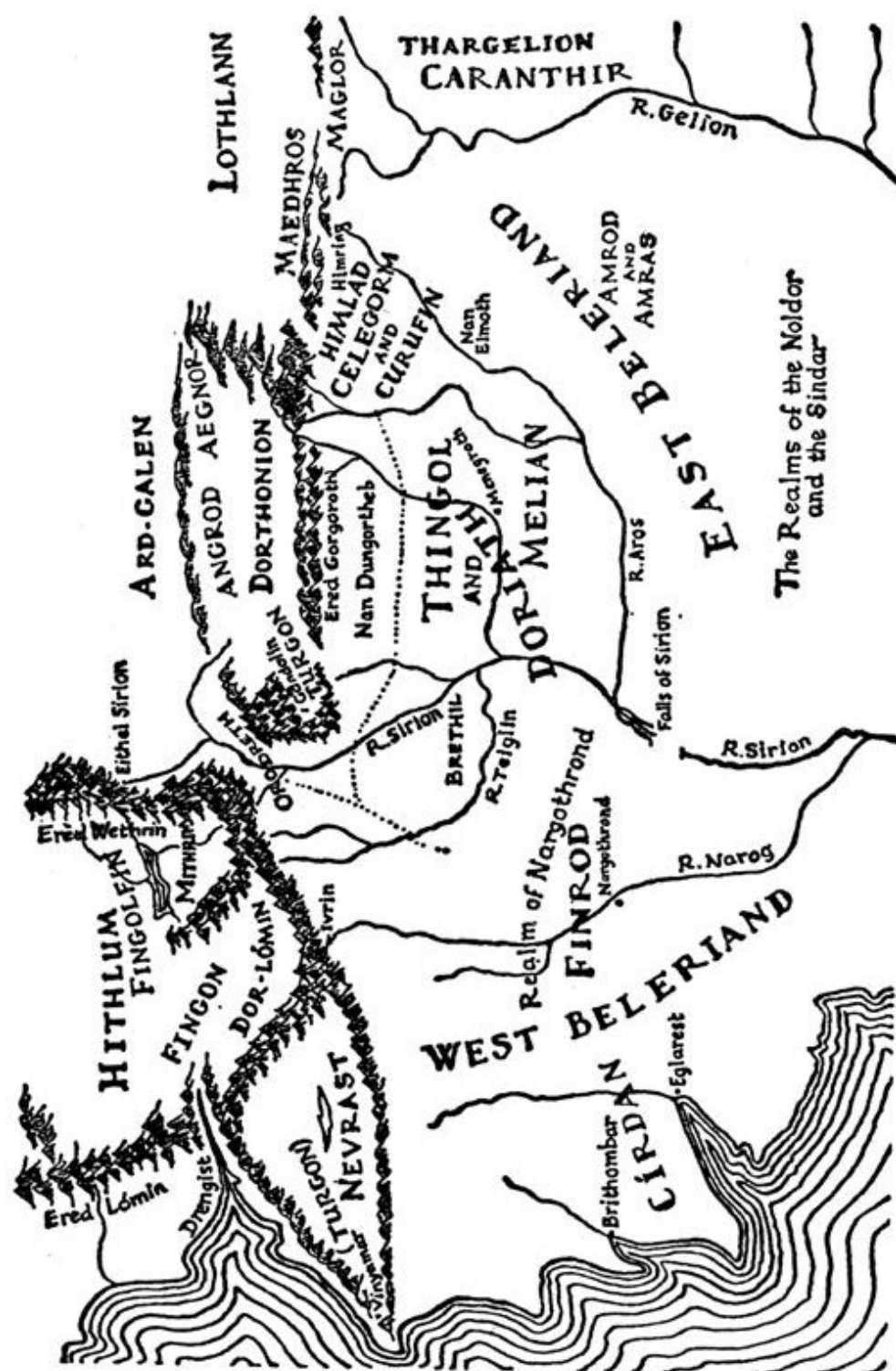
But Turgon remembered the city set upon a hill, Tirion the fair with its tower and tree, and he found not what he sought, but returned to Nevrast, and sat in peace in Vinyamar by the shores of the sea. And in the next year Ulmo himself appeared to him, and bade him go forth again alone into the Vale of Sirion; and Turgon went forth, and by the guidance of Ulmo he discovered the hidden vale of Tumladen in the Encircling Mountains, in the midst of which there was a hill of stone. Of this he spoke to none as yet, but returned once more to Nevrast, and there began in his secret counsels to devise the plan of a city after the manner of Tirion upon Túna, for which his heart yearned in exile.

Now Morgoth, believing the report of his spies that the lords of the Noldor were wandering abroad with little thought of war, made trial of the strength and watchfulness of his enemies. Once more, with little warning, his might was stirred, and suddenly there were earthquakes in the north, and fire came from fissures in the earth, and the Iron Mountains vomited flame; and Orcs poured forth across the plain of Ard-galen. Thence they thrust down the Pass of Sirion in the west, and in the east they burst through the land of Maglor, in the gap between the hills of Maedhros and the outliers of the Blue Mountains. But Fingolfin and Maedhros were not sleeping, and while others sought out the scattered bands of Orcs that strayed in Beleriand and did great evil they came upon the main host from either side as it was assaulting Dorthonion; and they defeated the servants of Morgoth, and pursuing them across Ard-galen destroyed them utterly, to the least and last, within sight of Angband's gates. That was the third great battle of the Wars of Beleriand, and it was named Dagor Aglareb, the Glorious Battle.

A victory it was, and yet a warning; and the princes took heed of it, and thereafter drew closer their leaguer, and strengthened and ordered their watch, setting the Siege of Angband, which lasted wellnigh four hundred years of the Sun. For a long time after Dagor Aglareb no servant of Morgoth would venture from his gates, for they feared the lords of the Noldor; and Fingolfin boasted that save by treason among themselves Morgoth could never again burst from the leaguer of the Eldar, nor come upon them at unawares. Yet the Noldor could not capture Angband, nor could they regain the Silmarils; and war never wholly ceased in all that time of the Siege, for Morgoth devised new evils, and ever and anon he would make trial of his enemies. Nor could the stronghold of Morgoth be ever wholly encircled; for the Iron Mountains, from whose great curving wall the towers of Thangorodrim were thrust forward, defended it upon either side, and were impassable to the Noldor, because of their snow and ice. Thus in his rear and to the north Morgoth had no foes, and by that way his spies at times went out, and came by devious routes into Beleriand. And desiring above all to sow fear and disunion among the Eldar, he commanded the Orcs to take alive any of them that they could and bring them bound to Angband; and some he so daunted by the terror of his eyes that they needed no chains more, but walked ever in fear of him, doing his will wherever they might be. Thus Morgoth learned much of all that had befallen since the rebellion of Fëanor, and he rejoiced, seeing therein the seed of many dissensions among his foes.

When nearly one hundred years had run since the Dagor Aglareb, Morgoth endeavoured to take Fingolfin at unawares (for he knew of the vigilance of Maedhros); and he sent forth an army into the white north, and they turned west and again south and came down the coasts to the Firth of Drengist, by the route that Fingolfin followed from the Grinding Ice. Thus they would enter into the realm of Hithlum from the west; but they were espied in time, and Fingon fell upon them among the hills at the head of the Firth, and most of the Orcs were driven into the sea. This was not reckoned among the great battles, for the Orcs were not in great number, and only a part of the people of Hithlum fought there. But thereafter there was peace for many years, and no open assault from Angband, for Morgoth perceived now that the Orcs unaided were no match for the Noldor; and he sought in his heart for new counsel.

Again after a hundred years Glaurung, the first of the Urulóki, the fire-drakes of the North, issued from Angband's gates by night. He was yet young and scarce half-grown, for long and slow is the life of the dragons, but the Elves fled before him to Ered Wethrin and Dorthonion in dismay; and he defiled the fields of Ard-galen. Then Fingon prince of Hithlum rode against him with archers on horseback, and hemmed him round with a ring of swift riders; and Glaurung could not endure their darts, being not yet come to his full armoury, and he fled back to Angband, and came not forth again for many years. Fingon won great praise, and the Noldor rejoiced; for few foresaw the full meaning and threat of this new thing. But Morgoth was ill-pleased that Glaurung had disclosed himself oversoon; and after his defeat there was the Long Peace of wellnigh two hundred years. In all that time there were but affrays on the marches, and all Beleriand prospered and grew rich. Behind the guard of their armies in the north the Noldor built their dwellings and their towers, and many fair things they made in those days, and poems and histories and books of lore. In many parts of the land the Noldor and the Sindar became welded into one people, and spoke the same tongue; though this difference remained between them, that the Noldor had the greater power of mind and body, and were the mightier warriors and sages, and they built with stone, and loved the hill-slopes and open lands. But the Sindar had the fairer voices and were more skilled in music, save only Maglor son of Fëanor, and they loved the woods and the riversides; and some of the Grey-elves still wandered far and wide without settled abode, and they sang as they went.





## Chapter 14: Of Beleriand And Its Realms

This is the fashion of the lands into which the Noldor came, in the north of the western regions of Middle-earth, in the ancient days; and here also is told of the manner in which the chieftains of the Eldar held their lands and the leaguer upon Morgoth after the Dagor Aglareb, the third battle in the Wars of Beleriand.

In the north of the world Melkor had in the ages past reared Ered Engrin, the Iron Mountains, as a fence to his citadel of Utumno; and they stood upon the borders of the regions of everlasting cold, in a great curve from east to west. Behind the walls of Ered Engrin in the west, where they bent back northwards, Melkor built another fortress, as a defence against assault that might come from Valinor; and when he came back to Middle-earth, as has been told, he took up his abode in the endless dungeons of Angband, the Hells of Iron, for in the War of the Powers the Valar, in their haste to overthrow him in his great stronghold of Utumno, did not wholly destroy Angband nor search out all its deep places. Beneath Ered Engrin he made a great tunnel, which issued south of the mountains; and there he made a mighty gate. But above this gate, and behind it even to the mountains, he piled the thunderous towers of Thangorodrim, that were made of the ash and slag of his subterranean furnaces, and the vast refuse of his tunnellings. They were black and desolate and exceedingly lofty; and smoke issued from their tops, dark and foul upon the northern sky. Before the gates of Angband filth and desolation spread southward for many miles over the wide plain of Ard-galen; but after the coming of the Sun rich grass arose there, and while Angband was besieged and its gates shut there were green things even among the pits and broken rocks before the doors of hell.

To the west of Thangorodrim lay Hísilómë, the Land of Mist, for so it was named by the Noldor in their own tongue because of the clouds that Morgoth sent thither during their first encampment; Hithlum it became in the tongue of the Sindar that dwelt in those regions. It was a fair land while the Siege of Angband lasted, although its air was cool and winter there was cold. In the west it was bounded by Ered Lómin, the Echoing Mountains that marched near the sea; and in the east and south by the great curve of Ered Wethrin, the Shadowy Mountains, that looked across Ard-galen and the Vale of Sirion.

Fingolfin and Fingon his son held Hithlum, and the most part of Fingolfin's folk dwelt in Mithrim about the shores of the great lake; to Fingon was assigned Dor-lómin, that lay to the west of the Mountains of Mithrim. But their chief fortress was at Eithel Sirion in the east of Ered Wethrin, whence they kept watch upon Ard-galen; and their cavalry rode upon that plain even to the shadow of Thangorodrim, for from few their horses had increased swiftly, and the grass of Ard-galen was rich and green. Of those horses many of the sires came from Valinor, and they were given to Fingolfin by Maedhros in atonement of his losses, for they had been carried by ship to Losgar.

West of Dor-lómin, beyond the Echoing Mountains, which south of the Firth of Drengist marched inland, lay Nevrast, that signifies the Hither Shore in the Sindarin tongue. That name was given at first to all the coastlands south of the Firth, but afterwards only to the land whose shores lay between Drengist and Mount Taras. There for many years was the realm of Turgon the wise, son of Fingolfin, bounded by the sea, and by Ered Lómin, and by the hills which continued the walls of Ered Wethrin westward, from Ivrin to Mount Taras, which stood upon a promontory. By some Nevrast was held to belong rather to Beleriand than to Hithlum, for it was a milder land, watered by the wet winds from the sea and sheltered from the cold north winds that blew over Hithlum. It was a hollow land, surrounded by mountains and great coast-cliffs higher than the plains behind, and no river flowed thence; and there was a great mere in the midst of Nevrast, with no certain shores, being encircled by wide marshes. Linaewen was the name of that mere, because of the multitude of birds that dwelt there, of such as love tall reeds and shallow pools. At the coming of the Noldor many of the Grey-elves lived in Nevrast near to the coasts, and especially about Mount Taras in the southwest; for to that place Ulmo and Ossë had been wont to come in days of old. All that people took Turgon for their lord, and the mingling of the

Noldor and the Sindar came to pass soonest there; and Turgon dwelt long in those halls that he named Vinyamar, under Mount Taras beside the sea.

South of Ard-galen the great highland named Dorthonion stretched for sixty leagues from west to east; great pine forests it bore, especially on its northern and western sides. By gentle slopes from the plain it rose to a bleak and lofty land, where lay many tarns at the feet of bare tors whose heads were higher than the peaks of Ered Wethrin: but southward where it looked towards Doriath it fell suddenly in dreadful precipices. From the northern slopes of Dorthonion Angrod and Aegnor, sons of Finarfin, looked out over the fields of Ard-galen, and were the vassals of their brother Finrod, lord of Nargothrond; their people were few, for the land was barren, and the great highlands behind were deemed to be a bulwark that Morgoth would not lightly seek to cross.

Between Dorthonion and the Shadowy Mountains there was a narrow vale, whose sheer walls were clad with pines; but the vale itself was green, for the River Sirion flowed through it, hastening towards Beleriand. Finrod held the Pass of Sirion, and upon the isle of Tol Sirion in the midst of the river he built a mighty watch-tower, Minas Tirith; but after Nargothrond was made he committed that fortress mostly to the keeping of Orodreth his brother.

Now the great and fair country of Beleriand lay on either side of the mighty river Sirion, renowned in song, which rose at Eithel Sirion and skirted the edge of Ard-galen ere he plunged through the pass, becoming ever fuller with the streams of the mountains. Thence he flowed south for one hundred and thirty leagues, gathering the waters of many tributaries, until with a mighty flood he reached his many mouths and sandy delta in the Bay of Balar. And following Sirion from north to south there lay upon the right hand in West Beleriand the Forest of Brethil between Sirion and Teiglin, and then the realm of Nargothrond, between Teiglin and Narog. And the River Narog rose in the falls of Ivrin in the southern face of Dor-lómin, and flowed some eighty leagues ere he joined Sirion in Nan-tathren, the Land of Willows. South of Nan-tathren was a region of meads filled with many flowers, where few folk dwelt; and beyond lay the marshes and isles of reed about the mouths of Sirion, and the sands of his delta empty of all living things save birds of the sea.

But the realm of Nargothrond extended also west of Narog to the River Nenning, that reached the sea at Eglarest; and Finrod became the overlord of all the Elves of Beleriand between Sirion and the sea, save only in the Falas. There dwelt those of the Sindar who still loved ships, and Círdan the shipbuilder was their lord; but between Círdan and Finrod there was friendship and alliance, and with the aid of the Noldor the havens of Brithombar and Eglarest were built anew. Behind their great walls they became fair towns and harbours with quays and piers of stone. Upon the cape west of Eglarest Finrod raised the tower of Barad Nimras to watch the western sea, though needlessly, as it proved; for at no time ever did Morgoth essay to build ships or to make war by sea. Water all his servants shunned, and to the sea none would willingly go nigh, save in dire need. With the aid of the Elves of the Havens some of the folk of Nargothrond built new ships, and they went forth and explored the great Isle of Balar, thinking there to prepare a last refuge, if evil came; but it was not their fate that they should ever dwell there.

Thus the realm of Finrod was the greatest by far, though he was the youngest of the great lords of the Noldor, Fingolfin, Fingon, and Maedhros, and Finrod Felagund. But Fingolfin was held overlord of all the Noldor, and Fingon after him, though their own realm was but the northern land of Hithlum; yet their people were the most hardy and valiant, most feared by the Orcs and most hated by Morgoth.

Upon the left hand of Sirion lay East Beleriand, at its widest a hundred leagues from Sirion to Gelion and the borders of Ossiriand; and first, between Sirion and Mindeb, lay the empty land of Dimbar under the peaks of the Crissaegrim, abode of eagles. Between Mindeb and the upper waters of Esgalduin lay the no-land of Nan Dungortheb; and that region was filled with fear, for upon its one side the power of Melian fenced the north march of Doriath, but upon the other side the sheer precipices of Ered Gorgoroth, Mountains of Terror, fell down from high Dorthonion. Thither, as was earlier told, Ungoliant had fled from the whips of the Balrogs, and there she dwelt a while, filling the ravines with her deadly gloom, and there still, when she had passed away, her foul offspring lurked and wove their evil nets; and the thin waters that spilled from Ered Gorgoroth were defiled, and perilous to drink, for the hearts of those that tasted them were filled with shadows of madness and despair. All living things else shunned that land, and the Noldor would pass through Nan Dungortheb only at

great need, by paths near to the borders of Doriath and furthest from the haunted hills. That way was made long before, in the time ere Morgoth returned to Middle-earth; and if one fared upon it he came eastwards to Esgalduin, where still there stood in the days of the Siege the stone bridge of Iant Iaur. Thence he passed through Dor Dínen, the Silent Land, and crossing the Arossiach (which signifies the Fords of Aros) came to the north marches of Beleriand, where dwelt the sons of Fëanor.

Southward lay the guarded woods of Doriath, abode of Thingol the Hidden King, into whose realm none passed save by his will. Its northern and lesser part, the Forest of Neldoreth, was bounded east and south by the dark river Esgalduin, which bent westward in the midst of the land; and between Aros and Esgalduin lay the denser and greater woods of Region. Upon the southern bank of Esgalduin, where it turned westward towards Sirion, were the Caves of Menegroth; and all Doriath lay east of Sirion save for a narrow region of woodland between the meeting of Teiglin and Sirion and the Meres of Twilight. By the people of Doriath this wood was called Nivrim, the West March; great oak-trees grew there, and it also was encompassed within the Girdle of Melian, that so some portion of Sirion which she loved in reverence of Ulmo should be wholly under the power of Thingol.

In the south-west of Doriath, where Aros flowed into Sirion, lay great pools and marshes on either side of the river, which halted there in his course and strayed in many channels. That region was named Aelin-uial, the Twilight Meres, for they were wrapped in mists, and the enchantment of Doriath lay over them. Now all the northern part of Beleriand sloped southward to this point and then for a while was plain, and the flood of Sirion was stayed. But south of Aelin-uial the land fell suddenly and steeply; and all the lower fields of Sirion were divided from the upper fields by this fall, which to one looking from the south northward appeared as an endless chain of hills running from Eglarest beyond Narog in the west to Amon Ereb in the east, within far sight of Gelion. Narog came through these hills in a deep gorge, and flowed over rapids but had no fall, and on its western bank the land rose into the great wooded highlands of Tauren-Faroth. On the west side of this gorge, where the short and foaming stream Ringwil tumbled headlong into Narog from the High Faroth, Finrod established Nargothrond. But some twenty-five leagues east of the gorge of Nargothrond Sirion fell from the north in a mighty fall below the Meres, and then he plunged suddenly underground into great tunnels that the weight of his falling waters delved; and he issued again three leagues southward with great noise and smoke through rocky arches at the foot of the hills which were called the Gates of Sirion.

This dividing fall was named Andram, the Long Wall, from Nargothrond to Ramdal, the Wall's End, in East Beleriand. But in the east it became ever less sheer, for the vale of Gelion sloped steadily southward, and Gelion had neither fall nor rapids throughout his course, but was ever swifter than was Sirion. Between Ramdal and Gelion there stood a single hill of great extent and gentle slopes, but seeming mightier than it was, for it stood alone; and that hill was named Amon Ereb. Upon Amon Ereb died Denethor, lord of the Nandor that dwelt in Ossiriand, who marched to the aid of Thingol against Morgoth in those days when the Orcs first came down in force, and broke the starlit peace of Beleriand; and upon that hill Maedhros dwelt after the great defeat. But south of the Andram, between Sirion and Gelion, was a wild land of tangled forest in which no folk went, save here and there a few Dark Elves wandering; Taur-im-Duinath it was named, the Forest between the Rivers.

Gelion was a great river; and he rose in two sources and had at first two branches: Little Gelion that came from the Hill of Himring, and Greater Gelion that came from Mount Rerir. From the meeting of his arms he flowed south for forty leagues before he found his tributaries; and before he found the sea he was twice as long as Sirion, though less wide and full, for more rain fell in Hithlum and Dorthonion, whence Sirion drew his waters, than in the east. From Ered Luin flowed the six tributaries of Gelion: Ascar (that was after named Rathlóriel), Thalos, Legolin, Brilthor, Duilwen, and Adurant, swift and turbulent streams, falling steeply from the mountains; and between Ascar in the north and Adurant in the south, and between Gelion and Ered Luin, lay the far green country of Ossiriand, the Land of Seven Rivers. Now at a point nearly midway in its course the stream of Adurant divided and then joined again; and the island that its waters enclosed was named Tol Galen, the Green Isle. There Beren and Lúthien dwelt after their return.

In Ossiriand dwelt the Green-elves, in the protection of their rivers; for after Sirion Ulmo loved Gelion above all the waters of the western world. The woodcraft of the Elves of Ossiriand was such that a stranger might pass through their land from end to end and see none of them. They were clad in green in spring and summer, and



the sound of their singing could be heard even across the waters of Gelion; wherefore the Noldor named that country Lindon, the land of music, and the mountains beyond they named Ered Lindon, for they first saw them from Ossiriand.

East of Dorthonion the marches of Beleriand were most open to attack, and only hills of no great height guarded the vale of Gelion from the north. In that region, upon the March of Maedhros and in the lands behind, dwelt the sons of Fëanor with many people; and their riders passed often over the vast northern plain, Lothlann the wide and empty, east of Ard-galen, lest Morgoth should attempt any sortie towards East Beleriand. The chief citadel of Maedhros was upon the Hill of Himring, the Ever-cold; and that was wide-shouldered, bare of trees, and flat upon its summit, surrounded by many lesser hills. Between Himring and Dorthonion there was a pass, exceeding steep upon the west, and that was the Pass of Aglon, and was a gate unto Doriath; and a bitter wind blew ever through it from the north. But Celegorm and Curufin fortified Aglon and held it with great strength, and all the land of Himlad southward between the River Aros that rose in Dorthonion and his tributary Celon that came from Himring.

Between the arms of Gelion was the ward of Maglor, and here in one place the hills failed altogether; there it was that the Orcs came into East Beleriand before the Third Battle. Therefore the Noldor held strength of cavalry in the plains at that place; and the people of Caranthir fortified the mountains to the east of Maglor's Gap. There Mount Rerir, and about it many lesser heights, stood out from the main range of Ered Lindon westward; and in the angle between Rerir and Ered Lindon there was a lake, shadowed by mountains on all sides save the south. That was Lake Helevorn, deep and dark, and beside it Caranthir had his abode; but all the great land between Gelion and the mountains, and between Rerir and the River Ascar, was called by the Noldor Thargelion, which signifies the Land beyond Gelion, or Dor Caranthir, the Land of Caranthir; and it was here that the Noldor first met the Dwarves. But Thargelion was before called by the Grey-elves Talath Rhúnen, the East Vale.

Thus the sons of Fëanor under Maedhros were the lords of East Beleriand, but their people were in that time mostly in the north of the land, and southward they rode only to hunt in the greenwoods. But there Amrod and Amras had their abode, and they came seldom northward while the Siege lasted; and there also other of the Elf-lords would ride at times, even from afar, for the land was wild but very fair. Of these Finrod Felagund came most often, for he had great love of wandering, and he came even into Ossiriand, and won the friendship of the Green-elves. But none of the Noldor went ever over Ered Lindon, while their realm lasted; and little news and late came into Beleriand of what passed in the regions of the East.



## Chapter 15: Of The Noldor In Beleriand

It has been told how by the guidance of Ulmo Turgon of Nevrast discovered the hidden vale of Tumladen; and that (as was after known) lay east of the upper waters of Sirion, in a ring of mountains tall and sheer, and no living thing came there save the eagles of Thorondor. But there was a deep way under the mountains delved in the darkness of the world by waters that flowed out to join the streams of Sirion; and this way Turgon found, and so came to the green plain amid the mountains, and saw the island-hill that stood there of hard smooth stone; for the vale had been a great lake in ancient days. Then Turgon knew that he had found the place of his desire, and he resolved to build there a fair city, a memorial of Tirion upon Túna; but he returned to Nevrast, and remained there in peace, though he pondered ever in his thought how he should accomplish his design.

Now after the Dagor Aglareb the inquiet that Ulmo set in his heart returned to him, and he summoned many of the hardest and most skilled of his people, and led them secretly to the hidden vale, and there they began the building of the city that Turgon had devised; and they set a watch all about it, that none might come upon their work from without, and the power of Ulmo that ran in Sirion protected them. But Turgon dwelt still for the most part in Nevrast, until it came to pass that at last the city was full-wrought, after two and fifty years of secret toil. It is said that Turgon appointed its name to be Ondolindë in the speech of the Elves of Valinor, the Rock of the Music of Water, for there were fountains upon the hill; but in the Sindarin tongue the name was changed, and it became Gondolin, the Hidden Rock. Then Turgon prepared to depart from Nevrast and leave his halls in Vinyamar beside the sea; and there Ulmo came to him once again, and spoke with him. And he said: “Now thou shalt go at last to Gondolin, Turgon; and I will maintain my power in the Vale of Sirion, and in all the waters therein, so that none shall mark thy going, nor shall any find there the hidden entrance against thy will. Longest of all the realms of the Eldalië shall Gondolin stand against Melkor. But love not too well the work of thy hands and the devices of thy heart; and remember that the true hope of the Noldor lieth in the West and cometh from the Sea.”

And Ulmo warned Turgon that he also lay under the Doom of Mandos, which Ulmo had no power to remove. “Thus it may come to pass,” he said, “that the curse of the Noldor shall find thee too ere the end, and treason awake within thy walls. Then they shall be in peril of fire. But if this peril draweth nigh indeed, then even from Nevrast one shall come to warn thee, and from him beyond ruin and fire hope shall be born for Elves and Men. Leave therefore in this house arms and a sword, that in years to come he may find them, and thus shalt thou know him, and not be deceived.” And Ulmo declared to Turgon of what kind and stature should be the helm and mail and sword that he left behind.

Then Ulmo returned to the sea, and Turgon sent forth all his people, even to a third part of the Noldor of Fingolfin’s following, and a yet greater host of the Sindar; and they passed away, company by company, secretly, under the shadows of Ered Wethrin, and they came unseen to Gondolin, and none knew whither they had gone. And last of all Turgon arose, and went with his household silently through the hills, and passed the gates in the mountains, and they were shut behind him.

Through many long years none passed inward thereafter, save Húrin and Huor only; and the host of Turgon came never forth again until the Year of Lamentation after three hundred and fifty years and more. But behind the circle of the mountains the people of Turgon grew and throve, and they put forth their skill in labour unceasing, so that Gondolin upon Amon Gwareth became fair indeed and fit to compare even with Elven Tirion beyond the sea. High and white were its walls, and smooth its stairs, and tall and strong was the Tower of the King. There shining fountains played, and in the courts of Turgon stood images of the Trees of old, which Turgon himself wrought with elven-craft; and the Tree which he made of gold was named Glingal, and the Tree whose flowers he made of silver was named Belthil. But fairer than all the wonders of Gondolin was Idril, Turgon’s daughter, she that was called Celebrindal, the Silver-foot, whose hair was as the gold of Laurelin

before the coming of Melkor. Thus Turgon lived long in bliss; but Nevrast was desolate, and remained empty of living folk until the ruin of Beleriand.

Now while the city of Gondolin was building in secret, Finrod Felagund wrought in the deep places of Nargothrond; but Galadriel his sister dwelt, as has been told, in Thingol's realm in Doriath. And at times Melian and Galadriel would speak together of Valinor and the bliss of old; but beyond the dark hour of the death of the Trees Galadriel would not go, but ever fell silent. And on a time Melian said: "There is some woe that lies upon you and your kin. That I can see in you, but all else is hidden from me; for by no vision or thought can I perceive anything that passed or passes in the West: a shadow lies over all the land of Aman, and reaches far out over the sea. Why will you not tell me more?"

"For that woe is past," said Galadriel; "and I would take what joy is here left, untroubled by memory. And maybe there is woe enough yet to come, though still hope may seem bright."

Then Melian looked in her eyes, and said: "I believe not that the Noldor came forth as messengers of the Valar, as was said at first: not though they came in the very hour of our need. For they speak never of the Valar, nor have their high lords brought any message to Thingol, whether from Manwë, or Ulmo, or even from Olwë the King's brother, and his own folk that went over the sea. For what cause, Galadriel, were the high people of the Noldor driven forth as exiles from Aman? Or what evil lies on the sons of Fëanor that they are so haughty and so fell? Do I not strike near the truth?"

"Near," said Galadriel; "save that we were not driven forth, but came of our own will, and against that of the Valar. And through great peril and in despite of the Valar for this purpose we came: to take vengeance upon Morgoth, and regain what he stole."

Then Galadriel spoke to Melian of the Silmarils, and of the slaying of King Finwë at Formenos; but still she said no word of the Oath, nor of the Kinslaying, nor of the burning of the ships at Losgar. But Melian said: "Now much you tell me, and yet more I perceive. A darkness you would cast over the long road from Tirion, but I see evil there, which Thingol should learn for his guidance."

"Maybe," said Galadriel; "but not of me."

And Melian spoke then no more of these matters with Galadriel; but she told to King Thingol all that she had heard of the Silmarils. "This is a great matter," she said, "greater indeed than the Noldor themselves understand; for the Light of Aman and the fate of Arda lie locked now in these things, the work of Fëanor, who is gone. They shall not be recovered, I foretell, by any power of the Eldar; and the world shall be broken in battles that are to come, ere they are wrested from Morgoth. See now! Fëanor they have slain, and many another, as I guess; but first of all the deaths they have brought and yet shall bring was Finwë your friend. Morgoth slew him, ere he fled from Aman."

Then Thingol was silent, being filled with grief and foreboding; but at length he said: "Now at last I understand the coming of the Noldor out of the West, at which I wondered much before. Not to our aid did they come (save by chance); for those that remain in Middle-earth the Valar will leave to their own devices, until the uttermost need. For vengeance and redress of their loss the Noldor came. Yet all the more sure shall they be as allies against Morgoth, with whom it is not now to be thought that they shall ever make treaty."

But Melian said: "Truly for these causes they came; but for others also. Beware of the sons of Fëanor! The shadow of the wrath of the Valar lies upon them; and they have done evil, I perceive, both in Aman and to their own kin. A grief but lulled to sleep lies between the princes of the Noldor."

And Thingol answered: "What is that to me? Of Fëanor I have heard but report, which makes him great indeed. Of his sons I hear little to my pleasure; yet they are likely to prove the deadliest foes of our foe."

"Their swords and their counsels shall have two edges," said Melian; and afterwards they spoke no more of this matter.

It was not long before whispered tales began to pass among the Sindar concerning the deeds of the Noldor ere they came to Beleriand. Certain it is whence they came, and the evil truth was enhanced and poisoned by lies; but the Sindar were yet unwary and trustful of words, and (as may well be thought) Morgoth chose them for

this first assault of his malice, for they knew him not. And Círdan, hearing these dark tales, was troubled; for he was wise, and perceived swiftly that true or false they were put about at this time through malice, though the malice he deemed was that of the princes of the Noldor, because of the jealousy of their houses. Therefore he sent messengers to Thingol to tell all that he had heard.

It chanced that at that time the sons of Finarfin were again the guests of Thingol, for they wished to see their sister Galadriel. Then Thingol, being greatly moved, spoke in anger to Finrod, saying: "Ill have you done to me, kinsman, to conceal so great matters from me. For now I have learned of all the evil deeds of the Noldor."

But Finrod answered: "What ill have I done you, lord? Or what evil deed have the Noldor done in all your realm to grieve you? Neither against your kingship nor against any of your people have they thought evil or done evil."

"I marvel at you, son of Eärwen," said Thingol, "that you would come to the board of your kinsman thus red-handed from the slaying of your mother's kin, and yet say naught in defence, nor yet seek any pardon!"

Then Finrod was greatly troubled, but he was silent, for he could not defend himself, save by bringing charges against the other princes of the Noldor; and that he was loath to do before Thingol. But in Angrod's heart the memory of the words of Caranthir welled up again in bitterness, and he cried: "Lord, I know not what lies you have heard, nor whence; but we came not red-handed. Guiltless we came forth, save maybe of folly, to listen to the words of fell Fëanor, and become as if besotted with wine, and as briefly. No evil did we do on our road, but suffered ourselves great wrong; and forgave it. For this we are named tale-bearers to you and treasonable to the Noldor: untruly as you know, for we have of our loyalty been silent before you, and thus earned your anger. But now these charges are no longer to be borne, and the truth you shall know."

Then Angrod spoke bitterly against the sons of Fëanor, telling of the blood at Alqualondë, and the Doom of Mandos, and the burning of the ships at Losgar. And he cried: "Where-fore should we that endured the Grinding Ice bear the name of kinslayers and traitors?"

"Yet the shadow of Mandos lies on you also," said Melian. But Thingol was long silent ere he spoke. "Go now!" he said. "For my heart is hot within me. Later you may return, if you will; for I will not shut my doors for ever against you, my kindred, that were ensnared in an evil that you did not aid. With Fingolfin and his people also I will keep friendship, for they have bitterly atoned for such ill as they did. And in our hatred of the Power that wrought all this woe our griefs shall be lost. But hear my words! Never again in my ears shall be heard the tongue of those who slew my kin in Alqualondë! Nor in all my realm shall it be openly spoken, while my power endures. All the Sindar shall hear my command that they shall neither speak with the tongue of the Noldor nor answer to it. And all such as use it shall be held slayers of kin and betrayers of kin unrepentant."

Then the sons of Finarfin departed from Menegroth with heavy hearts, perceiving how the words of Mandos would ever be made true, and that none of the Noldor that followed after Fëanor could escape from the shadow that lay upon his house. And it came to pass even as Thingol had spoken; for the Sindar heard his word, and thereafter throughout Beleriand they refused the tongue of the Noldor, and shunned those that spoke it aloud; but the Exiles took the Sindarin tongue in all their daily uses, and the High Speech of the West was spoken only by the lords of the Noldor among themselves. Yet that speech lived ever as a language of lore, wherever any of that people dwelt.

It came to pass that Nargothrond was full-wrought (and yet Turgon still dwelt in the halls of Vinyamar), and the sons of Finarfin were gathered there to a feast; and Galadriel came from Doriath and dwelt a while in Nargothrond. Now King Finrod Felagund had no wife, and Galadriel asked him why this should be; but foresight came upon Felagund as she spoke, and he said: "An oath I too shall swear, and must be free to fulfil it, and go into darkness. Nor shall anything of my realm endure that a son should inherit."

But it is said that not until that hour had such cold thoughts ruled him; for indeed she whom he had loved was Amarië of the Vanyar, and she went not with him into exile.



## Chapter 16: Of Maeglin

Aredhel Ar-Feiniel, the White Lady of the Noldor, daughter of Fingolfin, dwelt in Nevrast with Turgon her brother, and she went with him to the Hidden Kingdom. But she wearied of the guarded city of Gondolin, desiring ever the longer the more to ride again in the wide lands and to walk in the forests, as had been her wont in Valinor; and when two hundred years had passed since Gondolin was full-wrought, she spoke to Turgon and asked leave to depart. Turgon was loath to grant this, and long denied her; but at the last he yielded, saying: "Go then, if you will, though it is against my wisdom, and I forebode that ill will come of it both to you and to me. But you shall go only to seek Fingon, our brother; and those that I send with you shall return hither to Gondolin as swiftly as they may."

But Aredhel said: "I am your sister and not your servant, and beyond your bounds I will go as seems good to me. And if you begrudge me an escort, then I will go alone."

Then Turgon answered: "I grudge you nothing that I have. Yet I desire that none shall dwell beyond my walls who know the way hither; and if I trust you, my sister, others I trust less to keep guard on their tongues."

And Turgon appointed three lords of his household to ride with Aredhel, and he bade them lead her to Fingon in Hithlum, if they might prevail upon her. "And be wary," he said; "for though Morgoth be yet hemmed in the North there are many perils in Middle-earth of which the Lady knows nothing." Then Aredhel departed from Gondolin, and Turgon's heart was heavy at her going.

But when she came to the Ford of Brithiach in the River Sirion she said to her companions: "Turn now south and not north, for I will not ride to Hithlum; my heart desires rather to find the sons of Fëanor, my friends of old." And since she could not be dissuaded they turned south as she commanded, and sought admittance into Doriath. But the march-wardens denied them; for Thingol would suffer none of the Noldor to pass the Girdle, save his kinsfolk of the house of Finarfin, and least of all those that were friends of the sons of Fëanor. Therefore the march-wardens said to Aredhel: "To the land of Celegorm for which you seek, Lady, you may by no means pass through the realm of King Thingol; you must ride beyond the Girdle of Melian, to the south or to the north. The speediest way is by the paths that lead east from the Brithiach through Dimbar and along the north-march of this kingdom, until you pass the Bridge of Esgalduin and the Fords of Aros, and come to the lands that lie behind the Hill of Himring. There dwell, as we believe, Celegorm and Curufin, and it may be that you will find them; but the road is perilous."

Then Aredhel turned back and sought the dangerous road between the haunted valleys of Ered Gorgoroth and the north fences of Doriath; and as they drew near to the evil region of Nan Dungortheb the riders became enmeshed in shadows, and Aredhel strayed from her companions and was lost. They sought long for her in vain, fearing that she had been ensnared, or had drunk from the poisoned streams of that land; but the fell creatures of Ungoliant that dwelt in the ravines were aroused and pursued them, and they hardly escaped with their lives. When at last they returned and their tale was told there was great sorrow in Gondolin; and Turgon sat long alone, enduring grief and anger in silence.

But Aredhel, having sought in vain for her companions, rode on, for she was fearless and hardy of heart, as were all the children of Finwë; and she held on her way, and crossing Esgalduin and Aros came to the land of Himlad between Aros and Celon where Celegorm and Curufin dwelt in those days, before the breaking of the Siege of Angband. At that time they were from home, riding with Caranthir east in Thargelion; but the people of Celegorm welcomed her and bade her stay among them with honour until their lord's return. There for a while she was content, and had great joy in wandering free in the woodlands; but as the year lengthened and Celegorm did not return, she became restless again, and took to riding alone ever further abroad, seeking for

new paths and untrodden glades. Thus it chanced in the waning of the year that Aredhel came to the south of Himlad, and passed over Celon; and before she was aware she was enmeshed in Nan Elmoth.

In that wood in ages past Melian walked in the twilight of Middle-earth when the trees were young, and enchantment lay upon it still. But now the trees of Nan Elmoth were the tallest and darkest in all Beleriand, and there the sun never came; and there Eöl dwelt, who was named the Dark Elf. Of old he was of the kin of Thingol, but he was restless and ill at ease in Doriath, and when the Girdle of Melian was set about the Forest of Region where he dwelt he fled thence to Nan Elmoth. There he lived in deep shadow, loving the night and the twilight under the stars. He shunned the Noldor, holding them to blame for the return of Morgoth, to trouble the quiet of Beleriand; but for the Dwarves he had more liking than any other of the Elvenfolk of old. From him the Dwarves learned much of what passed in the lands of the Eldar.

Now the traffic of the Dwarves down from the Blue Mountains followed two roads across East Beleriand, and the northern way, going towards the Fords of Aros, passed nigh to Nan Elmoth; and there Eöl would meet the Naugrim and hold converse with them. And as their friendship grew he would at times go and dwell as guest in the deep mansions of Nogrod or Belegost. There he learned much of metalwork, and came to great skill therein; and he devised a metal as hard as the steel of the Dwarves, but so malleable that he could make it thin and supple; and yet it remained resistant to all blades and darts. He named it *galvorn*, for it was black and shining like jet, and he was clad in it whenever he went abroad. But Eöl, though stooped by his smithwork, was no Dwarf, but a tall Elf of a high kin of the Teleri, noble though grim of face; and his eyes could see deep into shadows and dark places. And it came to pass that he saw Aredhel Ar-Feiniel as she strayed among the tall trees near the borders of Nan Elmoth, a gleam of white in the dim land. Very fair she seemed to him, and he desired her; and he set his enchantments about her so that she could not find the ways out, but drew ever nearer to his dwelling in the depths of the wood. There were his smithy, and his dim halls, and such servants as he had, silent and secret as their master. And when Aredhel, weary with wandering, came at last to his doors, he revealed himself; and he welcomed her, and led her into his house. And there she remained; for Eöl took her to wife, and it was long ere any of her kin heard of her again.

It is not said that Aredhel was wholly unwilling, nor that her life in Nan Elmoth was hateful to her for many years. For though at Eöl's command she must shun the sunlight, they wandered far together under the stars or by the light of the sickle moon; or she might fare alone as she would, save that Eöl forbade her to seek the sons of Fëanor, or any others of the Noldor. And Aredhel bore to Eöl a son in the shadows of Nan Elmoth, and in her heart she gave him a name in the forbidden tongue of the Noldor, Lómion, that signifies Child of the Twilight; but his father gave him no name until he was twelve years old. Then he called him Maeglin, which is Sharp Glance, for he perceived that the eyes of his son were more piercing than his own, and his thought could read the secrets of hearts beyond the mist of words.

As Maeglin grew to full stature he resembled in face and form rather his kindred of the Noldor, but in mood and mind he was the son of his father. His words were few save in matters that touched him near, and then his voice had a power to move those that heard him and to overthrow those that withstood him. He was tall and black-haired; his eyes were dark, yet bright and keen as the eyes of the Noldor, and his skin was white. Often he went with Eöl to the cities of the Dwarves in the east of Ered Lindon, and there he learned eagerly what they would teach, and above all the craft of finding the ores of metals in the mountains.

Yet it is said that Maeglin loved his mother better, and if Eöl were abroad he would sit long beside her and listen to all that she could tell him of her kin and their deeds in Eldamar, and of the might and valour of the princes of the House of Fingolfin. All these things he laid to heart, but most of all that which he heard of Turgon, and that he had no heir; for Elenwë his wife perished in the crossing of the Helcaraxë, and his daughter Idril Celebrindal was his only child.

In the telling of these tales there was awakened in Aredhel a desire to see her own kin again, and she marvelled that she had grown weary of the light of Gondolin, and the fountains in the sun, and the green sword of Tumladen under the windy skies of spring; moreover she was often alone in the shadows when both her son and her husband were away. Of these tales also grew the first quarrels of Maeglin and Eöl. For by no means would his mother reveal to Maeglin where Turgon dwelt, nor by what means one might come thither, and he bided his time, trusting yet to wheedle the secret from her, or perhaps to read her unguarded mind; but ere that could be

done he desired to look on the Noldor and speak with the sons of Fëanor, his kin, that dwelt not far away. But when he declared his purpose to Eöl, his father was wrathful. "You are of the house of Eöl, Maeglin, my son," he said, "and not of the Golodhrim. All this land is the land of the Teleri, and I will not deal nor have my son deal with the slayers of our kin, the invaders and usurpers of our homes. In this you shall obey me, or I will set you in bonds." And Maeglin did not answer, but was cold and silent, and went abroad no more with Eöl; and Eöl mistrusted him.

It came to pass that at the midsummer the Dwarves, as was their custom, bade Eöl to a feast in Nogrod; and he rode away. Now Maeglin and his mother were free for a while to go where they wished, and they rode often to the eaves of the wood, seeking the sunlight; and desire grew hot in Maeglin's heart to leave Nan Elmoth for ever. Therefore he said to Aredhel: "Lady, let us depart while there is time! What hope is there in this wood for you or for me? Here we are held in bondage, and no profit shall I find here; for I have learned all that my father has to teach, or that the Naugrim will reveal to me. Shall we not seek for Gondolin? You shall be my guide, and I will be your guard!"

Then Aredhel was glad, and looked with pride upon her son; and telling the servants of Eöl that they went to seek the sons of Fëanor they departed and rode away to the north eaves of Nan Elmoth. There they crossed the slender stream of Celon into the land of Himlad and rode on to the Fords of Aros, and so westward along the fences of Doriath.

Now Eöl returned out of the east sooner than Maeglin had foreseen, and found his wife and his son but two days gone; and so great was his anger that he followed after them even by the light of day. As he entered the Himlad he mastered his wrath and went warily, remembering his danger, for Celegorm and Curufin were mighty lords who loved Eöl not at all, and Curufin moreover was of perilous mood; but the scouts of Aglon had marked the riding of Maeglin and Aredhel to the Fords of Aros, and Curufin perceiving that strange deeds were afoot came south from the Pass and encamped near the Fords. And before Eöl had ridden far across the Himlad he was waylaid by the riders of Curufin, and taken to their lord.

Then Curufin said to Eöl: "What errand have you, Dark Elf, in my lands? An urgent matter, perhaps, that keeps one so sun-shy abroad by day."

And Eöl knowing his peril restrained the bitter words that arose in his mind. "I have learned, Lord Curufin," he said, "that my son and my wife, the White Lady of Gondolin, have ridden to visit you while I was from home; and it seemed to me fitting that I should join them on this errand."

Then Curufin laughed at Eöl, and he said: "They might have found their welcome here less warm than they hoped, had you accompanied them; but it is no matter, for that was not their errand. It is not two days since they passed over the Arossiach, and thence rode swiftly westward. It seems that you would deceive me; unless indeed you yourself have been deceived."

And Eöl answered: "Then, lord, perhaps you will give me leave to go, and discover the truth of this matter."

"You have my leave, but not my love," said Curufin. "The sooner you depart from my land the better will it please me."

Then Eöl mounted his horse, saying: "It is good, Lord Curufin, to find a kinsman thus kindly at need. I will remember it when I return." Then Curufin looked darkly upon Eöl. "Do not flaunt the title of your wife before me," he said. "For those who steal the daughters of the Noldor and wed them without gift or leave do not gain kinship with their kin. I have given you leave to go. Take it, and be gone. By the laws of the Eldar I may not slay you at this time. And this counsel I add: return now to your dwelling in the darkness of Nan Elmoth; for my heart warns me that if you now pursue those who love you no more, never will you return thither."

Then Eöl rode off in haste, and he was filled with hatred of all the Noldor; for he perceived now that Maeglin and Aredhel were fleeing to Gondolin. And driven by anger and the shame of his humiliation he crossed the Fords of Aros and rode hard upon the way that they had gone before; but though they knew not that he followed them, and he had the swiftest steed, he came never in sight of them until they reached the Brithiach, and abandoned their horses. Then by ill fate they were betrayed; for the horses neighed loudly, and Eöl's steed

heard them, and sped towards them; and Eöl saw from afar the white raiment of Aredhel, and marked which way she went, seeking the secret path into the mountains.

Now Aredhel and Maeglin came to the Outer Gate of Gondolin and the Dark Guard under the mountains; and there she was received with joy, and passing through the Seven Gates she came with Maeglin to Turgon upon Amon Gwareth. Then the King listened with wonder to all that Aredhel had to tell; and he looked with liking upon Maeglin his sister-son, seeing in him one worthy to be accounted among the princes of the Noldor.

“I rejoice indeed that Ar-Feiniel has returned to Gondolin,” he said, “and now more fair again shall my city seem than in the days when I deemed her lost. And Maeglin shall have the highest honour in my realm.”

Then Maeglin bowed low and took Turgon for lord and king, to do all his will; but thereafter he stood silent and watchful, for the bliss and splendour of Gondolin surpassed all that he had imagined from the tales of his mother, and he was amazed by the strength of the city and the hosts of its people, and the many things strange and beautiful that he beheld. Yet to none were his eyes more often drawn than to Idril the King’s daughter, who sat beside him; for she was golden as the Vanyar, her mother’s kindred, and she seemed to him as the sun from which all the King’s hall drew its light.

But Eöl, following after Aredhel, found the Dry River and the secret path, and so creeping in by stealth he came to the Guard, and was taken and questioned. And when the Guard heard that he claimed Aredhel as wife they were amazed, and sent a swift messenger to the City; and he came to the King’s hall.

“Lord,” he cried, “the Guard have taken captive one that came by stealth to the Dark Gate. Eöl he names himself, and he is a tall Elf, dark and grim, of the kindred of the Sindar; yet he claims the Lady Aredhel as his wife, and demands to be brought before you. His wrath is great and he is hard to restrain; but we have not slain him as your law commands.”

Then Aredhel said: “Alas! Eöl has followed us, even as I feared. But with great stealth was it done; for we saw and heard no pursuit as we entered upon the Hidden Way.” Then she said to the messenger: “He speaks but the truth. He is Eöl, and I am his wife, and he is the father of my son. Slay him not, but lead him hither to the King’s judgement, if the King so wills.”

And so it was done; and Eöl was brought to Turgon’s hall and stood before his high seat, proud and sullen. Though he was amazed no less than his son at all that he saw, his heart was filled the more with anger and with hate of the Noldor. But Turgon treated him with honour, and rose up and would take his hand; and he said: “Welcome, kinsman, for so I hold you. Here you shall dwell at your pleasure, save only that you must here abide and depart not from my kingdom; for it is my law that none who finds the way hither shall depart.”

But Eöl withdrew his hand. “I acknowledge not your law,” he said. “No right have you or any of your kin in this land to seize realms or to set bounds, either here or there. This is the land of the Teleri, to which you bring war and all unquiet, dealing ever proudly and unjustly. I care nothing for your secrets and I came not to spy upon you, but to claim my own: my wife and my son. Yet if in Aredhel your sister you have some claim, then let her remain; let the bird go back to the cage, where soon she will sicken again, as she sickened before. But not so Maeglin. My son you shall not withhold from me. Come, Maeglin son of Eöl! Your father commands you. Leave the house of his enemies and the slayers of his kin, or be accursed!” But Maeglin answered nothing.

Then Turgon sat in his high seat holding his staff of doom, and in a stern voice spoke: “I will not debate with you, Dark Elf. By the swords of the Noldor alone are your sunless woods defended. Your freedom to wander there wild you owe to my kin; and but for them long since you would have laboured in thralldom in the pits of Angband. And here I am King; and whether you will it or will it not, my doom is law. This choice only is given to you: to abide here, or to die here; and so also for your son.”

Then Eöl looked into the eyes of King Turgon, and he was not daunted, but stood long without word or movement while a still silence fell upon the hall; and Aredhel was afraid, knowing that he was perilous. Suddenly, swift as serpent, he seized a javelin that he held hid beneath his cloak and cast it at Maeglin, crying: “The second choice I take and for my son also! You shall not hold what is mine!”

But Aredhel sprang before the dart, and it smote her in the shoulder; and Eöl was overborne by many and set in bonds, and led away, while others tended Aredhel. But Maeglin looking upon his father was silent.



It was appointed that Eöl should be brought on the next day to the King's judgement; and Aredhel and Idril moved Turgon to mercy. But in the evening Aredhel sickened, though the wound had seemed little, and she fell into the darkness, and in the night she died; for the point of the javelin was poisoned, though none knew it until too late.

Therefore when Eöl was brought before Turgon he found no mercy; and they led him forth to the Caragdûr, a precipice of black rock upon the north side of the hill of Gondolin, there to cast him down from the sheer walls of the city. And Maeglin stood by and said nothing; but at the last Eöl cried out: "So you forsake your father and his kin, ill-gotten son! Here shall you fail of all your hopes, and here may you yet die the same death as I."

Then they cast Eöl over the Caragdûr, and so he ended, and to all in Gondolin it seemed just; but Idril was troubled, and from that day she mistrusted her kinsman. But Maeglin prospered and grew great among the Gondolindrim, praised by all, and high in the favour of Turgon; for if he would learn eagerly and swiftly all that he might, he had much also to teach. And he gathered about him all such as had the most bent to smithcraft and mining; and he sought in the Echoriath (which are the Encircling Mountains), and found rich lodes of ore of divers metals. Most he prized the hard iron of the mine of Anghabar in the north of the Echoriath, and thence he got a wealth of forged metal and of steel, so that the arms of the Gondolindrim were made ever stronger and more keen; and that stood them in good stead in the days to come. Wise in counsel was Maeglin and wary, and yet hardy and valiant at need. And that was seen in after days: for when in the dread year of the Nirnaeth Arnoediad Turgon opened his leaguer and marched forth to the help of Fingon in the north, Maeglin would not remain in Gondolin as regent of the King, but went to the war and fought beside Turgon, and proved fell and fearless in battle.

Thus all seemed well with the fortunes of Maeglin, who had risen to be mighty among the princes of the Noldor, and greatest save one in the most renowned of their realms. Yet he did not reveal his heart; and though not all things went as he would he endured it in silence, hiding his mind so that few could read it, unless it were Idril Celebrindal. For from his first days in Gondolin he had borne a grief, ever worsening, that robbed him of all joy: he loved the beauty of Idril and desired her, without hope. The Eldar wedded not with kin so near, nor ever before had any desired to do so. And however that might be, Idril loved Maeglin not at all; and knowing his thought of her she loved him the less. For it seemed to her a thing strange and crooked in him, as indeed the Eldar ever since have deemed it: an evil fruit of the Kinslaying, whereby the shadow of the curse of Mandos fell upon the last hope of the Noldor. But as the years passed still Maeglin watched Idril, and waited, and his love turned to darkness in his heart. And he sought the more to have his will in other matters, shirking no toil or burden, if he might thereby have power.

Thus it was in Gondolin; and amid all the bliss of that realm, while its glory lasted, a dark seed of evil was sown.



## Chapter 17: Of The Coming Of Men Into The West

When three hundred years and more were gone since the Noldor came to Beleriand, in the days of the Long Peace, Finrod Felagund lord of Nargothrond journeyed east of Sirion and went hunting with Maglor and Maedhros, sons of Fëanor. But he wearied of the chase and passed on alone towards the mountains of Ered Lindon that he saw shining afar; and taking the Dwarf-road he crossed Gelion at the ford of Sarn Athrad, and turning south over the upper streams of Ascar, he came into the north of Ossiriand.

In a valley among the foothills of the mountains, below the springs of Thalos, he saw lights in the evening, and far off he heard the sound of song. At this he wondered much, for the Green-elves of that land lit no fires, nor did they sing by night. At first he feared that a raid of Orcs had passed the leaguer of the North, but as he drew near he perceived that it was not so; for the singers used a tongue that he had not heard before, neither that of Dwarves nor of Orcs. Then Felagund, standing silent in the night-shadow of the trees, looked down into the camp, and there he beheld a strange people.

Now these were a part of the kindred and following of Bëor the Old, as he was afterwards called, a chieftain among Men. After many lives of wandering out of the East he had led them at last over the Blue Mountains, the first of the race of Men to enter Beleriand; and they sang because they were glad, and believed that they had escaped from all perils and had come at last to a land without fear.

Long Felagund watched them, and love for them stirred in his heart; but he remained hidden in the trees until they had all fallen asleep. Then he went among the sleeping people, and sat beside their dying fire where none kept watch; and he took up a rude harp which Bëor had laid aside, and he played music upon it such as the ears of Men had not heard; for they had as yet no teachers in the art, save only the Dark Elves in the wild lands.

Now men awoke and listened to Felagund as he harped and sang, and each thought that he was in some fair dream, until he saw that his fellows were awake also beside him; but they did not speak or stir while Felagund still played, because of the beauty of the music and the wonder of the song. Wisdom was in the words of the Elven-king, and the hearts grew wiser that hearkened to him; for the things of which he sang, of the making of Arda, and the bliss of Aman beyond the shadows of the Sea, came as clear visions before their eyes, and his Elvish speech was interpreted in each mind according to its measure.

Thus it was that Men called King Felagund, whom they first met of all the Eldar, Nóm, that is Wisdom, in the language of that people, and after him they named his folk Nómin, the Wise. Indeed they believed at first that Felagund was one of the Valar, of whom they had heard rumour that they dwelt far in the West; and this was (some say) the cause of their journeying. But Felagund dwelt among them and taught them true knowledge, and they loved him, and took him for their lord, and were ever after loyal to the house of Finarfin.

Now the Eldar were beyond all other peoples skilled in tongues; and Felagund discovered also that he could read in the minds of Men such thoughts as they wished to reveal in speech, so that their words were easily interpreted. It is said also that these Men had long had dealings with the Dark Elves east of the mountains, and from them had learned much of their speech; and since all the languages of the Quendi were of one origin, the language of Bëor and his folk resembled the Elven-tongue in many words and devices. It was not long therefore before Felagund could hold converse with Bëor; and while he dwelt with him they spoke much together. But when he questioned him concerning the arising of Men and their journeys, Bëor would say little; and indeed he knew little, for the fathers of his people had told few tales of their past and a silence had fallen upon their memory. "A darkness lies behind us," Bëor said; "and we have turned our backs upon it, and we do not desire to return thither even in thought. Westwards our hearts have been turned, and we believe that there we shall find Light."

But it was said afterwards among the Eldar that when Men awoke in Hildórien at the rising of the Sun the spies of Morgoth were watchful, and tidings were soon brought to him; and this seemed to him so great a matter that secretly under shadow he himself departed from Angband, and went forth into Middle-earth, leaving to Sauron the command of the War. Of his dealings with Men the Eldar indeed knew nothing, at that time, and learnt but little afterwards; but that a darkness lay upon the hearts of Men (as the shadow of the Kinslaying and the Doom of Mandos lay upon the Noldor) they perceived clearly even in the people of the Elf-friends whom they first knew. To corrupt or destroy whatsoever arose new and fair was ever the chief desire of Morgoth; and doubtless he had this purpose also in his errand: by fear and lies to make Men the foes of the Eldar, and bring them up out of the east against Beleriand. But this design was slow to ripen, and was never wholly achieved; for Men (it is said) were at first very few in number, whereas Morgoth grew afraid of the growing power and union of the Eldar and came back to Angband, leaving behind at that time but few servants, and those of less might and cunning.

Now Felagund learned from Bëor that there were many other Men of like mind who were also journeying westward. "Others of my own kin have crossed the Mountains," he said, "and they are wandering not far away; and the Haladin, a people from whom we are sundered in speech, are still in the valleys on the eastern slopes, awaiting tidings before they venture further. There are yet other Men, whose tongue is more like to ours, with whom we have had dealings at times. They were before us on the westward march, but we passed them; for they are a numerous people, and yet keep together and move slowly, being all ruled by one chieftain whom they call Marach."

Now the Green-elves of Ossiriand were troubled by the coming of Men, and when they heard that a lord of the Eldar from over the Sea was among them they sent messengers to Felagund. "Lord," they said, "if you have power over these newcomers, bid them return by the ways that they came, or else to go forward. For we desire no strangers in this land to break the peace in which we live. And these folk are hewers of trees and hunters of beasts; therefore we are their unfriends, and if they will not depart we shall afflict them in all ways that we can."

Then by the advice of Felagund Bëor gathered all the wandering families and kindreds of his people, and they removed over Gelion, and took up their abode in the lands of Amrod and Amras, upon the east banks of the Celon south of Nan Elmoth, near to the borders of Doriath; and the name of that land thereafter was Estolad, the Encampment. But when after a year had passed Felagund wished to return to his own country, Bëor begged leave to come with him; and he remained in the service of the King of Nargothrond while his life lasted. In this way he got his name, Bëor, whereas his name before had been Balan; for Bëor signified "Vassal" in the tongue of his people. The rule of his folk he committed to Baran his elder son; and he did not return again to Estolad.

Soon after the departure of Felagund the other Men of whom Bëor had spoken came also into Beleriand. First came the Haladin; but meeting the unfriendship of the Green-elves they turned north and dwelt in Thargelion, in the country of Caranthir son of Fëanor: there for a time they had peace, and the people of Caranthir paid little heed to them. In the next year Marach led his people over the mountains; they were a tall and warlike folk, marching in ordered companies, and the Elves of Ossiriand hid themselves and did not waylay them. But Marach, hearing that the people of Bëor were dwelling in a green and fertile land, came down the Dwarf-road, and settled in the country south and east of the dwellings of Baran son of Bëor; and there was great friendship between those peoples.

Felagund himself often returned to visit Men; and many other Elves out of the west-lands, both Noldor and Sindar, journeyed to Estolad, being eager to see the Edain, whose coming had long been foretold. Now Atani, the Second People, was the name given to Men in Valinor in the lore that told of their coming; but in the speech of Beleriand that name became Edain, and it was there used only of the three kindreds of the Elf-friends.

Fingolfin, as King of all the Noldor, sent messengers of welcome to them; and then many young and eager men of the Edain went away and took service with the kings and lords of the Eldar. Among them was Malach son of Marach, and he dwelt in Hithlum for fourteen years; and he learned the Elven-tongue and was given the name of Aradan.

The Edain did not long dwell content in Estolad, for many still desired to go westward; but they did not know the way. Before them lay the fences of Doriath, and southward lay Sirion and its impassable fens. Therefore the kings of the three houses of the Noldor, seeing hope of strength in the sons of Men, sent word that any of the Edain that wished might remove and come to dwell among their people. In this way the migration of the Edain began: at first little by little, but later in families and kindreds, they arose and left Estolad, until after some fifty years many thousands had entered the lands of the Kings. Most of these took the long road northwards, until the ways became well known to them. The people of Bëor came to Dorthonion and dwelt in lands ruled by the house of Finarfin. The people of Aradan (for Marach his father remained in Estolad until his death) for the most part went on westward; and some came to Hithlum, but Magor son of Aradan and many of the people passed down Sirion into Beleriand and dwelt a while in the vales of the southern slopes of Ered Wethrin.

It is said that in all these matters none save Finrod Felagund took counsel with King Thingol, and he was ill pleased, both for that reason, and because he was troubled by dreams concerning the coming of Men, ere ever the first tidings of them were heard. Therefore he commanded that Men should take no lands to dwell in save in the north, and that the princes whom they served should be answerable for all that they did; and he said: "Into Doriath shall no Man come while my realm lasts, not even those of the house of Bëor who serve Finrod the beloved." Melian said nothing to him at that time, but afterwards she said to Galadriel: "Now the world runs on swiftly to great tidings. And one of Men, even of Bëor's house, shall indeed come, and the Girdle of Melian shall not restrain him, for doom greater than my power shall send him; and the songs that shall spring from that coming shall endure when all Middle-earth is changed."

But many Men remained in Estolad, and there was still a mingled people living there long years after, until in the ruin of Beleriand they were overwhelmed or fled back into the East. For beside the old who deemed that their wandering days were over there were not a few who desired to go their own ways, and they feared the Eldar and the light of their eyes; and then dissensions awoke among the Edain, in which the shadow of Morgoth may be discerned, for certain it is that he knew of the coming of Men into Beleriand and of their growing friendship with the Elves.

The leaders of discontent were Bereg of the house of Bëor, and Amlach, one of the grandsons of Marach; and they said openly: "We took long roads, desiring to escape the perils of Middle-earth and the dark things that dwell there; for we heard that there was Light in the West. But now we learn that the Light is beyond the Sea. Thither we cannot come where the Gods dwell in bliss. Save one; for the Lord of the Dark is here before us, and the Eldar, wise but fell, who make endless war upon him. In the North he dwells, they say; and there is the pain and death from which we fled. We will not go that way."

Then a council and assembly of Men was called, and great numbers came together. And the Elf-friends answered Bereg, saying: "Truly from the Dark King come all the evils from which we fled; but he seeks dominion over all Middle-earth, and whither now shall we turn and he will not pursue us? Unless he be vanquished here, or at least held in leaguer. Only by the valour of the Eldar is he restrained, and maybe it was for this purpose, to aid them at need, that we were brought into this land."

To this Bereg answered: "Let the Eldar look to it! Our lives are short enough." But there arose one who seemed to all to be Amlach son of Imlach, speaking fell words that shook the hearts of all who heard him: "All this is but Elvish lore, tales to beguile newcomers that are unwary. The Sea has no shore. There is no Light in the West. You have followed a fool-fire of the Elves to the end of the world! Which of you has seen the least of the Gods? Who has beheld the Dark King in the North? Those who seek the dominion of Middle-earth are the Eldar. Greedy for wealth they have delved in the earth for its secrets and have stirred to wrath the things that dwell beneath it, as they have ever done and ever shall. Let the Orcs have the realm that is theirs, and we will have ours. There is room in the world, if the Eldar will let us be!"

Then those that listened sat for a while astounded, and a shadow of fear fell on their hearts; and they resolved to depart far from the lands of the Eldar. But afterwards Amlach returned among them, and denied that he had been present at their debate or had spoken such words as they reported; and there was doubt and bewilderment among Men. Then the Elf-friends said: "You will now believe this at least: there is indeed a Dark Lord, and his spies and emissaries are among us; for he fears us, and the strength that we may give to his foes."

But some still answered: "He hates us, rather, and ever the more the longer we dwell here, meddling in his quarrel with the Kings of the Eldar, to no gain of ours." Many therefore of those that yet remained in Estolad made ready to depart; and Bereg led a thousand of the people of Bëor away southwards, and they passed out of the songs of those days. But Amlach repented, saying: "I have now a quarrel of my own with this Master of Lies, which will last to my life's end"; and he went away north and entered the service of Maedhros. But those of his people who were of like mind with Bereg chose a new leader, and they went back over the mountains into Eriador, and are forgotten.

During this time the Haladin remained in Thargelion and were content. But Morgoth, seeing that by lies and deceits he could not yet wholly estrange Elves and Men, was filled with wrath, and endeavoured to do Men what hurt he could. Therefore he sent out an Orc-raid, and passing east it escaped the leaguer, and came in stealth back over Ered Lindon by the passes of the Dwarf-road, and fell upon the Haladin in the southern woods of the land of Caranthir.

Now the Haladin did not live under the rule of lords or many together, but each homestead was set apart and governed its own affairs, and they were slow to unite. But there was among them a man named Haldad, who was masterful and fearless; and he gathered all the brave men that he could find, and retreated to the angle of land between Ascar and Gelion, and in the utmost corner he built a stockade across from water to water; and behind it they led all the women and children that they could save. There they were besieged, until their food was gone.

Haldad had twin children: Haleth his daughter, and Haldar his son; and both were valiant in the defence, for Haleth was a woman of great heart and strength. But at last Haldad was slain in a sortie against the Orcs; and Haldar, who rushed out to save his father's body from their butchery, was hewn down beside him. Then Haleth held the people together, though they were without hope; and some cast themselves in the rivers and were drowned. But seven days later, as the Orcs made their last assault and had already broken through the stockade, there came suddenly a music of trumpets, and Caranthir with his host came down from the north and drove the Orcs into the rivers.

Then Caranthir looked kindly upon Men and did Haleth great honour; and he offered her recompense for her father and brother. And seeing, over late, what valour there was in the Edain, he said to her: "If you will remove and dwell further north, there you shall have the friendship and protection of the Eldar, and free lands of your own."

But Haleth was proud, and unwilling to be guided or ruled, and most of the Haladin were of like mood. Therefore she thanked Caranthir, but answered: "My mind is now set, lord, to leave the shadow of the mountains, and go west, whither others of our kin have gone." When therefore the Haladin had gathered all whom they could find alive of their folk who had fled wild into the woods before the Orcs, and had gleaned what remained of their goods in their burned homesteads, they took Haleth for their chief; and she led them at last to Estolad, and there dwelt for a time.

But they remained a people apart, and were ever after known to Elves and Men as the People of Haleth. Haleth remained their chief while her days lasted, but she did not wed, and the headship afterwards passed to Haldan son of Haldar her brother. Soon however Haleth desired to move westward again; and though most of her people were against this counsel, she led them forth once more; and they went without help or guidance of the Eldar, and passing over Celon and Aros they journeyed in the perilous land between the Mountains of Terror and the Girdle of Melian. That land was even then not yet so evil as it after became, but it was no road for mortal Men to take without aid, and Haleth only brought her people through it with hardship and loss, constraining them to go forward by the strength of her will. At last they crossed over the Brithiach, and many bitterly repented of their journey; but there was now no returning. Therefore in new lands they went back to their old life as best they could; and they dwelt in free homesteads in the woods of Talath Dirnen beyond Teiglin, and some wandered far into the realm of Nargothrond. But there were many who loved the Lady Haleth and wished to go whither she would, and dwell under her rule; and these she led into the Forest of Brethil, between Teiglin and Sirion. Thither in the evil days that followed many of her scattered folk returned.

Now Brethil was claimed as part of his realm by King Thingol, though it was not within the Girdle of Melian, and he would have denied it to Haleth; but Felagund, who had the friendship of Thingol, hearing of all that had befallen the People of Haleth, obtained this grace for her: that she should dwell free in Brethil, upon the condition only that her people should guard the Crossings of Teiglin against all enemies of the Eldar, and allow no Orcs to enter their woods. To this Haleth answered: "Where are Haldad my father, and Haldar my brother? If the King of Doriath fears a friendship between Haleth and those who have devoured her kin, then the thoughts of the Eldar are strange to Men." And Haleth dwelt in Brethil until she died; and her people raised a green mound over her in the heights of the forest, Tûr Haretha, the Lady-barrow, Haudh-en-Arwen in the Sindarin tongue.

In this way it came to pass that the Edain dwelt in the lands of the Eldar, some here, some there, some wandering, some settled in kindreds or small peoples; and the most part of them soon learned the Grey-elven tongue, both as a common speech among themselves and because many were eager to learn the lore of the Elves. But after a time the Elf-kings, seeing that it was not good for Elves and Men to dwell mingled together without order, and that Men needed lords of their own kind, set regions apart where Men could live their own lives, and appointed chieftains to hold these lands freely. They were the allies of the Eldar in war, but marched under their own leaders. Yet many of the Edain had delight in the friendship of the Elves, and dwelt among them for so long as they had leave; and the young men often took service for a time in the hosts of the kings.

Now Hador Lórindol, son of Hathol, son of Magor, son of Malach Aradan, entered the household of Fingolfin in his youth, and was loved by the King. Fingolfin therefore gave to him the lordship of Dor-lómin, and into that land he gathered most of the people of his kin, and became the mightiest of the chieftains of the Edain. In his house only the Elven-tongue was spoken; but their own speech was not forgotten, and from it came the common tongue of Númenor. But in Dorthonion the lordship of the people of Bëor and the country of Ladros was given to Boromir, son of Boron, who was the grandson of Bëor the Old.

The sons of Hador were Galdor and Gundor; and the sons of Galdor were Húrin and Huor; and the son of Húrin was Túrin the Bane of Glaurung; and the son of Huor was Tuor, father of Eärendil the Blessed. The son of Boromir was Bregor, whose sons were Bregolas and Barahir; and the sons of Bregolas were Baragund and Belegund. The daughter of Baragund was Morwen, the mother of Túrin, and the daughter of Belegund was Rían, the mother of Tuor. But the son of Barahir was Beren One-hand, who won the love of Lúthien Thingol's daughter, and returned from the Dead; from them came Elwing the wife of Eärendil, and all the Kings of Númenor after.

All these were caught in the net of the Doom of the Noldor; and they did great deeds which the Eldar remember still among the histories of the Kings of old. And in those days the strength of Men was added to the power of the Noldor, and their hope was high; and Morgoth was straitly enclosed, for the people of Hador, being hardy to endure cold and long wandering, feared not at times to go far into the north and there keep watch upon the movements of the Enemy. The Men of the Three Houses thrived and multiplied, but greatest among them was the house of Hador Goldenhead, peer of Elven-lords. His people were of great strength and stature, ready in mind, bold and steadfast, quick to anger and to laughter, mighty among the Children of Ilúvatar in the youth of Mankind. Yellow-haired they were for the most part, and blue-eyed; but not so was Túrin, whose mother was Morwen of the house of Bëor. The Men of that house were dark or brown of hair, with grey eyes; and of all Men they were most like to the Noldor and most loved by them; for they were eager of mind, cunning-handed, swift in understanding, long in memory, and they were moved sooner to pity than to laughter. Like to them were the woodland folk of Haleth, but they were of lesser stature, and less eager for lore. They used few words, and did not love great concourse of men; and many among them delighted in solitude, wandering free in the greenwoods while the wonder of the lands of the Eldar was new upon them. But in the realms of the West their time was brief and their days unhappy.

The years of the Edain were lengthened, according to the reckoning of Men, after their coming to Beleriand; but at last Bëor the Old died when he had lived three and ninety years, for four and forty of which he had served King Felagund. And when he lay dead, of no wound or grief, but stricken by age, the Eldar saw for the first time the swift waning of the life of Men, and the death of weariness which they knew not in themselves; and they grieved greatly for the loss of their friends. But Bëor at the last had relinquished his life willingly and

passed in peace; and the Eldar wondered much at the strange fate of Men, for in all their lore there was no account of it, and its end was hidden from them.

Nonetheless the Edain of old learned swiftly of the Eldar all such art and knowledge as they could receive, and their sons increased in wisdom and skill, until they far surpassed all others of Mankind, who dwelt still east of the mountains and had not seen the Eldar, nor looked upon the faces that had beheld the Light of Valinor.



## Chapter 18: Of The Ruin Of Beleriand And The Fall Of Fingolfin

Now Fingolfin, King of the North, and High King of the Noldor, seeing that his people were become numerous and strong, and that the Men allied to them were many and valiant, pondered once more an assault upon Angband; for he knew that they lived in danger while the circle of the siege was incomplete, and Morgoth was free to labour in his deep mines, devising what evils none could foretell ere he should reveal them. This counsel was wise according to the measure of his knowledge; for the Noldor did not yet comprehend the fullness of the power of Morgoth, nor understand that their unaided war upon him was without final hope, whether they hastened or delayed. But because the land was fair and their kingdoms wide, most of the Noldor were content with things as they were, trusting them to last, and slow to begin an assault in which many must surely perish were it in victory or in defeat. Therefore they were little disposed to hearken to Fingolfin, and the sons of Fëanor at that time least of all. Among the chieftains of the Noldor Angrod and Aegnor alone were of like mind with the King; for they dwelt in regions whence Thangorodrim could be descried, and the threat of Morgoth was present to their thought. Thus the designs of Fingolfin came to naught, and the land had peace yet for a while.

But when the sixth generation of Men after Bëor and Marach were not yet come to full manhood, it being then four hundred years and five and fifty since the coming of Fingolfin, the evil befell that he had long dreaded, and yet more dire and sudden than his darkest fear. For Morgoth had long prepared his force in secret, while ever the malice of his heart grew greater, and his hatred of the Noldor more bitter; and he desired not only to end his foes but to destroy also and defile the lands that they had taken and made fair. And it is said that his hate overcame his counsel, so that if he had but endured to wait longer, until his designs were full, then the Noldor would have perished utterly. But on his part he esteemed too lightly the valour of the Elves, and of Men he took yet no account.

There came a time of winter, when night was dark and without moon; and the wide plain of Ard-galen stretched dim beneath the cold stars, from the hill-forts of the Noldor to the feet of Thangorodrim. The watchfires burned low, and the guards were few; on the plain few were waking in the camps of the horsemen of Hithlum. Then suddenly Morgoth sent forth great rivers of flame that ran down swifter than Balrogs from Thangorodrim, and poured over all the plain; and the Mountains of Iron belched forth fires of many poisonous hues, and the fume of them stank upon the air, and was deadly. Thus Ard-galen perished, and fire devoured its grasses; and it became a burned and desolate waste, full of a choking dust, barren and lifeless. Thereafter its name was changed, and it was called Anfauglith, the Gasping Dust. Many charred bones had there their roofless grave; for many of the Noldor perished in that burning, who were caught by the running flame and could not fly to the hills. The heights of Dorthonion and Ered Wethrin held back the fiery torrents, but their woods upon the slopes that looked towards Angband were all kindled, and the smoke wrought confusion among the defenders. Thus began the fourth of the great battles, Dagor Bragollach, the Battle of Sudden Flame.

In the front of that fire came Glaurung the golden, father of dragons, in his full might; and in his train were Balrogs, and behind them came the black armies of the Orcs in multitudes such as the Noldor had never before seen or imagined. And they assaulted the fortresses of the Noldor, and broke the leaguer about Angband, and slew wherever they found them the Noldor and their allies, Grey-elves and Men. Many of the stoutest of the foes of Morgoth were destroyed in the first days of that war, bewildered and dispersed and unable to muster their strength. War ceased not wholly ever again in Beleriand; but the Battle of Sudden Flame is held to have ended with the coming of spring, when the onslaught of Morgoth grew less.

Thus ended the Siege of Angband; and the foes of Morgoth were scattered and sundered one from another. The most part of the Grey-elves fled south and forsook the northern war; many were received into Doriath, and the kingdom and strength of Thingol grew greater in that time, for the power of Melian the queen was woven about



his borders and evil could not yet enter that hidden realm. Others took refuge in the fortresses by the sea, and in Nargothrond; and some fled the land and hid themselves in Ossiriand, or passing the mountains wandered homeless in the wild. And rumour of the war and the breaking of the siege reached the ears of Men in the east of Middle-earth.

The sons of Finarfin bore most heavily the brunt of the assault, and Angrod and Aegnor were slain; beside them fell Bregolas lord of the house of Bëor, and a great part of the warriors of that people. But Barahir the brother of Bregolas was in the fighting further westward, near to the Pass of Sirion. There King Finrod Felagund, hastening from the south, was cut off from his people and surrounded with small company in the Fen of Serech; and he would have been slain or taken, but Barahir came up with the bravest of his men and rescued him, and made a wall of spears about him; and they cut their way out of the battle with great loss. Thus Felagund escaped, and returned to his deep fortress of Nargothrond; but he swore an oath of abiding friendship and aid in every need to Barahir and all his kin, and in token of his vow he gave to Barahir his ring. Barahir was now by right lord of the house of Bëor, and he returned to Dorthonion; but most of his people fled from their homes and took refuge in the fastness of Hithlum.

So great was the onslaught of Morgoth that Fingolfin and Fingon could not come to the aid of the sons of Finarfin; and the hosts of Hithlum were driven back with great loss to the fortresses of Ered Wethrin, and these they hardly defended against the Orcs. Before the walls of Eithel Sirion fell Hador the Golden-haired, defending the rearguard of his lord Fingolfin, being then sixty and six years of age, and with him fell Gundor his younger son, pierced with many arrows; and they were mourned by the Elves. Then Galdor the Tall took the lordship of his father. And because of the strength and height of the Shadowy Mountains, which withstood the torrent of fire, and by the valour of the Elves and the Men of the North, which neither Orc nor Balrog could yet overcome, Hithlum remained unconquered, a threat upon the flank of Morgoth's attack; but Fingolfin was sundered from his kinsmen by a sea of foes.

For the war had gone ill with the sons of Fëanor, and well nigh all the east marches were taken by assault. The Pass of Aglon was forced, though with great cost to the hosts of Morgoth; and Celegorm and Curufin being defeated fled south and west by the marches of Doriath, and coming at last to Nargothrond sought harbour with Finrod Felagund. Thus it came to pass that their people swelled the strength of Nargothrond; but it would have been better, as was after seen, if they had remained in the east among their own kin. Maedhros did deeds of surpassing valour, and the Orcs fled before his face; for since his torment upon Thangorodrim his spirit burned like a white fire within, and he was as one that returns from the dead. Thus the great fortress upon the Hill of Himring could not be taken, and many of the most valiant that remained, both of the people of Dorthonion and of the east marches, rallied there to Maedhros; and for a while he closed once more the Pass of Aglon, so that the Orcs could not enter Beleriand by that road. But they overwhelmed the riders of the people of Fëanor upon Lothlann, for Glaurung came thither, and passed through Maglor's Gap, and destroyed all the land between the arms of Gelion. And the Orcs took the fortress upon the west slopes of Mount Rerir, and ravaged all Thargelion, the land of Caranthir; and they defiled Lake Helevorn. Thence they passed over Gelion with fire and terror and came far into East Beleriand. Maglor joined Maedhros upon Himring; but Caranthir fled and joined the remnant of his people to the scattered folk of the hunters, Amrod and Amras, and they retreated and passed Ramdal in the south. Upon Amon Ereb they maintained a watch and some strength of war, and they had aid of the Green-elves; and the Orcs came not into Ossiriand, nor to Taur-im-Duinath and the wilds of the south.

Now news came to Hithlum that Dorthonion was lost and the sons of Finarfin overthrown, and that the sons of Fëanor were driven from their lands. Then Fingolfin beheld (as it seemed to him) the utter ruin of the Noldor, and the defeat beyond redress of all their houses; and filled with wrath and despair he mounted upon Rochallor his great horse and rode forth alone, and none might restrain him. He passed over Dor-nu-Fauglith like a wind amid the dust, and all that beheld his onset fled in amaze, thinking that Oromë himself was come: for a great madness of rage was upon him, so that his eyes shone like the eyes of the Valar. Thus he came alone to Angband's gates, and he sounded his horn, and smote once more upon the brazen doors, and challenged Morgoth to come forth to single combat. And Morgoth came.

That was the last time in those wars that he passed the doors of his stronghold, and it is said that he took not the challenge willingly; for though his might was greatest of all things in this world, alone of the Valar he knew fear. But he could not now deny the challenge before the face of his captains; for the rocks rang with the shrill music of Fingolfin's horn, and his voice came keen and clear down into the depths of Angband; and Fingolfin named Morgoth craven, and lord of slaves. Therefore Morgoth came, climbing slowly from his subterranean throne, and the rumour of his feet was like thunder underground. And he issued forth clad in black armour; and he stood before the King like a tower, iron-crowned, and his vast shield, sable unblazoned, cast a shadow over him like a stormcloud. But Fingolfin gleamed beneath it as a star; for his mail was overlaid with silver, and his blue shield was set with crystals; and he drew his sword Ringil, that glittered like ice.

Then Morgoth hurled aloft Grond, the Hammer of the Underworld, and swung it down like a bolt of thunder. But Fingolfin sprang aside, and Grond rent a mighty pit in the earth, whence smoke and fire darted. Many times Morgoth essayed to smite him, and each time Fingolfin leaped away, as a lightning shoots from under a dark cloud; and he wounded Morgoth with seven wounds, and seven times Morgoth gave a cry of anguish, whereat the hosts of Angband fell upon their faces in dismay, and the cries echoed in the Northlands.

But at the last the King grew weary, and Morgoth bore down his shield upon him. Thrice he was crushed to his knees, and thrice arose again and bore up his broken shield and stricken helm. But the earth was all rent and pitted about him, and he stumbled and fell backward before the feet of Morgoth; and Morgoth set his left foot upon his neck, and the weight of it was like a fallen hill. Yet with his last and desperate stroke Fingolfin hewed the foot with Ringil, and the blood gushed forth black and smoking and filled the pits of Grond.

Thus died Fingolfin, High King of the Noldor, most proud and valiant of the Elven-kings of old. The Orcs made no boast of that duel at the gate; neither do the Elves sing of it, for their sorrow is too deep. Yet the tale of it is remembered still, for Thorondor King of Eagles brought the tidings to Gondolin, and to Hithlum afar off. And Morgoth took the body of the Elven-king and broke it, and would cast it to his wolves; but Thorondor came hasting from his eyrie among the peaks of the Crissaegrim, and he stooped upon Morgoth and marred his face. The rushing of the wings of Thorondor was like the noise of the winds of Manwë, and he seized the body in his mighty talons, and soaring suddenly above the darts of the Orcs he bore the King away. And he laid him upon a mountain-top that looked from the north upon the hidden valley of Gondolin; and Turgon coming built a high cairn over his father. No Orc dared ever after to pass over the mount of Fingolfin or draw nigh his tomb, until the doom of Gondolin was come and treachery was born among his kin. Morgoth went ever halt of one foot after that day, and the pain of his wounds could not be healed; and in his face was the scar that Thorondor made.

Great was the lamentation in Hithlum when the fall of Fingolfin became known, and Fingon in sorrow took the lordship of the house of Fingolfin and the kingdom of the Noldor; but his young son Ereinion (who was after named Gil-galad) he sent to the Havens.

Now Morgoth's power overshadowed the Northlands; but Barahir would not flee from Dorthonion, and remained contesting the land foot by foot with his enemies. Then Morgoth pursued his people to the death, until few remained; and all the forest of the northward slopes of that land was turned little by little into a region of such dread and dark enchantment that even the Orcs would not enter it unless need drove them, and it was called Deldúwath, and Taur-nu-Fuin, The Forest under Nightshade. The trees that grew there after the burning were black and grim, and their roots were tangled, groping in the dark like claws; and those who strayed among them became lost and blind, and were strangled or pursued to madness by phantoms of terror. At last so desperate was the case of Barahir that Emeldir the Manhearted his wife (whose mind was rather to fight beside her son and her husband than to flee) gathered together all the women and children that were left, and gave arms to those that would bear them; and she led them into the mountains that lay behind, and so by perilous paths, until they came at last with loss and misery to Brethil. Some were there received among the Haladin, but some passed on over the mountains to Dorlómin and the people of Galdor, Hador's son; and among those were Rían, daughter of Belegund, and Morwen, who was named Eledhwen, that is Elfsheen, daughter of Baragund. But none ever saw again the men that they had left. For these were slain one by one, until at last only twelve men remained to Barahir: Beren his son, and Baragund and Belegund his nephews, the sons of Bregolas, and nine faithful servants of his house whose names were long remembered in the songs of the Noldor: Radhruin

and Dairuin they were, Dagnir and Ragnor, Gildor and Gorlim the unhappy, Arthad and Urthel, and Hathaldir the young. Outlaws without hope they became, a desperate band that could not escape and would not yield, for their dwellings were destroyed, and their wives and children captured, slain, or fled. From Hithlum there came neither news nor help, and Barahir and his men were hunted like wild beasts; and they retreated to the barren highland above the forest, and wandered among the tarns and rocky moors of that region, furthest from the spies and spells of Morgoth. Their bed was the heather and their roof the cloudy sky.

For nigh on two years after the Dagor Bragollach the Noldor still defended the western pass about the sources of Sirion, for the power of Ulmo was in that water, and Minas Tirith withstood the Orcs. But at length, after the fall of Fingolfin, Sauron, greatest and most terrible of the servants of Morgoth, who in the Sindarin tongue was named Gorthaur, came against Orodreth, the warden of the tower upon Tol Sirion. Sauron was become now a sorcerer of dreadful power, master of shadows and of phantoms, foul in wisdom, cruel in strength, misshaping what he touched, twisting what he ruled, lord of werewolves; his dominion was torment. He took Minas Tirith by assault, for a dark cloud of fear fell upon those that defended it; and Orodreth was driven out, and fled to Nargothrond. Then Sauron made it into a watch-tower for Morgoth, a stronghold of evil, and a menace; and the fair isle of Tol Sirion became accursed, and it was called Tol-in-Gaurhoth, the Isle of Werewolves. No living creature could pass through that vale that Sauron did not espy from the tower where he sat. And Morgoth held now the western pass, and his terror filled the fields and woods of Beleriand. Beyond Hithlum he pursued his foes relentlessly, and he searched out their hiding-places and took their strongholds one by one. The Orcs growing ever bolder wandered at will far and wide, coming down Sirion in the west and Celon in the east, and they encompassed Doriath; and they harried the lands so that beast and bird fled before them, and silence and desolation spread steadily from the North. Many of the Noldor and the Sindar they took captive and led to Angband, and made them thralls, forcing them to use their skill and their knowledge in the service of Morgoth. And Morgoth sent out his spies, and they were clad in false forms and deceit was in their speech; they made lying promises of reward, and with cunning words sought to arouse fear and jealousy among the peoples, accusing their kings and chieftains of greed, and of treachery one to another. And because of the curse of the Kinslaying at Alqualondë these lies were often believed; and indeed as the time darkened they had a measure of truth, for the hearts and minds of the Elves of Beleriand became clouded with despair and fear. But ever the Noldor feared most the treachery of those of their own kin, who had been thralls in Angband; for Morgoth used some of these for his evil purposes, and feigning to give them liberty sent them abroad, but their wills were chained to his, and they strayed only to come back to him again. Therefore if any of his captives escaped in truth, and returned to their own people, they had little welcome, and wandered alone outlawed and desperate.

To Men Morgoth feigned pity, if any would hearken to his messages, saying that their woes came only of their servitude to the rebel Noldor, but at the hands of the rightful Lord of Middle-earth they would get honour and a just reward of valour, if they would leave rebellion. But few men of the Three Houses of the Edain would give ear to him, not even were they brought to the torment of Angband. Therefore Morgoth pursued them with hatred; and he sent his messengers over the mountains.

It is told that at this time the Swarthy Men came first into Beleriand. Some were already secretly under the dominion of Morgoth, and came at his call; but not all, for the rumour of Beleriand, of its lands and waters, of its wars and riches, went now far and wide, and the wandering feet of Men were ever set westward in those days. These Men were short and broad, long and strong in the arm; their skins were swart or sallow, and their hair was dark as were their eyes. Their houses were many, and some had greater liking for the Dwarves of the mountains than for the Elves. But Maedhros, knowing the weakness of the Noldor and the Edain, whereas the pits of Angband seemed to hold store inexhaustible and ever-renewed, made alliance with these new-come Men, and gave his friendship to the greatest of their chieftains, Bór and Ulfang. And Morgoth was well content; for this was as he had designed. The sons of Bór were Borlad, Borlach, and Borthand; and they followed Maedhros and Maglor, and cheated the hope of Morgoth, and were faithful. The sons of Ulfang the Black were Ulfast, and Ulwarth, and Uldor the accursed; and they followed Caranthir and swore allegiance to him, and proved faithless.

There was small love between the Edain and the Easterlings, and they met seldom; for the newcomers abode long in East Beleriand, but Hador's folk were shut in Hithlum, and Bëor's house was wellnigh destroyed. The People of Haleth were at first untouched by the northern war, for they dwelt to the southward in the Forest of

Brethil; but now there was battle between them and the invading Orcs, for they were stout-hearted men and would not lightly forsake the woods that they loved. And amid the tale of defeats of that time the deeds of the Haladin are remembered with honour: for after the taking of Minas Tirith the Orcs came through the western pass, and maybe would have ravaged even to the mouths of Sirion; but Halmir lord of the Haladin sent swift word to Thingol, for he had friendship with the Elves that guarded the borders of Doriath. Then Beleg Strongbow, chief of the marchwardens of Thingol, brought great strength of the Sindar armed with axes into Brethil; and issuing from the deeps of the forest Halmir and Beleg took an Orc-legion at unawares and destroyed it. Thereafter the black tide out of the North was stemmed in that region, and the Orcs dared not cross the Teiglin for many years after. The People of Haleth dwelt yet in watchful peace in the Forest of Brethil, and behind their guard the Kingdom of Nargothrond had respite, and mustered its strength.

At this time Húrin and Huor, the sons of Galdor of Dorlómin, were dwelling with the Haladin, for they were akin. In the days before the Dagor Bragollach those two houses of the Edain were joined at a great feast, when Galdor and Glóredhel the children of Hador Goldenhead were wedded to Hareth and Haldir the children of Halmir lord of the Haladin. Thus it was that the sons of Galdor were fostered in Brethil by Haldir their uncle, according to the custom of Men in that time; and they went both to that battle with the Orcs, even Huor, for he would not be restrained, though he was but thirteen years old. But being with a company that was cut off from the rest they were pursued to the Ford of Brithiach, and there they would have been taken or slain but for the power of Ulmo, that was still strong in Sirion. A mist arose from the river and hid them from their enemies, and they escaped over the Brithiach into Dimbar, and wandered among the hills beneath the sheer walls of the Crissaegrim, until they were bewildered in the deceits of that land and knew not the way to go on or to return. There Thorondor espied them, and he sent two of his eagles to their aid; and the eagles bore them up and brought them beyond the Encircling Mountains to the secret vale of Tumladen and the hidden city of Gondolin, which no Man yet had seen.

There Turgon the King received them well, when he learned of their kin; for messages and dreams had come to him up Sirion from the sea, from Ulmo, Lord of Waters, warning him of woe to come and counselling him to deal kindly with the sons of the house of Hador, from whom help should come to him at need. Húrin and Huor dwelt as guests in the King's house for well nigh a year; and it is said that in this time Húrin learned much lore of the Elves, and understood also something of the counsels and purposes of the King. For Turgon took great liking for the sons of Galdor, and spoke much with them; and he wished indeed to keep them in Gondolin out of love, and not only for his law that no stranger, be he Elf or Man, who found the way to the secret kingdom and looked upon the city should ever depart again, until the King should open the leaguer, and the hidden people should come forth.

But Húrin and Huor desired to return to their own people and share in the wars and griefs that now beset them. And Húrin said to Turgon: "Lord, we are but mortal Men, and unlike the Eldar. They may endure for long years awaiting battle with their enemies in some far distant day; but for us the time is short, and our hope and strength soon wither. Moreover we did not find the road to Gondolin, and indeed we do not know surely where this city stands; for we were brought in fear and wonder by the high ways of the air, and in mercy our eyes were veiled." Then Turgon granted his prayer, and he said: "By the way that you came you have leave to depart, if Thorondor is willing. I grieve at this parting; yet in a little while, as the Eldar account it, we may meet again."

But Maeglin, the King's sister-son, who was mighty in Gondolin, grieved not at all at their going, though he begrudged them the favour of the King, for he had no love for any of the kindred of Men; and he said to Húrin: "The King's grace is greater than you know, and the law is become less stern than aforetime; or else no choice would be given you but to abide here to your life's end."

Then Húrin answered him: "The King's grace is great indeed; but if our word is not enough, then we will swear oaths to you." And the brothers swore never to reveal the counsels of Turgon, and to keep secret all that they had seen in his realm. Then they took their leave, and the eagles coming bore them away by night, and set them down in Dor-lómin before the dawn. Their kinsfolk rejoiced to see them, for messengers from Brethil had reported that they were lost; but they would not declare even to their father where they had been, save that they were rescued in the wilderness by the eagles that brought them home. But Galdor said: "Did you then dwell a year in the wild? Or did the eagles house you in their eyries? But you found food and fine raiment, and return as

young princes, not as waifs of the wood.” And Húrin answered: “Be content that we have returned; for only under an oath of silence was this permitted.” Then Galdor questioned them no more, but he and many others guessed at the truth; and in time the strange fortune of Húrin and Huor reached the ears of the servants of Morgoth.

Now when Turgon learned of the breaking of the leaguer of Angband he would not suffer any of his own people to issue forth to war; for he deemed that Gondolin was strong, and the time not yet ripe for its revealing. But he believed also that the ending of the Siege was the beginning of the downfall of the Noldor, unless aid should come; and he sent companies of the Gondolindrim in secret to the mouths of Sirion and the Isle of Balar. There they built ships, and set sail into the uttermost West upon Turgon’s errand, seeking for Valinor, to ask for pardon and aid of the Valar; and they besought the birds of the sea to guide them. But the seas were wild and wide, and shadow and enchantment lay upon them; and Valinor was hidden. Therefore none of the messengers of Turgon came into the West, and many were lost and few returned; but the doom of Gondolin drew nearer.

Rumour came to Morgoth of these things, and he was unquiet amid his victories; and he desired greatly to learn tidings of Felagund and Turgon. For they had vanished out of knowledge, and yet were not dead; and he feared what they might yet accomplish against him. Of Nargothrond he knew indeed the name, but neither its place nor its strength; and of Gondolin he knew nothing, and the thought of Turgon troubled him the more. Therefore he sent forth ever more spies into Beleriand; but he recalled the main hosts of the Orcs to Angband, for he perceived that he could not yet make a final and victorious battle until he had gathered new strength, and that he had not measured rightly the valour of the Noldor nor the might in arms of the Men that fought beside them. Great though his victory had been in the Bragollach and in the years after, and grievous the harm that he had done to his enemies, his own loss had been no less; and though he held Dorthonion and the Pass of Sirion, the Eldar recovering from their first dismay began now to regain what they had lost. Thus Beleriand in the south had a semblance of peace again for a few brief years; but the forges of Angband were full of labour.

When seven years had passed since the Fourth Battle, Morgoth renewed his assault, and he sent a great force against Hithlum. The attack on the passes of the Shadowy Mountains was bitter, and in the siege of Eithel Sirion Galdor the tall, Lord of Dor-lómin, was slain by an arrow. That fortress he held on behalf of Fingon the High King; and in that same place his father Hador Lórindol died but a little time before. Húrin his son was then newly come to manhood, but he was great in strength both of mind and body; and he drove the Orcs with heavy slaughter from Ered Wethrin, and pursued them far across the sands of Anfauglith.

But King Fingon was hard put to it to hold back the army of Angband that came down from the north; and battle was joined upon the very plains of Hithlum. There Fingon was outnumbered; but the ships of Círdan sailed in great strength up the Firth of Drengist, and in the hour of need the Elves of the Falas came upon the host of Morgoth from the west. Then the Orcs broke and fled, and the Eldar had the victory, and their horsed archers pursued them even into the Iron Mountains.

Thereafter Húrin son of Galdor ruled the house of Hador in Dor-lómin, and served Fingon. Húrin was of less stature than his fathers, or his son after him; but he was tireless and enduring in body, lithe and swift after the manner of his mother’s kin, Hareth of the Haladin. His wife was Morwen Eledhwen, daughter of Baragund of the house of Bëor, she who fled from Dorthonion with Rían daughter of Belegund and Emeldir the mother of Beren.

In that time also the outlaws of Dorthonion were destroyed, as is told hereafter; and Beren son of Barahir alone escaping came hardly into Doriath.



## Chapter 19: Of Beren And Lúthien

Among the tales of sorrow and of ruin that come down to us from the darkness of those days there are yet some in which amid weeping there is joy and under the shadow of death light that endures. And of these histories most fair still in the ears of the Elves is the tale of Beren and Lúthien. Of their lives was made the Lay of Leithian, Release from Bondage, which is the longest save one of the songs concerning the world of old; but here the tale is told in fewer words and without song.

It has been told that Barahir would not forsake Dorthonion, and there Morgoth pursued him to the death, until at last there remained to him only twelve companions. Now the forest of Dorthonion rose southward into mountainous moors; and in the east of those highlands there lay a lake, Tarn Aeluin, with wild heaths about it, and all that land was pathless and untamed, for even in the days of the Long Peace none had dwelt there. But the waters of Tarn Aeluin were held in reverence, for they were clear and blue by day and by night were a mirror for the stars; and it was said that Melian herself had hallowed that water in days of old. Thither Barahir and his outlaws withdrew, and there made their lair, and Morgoth could not discover it. But the rumour of the deeds of Barahir and his companions went far and wide; and Morgoth commanded Sauron to find them and destroy them.

Now among the companions of Barahir was Gorlim son of Angrim. His wife was named Eilinel, and their love was great, ere evil befell. But Gorlim returning from the war upon the marches found his house plundered and forsaken, and his wife gone; whether slain or taken he knew not. Then he fled to Barahir, and of his companions he was the most fierce and desperate; but doubt gnawed his heart, thinking that perhaps Eilinel was not dead. At times he would depart alone and secretly, and visit his house that still stood amid the fields and woods he had once possessed; and this became known to the servants of Morgoth.

On a time of autumn he came in the dusk of evening, and drawing near he saw as he thought a light at the window; and coming warily he looked within. There he saw Eilinel, and her face was worn with grief and hunger, and it seemed to him that he heard her voice lamenting that he had forsaken her. But even as he cried aloud the light was blown out in the wind; wolves howled, and on his shoulders he felt suddenly the heavy hands of Sauron's hunters. Thus Gorlim was ensnared; and taking him to their camp they tormented him, seeking to learn the hidings of Barahir and all his ways. But nothing would Gorlim tell. Then they promised him that he should be released and restored to Eilinel, if he would yield; and being at last worn with pain, and yearning for his wife, he faltered. Then straightway they brought him into the dreadful presence of Sauron; and Sauron said: "I hear now that thou wouldst barter with me. What is thy price?"

And Gorlim answered that he should find Eilinel again, and with her be set free; for he thought that Eilinel also had been made captive.

Then Sauron smiled, saying: "That is a small price for so great a treachery. So shall it surely be. Say on!"

Now Gorlim would have drawn back, but daunted by the eyes of Sauron he told at last all that he would know. Then Sauron laughed; and he mocked Gorlim, and revealed to him that he had seen only a phantom devised by wizardry to entrap him; for Eilinel was dead. "Nonetheless I will grant thy prayer," said Sauron; "and thou shalt go to Eilinel, and be set free of my service." Then he put him cruelly to death.

In this way the hiding of Barahir was revealed, and Morgoth drew his net about it; and the Orcs coming in the still hours before dawn surprised the Men of Dorthonion and slew them all, save one. For Beren son of Barahir had been sent by his father on a perilous errand to spy upon the ways of the Enemy, and he was far afield when the lair was taken. But as he slept benighted in the forest he dreamed that carrion-birds sat thick as leaves upon bare trees beside a mere, and blood dripped from their beaks. Then Beren was aware in his dream of a form that

came to him across the water, and it was a wraith of Gorlim; and it spoke to him declaring his treachery and death, and bade him make haste to warn his father.

Then Beren awoke, and sped through the night, and came back to the lair of the outlaws on the second morning. But as he drew near the carrion-birds rose from the ground and sat in the alder-trees beside Tarn Aeluin, and croaked in mockery.

There Beren buried his father's bones, and raised a cairn of boulders above him, and swore upon it an oath of vengeance. First therefore he pursued the Orcs that had slain his father and his kinsmen, and he found their camp by night at Rivil's Well above the Fen of Serech, and because of his woodcraft he came near to their fire unseen. There their captain made boast of his deeds, and he held up the hand of Barahir that he had cut off as a token for Sauron that their mission was fulfilled; and the ring of Felagund was on that hand. Then Beren sprang from behind a rock, and slew the captain, and taking the hand and the ring he escaped, being defended by fate; for the Orcs were dismayed, and their arrows wild.

Thereafter for four years more Beren wandered still upon Dorthonion, a solitary outlaw; but he became the friend of birds and beasts, and they aided him, and did not betray him, and from that time forth he ate no flesh nor slew any living thing that was not in the service of Morgoth. He did not fear death, but only captivity, and being bold and desperate he escaped both death and bonds; and the deeds of lonely daring that he achieved were noised abroad throughout Beleriand, and the tale of them came even into Doriath. At length Morgoth set a price upon his head no less than the price upon the head of Fingon, High King of the Noldor; but the Orcs fled rather at the rumour of his approach than sought him out. Therefore an army was sent against him under the command of Sauron; and Sauron brought were-wolves, fell beasts inhabited by dreadful spirits that he had imprisoned in their bodies.

All that land was now become filled with evil, and all clean things were departing from it; and Beren was pressed so hard that at last he was forced to flee from Dorthonion. In time of winter and snow he forsook the land and grave of his father, and climbing into the high regions of Gorgoroth, the Mountains of Terror, he descried afar the land of Doriath. There it was put into his heart that he would go down into the Hidden Kingdom, where no mortal foot had yet trodden.

Terrible was his southward journey. Sheer were the precipices of Ered Gorgoroth, and beneath their feet were shadows that were laid before the rising of the Moon. Beyond lay the wilderness of Dungortheb, where the sorcery of Sauron and the power of Melian came together, and horror and madness walked. There spiders of the fell race of Ungoliant abode, spinning their unseen webs in which all living things were snared; and monsters wandered there that were born in the long dark before the Sun, hunting silently with many eyes. No food for Elves or Men was there in that haunted land, but death only. That journey is not accounted least among the great deeds of Beren, but he spoke of it to no-one after, lest the horror return into his mind; and none know how he found a way, and so came by paths that no Man nor Elf else ever dared to tread to the borders of Doriath. And he passed through the mazes that Melian wove about the kingdom of Thingol, even as she had foretold; for a great doom lay upon him.

It is told in the Lay of Leithian that Beren came stumbling into Doriath grey and bowed as with many years of woe, so great had been the torment of the road. But wandering in the summer in the woods of Neldoreth he came upon Lúthien, daughter of Thingol and Melian, at a time of evening under moonrise, as she danced upon the unfading grass in the glades beside Esgalduin. Then all memory of his pain departed from him, and he fell into an enchantment; for Lúthien was the most beautiful of all the Children of Ilúvatar. Blue was her raiment as the unclouded heaven, but her eyes were grey as the starlit evening; her mantle was sewn with golden flowers, but her hair was dark as the shadows of twilight. As the light upon the leaves of trees, as the voice of clear waters, as the stars above the mists of the world, such was her glory and her loveliness; and in her face was a shining light.

But she vanished from his sight; and he became dumb, as one that is bound under a spell, and he strayed long in the woods, wild and wary as a beast, seeking for her. In his heart he called her Tinúviel, that signifies Nightingale, daughter of twilight, in the Grey-elven tongue, for he knew no other name for her. And he saw her afar as leaves in the winds of autumn, and in winter as a star upon a hill, but a chain was upon his limbs.

There came a time near dawn on the eve of spring, and Lúthien danced upon a green hill; and suddenly she began to sing. Keen, heart-piercing was her song as the song of the lark that rises from the gates of night and pours its voice among the dying stars, seeing the sun behind the walls of the world; and the song of Lúthien released the bonds of winter, and the frozen waters spoke, and flowers sprang from the cold earth where her feet had passed.

Then the spell of silence fell from Beren, and he called to her, crying Tinúviel; and the woods echoed the name. Then she halted in wonder, and fled no more, and Beren came to her. But as she looked on him, doom fell upon her, and she loved him; yet she slipped from his arms and vanished from his sight even as the day was breaking. Then Beren lay upon the ground in a swoon, as one slain at once by bliss and grief; and he fell into a sleep as it were into an abyss of shadow, and waking he was cold as stone, and his heart barren and forsaken. And wandering in mind he groped as one that is stricken with sudden blindness, and seeks with hands to grasp the vanished light. Thus he began the payment of anguish for the fate that was laid on him; and in his fate Lúthien was caught, and being immortal she shared in his mortality, and being free received his chain; and her anguish was greater than any other of the Eldalië has known.

Beyond his hope she returned to him where he sat in darkness, and long ago in the Hidden Kingdom she laid her hand in his. Thereafter often she came to him, and they went in secret through the woods together from spring to summer; and no others of the Children of Ilúvatar have had joy so great, though the time was brief.

But Daeron the minstrel also loved Lúthien, and he espied her meetings with Beren, and betrayed them to Thingol. Then the King was filled with anger, for Lúthien he loved above all things, setting her above all the princes of the Elves; whereas mortal Men he did not even take into his service. Therefore he spoke in grief and amazement to Lúthien; but she would reveal nothing, until he swore an oath to her that he would neither slay Beren nor imprison him. But he sent his servants to lay hands on him and lead him to Menegroth as a malefactor; and Lúthien forestalling them led Beren herself before the throne of Thingol, as if he were an honoured guest.

Then Thingol looked upon Beren in scorn and anger; but Melian was silent. “Who are you,” said the King, “that come hither as a thief, and unbidden dare to approach my throne?”

But Beren being filled with dread, for the splendour of Menegroth and the majesty of Thingol were very great, answered nothing. Therefore Lúthien spoke, and said: “He is Beren son of Barahir, lord of Men, mighty foe of Morgoth, the tale of whose deeds is become a song even among the Elves.”

“Let Beren speak!” said Thingol. “What would you here, unhappy mortal, and for what cause have you left your own land to enter this, which is forbidden to such as you? Can you show reason why my power should not be laid on you in heavy punishment for your insolence and folly?”

Then Beren looking up beheld the eyes of Lúthien, and his glance went also to the face of Melian; and it seemed to him that words were put into his mouth. Fear left him, and the pride of the eldest house of Men returned to him; and he said: “My fate, O King, led me hither, through perils such as few even of the Elves would dare. And here I have found what I sought not indeed, but finding I would possess for ever. For it is above all gold and silver, and beyond all jewels. Neither rock, nor steel, nor the fires of Morgoth, nor all the powers of the Elf-kingdoms, shall keep from me the treasure that I desire. For Lúthien your daughter is the fairest of all the Children of the World.”

Then silence fell upon the hall, for those that stood there were astounded and afraid, and they thought that Beren would be slain. But Thingol spoke slowly, saying: “Death you have earned with these words; and death you should find suddenly, had I not sworn an oath in haste; of which I repent, baseborn mortal, who in the realm of Morgoth has learnt to creep in secret as his spies and thralls.”

Then Beren answered: “Death you can give me earned or unearned; but the names I will not take from you of baseborn, nor spy, nor thrall. By the ring of Felagund, that he gave to Barahir my father on the battlefield of the North, my house has not earned such names from any Elf, be he king or no.”

His words were proud, and all eyes looked upon the ring; for he held it now aloft, and the green jewels gleamed there that the Noldor had devised in Valinor. For this ring was like to twin serpents, whose eyes were emeralds,



and their heads met beneath a crown of golden flowers, that the one upheld and the other devoured; that was the badge of Finarfin and his house. Then Melian leaned to Thingol's side, and in whispered counsel bade him forgo his wrath. "For not by you," she said, "shall Beren be slain; and far and free does his fate lead him in the end, yet it is wound with yours. Take heed!"

But Thingol looked in silence upon Lúthien; and he thought in his heart: "Unhappy Men, children of little lords and brief kings, shall such as these lay hands on you, and yet live?" Then breaking the silence he said: "I see the ring, son of Barahir, and I perceive that you are proud, and deem yourself mighty. But a father's deeds, even had his service been rendered to me, avail not to win the daughter of Thingol and Melian. See now! I too desire a treasure that is withheld. For rock and steel and the fires of Morgoth keep the jewel that I would possess against all the powers of the Elf-kingdoms. Yet I hear you say that bonds such as these do not daunt you. Go your way therefore! Bring to me in your hand a Silmaril from Morgoth's crown; and then, if she will, Lúthien may set her hand in yours. Then you shall have my jewel; and though the fate of Arda lie within the Silmarils, yet you shall hold me generous."

Thus he wrought the doom of Doriath, and was ensnared within the curse of Mandos. And those that heard these words perceived that Thingol would save his oath, and yet send Beren to his death; for they knew that not all the power of the Noldor, before the Siege was broken, had availed even to see from afar the shining Silmarils of Fëanor. For they were set in the Iron Crown, and treasured in Angband above all wealth; and Balrogs were about them, and countless swords, and strong bars, and unassailable walls, and the dark majesty of Morgoth.

But Beren laughed. "For little price," he said, "do Elven-kings sell their daughters: for gems, and things made by craft. But if this be your will, Thingol, I will perform it. And when we meet again my hand shall hold a Silmaril from the Iron Crown; for you have not looked the last upon Beren son of Barahir."

Then he looked in the eyes of Melian, who spoke not; and he bade farewell to Lúthien Tinúviel, and bowing before Thingol and Melian he put aside the guards about him, and departed from Menegroth alone.

Then at last Melian spoke, and she said to Thingol: "O King, you have devised cunning counsel. But if my eyes have not lost their sight, it is ill for you, whether Beren fail in his errand, or achieve it. For you have doomed either your daughter, or yourself. And now is Doriath drawn within the fate of a mightier realm."

But Thingol answered: "I sell not to Elves or Men those whom I love and cherish above all treasure. And if there were hope or fear that Beren should come ever back alive to Menegroth, he should not have looked again upon the light of heaven, though I had sworn it."

But Lúthien was silent, and from that hour she sang not again in Doriath. A brooding silence fell upon the woods, and the shadows lengthened in the kingdom of Thingol.

It is told in the Lay of Leithian that Beren passed through Doriath unhindered, and came at length to the region of the Twilight Meres, and the Fens of Sirion; and leaving Thingol's land he climbed the hills above the Falls of Sirion, where the river plunged underground with great noise. Thence he looked westward, and through the mist and rains that lay upon those hills he saw Talath Dirnen, the Guarded Plain, stretching between Sirion and Narog; and beyond he descried afar the highlands of Taur-en-Faroth that rose above Nargothrond. And being destitute, without hope or counsel, he turned his feet thither.

Upon all that plain the Elves of Nargothrond kept unceasing watch; and every hill upon its borders was crowned with hidden towers, and through all its woods and fields archers ranged secretly and with great craft. Their arrows were sure and deadly, and nothing crept there against their will. Therefore, ere Beren had come far upon his road, they were aware of him, and his death was nigh. But knowing his danger he held ever aloft the ring of Felagund; and though he saw no living thing, because of the stealth of the hunters, he felt that he was watched, and cried often aloud: "I am Beren son of Barahir, friend of Felagund. Take me to the King!"

Therefore the hunters slew him not, but assembling they waylaid him, and commanded him to halt. But seeing the ring they bowed before him, though he was in evil plight, wild and wayworn; and they led him northward and westward, going by night lest their paths should be revealed. For at that time there was no ford or bridge over the torrent of Narog before the gates of Nargothrond; but further to the north, where Ginglith joined

Narog, the flood was less, and crossing there and turning again southward the Elves led Beren under the light of the moon to the dark gates of their hidden halls.

Thus Beren came before King Finrod Felagund; and Felagund knew him, needing no ring to remind him of the kin of Bëor and of Barahir. Behind closed doors they sat, and Beren told of the death of Barahir, and of all that had befallen him in Doriath; and he wept, recalling Lúthien and their joy together. But Felagund heard his tale in wonder and disquiet; and he knew that the oath he had sworn was come upon him for his death, as long before he had foretold to Galadriel. He spoke then to Beren in heaviness of heart. "It is plain that Thingol desires your death; but it seems that this doom goes beyond his purpose, and that the Oath of Fëanor is again at work. For the Silmarils are cursed with an oath of hatred, and he that even names them in desire moves a great power from slumber; and the sons of Fëanor would lay all the Elf-kingdoms in ruin rather than suffer any other than themselves to win or possess a Silmaril, for the Oath drives them. And now Celegorm and Curufin are dwelling in my halls; and though I, Finarfin's son, am King, they have won a strong power in the realm, and lead many of their own people. They have shown friendship to me in every need, but I fear that they will show neither love nor mercy to you, if your quest be told. Yet my own oath holds; and thus we are all ensnared."

Then King Felagund spoke before his people, recalling the deeds of Barahir, and his vow; and he declared that it was laid upon him to aid the son of Barahir in his need, and he sought the help of his chieftains. Then Celegorm arose amid the throng, and drawing his sword he cried: "Be he friend or foe, whether demon of Morgoth, or Elf, or child of Men, or any other living thing in Arda, neither law, nor love, nor league of hell, nor might of the Valar, nor any power of wizardry, shall defend him from the pursuing hate of Fëanor's sons, if he take or find a Silmaril and keep it. For the Silmarils we alone claim, until the world ends."

Many other words he spoke, as potent as were long before in Tirion the words of his father that first inflamed the Noldor to rebellion. And after Celegorm Curufin spoke, more softly but with no less power, conjuring in the minds of the Elves a vision of war and the ruin of Nargothrond. So great a fear did he set in their hearts that never after until the time of Túrin would any Elf of that realm go into open battle; but with stealth and ambush, with wizardry and venomous dart, they pursued all strangers, forgetting the bonds of kinship. Thus they fell from the valour and freedom of the Elves of old, and their land was darkened.

And now they murmured that Finarfin's son was not as a Vala to command them, and they turned their faces from him. But the curse of Mandos came upon the brothers, and dark thoughts arose in their hearts, thinking to send forth Felagund alone to his death, and to usurp, it might be, the throne of Nargothrond; for they were of the eldest line of the princes of the Noldor.

And Felagund seeing that he was forsaken took from his head the silver crown of Nargothrond and cast it at his feet, saying: "Your oaths of faith to me you may break, but I must hold my bond. Yet if there be any on whom the shadow of our curse has not yet fallen, I should find at least a few to follow me, and should not go hence as a beggar that is thrust from the gates." There were ten that stood by him; and the chief of them, who was named Edrahil, stooping lifted the crown and asked that it be given to a steward until Felagund's return. "For you remain my king, and theirs," he said, "whatever betide."

Then Felagund gave the crown of Nargothrond to Orodreth his brother to govern in his stead; and Celegorm and Curufin said nothing, but they smiled and went from the halls.

On an evening of autumn Felagund and Beren set out from Nargothrond with their ten companions; and they journeyed beside Narog to his source in the Falls of Ivrin. Beneath the Shadowy Mountains they came upon a company of Orcs, and slew them all in their camp by night; and they took their gear and their weapons. By the arts of Felagund their own forms and faces were changed into the likeness of Orcs; and thus disguised they came far upon their northward road, and ventured into the western pass, between Ered Wethrin and the highlands of Taur-nu-Fuin. But Sauron in his tower was ware of them, and doubt took him; for they went in haste, and stayed not to report their deeds, as was commanded to all the servants of Morgoth that passed that way. Therefore he sent to waylay them, and bring them before him.

Thus befell the contest of Sauron and Felagund which is renowned. For Felagund strove with Sauron in songs of power, and the power of the King was very great; but Sauron had the mastery, as is told in the Lay of Leithian:

*He chanted a song of wizardry,  
 Of piercing, opening, of treachery,  
 Revealing, uncovering, betraying.  
 Then sudden Felagund there swaying  
 Sang in answer a song of staying,  
 Resisting, battling against power,  
 Of secrets kept, strength like a tower,  
 And trust unbroken, freedom, escape;  
 Of changing and of shifting shape,  
 Of snares eluded, broken traps,  
 The prison opening, the chain that snaps.  
 Backwards and forwards swayed their song.  
 Reeling and foundering, as ever more strong  
 The chanting swelled, Felagund fought,  
 And all the magic and might he brought  
 Of Elvenesse into his words.  
 Softly in the gloom they heard the birds  
 Singing afar in Nargothrond,  
 The sighing of the Sea beyond,  
 Beyond the western world, on sand,  
 On sand of pearls in Elvenland.  
 Then the gloom gathered; darkness growing  
 In Valinor, the red blood flowing  
 Beside the Sea, where the Noldor slew  
 The Foamriders, and stealing drew  
 Their white ships with their white sails  
 From lamplit havens. The wind wails,  
 The wolf howls. The ravens flee.  
 The ice mutters in the mouths of the Sea.  
 The captives sad in Angband mourn.  
 Thunder rumbles, the fires burn—  
 And Finrod fell before the throne.*

Then Sauron stripped from them their disguise, and they stood before him naked and afraid. But though their kinds were revealed, Sauron could not discover their names or their purposes.

He cast them therefore into a deep pit, dark and silent, and threatened to slay them cruelly, unless one would betray the truth to him. From time to time they saw two eyes kindled in the dark, and a werewolf devoured one of the companions; but none betrayed their lord.

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In the time when Sauron cast Beren into the pit a weight of horror came upon Lúthien's heart; and going to Melian for counsel she learned that Beren lay in the dungeons of Tol-in-Gaurhoth without hope of rescue. Then Lúthien, perceiving that no help would come from any other on earth, resolved to fly from Doriath and come herself to him; but she sought the aid of Daeron, and he betrayed her purpose to the King. Then Thingol was filled with fear and wonder; and because he would not deprive Lúthien of the lights of heaven, lest she fail and fade, and yet would restrain her, he caused a house to be built from which she should not escape. Not far from the gates of Menegroth stood the greatest of all the trees in the Forest of Neldoreth; and that was a beech-forest and the northern half of the kingdom. This mighty beech was named Hírilorn, and it had three trunks, equal in girth, smooth in rind, and exceeding tall; no branches grew from them for a great height above the ground. Far aloft between the shafts of Hírilorn a wooden house was built, and there Lúthien was made to dwell; and the

ladders were taken away and guarded, save only when the servants of Thingol brought her such things as she needed.

It is told in the Lay of Leithian how she escaped from the house in Hírilorn; for she put forth her arts of enchantment, and caused her hair to grow to great length, and of it she wove a dark robe that wrapped her beauty like a shadow, and it was laden with a spell of sleep. Of the strands that remained she twined a rope, and she let it down from her window; and as the end swayed above the guards that sat beneath the tree they fell into a deep slumber. Then Lúthien climbed from her prison, and shrouded in her shadowy cloak she escaped from all eyes, and vanished out of Doriath.

It chanced that Celegorm and Curufin went on a hunt through the Guarded Plain; and this they did because Sauron, being filled with suspicion, sent forth many wolves into the Elf-lands. Therefore they took their hounds and rode forth; and they thought that ere they returned they might also hear tidings concerning King Felagund. Now the chief of the wolf-hounds that followed Celegorm was named Huan. He was not born in Middle-earth, but came from the Blessed Realm; for Oromë had given him to Celegorm long ago in Valinor, and there he had followed the horn of his master, before evil came. Huan followed Celegorm into exile, and was faithful; and thus he too came under the doom of woe set upon the Noldor, and it was decreed that he should meet death, but not until he encountered the mightiest wolf that would ever walk the world.

Huan it was that found Lúthien flying like a shadow surprised by the daylight under the trees, when Celegorm and Curufin rested a while near to the western eaves of Doriath; for nothing could escape the sight and scent of Huan, nor could any enchantment stay him, and he slept not, neither by night nor day. He brought her to Celegorm, and Lúthien, learning that he was a prince of the Noldor and a foe of Morgoth, was glad; and she declared herself, casting aside her cloak. So great was her sudden beauty revealed beneath the sun that Celegorm became enamoured of her; but he spoke her fair, and promised that she would find help in her need, if she returned with him now to Nargothrond. By no sign did he reveal that he knew already of Beren and the quest, of which she told, nor that it was a matter which touched him near.

Thus they broke off the hunt and returned to Nargothrond, and Lúthien was betrayed; for they held her fast, and took away her cloak, and she was not permitted to pass the gates or to speak with any save the brothers, Celegorm and Curufin. For now, believing that Beren and Felagund were prisoners beyond hope of aid, they purposed to let the King perish, and to keep Lúthien, and force Thingol to give her hand to Celegorm. Thus they would advance their power, and become the mightiest of the princes of the Noldor. And they did not purpose to seek the Silmarils by craft or war, or to suffer any others to do so, until they had all the might of the Elf-kingdoms under their hands. Orodreth had no power to withstand them, for they swayed the hearts of the people of Nargothrond; and Celegorm sent messengers to Thingol urging his suit.

But Huan the hound was true of heart, and the love of Lúthien had fallen upon him in the first hour of their meeting; and he grieved at her captivity. Therefore he came often to her chamber; and at night he lay before her door, for he felt that evil had come to Nargothrond. Lúthien spoke often to Huan in her loneliness, telling of Beren, who was the friend of all birds and beasts that did not serve Morgoth; and Huan understood all that was said. For he comprehended the speech of all things with voice; but it was permitted to him thrice only ere his death to speak with words.

Now Huan devised a plan for the aid of Lúthien; and coming at a time of night he brought her cloak, and for the first time he spoke, giving her counsel. Then he led her by secret ways out of Nargothrond, and they fled north together; and he humbled his pride and suffered her to ride upon him in the fashion of a steed, even as the Orcs did at times upon great wolves. Thus they made great speed, for Huan was swift and tireless.

In the pits of Sauron Beren and Felagund lay, and all their companions were now dead; but Sauron purposed to keep Felagund to the last, for he perceived that he was a Noldo of great might and wisdom, and he deemed that in him lay the secret of their errand. But when the wolf came for Beren, Felagund put forth all his power, and burst his bonds; and he wrestled with the werewolf, and slew it with his hands and teeth; yet he himself was wounded to the death. Then he spoke to Beren, saying: "I go now to my long rest in the timeless halls beyond the seas and the Mountains of Aman. It will be long ere I am seen among the Noldor again; and it may be that we shall not meet a second time in death or life, for the fates of our kindreds are apart. Farewell!" He died then

in the dark, in Tol-in-Gaurhoth, whose great tower he himself had built. Thus King Finrod Felagund, fairest and most beloved of the house of Finwë, redeemed his oath; but Beren mourned beside him in despair.

In that hour Lúthien came, and standing upon the bridge that led to Sauron's isle she sang a song that no walls of stone could hinder. Beren heard, and he thought that he dreamed; for the stars shone above him, and in the trees nightingales were singing. And in answer he sang a song of challenge that he had made in praise of the Seven Stars, the Sickle of the Valar that Varda hung above the North as a sign for the fall of Morgoth. Then all strength left him and he fell down into darkness.

But Lúthien heard his answering voice, and she sang then a song of greater power. The wolves howled, and the isle trembled. Sauron stood in the high tower, wrapped in his black thought; but he smiled hearing her voice, for he knew that it was the daughter of Melian. The fame of the beauty of Lúthien and the wonder of her song had long gone forth from Doriath; and he thought to make her captive and hand her over to the power of Morgoth, for his reward would be great.

Therefore he sent a wolf to the bridge. But Huan slew it silently. Still Sauron sent others one by one; and one by one Huan took them by the throat and slew them. Then Sauron sent Draugluin, a dread beast, old in evil, lord and sire of the werewolves of Angband. His might was great; and the battle of Huan and Draugluin was long and fierce. Yet at length Draugluin escaped, and fleeing back into the tower he died before Sauron's feet; and as he died he told his master: "Huan is there!" Now Sauron knew well, as did all in that land, the fate that was decreed for the hound of Valinor, and it came into his thought that he himself would accomplish it. Therefore he took upon himself the form of a werewolf, and made himself the mightiest that had yet walked the world; and he came forth to win the passage of the bridge.

So great was the horror of his approach that Huan leaped aside. Then Sauron sprang upon Lúthien; and she swooned before the menace of the fell spirit in his eyes and the foul vapour of his breath. But even as he came, falling she cast a fold of her dark cloak before his eyes; and he stumbled, for a fleeting drowsiness came upon him. Then Huan sprang. There befell the battle of Huan and Wolf-Sauron, and the howls and baying echoed in the hills, and the watchers on the walls of Ered Wethrin across the valley heard it afar and were dismayed.

But no wizardry nor spell, neither fang nor venom, nor devil's art nor beast-strength, could overthrow Huan of Valinor; and he took his foe by the throat and pinned him down. Then Sauron shifted shape, from wolf to serpent, and from monster to his own accustomed form; but he could not elude the grip of Huan without forsaking his body utterly. Ere his foul spirit left its dark house, Lúthien came to him, and said that he should be stripped of his raiment of flesh, and his ghost be sent quaking back to Morgoth; and she said: "There everlastingly thy naked self shall endure the torment of his scorn, pierced by his eyes, unless thou yield to me the mastery of thy tower."

Then Sauron yielded himself, and Lúthien took the mastery of the isle and all that was there; and Huan released him. And immediately he took the form of a vampire, great as a dark cloud across the moon, and he fled, dripping blood from his throat upon the trees, and came to Taur-nu-Fuin, and dwelt there, filling it with horror.

Then Lúthien stood upon the bridge, and declared her power: and the spell was loosed that bound stone to stone, and the gates were thrown down, and the walls opened, and the pits laid bare; and many thralls and captives came forth in wonder and dismay, shielding their eyes against the pale moonlight, for they had lain long in the darkness of Sauron. But Beren came not. Therefore Huan and Lúthien sought him in the isle; and Lúthien found him mourning by Felagund. So deep was his anguish that he lay still, and did not hear her feet. Then thinking him already dead she put her arms about him and fell into a dark forgetfulness. But Beren coming back to the light out of the pits of despair lifted her up, and they looked again upon one another; and the day rising over the dark hills shone upon them.

They buried the body of Felagund upon the hill-top of his own isle, and it was clean again; and the green grave of Finrod Finarfin's son, fairest of all the princes of the Elves, remained inviolate, until the land was changed and broken, and foundered under destroying seas. But Finrod walks with Finarfin his father beneath the trees in Eldamar.

Now Beren and Lúthien Tinúviel went free again and together walked through the woods renewing for a time their joy; and though winter came it hurt them not, for flowers lingered where Lúthien went, and the birds sang beneath the snowclad hills. But Huan being faithful went back to Celegorm his master; yet their love was less than before.

There was tumult in Nargothrond. For thither now returned many Elves that had been prisoners in the isle of Sauron; and a clamour arose that no words of Celegorm could still. They lamented bitterly the fall of Felagund their king, saying that a maiden had dared that which the sons of Fëanor had not dared to do; but many perceived that it was treachery rather than fear that had guided Celegorm and Curufin. Therefore the hearts of the people of Nargothrond were released from their dominion, and turned again to the house of Finarfin; and they obeyed Orodreth. But he would not suffer them to slay the brothers, as some desired, for the spilling of kindred blood by kin would bind the curse of Mandos more closely upon them all. Yet neither bread nor rest would he grant to Celegorm and Curufin within his realm, and he swore that there should be little love between Nargothrond and the sons of Fëanor thereafter.

“Let it be so!” said Celegorm, and there was a light of menace in his eyes; but Curufin smiled. Then they took horse and rode away like fire, to find if they might their kindred in the east. But none would go with them, not even those that were of their own people; for all perceived that the curse lay heavily upon the brothers, and that evil followed them. In that time Celebrimbor the son of Curufin repudiated the deeds of his father, and remained in Nargothrond; yet Huan followed still the horse of Celegorm his master.

Northward they rode, for they intended in their haste to pass through Dimbar, and along the north marches of Doriath, seeking the swiftest road to Himring, where Maedhros their brother dwelt; and still they might hope with speed to traverse it, since it lay close to Doriath’s borders, shunning Nan Dungortheb and the distant menace of the Mountains of Terror.

Now it is told that Beren and Lúthien came in their wandering into the Forest of Brethil, and drew near at last to the borders of Doriath. Then Beren took thought of his vow; and against his heart he resolved, when Lúthien was come again within the safety of her own land, to set forth once more. But she was not willing to be parted from him again, saying: “You must choose, Beren, between these two: to relinquish the quest and your oath and seek a life of wandering upon the face of the earth; or to hold to your word and challenge the power of darkness upon its throne. But on either road I shall go with you, and our doom shall be alike.”

Even as they spoke together of these things, walking without heed of aught else, Celegorm and Curufin rode up, hastening through the forest; and the brothers espied them and knew them from afar. Then Celegorm turned his horse, and spurred it upon Beren, purposing to ride him down; but Curufin swerving stooped and lifted Lúthien to his saddle, for he was a strong and cunning horseman. Then Beren sprang from before Celegorm full upon the speeding horse of Curufin that had passed him; and the Leap of Beren is renowned among Men and Elves. He took Curufin by the throat from behind, and hurled him backward, and they fell to the ground together. The horse reared and fell, but Lúthien was flung aside, and lay upon the grass.

Then Beren throttled Curufin; but death was near him, for Celegorm rode upon him with a spear. In that hour Huan forsook the service of Celegorm, and sprang upon him, so that his horse swerved aside, and would not approach Beren because of the terror of the great hound. Celegorm cursed both hound and horse, but Huan was unmoved. Then Lúthien rising forbade the slaying of Curufin; but Beren despoiled him of his gear and weapons, and took his knife, Angrist. That knife was made by Telchar of Nogrod, and hung sheathless by his side; iron it would cleave as if it were green wood. Then Beren lifting Curufin flung him from him, and bade him walk now back to his noble kinsfolk, who might teach him to turn his valour to worthier use. “Your horse,” he said, “I keep for the service of Lúthien, and it may be accounted happy to be free of such a master.”

Then Curufin cursed Beren under cloud and sky. “Go hence,” he said, “unto a swift and bitter death.” Celegorm took him beside him on his horse, and the brothers made then as if to ride away; and Beren turned away and took no heed of their words. But Curufin, being filled with shame and malice, took the bow of Celegorm and shot back as they went; and the arrow was aimed at Lúthien. Huan leaping caught it in his mouth; but Curufin shot again, and Beren sprang before Lúthien, and the dart smote him in the breast.

It is told that Huan pursued the sons of Fëanor, and they fled in fear; and returning he brought to Lúthien a herb out of the forest. With that leaf she staunched Beren's wound, and by her arts and by her love she healed him; and thus at last they returned to Doriath. There Beren, being torn between his oath and his love, and knowing Lúthien to be now safe, arose one morning before the sun, and committed her to the care of Huan; then in great anguish he departed while she yet slept upon the grass.

He rode northward again with all speed to the Pass of Sirion, and coming to the skirts of Taur-nu-Fuin he looked out across the waste of Anfauglith and saw afar the peaks of Thangorodrim. There he dismissed the horse of Curufin, and bade it leave now dread and servitude and run free upon the green grass in the lands of Sirion. Then being now alone and upon the threshold of the final peril he made the Song of Parting, in praise of Lúthien and the lights of heaven; for he believed that he must now say farewell to both love and light. Of that song these words were part:

*Farewell sweet earth and northern sky,  
for ever blest, since here did lie  
and here with lissom limbs did run  
beneath the Moon, beneath the Sun,  
Lúthien Tinúviel  
more fair than mortal tongue can tell.  
Though all to ruin fell the world  
and were dissolved and backward hurled  
unmade into the old abyss,  
yet were its making good, for this—  
the dusk, the dawn, the earth, the sea—  
that Lúthien for a time should be.*

And he sang aloud, caring not what ear should overhear him, for he was desperate and looked for no escape.

But Lúthien heard his song, and she sang in answer, as she came through the woods unlooked for. For Huan, consenting once more to be her steed, had borne her swiftly hard upon Beren's trail. Long he had pondered in his heart what counsel he could devise for the lightening of the peril of these two whom he loved. He turned aside therefore at Sauron's isle, as they ran northward again, and he took thence the ghastly wolf-hame of Draugluin, and the bat-fell of Thuringwethil. She was the messenger of Sauron, and was wont to fly in vampire's form to Angband; and her great fingered wings were barbed at each joint's end with an iron claw. Clad in these dreadful garments Huan and Lúthien ran through Taur-nu-Fuin, and all things fled before them.

Beren seeing their approach was dismayed; and he wondered, for he had heard the voice of Tinúviel, and he thought it now a phantom for his ensnaring. But they halted and cast aside their disguise, and Lúthien ran towards him. Thus Beren and Lúthien met again between the desert and the wood. For a while he was silent, and was glad; but after a space he strove once more to dissuade Lúthien from her journey.

"Thrice now I curse my oath to Thingol," he said, "and I would that he had slain me in Menegroth, rather than I should bring you under the shadow of Morgoth."

Then for the second time Huan spoke with words; and he counselled Beren, saying: "From the shadow of death you can no longer save Lúthien, for by her love she is now subject to it. You can turn from your fate and lead her into exile, seeking peace in vain while your life lasts. But if you will not deny your doom, then either Lúthien, being forsaken, must assuredly die alone, or she must with you challenge the fate that lies before you—hopeless, yet not certain. Further counsel I cannot give, nor may I go further on your road. But my heart forebodes that what you find at the Gate I shall myself see. All else is dark to me; yet it may be that our three paths lead back to Doriath, and we may meet before the end."

Then Beren perceived that Lúthien could not be divided from the doom that lay upon them both, and he sought no longer to dissuade her. By the counsel of Huan and the arts of Lúthien he was arrayed now in the hame of Draugluin, and she in the winged fell of Thuringwethil. Beren became in all things like a werewolf to look upon, save that in his eyes there shone a spirit grim indeed but clean; and horror was in his glance as he saw

upon his flank a bat-like creature clinging with creased wings. Then howling under the moon he leaped down the hill, and the bat wheeled and flittered above him.

They passed through all perils, until they came with the dust of their long and weary road upon them to the drear dale that lay before the Gate of Angband. Black chasms opened beside the road, whence forms as of writhing serpents issued. On either hand the cliffs stood as embattled walls, and upon them sat carrion fowl crying with fell voices. Before them was the impregnable Gate, an arch wide and dark at the foot of the mountain; above it reared a thousand feet of precipice.

There dismay took them, for at the gate was a guard of whom no tidings had yet gone forth. Rumour of he knew not what designs abroad among the princes of the Elves had come to Morgoth, and ever down the aisles of the forest was heard the baying of Huan, the great hound of war, whom long ago the Valar unleashed. Then Morgoth recalled the doom of Huan, and he chose one from among the whelps of the race of Draugluin; and he fed him with his own hand upon living flesh, and put his power upon him. Swiftly the wolf grew, until he could creep into no den, but lay huge and hungry before the feet of Morgoth. There the fire and anguish of hell entered into him, and he became filled with a devouring spirit, tormented, terrible, and strong. Carcharoth, the Red Maw, he is named in the tales of those days, and Anfauglir, the Jaws of Thirst. And Morgoth set him to lie unsleeping before the doors of Angband, lest Huan come.

Now Carcharoth espied them from afar, and he was filled with doubt; for news had long been brought to Angband that Draugluin was dead. Therefore when they approached he denied them entry, and bade them stand; and he drew near with menace, scenting something strange in the air about them. But suddenly some power, descended from of old from divine race, possessed Lúthien, and casting back her foul raiment she stood forth, small before the might of Carcharoth, but radiant and terrible. Lifting up her hand she commanded him to sleep, saying: "O woe-begotten spirit, fall now into dark oblivion, and forget for a while the dreadful doom of life." And Carcharoth was felled, as though lightning had smitten him.

Then Beren and Lúthien went through the Gate, and down the labyrinthine stairs; and together wrought the greatest deed that has been dared by Elves or Men. For they came to the seat of Morgoth in his nethermost hall, that was upheld by horror, lit by fire, and filled with weapons of death and torment. There Beren slunk in wolf's form beneath his throne; but Lúthien was stripped of her disguise by the will of Morgoth, and he bent his gaze upon her. She was not daunted by his eyes; and she named her own name, and offered her service to sing before him, after the manner of a minstrel. Then Morgoth looking upon her beauty conceived in his thought an evil lust, and a design more dark than any that had yet come into his heart since he fled from Valinor. Thus he was beguiled by his own malice, for he watched her, leaving her free for a while, and taking secret pleasure in his thought. Then suddenly she eluded his sight, and out of the shadows began a song of such surpassing loveliness, and of such blinding power, that he listened perforce; and a blindness came upon him, as his eyes roamed to and fro, seeking her.

All his court were cast down in slumber, and all the fires faded and were quenched; but the Silmarils in the crown on Morgoth's head blazed forth suddenly with a radiance of white flame; and the burden of that crown and of the jewels bowed down his head, as though the world were set upon it, laden with a weight of care, of fear, and of desire, that even the will of Morgoth could not support. Then Lúthien catching up her winged robe sprang into the air, and her voice came dropping down like rain into pools, profound and dark. She cast her cloak before his eyes, and set upon him a dream, dark as the Outer Void where once he walked alone. Suddenly he fell, as a hill sliding in avalanche, and hurled like thunder from his throne lay prone upon the floors of hell. The iron crown rolled echoing from his head. All things were still.

As a dead beast Beren lay upon the ground; but Lúthien touching him with her hand aroused him, and he cast aside the wolf-hame. Then he drew forth the knife Angrist; and from the iron claws that held it he cut a Silmaril.

As he closed it in his hand, the radiance welled through his living flesh, and his hand became as a shining lamp; but the jewel suffered his touch and hurt him not. It came then into Beren's mind that he would go beyond his vow, and bear out of Angband all three of the Jewels of Fëanor; but such was not the doom of the Silmarils.



The knife Angrist snapped, and a shard of the blade flying smote the cheek of Morgoth. He groaned and stirred, and all the host of Angband moved in sleep.

Then terror fell upon Beren and Lúthien, and they fled, heedless and without disguise, desiring only to see the light once more. They were neither hindered nor pursued, but the Gate was held against their going out; for Carcharoth had arisen from sleep, and stood now in wrath upon the threshold of Angband. Before they were aware of him, he saw them, and sprang upon them as they ran.

Lúthien was spent, and she had not time nor strength to quell the wolf. But Beren strode forth before her, and in his right hand he held aloft the Silmaril. Carcharoth halted, and for a moment was afraid. "Get you gone, and fly!" cried Beren; "for here is a fire that shall consume you, and all evil things." And he thrust the Silmaril before the eyes of the wolf.

But Carcharoth looked upon that holy jewel and was not daunted, and the devouring spirit within him awoke to sudden fire; and gaping he took suddenly the hand within his jaws, and he bit it off at the wrist. Then swiftly all his inwards were filled with a flame of anguish, and the Silmaril seared his accursed flesh. Howling he fled before them, and the walls of the valley of the Gate echoed with the clamour of his torment. So terrible did he become in his madness that all the creatures of Morgoth that abode in that valley, or were upon any of the roads that led thither, fled far away; for he slew all living things that stood in his path, and burst from the North with ruin upon the world. Of all the terrors that came ever into Beleriand ere Angband's fall the madness of Carcharoth was the most dreadful; for the power of the Silmaril was hidden within him.

Now Beren lay in a swoon within the perilous Gate, and death drew nigh him, for there was venom on the fangs of the wolf. Lúthien with her lips drew out the venom, and she put forth her failing power to staunch the hideous wound. But behind her in the depths of Angband the rumour grew of great wrath aroused. The hosts of Morgoth were awakened.

Thus the quest of the Silmaril was like to have ended in ruin and despair; but in that hour above the wall of the valley three mighty birds appeared, flying northward with wings swifter than the wind. Among all birds and beasts the wandering and need of Beren had been noised, and Huan himself had bidden all things watch, that they might bring him aid. High above the realm of Morgoth Thorondor and his vassals soared, and seeing now the madness of the Wolf and Beren's fall they came swiftly down, even as the powers of Angband were released from the toils of sleep.

Then they lifted up Lúthien and Beren from the earth, and bore them aloft into the clouds. Below them suddenly thunder rolled, lightnings leaped upward, and the mountains quaked. Fire and smoke belched forth from Thangorodrim, and flaming bolts were hurled far abroad, falling ruinous upon the lands; and the Noldor in Hithlum trembled. But Thorondor took his way far above the earth, seeking the high roads of heaven, where the sun daylong shines unveiled and the moon walks amid the cloudless stars. Thus they passed swiftly over Dor-nu-Faughlith, and over Taur-nu-Fuin, and came above the hidden valley of Tumladen. No cloud nor mist lay there, and looking down Lúthien saw far below, as a white light starting from a green jewel, the radiance of Gondolin the fair where Turgon dwelt. But she wept, for she thought that Beren would surely die; he spoke no word, nor opened his eyes, and knew thereafter nothing of his flight. And at the last the eagles set them down upon the borders of Doriath; and they were come to that same dell whence Beren had stolen in despair and left Lúthien asleep.

There the eagles laid her at Beren's side and returned to the peaks of Crissaegrim and their high eyries; but Huan came to her, and together they tended Beren, even as before when she healed him of the wound that Curufin gave to him. But this wound was fell and poisonous. Long Beren lay, and his spirit wandered upon the dark borders of death, knowing ever an anguish that pursued him from dream to dream. Then suddenly, when her hope was almost spent, he woke again, and looked up, seeing leaves against the sky; and he heard beneath the leaves singing soft and slow beside him Lúthien Tinúviel. And it was spring again.

Thereafter Beren was named Erchamion, which is the One-handed; and suffering was graven in his face. But at last he was drawn back to life by the love of Lúthien, and he arose, and together they walked in the woods once more. And they did not hasten from that place, for it seemed fair to them. Lúthien indeed was willing to wander in the wild without returning, forgetting house and people and all the glory of the Elf-kingdoms, and for a time

Beren was content; but he could not for long forget his oath to return to Menegroth, nor would he withhold Lúthien from Thingol for ever. For he held by the law of Men, deeming it perilous to set at naught the will of the father, save at the last need; and it seemed also to him unfit that one so royal and fair as Lúthien should live always in the woods, as the rude hunters among Men, without home or honour or the fair things which are the delight of the queens of the Eldalië. Therefore after a while he persuaded her, and their footsteps forsook the houseless lands; and he passed into Doriath, leading Lúthien home. So their doom willed it.

Upon Doriath evil days had fallen. Grief and silence had come upon all its people when Lúthien was lost. Long they had sought for her in vain. And it is told that in that time Daeron the minstrel of Thingol strayed from the land, and was seen no more. He it was that made music for the dance and song of Lúthien, before Beren came to Doriath; and he had loved her, and set all his thought of her in his music. He became the greatest of all the minstrels of the Elves east of the Sea, named even before Maglor son of Fëanor. But seeking for Lúthien in despair he wandered upon strange paths, and passing over the mountains he came into the East of Middle-earth, where for many ages he made lament beside dark waters for Lúthien, daughter of Thingol, most beautiful of all living things.

In that time Thingol turned to Melian; but now she withheld her counsel from him, saying that the doom that he had devised must work to its appointed end, and that he must wait now upon time. But Thingol learned that Lúthien had journeyed far from Doriath, for messages came secretly from Celegorm, as has been told, saying that Felagund was dead, and Beren was dead, but Lúthien was in Nargothrond, and that Celegorm would wed her. Then Thingol was wrathful, and he sent forth spies, thinking to make war upon Nargothrond; and thus he learned that Lúthien was again fled, and that Celegorm and Curufin were driven from Nargothrond. Then his counsel was in doubt, for he had not the strength to assail the seven sons of Fëanor; but he sent messengers to Himring to summon their aid in seeking for Lúthien, since Celegorm had not sent her to the house of her father, nor had he kept her safely.

But in the north of his realm his messengers met with a peril sudden and unlooked for: the onslaught of Carcharoth, the Wolf of Angband. In his madness he had run ravening from the north, and passing at length over Taur-nu-Fuin upon its eastern side he came down from the sources of Esgalduin like a destroying fire. Nothing hindered him, and the might of Melian upon the borders of the land stayed him not; for fate drove him, and the power of the Silmaril that he bore to his torment. Thus he burst into the inviolate woods of Doriath, and all fled away in fear. Alone of the messengers Mablung, chief captain of the King, escaped, and he brought the dread tidings to Thingol.

Even in that dark hour Beren and Lúthien returned, hastening from the west, and the news of their coming went before them like a sound of music borne by the wind into dark houses where men sit sorrowful. They came at last to the gates of Menegroth, and a great host followed them. Then Beren led Lúthien before the throne of Thingol her father; and he looked in wonder upon Beren, whom he had thought dead; but he loved him not, because of the woes that he had brought upon Doriath. But Beren knelt before him, and said: "I return according to my word. I am come now to claim my own."

And Thingol answered: "What of your quest, and of your vow?"

But Beren said: "It is fulfilled. Even now a Silmaril is in my hand."

Then Thingol said: "Show it to me!"

And Beren put forth his left hand, slowly opening its fingers; but it was empty. Then he held up his right arm; and from that hour he named himself Camlost, the Empty-handed.

Then Thingol's mood was softened; and Beren sat before his throne upon the left, and Lúthien upon the right, and they told all the tale of the Quest, while all there listened and were filled with amazement. And it seemed to Thingol that this Man was unlike all other mortal Men, and among the great in Arda, and the love of Lúthien a thing new and strange; and he perceived that their doom might not be withstood by any power of the world. Therefore at the last he yielded his will, and Beren took the hand of Lúthien before the throne of her father.

But now a shadow fell upon the joy of Doriath at the return of Lúthien the fair; for learning of the cause of the madness of Carcharoth the people grew the more afraid, perceiving that his danger was fraught with dreadful

power because of the holy jewel, and hardly might be overthrown. And Beren, hearing of the onslaught of the Wolf, understood that the Quest was not yet fulfilled.

Therefore, since daily Carcharoth drew nearer to Menegroth, they prepared the Hunting of the Wolf; of all pursuits of beasts whereof tales tell the most perilous. To that chase went Huan the Hound of Valinor, and Mablung of the Heavy Hand, and Beleg Strongbow, and Beren Erchamion, and Thingol King of Doriath. They rode forth in the morning and passed over the River Esgalduin; but Lúthien remained behind at the gates of Menegroth. A dark shadow fell upon her and it seemed to her that the sun had sickened and turned black.

The hunters turned east and north, and following the course of the river they came at last upon Carcharoth the Wolf in a dark valley, down the northern side whereof Esgalduin fell in a torrent over steep falls. At the foot of the falls Carcharoth drank to ease his consuming thirst, and he howled, and thus they were aware of him. But he, espying their approach, rushed not suddenly to attack them. It may be that the devil's cunning of his heart awoke, being for a moment eased of his pain by the sweet waters of Esgalduin; and even as they rode towards him he slunk aside into a deep brake, and there lay hid. But they set a guard about all that place, and waited, and the shadows grew long in the forest.

Beren stood beside Thingol, and suddenly they were aware that Huan had left their side. Then a great baying awoke in the thicket; for Huan becoming impatient and desiring to look upon this wolf had gone in alone to dislodge him. But Carcharoth avoided him, and bursting from the thorns leaped suddenly upon Thingol. Swiftly Beren strode before him with a spear, but Carcharoth swept it aside and felled him, biting at his breast. In that moment Huan leaped from the thicket upon the back of the Wolf, and they fell together fighting bitterly; and no battle of wolf and hound has been like to it, for in the baying of Huan was heard the voice of the horns of Oromë and the wrath of the Valar, but in the howls of Carcharoth was the hate of Morgoth and malice crueller than teeth of steel; and the rocks were rent by their clamour and fell from on high and choked the falls of Esgalduin. There they fought to the death; but Thingol gave no heed, for he knelt by Beren, seeing that he was sorely hurt.

Huan in that hour slew Carcharoth; but there in the woven woods of Doriath his own doom long spoken was fulfilled, and he was wounded mortally, and the venom of Morgoth entered into him. Then he came, and falling beside Beren spoke for the third time with words; and he bade Beren farewell before he died. Beren spoke not, but laid his hand upon the head of the hound, and so they parted.

Mablung and Beleg came hastening to the King's aid, but when they looked upon what was done they cast aside their spears and wept. Then Mablung took a knife and ripped up the belly of the Wolf; and within he was wellnigh all consumed as with a fire, but the hand of Beren that held the jewel was yet incorrupt. But when Mablung reached forth to touch it, the hand was no more, and the Silmaril lay there unveiled, and the light of it filled the shadows of the forest all about them. Then quickly and in fear Mablung took it and set it in Beren's living hand; and Beren was aroused by the touch of the Silmaril, and held it aloft, and bade Thingol receive it. "Now is the Quest achieved," he said, "and my doom full-wrought"; and he spoke no more.

They bore back Beren Camlost son of Barahir upon a bier of branches with Huan the wolfhound at his side; and night fell ere they returned to Menegroth. At the feet of Hírilorn the great beech Lúthien met them walking slow, and some bore torches beside the bier. There she set her arms about Beren, and kissed him, bidding him await her beyond the Western Sea; and he looked upon her eyes ere the spirit left him. But the starlight was quenched and darkness had fallen even upon Lúthien Tinúviel. Thus ended the Quest of the Silmaril; but the Lay of Leithian, Release from Bondage, does not end.

For the spirit of Beren at her bidding tarried in the halls of Mandos, unwilling to leave the world, until Lúthien came to say her last farewell upon the dim shores of the Outer Sea, whence Men that die set out never to return. But the spirit of Lúthien fell down into darkness, and at the last it fled, and her body lay like a flower that is suddenly cut off and lies for a while unwithered on the grass.

Then a winter, as it were the hoar age of mortal Men, fell upon Thingol. But Lúthien came to the halls of Mandos, where are the appointed places of the Eldalië, beyond the mansions of the West upon the confines of the world. There those that wait sit in the shadow of their thought. But her beauty was more than their beauty, and her sorrow deeper than their sorrows; and she knelt before Mandos and sang to him.

The song of Lúthien before Mandos was the song most fair that ever in words was woven, and the song most sorrowful that ever the world shall hear. Unchanged, imperishable, it is sung still in Valinor beyond the hearing of the world, and listening the Valar are grieved. For Lúthien wove two themes of words, of the sorrow of the Eldar and the grief of Men, of the Two Kindreds that were made by Ilúvatar to dwell in Arda, the Kingdom of Earth amid the innumerable stars. And as she knelt before him her tears fell upon his feet like rain upon the stones; and Mandos was moved to pity, who never before was so moved, nor has been since.

Therefore he summoned Beren, and even as Lúthien had spoken in the hour of his death they met again beyond the Western Sea. But Mandos had no power to withhold the spirits of Men that were dead within the confines of the world, after their time of waiting; nor could he change the fates of the Children of Ilúvatar. He went therefore to Manwë, Lord of the Valar, who governed the world under the hand of Ilúvatar; and Manwë sought counsel in his inmost thought, where the will of Ilúvatar was revealed.

These were the choices that he gave to Lúthien. Because of her labours and her sorrow, she should be released from Mandos, and go to Valimar, there to dwell until the world's end among the Valar, forgetting all griefs that her life had known. Thither Beren could not come. For it was not permitted to the Valar to withhold Death from him, which is the gift of Ilúvatar to Men. But the other choice was this: that she might return to Middle-earth, and take with her Beren, there to dwell again, but without certitude of life or joy. Then she would become mortal, and subject to a second death, even as he; and ere long she would leave the world for ever, and her beauty become only a memory in song.

This doom she chose, forsaking the Blessed Realm, and putting aside all claim to kinship with those that dwell there; that thus whatever grief might lie in wait, the fates of Beren and Lúthien might be joined, and their paths lead together beyond the confines of the world. So it was that alone of the Eldalië she has died indeed, and left the world long ago. Yet in her choice the Two Kindreds have been joined; and she is the forerunner of many in whom the Eldar see yet, though all the world is changed, the likeness of Lúthien the beloved, whom they have lost.



## Chapter 20: Of The Fifth Battle: Nirnaeth Arnoediad

It is said that Beren and Lúthien returned to the northern lands of Middle-earth, and dwelt together for a time as living man and woman; and they took up again their mortal form in Doriath. Those that saw them were both glad and fearful; and Lúthien went to Menegroth and healed the winter of Thingol with the touch of her hand. But Melian looked in her eyes and read the doom that was written there, and turned away; for she knew that a parting beyond the end of the world had come between them, and no grief of loss has been heavier than the grief of Melian the Maia in that hour. Then Beren and Lúthien went forth alone, fearing neither thirst nor hunger; and they passed beyond the River Gelion into Ossiriand, and dwelt there in Tol Galen the green isle, in the midst of Adurant, until all tidings of them ceased. The Eldar afterwards called that country Dor Firn-i-Guinar, the Land of the Dead that Live; and there was born Dior Aranel the beautiful, who was after known as Dior Eluchíl, which is Thingol's Heir. No mortal man spoke ever again with Beren son of Barahir; and none saw Beren or Lúthien leave the world, or marked where at last their bodies lay.

In those days Maedhros son of Fëanor lifted up his heart, perceiving that Morgoth was not unassailable; for the deeds of Beren and Lúthien were sung in many songs throughout Beleriand. Yet Morgoth would destroy them all, one by one, if they could not again unite, and make new league and common council; and he began those counsels for the raising of the fortunes of the Eldar that are called the Union of Maedhros.

Yet the oath of Fëanor and the evil deeds that it had wrought did injury to the design of Maedhros, and he had less aid than should have been. Orodreth would not march forth at the word of any son of Fëanor, because of the deeds of Celegorm and Curufin; and the Elves of Nargothrond trusted still to defend their hidden stronghold by secrecy and stealth. Thence came only a small company, following Gwindor son of Guilin, a very valiant prince; and against the will of Orodreth he went to the northern war, because he grieved for the loss of Gelmir his brother in the Dagor Bragollach. They took the badge of the house of Fingolfin, and marched beneath the banners of Fingon; and they came never back, save one.

From Doriath came little help. For Maedhros and his brothers, being constrained by their oath, had before sent to Thingol and reminded him with haughty words of their claim, summoning him to yield the Silmaril, or become their enemy. Melian counselled him to surrender it; but the words of the sons of Fëanor were proud and threatening, and Thingol was filled with anger, thinking of the anguish of Lúthien and the blood of Beren whereby the jewel had been won, despite the malice of Celegorm and Curufin. And every day that he looked upon the Silmaril the more he desired to keep it for ever; for such was its power. Therefore he sent back the messengers with scornful words. Maedhros made no answer, for he had now begun to devise the league and union of the Elves; but Celegorm and Curufin vowed openly to slay Thingol and destroy his people, if they came victorious from war, and the jewel were not surrendered of free will. Then Thingol fortified the marches of his realm, and went not to war, nor any out of Doriath save Mablung and Beleg, who were unwilling to have no part in these great deeds. To them Thingol gave leave to go, so long as they served not the sons of Fëanor; and they joined themselves to the host of Fingon.

But Maedhros had the help of the Naugrim, both in armed force and in great store of weapons; and the smithies of Nogrod and Belegost were busy in those days. And he gathered together again all his brothers and all the people who would follow them; and the Men of Bór and Ulfang were marshalled and trained for war, and they summoned yet more of their kinsfolk out of the East. Moreover in the west Fingon, ever the friend of Maedhros, took counsel with Himring, and in Hithlum the Noldor and the Men of the house of Hador prepared for war. In the forest of Brethil Halmir, lord of the People of Haleth, gathered his men, and they whetted their axes; but Halmir died ere the war came, and Haldir his son ruled that people. And to Gondolin also the tidings came, to Turgon, the hidden king.

But Maedhros made trial of his strength too soon, ere his plans were full-wrought; and though the Orcs were driven out of all the northward regions of Beleriand, and even Dorthonion was freed for a while, Morgoth was warned of the uprising of the Eldar and the Elf-friends, and took counsel against them. Many spies and workers of treason he sent forth among them, as he was the better able now to do, for the faithless Men of his secret allegiance were yet deep in the secrets of the sons of Fëanor.

At length Maedhros, having gathered all the strength that he could of Elves and Men and Dwarves, resolved to assault Angband from east and west; and he purposed to march with banners displayed in open force over Anfauglith. But when he had drawn forth, as he hoped, the armies of Morgoth in answer, then Fingon should issue forth from the passes of Hithlum; and thus they thought to take the might of Morgoth as between anvil and hammer, and break it to pieces. And the signal for this was to be the firing of a great beacon in Dorthonion.

On the appointed day, on the morning of Midsummer, the trumpets of the Eldar greeted the rising of the sun; and in the east was raised the standard of the sons of Fëanor, and in the west the standard of Fingon, High King of the Noldor. Then Fingon looked out from the walls of Eithel Sirion, and his host was arrayed in the valleys and the woods upon the east of Ered Wethrin, well hid from the eyes of the Enemy; but he knew that it was very great. For there all the Noldor of Hithlum were assembled, together with Elves of the Falas and Gwindor's company from Nargothrond, and he had great strength of Men: upon the right were the host of Dor-lómin and all the valour of Húrin and Huor his brother, and to them had come Haldir of Brethil with many men of the woods.

Then Fingon looked towards Thangorodrim, and there was a dark cloud about it, and a black smoke went up; and he knew that the wrath of Morgoth was aroused, and that their challenge was accepted. A shadow of doubt fell upon Fingon's heart; and he looked eastwards, seeking if he might see with elven-sight the dust of Anfauglith rising beneath the hosts of Maedhros. He knew not that Maedhros was hindered in his setting-forth by the guile of Uldor the accursed, who deceived him with false warnings of assault from Angband.

But now a cry went up, passing up the wind from the south from vale to vale, and Elves and Men lifted their voices in wonder and joy. For unsummoned and unlooked for Turgon had opened the leaguer of Gondolin, and was come with an army ten thousand strong, with bright mail and long swords and spears like a forest. Then when Fingon heard afar the great trumpet of Turgon his brother, the shadow passed and his heart was uplifted, and he shouted aloud: "*Utúlie'n aurë! Aiya Eldalië ar Atanatári, utúlie'n aurë!* The day has come! Behold, people of the Eldar and Fathers of Men, the day has come!" And all those who heard his great voice echo in the hills answered crying: "*Auta i lómë!* The night is passing!"

Now Morgoth, who knew much of what was done and designed by his enemies, chose his hour, and trusting in his treacherous servants to hold back Maedhros and prevent the union of his foes he sent a force seeming great (and yet but part of all that he had made ready) towards Hithlum; and they were clad all in dun raiment and showed no naked steel, and thus were already far over the sands of Anfauglith before their approach was seen.

Then the hearts of the Noldor grew hot, and their captains wished to assail their foes upon the plain; but Húrin spoke against it, and bade them beware of the guile of Morgoth, whose strength was always greater than it seemed, and his purpose other than he revealed. And though the signal of the approach of Maedhros came not, and the host grew impatient, Húrin urged them still to await it, and to let the Orcs break themselves in assault upon the hills.

But the Captain of Morgoth in the west had been commanded to draw out Fingon swiftly from his hills by whatever means he could. He marched on therefore until the front of his battle was drawn up before the stream of Sirion, from the walls of the fortress of Eithel Sirion to the inflowing of Rivil at the Fen of Serech; and the outposts of Fingon could see the eyes of their enemies. But there was no answer to his challenge, and the taunts of the Orcs faltered as they looked upon the silent walls and the hidden threat of the hills. Then the Captain of Morgoth sent out riders with tokens of parley, and they rode up before the outworks of the Barad Eithel. With them they brought Gelmir son of Guilin, that lord of Nargothrond whom they had captured in the Bragollach; and they had blinded him. Then the heralds of Angband showed him forth, crying: "We have many more such at home, but you must make haste if you would find them; for we shall deal with them all when we return even so." And they hewed off Gelmir's hands and feet, and his head last, within sight of the Elves, and left him.

By ill chance, at that place in the outworks stood Gwindor of Nargothrond, the brother of Gelmir. Now his wrath was kindled to madness, and he leapt forth on horseback, and many riders with him; and they pursued the heralds and slew them, and drove on deep into the main host. And seeing this all the host of the Noldor was set on fire, and Fingon put on his white helm and sounded his trumpets, and all the host of Hithlum leapt forth from the hills in sudden onslaught. The light of the drawing of the swords of the Noldor was like a fire in a field of reeds; and so fell and swift was their onset that almost the designs of Morgoth went astray. Before the army that he sent westward could be strengthened it was swept away, and the banners of Fingon passed over Anfauglith and were raised before the walls of Angband. Ever in the forefront of that battle went Gwindor and the Elves of Nargothrond, and even now they could not be restrained; and they burst through the Gate and slew the guards upon the very stairs of Angband, and Morgoth trembled upon his deep throne, hearing them beat upon his doors. But they were trapped there, and all were slain save Gwindor only, whom they took alive; for Fingon could not come to their aid. By many secret doors in Thangorodrim Morgoth had let issue forth his main host that he held in waiting, and Fingon was beaten back with great loss from the walls.

Then in the plain of Anfauglith, on the fourth day of the war, there began Nirnaeth Arnoediad, Unnumbered Tears, for no song or tale can contain all its grief. The host of Fingon retreated over the sands, and Haldir lord of the Haladin was slain in the rearguard; with him fell most of the Men of Brethil, and came never back to their woods. But on the fifth day as night fell, and they were still far from Ered Wethrin, the Orcs surrounded the host of Hithlum, and they fought until day, pressed ever closer. In the morning came hope, when the horns of Turgon were heard as he marched up with the main host of Gondolin; for they had been stationed southward guarding the Pass of Sirion, and Turgon restrained most of his people from the rash onslaught. Now he hastened to the aid of his brother; and the Gondolindrim were strong and clad in mail, and their ranks shone like a river of steel in the sun.

Now the phalanx of the guard of the King broke through the ranks of the Orcs, and Turgon hewed his way to the side of his brother; and it is told that the meeting of Turgon with Húrin, who stood beside Fingon, was glad in the midst of battle. Then hope was renewed in the hearts of the Elves; and in that very time, at the third hour of morning, the trumpets of Maedhros were heard at last coming up from the east, and the banners of the sons of Fëanor assailed the enemy in the rear. Some have said that even then the Eldar might have won the day, had all their hosts proved faithful; for the Orcs wavered, and their onslaught was stayed, and already some were turning to flight. But even as the vanguard of Maedhros came upon the Orcs, Morgoth loosed his last strength, and Angband was emptied. There came wolves, and wolfriders, and there came Balrogs, and dragons, and Glaurung father of dragons. The strength and terror of the Great Worm were now great indeed, and Elves and Men withered before him; and he came between the hosts of Maedhros and Fingon and swept them apart.

Yet neither by wolf, nor by Balrog, nor by Dragon, would Morgoth have achieved his end, but for the treachery of Men. In this hour the plots of Ulfang were revealed. Many of the Easterlings turned and fled, their hearts being filled with lies and fear; but the sons of Ulfang went over suddenly to Morgoth and drove in upon the rear of the sons of Fëanor, and in the confusion that they wrought they came near to the standard of Maedhros. They reaped not the reward that Morgoth promised them, for Maglor slew Uldor the accursed, the leader in treason, and the sons of Bór slew Ulfast and Ulwarth ere they themselves were slain. But new strength of evil Men came up that Uldor had summoned and kept hidden in the eastern hills, and the host of Maedhros was assailed now on three sides, and it broke, and was scattered, and fled this way and that. Yet fate saved the sons of Fëanor, and though all were wounded none were slain, for they drew together, and gathering a remnant of the Noldor and the Naugrim about them they hewed a way out of the battle and escaped far away towards Mount Dolmed in the east.

Last of all the eastern force to stand firm were the Dwarves of Belegost, and thus they won renown. For the Naugrim withstood fire more hardily than either Elves or Men, and it was their custom moreover to wear great masks in battle hideous to look upon; and those stood them in good stead against the dragons. And but for them Glaurung and his brood would have withered all that was left of the Noldor. But the Naugrim made a circle about him when he assailed them, and even his mighty armour was not full proof against the blows of their great axes; and when in his rage Glaurung turned and struck down Azaghâl, Lord of Belegost, and crawled over him, with his last stroke Azaghâl drove a knife into his belly, and so wounded him that he fled the field, and the beasts of Angband in dismay followed after him. Then the Dwarves raised up the body of Azaghâl and bore it

away; and with slow steps they walked behind singing a dirge in deep voices, as it were a funeral pomp in their country, and gave no heed more to their foes; and none dared to stay them.

But now in the western battle Fingon and Turgon were assailed by a tide of foes thrice greater than all the force that was left to them. Gothmog, Lord of Balrogs, high-captain of Angband, was come; and he drove a dark wedge between the Elvenhosts, surrounding King Fingon, and thrusting Turgon and Húrin aside towards the Fen of Serech. Then he turned upon Fingon. That was a grim meeting. At last Fingon stood alone with his guard dead about him; and he fought with Gothmog, until another Balrog came behind and cast a thong of fire about him. Then Gothmog hewed him with his black axe, and a white flame sprang up from the helm of Fingon as it was cloven. Thus fell the High King of the Noldor; and they beat him into the dust with their maces, and his banner, blue and silver, they trod into the mire of his blood.

The field was lost; but still Húrin and Huor and the remnant of the house of Haldor stood firm with Turgon of Gondolin, and the hosts of Morgoth could not yet win the Pass of Sirion. Then Húrin spoke to Turgon, saying: "Go now, lord, while time is! For in you lives the last hope of the Eldar, and while Gondolin stands Morgoth shall still know fear in his heart."

But Turgon answered: "Not long now can Gondolin be hidden; and being discovered it must fall."

Then Huor spoke and said: "Yet if it stands but a little while, then out of your house shall come the hope of Elves and Men. This I say to you, lord, with the eyes of death: though we part here for ever, and I shall not look on your white walls again, from you and from me a new star shall arise. Farewell!"

And Maeglin, Turgon's sister-son, who stood by, heard these words, and did not forget them; but he said nothing.

Then Turgon took the counsel of Húrin and Huor, and summoning all that remained of the host of Gondolin and such of Fingon's people as could be gathered he retreated towards the Pass of Sirion; and his captains Ecthelion and Glorfindel guarded the flanks to right and left, so that none of the enemy should pass them by. But the Men of Dor-lómin held the rearguard, as Húrin and Huor desired; for they did not wish in their hearts to leave the Northlands, and if they could not win back to their homes, there they would stand to the end. Thus was the treachery of Uldor redressed; and of all the deeds of war that the fathers of Men wrought in behalf of the Eldar, the last stand of the Men of Dor-lómin is most renowned.

So it was that Turgon fought his way southward, until coming behind the guard of Húrin and Huor he passed down Sirion and escaped; and he vanished into the mountains and was hidden from the eyes of Morgoth. But the brothers drew the remnant of the Men of the house of Hador about them, and foot by foot they withdrew, until they came behind the Fen of Serech, and had the stream of Rivil before them. There they stood and gave way no more.

Then all the hosts of Angband swarmed against them, and they bridged the stream with their dead, and encircled the remnant of Hithlum as a gathering tide about a rock. There as the sun westered on the sixth day, and the shadow of Ered Wethrin grew dark, Huor fell pierced with a venomous arrow in his eye, and all the valiant Men of Hador were slain about him in a heap; and the Orcs hewed their heads and piled them as a mound of gold in the sunset.

Last of all Húrin stood alone. Then he cast aside his shield, and wielded an axe two-handed; and it is sung that the axe smoked in the black blood of the troll-guard of Gothmog until it withered, and each time that he slew Húrin cried: "*Aurë entuluva!* Day shall come again!" Seventy times he uttered that cry; but they took him at last alive, by the command of Morgoth, for the Orcs grappled him with their hands, which clung to him still though he hewed off their arms; and ever their numbers were renewed, until at last he fell buried beneath them. Then Gothmog bound him and dragged him to Angband with mockery.

Thus ended Nirnaeth Arnoediad, as the sun went down beyond the sea. Night fell in Hithlum, and there came a great storm of wind out of the West.

Great was the triumph of Morgoth, and his design was accomplished in a manner after his own heart; for Men took the lives of Men, and betrayed the Eldar, and fear and hatred were aroused among those that should have



been united against him. From that day the hearts of the Elves were estranged from Men, save only those of the Three Houses of the Edain.

The realm of Fingon was no more; and the sons of Fëanor wandered as leaves before the wind. Their arms were scattered, and their league broken; and they took to a wild and woodland life beneath the feet of Ered Lindon, mingling with the Green-elves of Ossiriand, bereft of their power and glory of old. In Brethil some few of the Haladin yet dwelt in the protection of their woods, and Handir son of Haldir was their lord; but to Hithlum came back never one of Fingon's host, nor any of the Men of Hador's house, nor any tidings of the battle and the fate of their lords. But Morgoth sent thither the Easterlings that had served him, denying them the rich lands of Beleriand which they coveted; and he shut them in Hithlum and forbade them to leave it. Such was the reward he gave them for their treachery to Maedhros: to plunder and harass the old and the women and the children of Hador's people. The remnant of the Eldar of Hithlum were taken to the mines of the north and laboured there as thralls, save some that eluded him and escaped into the wilds and the mountains.

The Orcs and the wolves went freely through all the North, and came ever further southward into Beleriand, even as far as Nan-tathren, the Land of Willows, and the borders of Ossiriand, and none were safe in field or wild. Doriath indeed remained, and the halls of Nargothrond were hidden; but Morgoth gave small heed to them, either because he knew little of them, or because their hour was not yet come in the deep purposes of his malice. Many now fled to the Havens and took refuge behind Círdan's walls, and the mariners passed up and down the coast and harried the enemy with swift landings. But in the next year, ere the winter was come, Morgoth sent great strength over Hithlum and Nevrast, and they came down the rivers Brithon and Nenning and ravaged all the Falas, and besieged the walls of Brithombar and Eglarest. Smiths and miners and masters of fire they brought with them, and they set up great engines; and valiantly though they were resisted they broke the walls at last. Then the Havens were laid in ruin, and the tower of Barad Nimras cast down; and the most part of Círdan's people were slain or enslaved. But some went aboard ship and escaped by sea; and among them was Ereinion Gil-galad, the son of Fingon, whom his father had sent to the Havens after the Dagor Bragollach. This remnant sailed with Círdan south to the Isle of Balar, and they made a refuge for all that could come thither; for they kept a foothold also at the Mouths of Sirion, and there many light and swift ships lay hid in the creeks and waters where the reeds were dense as a forest.

And when Turgon heard of this he sent again his messengers to Sirion's mouths, and besought the aid of Círdan the Shipwright. At the bidding of Turgon Círdan built seven swift ships, and they sailed out into the West; but no tidings of them came ever back to Balar, save of one, and the last. The mariners of that ship toiled long in the sea, and returning at last in despair they foundered in a great storm within sight of the coasts of Middle-earth; but one of them was saved by Ulmo from the wrath of Ossë, and the waves bore him up, and cast him ashore in Nevrast. His name was Voronwë; and he was one of those that Turgon sent forth as messengers from Gondolin.

Now the thought of Morgoth dwelt ever upon Turgon; for Turgon had escaped him, of all his foes that one whom he most desired to take or to destroy. And that thought troubled him, and marred his victory, for Turgon of the mighty house of Fingolfin was now by right King of all the Noldor; and Morgoth feared and hated the house of Fingolfin, because they had the friendship of Ulmo his foe, and because of the wounds that Fingolfin gave him with his sword. And most of all his kin Morgoth feared Turgon; for of old in Valinor his eye had lighted upon him, and whenever he drew near a shadow had fallen on his spirit, foreboding that in some time that yet lay hidden, from Turgon ruin should come to him.

Therefore Húrin was brought before Morgoth, for Morgoth knew that he had the friendship of the King of Gondolin; but Húrin defied him, and mocked him. Then Morgoth cursed Húrin and Morwen and their offspring, and set a doom upon them of darkness and sorrow; and taking Húrin from prison he set him in a chair of stone upon a high place of Thangorodrim. There he was bound by the power of Morgoth, and Morgoth standing beside him cursed him again; and he said: "Sit now there; and look out upon the lands where evil and despair shall come upon those whom thou lovest. Thou hast dared to mock me, and to question the power of Melkor, Master of the fates of Arda. Therefore with my eyes thou shalt see, and with my ears thou shalt hear; and never shalt thou move from this place until all is fulfilled unto its bitter end."

And even so it came to pass; but it is not said that Húrin asked ever of Morgoth either mercy or death, for himself or for any of his kin.

By the command of Morgoth the Orcs with great labour gathered all the bodies of those who had fallen in the great battle, and all their harness and weapons, and piled them in a great mound in the midst of Anfauglith; and it was like a hill that could be seen from afar. Haudh-en-Ndengin the Elves named it, the Hill of Slain, and Haudh-en-Nirnaeth, the Hill of Tears. But grass came there and grew again long and green upon that hill, alone in all the desert that Morgoth made; and no creature of Morgoth trod thereafter upon the earth beneath which the swords of the Eldar and the Edain crumbled into rust.



## Chapter 21: Of Túrin Turambar

Rían, daughter of Belegund, was the wife of Huor, son of Galdor; and she was wedded to him two months before he went with Húrin his brother to the Nirnaeth Arnoediad. When no tidings came of her lord she fled into the wild; but she was aided by the Grey-elves of Mithrim, and when her son Tuor was born they fostered him. Then Rían departed from Hithlum, and going to the Haudh-en-Ndengin she laid herself down upon it and died.

Morwen, daughter of Baragund, was the wife of Húrin, Lord of Dor-lómin; and their son was Túrin, who was born in the year that Beren Erchamion came upon Lúthien in the Forest of Neldoreth. A daughter they had also who was called Lalaith, which is Laughter, and she was beloved by Túrin her brother; but when she was three years old there came a pestilence to Hithlum, borne on an evil wind out of Angband, and she died.

Now after the Nirnaeth Arnoediad Morwen abode still in Dor-lómin, for Túrin was but eight years old, and she was again with child. Those days were evil; for the Easterlings that came into Hithlum despised the remnant of the people of Hador, and they oppressed them, and took their lands and their goods, and enslaved their children. But so great was the beauty and majesty of the Lady of Dor-lómin that the Easterlings were afraid, and dared not to lay hands upon her or her household; and they whispered among themselves, saying that she was perilous, and a witch skilled in magic and in league with the Elves. Yet she was now poor and without aid, save that she was succoured secretly by a kinswoman of Húrin named Aerin, whom Brodda, an Easterling, had taken as his wife; and Morwen feared greatly that Túrin would be taken from her and enslaved. Therefore it came into her heart to send him away in secret, and to beg King Thingol to harbour him, for Beren son of Barahir was her father's kinsman, and he had been moreover a friend of Húrin, ere evil befell. Therefore in the autumn of the Year of Lamentation Morwen sent Túrin forth over the mountains with two aged servants, bidding them find entry, if they could, into the kingdom of Doriath. Thus was the fate of Túrin woven, which is fulltold in that lay that is called *Narn i Hîn Húrin*, the *Tale of the Children of Húrin*, and is the longest of all the lays that speak of those days. Here that tale is told in brief, for it is woven with the fate of the Silmarils and of the Elves; and it is called the Tale of Grief, for it is sorrowful, and in it are revealed most evil works of Morgoth Bauglir.

In the first beginning of the year Morwen gave birth to her child, the daughter of Húrin; and she named her Nienor, which is Mourning. But Túrin and his companions passing through great perils came at last to the borders of Doriath; and there they were found by Beleg Strongbow, chief of the marchwardens of King Thingol, who led them to Menegroth. Then Thingol received Túrin, and took him even to his own fostering, in honour of Húrin the Steadfast; for Thingol's mood was changed towards the houses of the Elf-friends. Thereafter messengers went north to Hithlum, bidding Morwen leave Dor-lómin and return with them to Doriath; but still she would not leave the house in which she had dwelt with Húrin. And when the Elves departed she sent with them the Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin, greatest of the heirlooms of the house of Hador.

Túrin grew fair and strong in Doriath, but he was marked with sorrow. For nine years he dwelt in Thingol's halls, and during that time his grief grew less; for messengers went at times to Hithlum, and returning they brought better tidings of Morwen and Nienor. But there came a day when the messengers did not return out of the north, and Thingol would send no more. Then Túrin was filled with fear for his mother and his sister, and in grimness of heart he went before the King and asked for mail and sword; and he put on the Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin and went out to battle on the marches of Doriath, and became the companion in arms of Beleg Cúthalion.

And when three years had passed, Túrin returned again to Menegroth; but he came from the wild, and was unkempt, and his gear and garments were wayworn. Now one there was in Doriath, of the people of the Nandor, high in the counsels of the King; Saeros was his name. He had long begrudged to Túrin the honour he

received as Thingol's fosterson; and seated opposite to him at the board he taunted him, saying: "If the Men of Hithlum are so wild and fell, of what sort are the women of that land? Do they run like deer clad only in their hair?" Then Túrin in great anger took up a drinking-vessel, and cast it at Saeros; and he was grievously hurt.

On the next day Saeros waylaid Túrin as he set out from Menegroth to return to the marches; but Túrin overcame him, and set him to run naked as a hunted beast through the woods. Then Saeros fleeing in terror before him fell into the chasm of a stream, and his body was broken on a great rock in the water. But others coming saw what was done, and Mablung was among them; and he bade Túrin return with him to Menegroth and abide the judgement of the King, seeking his pardon. But Túrin, deeming himself now an outlaw and fearing to be held captive, refused Mablung's bidding, and turned swiftly away; and passing through the Girdle of Melian he came into the woods west of Sirion. There he joined himself to a band of such houseless and desperate men as could be found in those evil days lurking in the wild; and their hands were turned against all who came in their path, Elves and Men and Orcs.

But when all that had befallen was told and searched out before Thingol, the King pardoned Túrin, holding him wronged. In that time Beleg Strongbow returned from the north marches and came to Menegroth, seeking him; and Thingol spoke to Beleg, saying: "I grieve, Cúthalion; for I took Húrin's son as my son, and so he shall remain, unless Húrin himself should return out of the shadows to claim his own. I would not have any say that Túrin was driven forth unjustly into the wild, and gladly would I welcome him back; for I loved him well."

And Beleg answered: "I will seek Túrin until I find him, and I will bring him back to Menegroth, if I can; for I love him also."

Then Beleg departed from Menegroth, and far across Beleriand he sought in vain for tidings of Túrin through many perils.

But Túrin abode long among the outlaws, and became their captain; and he named himself Neithan, the Wronged. Very warily they dwelt in the wooded lands south of Teiglin; but when a year had passed since Túrin fled from Doriath, Beleg came upon their lair by night. It chanced that at that time Túrin was gone from the camp; and the outlaws seized Beleg and bound him, and treated him cruelly, for they feared him as a spy of the King of Doriath. But Túrin returning and seeing what was done, was stricken with remorse for all their evil and lawless deeds; and he released Beleg, and they renewed their friendship, and Túrin foreswore thenceforward war or plunder against all save the servants of Angband.

Then Beleg told Túrin of King Thingol's pardon; and he sought to persuade him by all means that he might to return with him to Doriath, saying that there was great need of his strength and valour on the north marches of the realm. "Of late the Orcs have found a way down out of Taur-nu-Fuin," he said; "they have made a road through the Pass of Anach."

"I do not remember it," said Túrin.

"Never did we go so far from the borders," said Beleg. "But you have seen the peaks of the Crissaegrim far off, and to the east the dark walls of the Gorgoroth. Anach lies between, above the high springs of Mindeb, a hard and dangerous road; yet many come by it now, and Dimbar which used to be in peace is falling under the Black Hand, and the Men of Brethil are troubled. We are needed there."

But in the pride of his heart Túrin refused the pardon of the King, and the words of Beleg were of no avail to change his mood. And he for his part urged Beleg to remain with him in the lands west of Sirion; but that Beleg would not do, and he said: "Hard you are, Túrin, and stubborn. Now the turn is mine. If you wish indeed to have the Strongbow beside you, look for me in Dimbar; for thither I shall return."

On the next day Beleg set out, and Túrin went with him a bowshot from the camp; but he said nothing. "Is it farewell, then, son of Húrin?" said Beleg. Then Túrin looked out westward, and he saw far off the great height of Amon Rûdh; and unwitting of what lay before him he answered: "You have said, seek me in Dimbar. But I say, seek for me on Amon Rûdh! Else, this is our last farewell." Then they parted, in friendship, yet in sadness.

Now Beleg returned to the Thousand Caves, and coming before Thingol and Melian he told them of all that had befallen, save only of his evil handling by Túrin's companions. Then Thingol sighed, and he said: "What more would Túrin have me do?"

“Give me leave, lord,” said Beleg, “and I will guard him and guide him as I may; then no man shall say that elven-words are lightly spoken. Nor would I wish to see so great a good run to nothing in the wild.”

Then Thingol gave Beleg leave to do as he would; and he said: “Beleg Cúthalion! For many deeds you have earned my thanks; but not the least is the finding of my fosterson. At this parting ask for any gift, and I will not deny it to you.”

“I ask then for a sword of worth,” said Beleg; “for the Orcs come now too thick and close for a bow only, and such blade as I have is no match for their armour.”

“Choose from all that I have,” said Thingol, “save only Aranrúth, my own.”

Then Beleg chose Anglachel; and that was a sword of great worth, and it was so named because it was made of iron that fell from heaven as a blazing star; it would cleave all earth-delved iron. One other sword only in Middle-earth was like to it. That sword does not enter into this tale, though it was made of the same ore by the same smith; and that smith was Eöl the Dark Elf, who took Aredhel Turgon’s sister to wife. He gave Anglachel to Thingol as fee, which he begrudged, for leave to dwell in Nan Elmoth; but its mate Anguirel he kept, until it was stolen from him by Maeglin, his son.

But as Thingol turned the hilt of Anglachel towards Beleg, Melian looked at the blade; and she said: “There is malice in this sword. The dark heart of the smith still dwells in it. It will not love the hand it serves; neither will it abide with you long.”

“Nonetheless I will wield it while I may,” said Beleg.

“Another gift I will give to you, Cúthalion,” said Melian, “that shall be your help in the wild, and the help also of those whom you choose.” And she gave him store of *lembas*, the waybread of the Elves, wrapped in leaves of silver, and the threads that bound it were sealed at the knots with the seal of the Queen, a wafer of white wax shaped as a single flower of Telperion; for according to the customs of the Eldalië the keeping and giving of *lembas* belonged to the Queen alone. In nothing did Melian show greater favour to Túrin than in this gift; for the Eldar had never before allowed Men to use this waybread, and seldom did so again.

Then Beleg departed with these gifts from Menegroth and went back to the north marches, where he had his lodges, and many friends. Then in Dimbar the Orcs were driven back, and Anglachel rejoiced to be unsheathed; but when the winter came, and war was stilled, suddenly his companions missed Beleg, and he returned to them no more.

Now when Beleg parted from the outlaws and returned into Doriath, Túrin led them away westward out of Sirion’s vale; for they grew weary of their life without rest, ever watchful and in fear of pursuit, and they sought for a safer lair. And it chanced at a time of evening that they came upon three Dwarves, who fled before them; but one that lagged behind was seized and thrown down, and a man of the company took his bow and let fly an arrow at the others as they vanished in the dusk. Now the dwarf that they had taken was named Mîm; and he pleaded for his life before Túrin, and offered as ransom to lead them to his hidden halls which none might find without his aid. Then Túrin pitied Mîm, and spared him; and he said: “Where is your house?”

Then Mîm answered: “High above the lands lies the house of Mîm, upon the great hill; Amon Rûdh is that hill called now, since the Elves changed all the names.”

Then Túrin was silent, and he looked long upon the dwarf; and at last he said: “You shall bring us to that place.”

On the next day they set out thither, following Mîm to Amon Rûdh. Now that hill stood upon the edge of the moor-lands that rose between the vales of Sirion and Narog, and high above the stony heath it reared its crown; but its steep grey head was bare, save for the red *seregon* that mantled the stone. And as the men of Túrin’s band drew near, the sun westering broke through the clouds, and fell upon the crown; and the *seregon* was all in flower. Then one among them said: “There is blood on the hill-top.”

But Mîm led them by secret paths up the steep slopes of Amon Rûdh; and at the mouth of his cave he bowed to Túrin, saying: “Enter into Bar-en-Danwedh, the House of Ransom; for so it shall be called.”

And now there came another dwarf bearing light to greet him, and they spoke together, and passed swiftly down into the darkness of the cave; but Túrin followed after, and came at length to a chamber far within, lit by dim lamps hanging upon chains. There he found Mîm kneeling at a stone couch beside the wall, and he tore his beard, and wailed, crying one name unceasingly; and on the couch there lay a third. But Túrin entering stood beside Mîm, and offered him aid. Then Mîm looked up at him, and said: "You can give no aid. For this is Khîm, my son; and he is dead, pierced by an arrow. He died at sunset. Ibun my son has told me."

Then pity rose in Túrin's heart, and he said to Mîm: "Alas! I would recall that shaft, if I could. Now Bar-en-Danwedh this house shall be called in truth; and if ever I come to any wealth, I will pay you a ransom of gold for your son, in token of sorrow, though it gladden your heart no more."

Then Mîm rose, and looked long at Túrin. "I hear you," he said. "You speak like a dwarf-lord of old; and at that I marvel. Now my heart is cooled, though it is not glad; and in this house you may dwell, if you will; for I will pay my ransom."

So began the abiding of Túrin in the hidden house of Mîm upon Amon Rûdh; and he walked on the greensward before the mouth of the cave, and looked out east, and west, and north. Northward he looked, and descried the forest of Brethil climbing green about Amon Obel in its midst, and thither his eyes were drawn ever and again, he knew not why; for his heart was set rather to the north-west, where league upon league away on the skirts of the sky it seemed to him that he could glimpse the Mountains of Shadow, the walls of his home. But at evening Túrin looked west into the sunset, as the sun rode down red into the hazes above the distant coasts, and the Vale of Narog lay deep in the shadows between.

In the time that followed Túrin spoke much with Mîm, and sitting with him alone he listened to his lore and the tale of his life. For Mîm came of Dwarves that were banished in ancient days from the great Dwarf-cities of the east, and long before the return of Morgoth they wandered westward into Beleriand; but they became diminished in stature and in smith-craft, and they took to lives of stealth, walking with bowed shoulders and furtive steps. Before the Dwarves of Nogrod and Belegost came west over the mountains the Elves of Beleriand knew not what these others were, and they hunted them, and slew them; but afterwards they let them alone, and they were called Noegyth Nibin, the Petty-Dwarves, in the Sindarin tongue. They loved none but themselves, and if they feared and hated the Orcs, they hated the Eldar no less, and the Exiles most of all; for the Noldor, they said, had stolen their lands and their homes. Long ere King Finrod Felagund came over the Sea, the caves of Nargothrond were discovered by them, and by them its delving was begun; and beneath the crown of Amon Rûdh, the Bald Hill, the slow hands of the Petty-Dwarves had bored and deepened the caves through the long years that they dwelt there, untroubled by the Grey-elves of the woods. But now at last they had dwindled and died out of Middle-earth, all save Mîm and his two sons; and Mîm was old even in the reckoning of Dwarves, old and forgotten. And in his halls the smithies were idle, and the axes rusted, and their name was remembered only in ancient tales of Doriath and Nargothrond.

But when the year drew on to midwinter, snow came down from the north heavier than they had known it in the river-vales, and Amon Rûdh was covered deep; and they said that the winters worsened in Beleriand as the power of Angband grew. Then only the hardest dared stir abroad; and some fell sick, and all were pinched with hunger. But in the dim dusk of a winter's day there appeared suddenly among them a man, as it seemed, of great bulk and girth, cloaked and hooded in white; and he walked up to the fire without a word. And when men sprang up in fear, he laughed, and threw back his hood, and beneath his wide cloak he bore a great pack; and in the light of the fire Túrin looked again on the face of Beleg Cúthalion.

Thus Beleg returned once more to Túrin, and their meeting was glad; and with him he brought out of Dimbar the Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin, thinking that it might lift Túrin's thought again above his life in the wilderness as the leader of a petty company. But still Túrin would not return to Doriath; and Beleg yielding to his love against his wisdom remained with him, and did not depart, and in that time he laboured much for the good of Túrin's company. Those that were hurt or sick he tended, and gave to them the *lembas* of Melian; and they were quickly healed, for though the Grey-elves were less in skill and knowledge than the Exiles from Valinor, in the ways of the life of Middle-earth they had a wisdom beyond the reach of Men. And because Beleg was strong and enduring, farsighted in mind as in eye, he came to be held in honour among the outlaws; but the hatred of Mîm for the Elf that had come into Bar-en-Danwedh grew ever greater, and he sat with Ibun his son in the

deepest shadows of his house, speaking to none. But Túrin paid now little heed to the Dwarf; and when winter passed, and spring came, they had sterner work to do.

Who knows now the counsels of Morgoth? Who can measure the reach of his thought, who had been Melkor, mighty among the Ainur of the Great Song, and sat now, a dark lord upon a dark throne in the North, weighing in his malice all the tidings that came to him, and perceiving more of the deeds and purposes of his enemies than even the wisest of them feared, save only Melian the Queen? To her often the thought of Morgoth reached out, and there was foiled.

And now again the might of Angband was moved; and as the long fingers of a groping hand the forerunners of his armies probed the ways into Beleriand. Through Anach they came, and Dimbar was taken, and all the north marches of Doriath. Down the ancient road they came that led through the long defile of Sirion, past the isle where Minas Tirith of Finrod had stood, and so through the land between Malduin and Sirion, and on through the eaves of Brethil to the Crossings of Teiglin. Thence the road went on into the Guarded Plain; but the Orcs did not go far upon it, as yet, for there dwelt now in the wild a terror that was hidden, and upon the red hill were watchful eyes of which they had not been warned. For Túrin put on again the Helm of Hador; and far and wide in Beleriand the whisper went, under wood and over stream and through the passes of the hills, saying that the Helm and Bow that had fallen in Dimbar had arisen again beyond hope. Then many who went leaderless, dispossessed but undaunted, took heart again, and came to seek the Two Captains. Dor-Cúarthol, the Land of Bow and Helm, was in that time named all the region between Teiglin and the west march of Doriath; and Túrin named himself anew, Gorthol, the Dread Helm, and his heart was high again. In Menegroth, and in the deep halls of Nargothrond, and even in the hidden realm of Gondolin, the fame of the deeds of the Two Captains was heard; and in Angband also they were known. Then Morgoth laughed, for now by the Dragon-helm was Húrin's son revealed to him again; and ere long Amon Rûdh was ringed with spies.

In the waning of the year Mîm the Dwarf and Ibun his son went out from Bar-en-Danwedh to gather roots in the wild for their winter store; and they were taken captive by Orcs. Then for a second time Mîm promised to guide his enemies by the secret paths to his home on Amon Rûdh; but yet he sought to delay the fulfilment of his promise, and demanded that Gorthol should not be slain. Then the Orc-captain laughed, and he said to Mîm: "Assuredly Túrin son of Húrin shall not be slain."

Thus was Bar-en-Danwedh betrayed, for the Orcs came upon it by night at unawares, guided by Mîm. There many of Túrin's company were slain as they slept; but some fleeing by an inner stair came out upon the hill-top, and there they fought until they fell, and their blood flowed out upon the *seregon* that mantled the stone. But a net was cast over Túrin as he fought, and he was enmeshed in it, and overcome, and led away.

And at length when all was silent again Mîm crept out of the shadows of his house; and as the sun rose over the mists of Sirion he stood beside the dead men on the hill-top. But he perceived that not all those that lay there were dead; for by one his gaze was returned, and he looked in the eyes of Beleg the Elf. Then with hatred long-stored Mîm stepped up to Beleg, and drew forth the sword Anglachel that lay beneath the body of one that had fallen beside him; but Beleg stumbling up seized back the sword and thrust it at the Dwarf, and Mîm in terror fled wailing from the hill-top. And Beleg cried after him: "The vengeance of the house of Hador will find you yet!"

Now Beleg was sorely wounded, but he was mighty among the Elves of Middle-earth, and he was moreover a master of healing. Therefore he did not die, and slowly his strength returned; and he sought in vain among the dead for Túrin, to bury him. But he found him not; and then he knew that Húrin's son was yet alive, and taken to Angband.

With little hope Beleg departed from Amon Rûdh and set out northward, towards the Crossings of Teiglin, following in the track of the Orcs; and he crossed over the Brithiach and journeyed through Dimbar towards the Pass of Anach. And now he was not far behind them, for he went without sleeping, whereas they had tarried on their road, hunting in the lands and fearing no pursuit as they came northward; and not even in the dreadful woods of Taur-nu-Fuin did he swerve from the trail, for the skill of Beleg was greater than any that have been in Middle-earth. But as he passed by night through that evil land he came upon one lying asleep at the foot of a great dead tree; and Beleg staying his steps beside the sleeper saw that it was an Elf. Then he spoke to him, and

gave him *lembas*, and asked him what fate had brought him to that terrible place; and he named himself Gwindor, son of Guilin.

Grieving Beleg looked upon him; for Gwindor was now but a bent and fearful shadow of his former shape and mood, when in the Nirnaeth Arnoediad that lord of Nargothrond rode with rash courage to the very doors of Angband, and there was taken. For few of the Noldor whom Morgoth captured were put to death, because of their skill in forging and in mining for metals and gems; and Gwindor was not slain, but put to labour in the mines of the North. By secret tunnels known only to themselves the mining Elves might sometimes escape; and thus it came to pass that Beleg found him, spent and bewildered in the mazes of Taur-nu-Fuin.

And Gwindor told him that as he lay and lurked among the trees he saw a great company of Orcs passing northwards, and wolves went with them; and among them was a Man, whose hands were chained, and they drove him onward with whips. "Very tall he was," said Gwindor, "as tall as are the Men from the misty hills of Hithlum." Then Beleg told him of his own errand in Taur-nu-Fuin; and Gwindor sought to dissuade him from his quest, saying that he would but join Túrin in the anguish that awaited him. But Beleg would not abandon Túrin, and despairing himself he aroused hope again in Gwindor's heart; and together they went on, following the Orcs until they came out of the forest on the high slopes that ran down to the barren dunes of Anfauglith. There within sight of the peaks of Thangorodrim the Orcs made their encampment in a bare dell as the light of day was failing, and setting wolf-sentinels all about they fell to carousing. A great storm rode up out of the west, and lightning glittered on the Shadowy Mountains far away, as Beleg and Gwindor crept towards the dell.

When all in the camp were sleeping Beleg took his bow, and in the darkness shot the wolf-sentinels, one by one and silently. Then in great peril they entered in, and they found Túrin fettered hand and foot and tied to a withered tree; and all about him knives that had been cast at him were embedded in the trunk, and he was senseless in a sleep of great weariness. But Beleg and Gwindor cut the bonds that held him, and lifting him they carried him out of the dell; yet they could bear him no further than to a thicket of thorn-trees a little way above. There they laid him down; and now the storm drew very near. Beleg drew his sword Anglachel, and with it he cut the fetters that bound Túrin; but fate was that day more strong, for the blade slipped as he cut the shackles, and Túrin's foot was pricked. Then he was aroused into a sudden wakefulness of rage and fear, and seeing one bending over him with naked blade he leapt up with a great cry, believing that Orcs were come again to torment him; and grappling with him in the darkness he seized Anglachel, and slew Beleg Cúthalion thinking him a foe.

But as he stood, finding himself free, and ready to sell his life dearly against imagined foes, there came a great flash of lightning above them; and in its light he looked down on Beleg's face. Then Túrin stood stonestill and silent, staring on that dreadful death, knowing what he had done; and so terrible was his face, lit by the lightning that flickered all about them, that Gwindor cowered down upon the ground and dared not raise his eyes.

But now in the dell beneath the Orcs were aroused, and all the camp was in a tumult; for they feared the thunder that came out of the west, believing that it was sent against them by the great Enemies beyond the Sea. Then a wind arose, and great rains fell, and torrents swept down from the heights of Taur-nu-Fuin; and though Gwindor cried out to Túrin, warning him of their utmost peril, he made no answer, but sat unmoving and unweeping in the tempest beside the body of Beleg Cúthalion.

When morning came the storm was passed away eastward over Lothlann, and the sun of autumn rose hot and bright; but believing that Túrin would have fled far away from that place and all trace of his flight be washed away, the Orcs departed in haste without longer search, and far off Gwindor saw them marching away over the steaming sands of Anfauglith. Thus it came to pass that they returned to Morgoth emptyhanded, and left behind them the son of Húrin, who sat crazed and unwitting on the slopes of Taur-nu-Fuin, bearing a burden heavier than their bonds.

Then Gwindor roused Túrin to aid him in the burial of Beleg, and he rose as one that walked in sleep; and together they laid Beleg in a shallow grave, and placed beside him Belthroning his great bow, that was made of black yew-wood. But the dread sword Anglachel Gwindor took, saying that it were better that it should take vengeance on the servants of Morgoth than lie useless in the earth; and he took also the *lembas* of Melian to strengthen them in the wild.



Thus ended Beleg Strongbow, truest of friends, greatest in skill of all that harboured in the woods of Beleriand in the Elder Days, at the hand of him whom he most loved; and that grief was graven on the face of Túrin and never faded. But courage and strength were renewed in the Elf of Nargothrond, and departing from Taur-nu-Fuin he led Túrin far away. Never once as they wandered together on long and grievous paths did Túrin speak, and he walked as one without wish or purpose, while the year waned and winter drew on over the northern lands. But Gwindor was ever beside him to guard him and guide him; and thus they passed westward over Sirion and came at length to Eithel Ivrin, the springs whence Narog rose beneath the Mountains of Shadow. There Gwindor spoke to Túrin, saying: "Awake, Túrin son of Húrin Thalion! On Irvin's lake is endless laughter. She is fed from crystal fountains unfailing, and guarded from defilement by Ulmo, Lord of Waters, who wrought her beauty in ancient days." Then Túrin knelt and drank from that water; and suddenly he cast himself down, and his tears were unloosed at last, and he was healed of his madness.

There he made a song for Beleg, and he named it *Laer Cú Beleg*, the Song of the Great Bow, singing it aloud heedless of peril. And Gwindor gave the sword Anglachel into his hands, and Túrin knew that it was heavy and strong and had great power; but its blade was black and dull and its edges blunt. Then Gwindor said: "This is a strange blade, and unlike any that I have seen in Middle-earth. It mourns for Beleg even as you do. But be comforted; for I return to Nargothrond of the house of Finarfin, and you shall come with me, and be healed and renewed."

"Who are you?" said Túrin.

"A wandering Elf, a thrall escaped, whom Beleg met and comforted," said Gwindor. "Yet once I was Gwindor son of Guilin, a lord of Nargothrond, until I went to the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, and was enslaved in Angband."

"Then have you seen Húrin son of Galdor, the warrior of Dor-lómin?" said Túrin.

"I have not seen him," said Gwindor. "But rumour of him runs through Angband that he still defies Morgoth; and Morgoth has laid a curse upon him and all his kin."

"That I do believe," said Túrin.

And now they arose, and departing from Eithel Ivrin they journeyed southward along the banks of Narog, until they were taken by scouts of the Elves and brought as prisoners to the hidden stronghold. Thus did Túrin come to Nargothrond.

At first his own people did not know Gwindor, who went out young and strong, and returned now seeming as one of the aged among mortal Men, because of his torments and his labours; but Finduilas daughter of Orodreth the King knew him and welcomed him, for she had loved him before the Nirnaeth, and so greatly did Gwindor love her beauty that he named her Faelivrin, which is the gleam of the sun on the pools of Ivrin. For Gwindor's sake Túrin was admitted with him into Nargothrond, and he dwelt there in honour. But when Gwindor would tell his name, Túrin checked him, saying: "I am Agarwaen the son of Úmarth (which is the Bloodstained, son of Ill-fate), a hunter in the woods"; and the Elves of Nargothrond questioned him no more.

In the time that followed Túrin grew high in favour with Orodreth, and well-nigh all hearts were turned to him in Nargothrond. For he was young, and only now reached his full manhood; and he was in truth the son of Morwen Eledhwen to look upon: dark-haired and pale-skinned, with grey eyes, and his face more beautiful than any other among mortal Men, in the Elder Days. His speech and bearing were that of the ancient kingdom of Doriath, and even among the Elves he might be taken for one from the great houses of the Noldor; therefore many called him Adanedhel, the Elf-Man. The sword Anglachel was forged anew for him by cunning smiths of Nargothrond, and though ever black its edges shone with pale fire; and he named it Gurthang, Iron of Death. So great was his prowess and skill in warfare on the confines of the Guarded Plain that he himself became known as Mormegil, the Black Sword; and the Elves said: "The Mormegil cannot be slain, save by mischance, or an evil arrow from afar." Therefore they gave him dwarf-mail, to guard him; and in a grim mood he found also in the armouries a dwarf-mask all gilded, and he put it on before battle, and his enemies fled before his face.

Then the heart of Finduilas was turned from Gwindor and against her will her love was given to Túrin; but Túrin did not perceive what had befallen. And being torn in heart Finduilas became sorrowful; and she grew wan and silent. But Gwindor sat in dark thought; and on a time he spoke to Finduilas, saying: "Daughter of the

house of Finarfin, let no grief lie between us; for though Morgoth has laid my life in ruin, you still I love. Go whither love leads you; yet beware! It is not fitting that the Elder Children of Ilúvatar should wed with the Younger; nor is it wise, for they are brief, and soon pass, to leave us in widowhood while the world lasts. Neither will fate suffer it, unless it be once or twice only, for some high cause of doom that we do not perceive. But this Man is not Beren. A doom indeed lies on him, as seeing eyes may well read in him, but a dark doom. Enter not into it! And if you will, your love shall betray you to bitterness and death. For hearken to me! Though he be indeed *agarwaen* son of *úmarth*, his right name is Túrin son of Húrin, whom Morgoth holds in Angband, and whose kin he has cursed. Doubt not the power of Morgoth Bauglir! Is it not written in me?"

Then Finduilas sat long in thought; but at the last she said only: "Túrin son of Húrin loves me not; nor will."

Now when Túrin learnt from Finduilas of what had passed, he was wrathful, and he said to Gwindor: "In love I hold you for rescue and safe-keeping. But now you have done ill to me, friend, to betray my right name, and call my doom upon me, from which I would lie hid."

But Gwindor answered: "The doom lies in yourself, not in your name."

When it became known to Orodreth that the Mormegil was in truth the son of Húrin Thalion he gave him great honour, and Túrin became mighty among the people of Nargothrond. But he had no liking for their manner of warfare, of ambush and stealth and secret arrow, and he yearned for brave strokes and battle in the open; and his counsels weighed with the King ever the longer the more. In those days the Elves of Nargothrond forsook their secrecy and went openly to battle, and great store of weapons were made; and by the counsel of Túrin the Noldor built a mighty bridge over the Narog from the Doors of Felagund, for the swifter passage of their arms. Then the servants of Angband were driven out of all the land between Narog and Sirion eastward, and westward to the Nenning and the desolate Falas; and though Gwindor spoke ever against Túrin in the council of the King, holding it an ill policy, he fell into dishonour and none heeded him, for his strength was small and he was no longer forward in arms. Thus Nargothrond was revealed to the wrath and hatred of Morgoth; but still at Túrin's prayer his true name was not spoken, and though the fame of his deeds came into Doriath and to the ears of Thingol, rumour spoke only of the Black Sword of Nargothrond.

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In that time of respite and hope, when because of the deeds of the Mormegil the power of Morgoth was stemmed west of Sirion, Morwen fled at last from Dor-lómin with Nienor her daughter, and adventured the long journey to Thingol's halls. There new grief awaited her, for she found Túrin gone, and to Doriath there had come no tidings since the Dragon-helm had vanished from the lands west of Sirion; but Morwen remained in Doriath with Nienor as guests of Thingol and Melian, and were treated with honour.

Now it came to pass, when four hundred and ninety-five years had passed since the rising of the Moon, in the spring of the year, there came to Nargothrond two Elves, named Gelmir and Arminas; they were of Angrod's people, but since the Dagor Bragollach they dwelt in the south with Círdan the Shipwright. From their far journeys they brought tidings of a great mustering of Orcs and evil creatures under the eaves of Ered Wethrin and in the Pass of Sirion; and they told also that Ulmo had come to Círdan, giving warning that great peril drew nigh to Nargothrond.

"Hear the words of the Lord of Waters!" said they to the King. "Thus he spoke to Círdan the Shipwright: 'The Evil of the North has defiled the springs of Sirion, and my power withdraws from the fingers of the flowing waters. But a worse thing is yet to come forth. Say therefore to the Lord of Nargothrond: Shut the doors of the fortress and go not abroad. Cast the stones of your pride into the loud river, that the creeping evil may not find the gate.'"

Orodreth was troubled by the dark words of the messengers, but Túrin would by no means hearken to these counsels, and least of all would he suffer the great bridge to be cast down; for he was become proud and stern, and would order all things as he wished.

Soon afterwards Handir Lord of Brethil was slain, for the Orcs invaded his land, and Handir gave them battle; but the Men of Brethil were worsted, and driven back into their woods. And in the autumn of the year, biding his hour, Morgoth loosed upon the people of Narog the great host that he had long prepared; and Glaurung the

Urulóki passed over Anfauglith, and came thence into the north vales of Sirion and there did great evil. Under the shadows of Ered Wethrin he defiled the Eithel Ivrin, and thence he passed into the realm of Nargothrond, and burned the Talath Dirnen, the Guarded Plain, between Narog and Teiglin.

Then the warriors of Nargothrond went forth, and tall and terrible on that day looked Túrin, and the heart of the host was upheld, as he rode on the right hand of Orodreth. But greater far was the host of Morgoth than any scouts had told, and none but Túrin defended by his dwarf-mask could withstand the approach of Glaurung; and the Elves were driven back and pressed by the Orcs into the field of Tumhalad, between Ginglith and Narog, and there they were penned. On that day all the pride and host of Nargothrond withered away; and Orodreth was slain in the forefront of the battle, and Gwindor son of Guilin was wounded to the death. But Túrin came to his aid, and all fled before him; and he bore Gwindor out of the rout, and escaping into a wood there laid him on the grass.

Then Gwindor said to Túrin: "Let bearing pay for bearing! But ill-fated was mine, and vain is thine; for my body is marred beyond healing, and I must leave Middle-earth. And though I love thee, son of Húrin, yet I rue the day that I took thee from the Orcs. But for thy prowess and thy pride, still I should have love and life, and Nargothrond should yet stand a while. Now if thou love me, leave me! Haste thee to Nargothrond, and save Finduilas. And this last I say to thee: she alone stands between thee and thy doom. If thou fail her, it shall not fail to find thee. Farewell!"

Then Túrin sped back to Nargothrond, mustering such of the rout as he met with on the way; and the leaves fell from the trees in a great wind as they went, for the autumn was passing to a dire winter. But the host of the Orcs and Glaurung the Dragon were there before him, and they came suddenly, ere those that were left on guard were aware of what had befallen on the field of Tumhalad. In that day the bridge over Narog proved an evil; for it was great and mightily made and could not swiftly be destroyed, and the enemy came readily over the deep river, and Glaurung came in full fire against the Doors of Felagund, and overthrew them, and passed within.

And even as Túrin came up the dreadful sack of Nargothrond was well nigh achieved. The Orcs had slain or driven off all that remained in arms, and were even then ransacking the great halls and chambers, plundering and destroying; but those of the women and maidens that were not burned or slain they had herded on the terraces before the doors, as slaves to be taken into Morgoth's thralldom. Upon this ruin and woe Túrin came, and none could withstand him; or would not, though he struck down all before him, and passed over the bridge, and hewed his way towards the captives.

And now he stood alone, for the few that followed him had fled. But in that moment Glaurung issued from the gaping doors, and lay behind, between Túrin and the bridge. Then suddenly he spoke, by the evil spirit that was in him, saying: "Hail, son of Húrin. Well met!"

Then Túrin sprang about, and strode against him, and the edges of Gurthang shone as with flame; but Glaurung withheld his blast, and opened wide his serpent-eyes and gazed upon Túrin. Without fear Túrin looked into them as he raised up the sword; and straightway he fell under the binding spell of the lidless eyes of the dragon, and was halted moveless. Then for a long time he stood as one graven of stone; and they two were alone, silent before the doors of Nargothrond. But Glaurung spoke again, taunting Túrin, and he said: "Evil have been all thy ways, son of Húrin. Thankless fosterling, outlaw, slayer of thy friend, thief of love, usurper of Nargothrond, captain foolhardy, and deserter of thy kin. As thralls thy mother and thy sister live in Dor-lómin, in misery and want. Thou art arrayed as a prince, but they go in rags; and for thee they yearn, but thou carest not for that. Glad may thy father be to learn that he hath such a son; as learn he shall." And Túrin being under the spell of Glaurung hearkened to his words, and he saw himself as in a mirror misshapen by malice, and loathed that which he saw.

And while he was yet held by the eyes of the dragon in torment of mind, and could not stir, the Orcs drove away the herded captives, and they passed nigh to Túrin and crossed over the bridge. Among them was Finduilas, and she cried out to Túrin as she went; but not until her cries and the wailing of the captives was lost upon the northward road did Glaurung release Túrin, and he might not stop his ears against that voice that haunted him after.

Then suddenly Glaurung withdrew his glance, and waited; and Túrin stirred slowly, as one waking from a hideous dream. Then coming to himself he sprang upon the dragon with a cry. But Glaurung laughed, saying: "If thou wilt be slain, I will slay thee gladly. But small help will that be to Morwen and Nienor. No heed didst thou give to the cries of the Elf-woman. Wilt thou deny also the bond of thy blood?"

But Túrin drawing back his sword stabbed at the dragon's eyes; and Glaurung coiling back swiftly towered above him, and said: "Nay! At least thou art valiant; beyond all whom I have met. And they lie who say that we of our part do not honour the valour of foes. See now! I offer thee freedom. Go to thy kin, if thou canst. Get thee gone! And if Elf or Man be left to make tale of these days, then surely in scorn they will name thee, if thou spurnest this gift."

Then Túrin, being yet bemused by the eyes of the dragon, as were he treating with a foe that could know pity, believed the words of Glaurung; and turning away he sped over the bridge. But as he went Glaurung spoke behind him, saying in a fell voice: "Haste thee now, son of Húrin, to Dor-lómin! Or perhaps the Orcs shall come before thee, once again. And if thou tarry for Finduilas, then never shalt thou see Morwen again, and never at all shalt thou see Nienor thy sister; and they will curse thee."

But Túrin passed away on the northward road, and Glaurung laughed once more, for he had accomplished the errand of his Master. Then he turned to his own pleasure, and sent forth his blast, and burned all about him. But all the Orcs that were busy in the sack he routed forth, and drove them away, and denied them their plunder even to the last thing of worth. The bridge then he broke down and cast into the foam of Narog; and being thus secure he gathered all the hoard and riches of Felagund and heaped them, and lay upon them in the innermost hall, and rested a while.

And Túrin hastened along the ways to the north, through the lands now desolate between Narog and Teiglin, and the Fell Winter came down to meet him; for in that year snow fell ere autumn was passed, and spring came late and cold. Ever it seemed to him as he went that he heard the cries of Finduilas, calling his name by wood and hill, and great was his anguish; but his heart being hot with the lies of Glaurung, and seeing ever in his mind the Orcs burning the house of Húrin or putting Morwen and Nienor to torment, he held on his way, and turned never aside.

At last worn by haste and the long road (for forty leagues and more had he journeyed without rest) he came with the first ice of winter to the pools of Ivrin, where before he had been healed. But they were now but a frozen mire, and he could drink there no more.

Thus he came hardly by the passes of Dor-lómin, through bitter snows from the north, and found again the land of his childhood. Bare and bleak it was; and Morwen was gone. Her house stood empty, broken and cold; and no living thing dwelt nigh. Therefore Túrin departed, and came to the house of Brodda the Easterling, he that had to wife Aerin, Húrin's kinswoman; and there he learned of an old servant that Morwen was long gone, for she had fled with Nienor out of Dor-lómin, none but Aerin knew where.

Then Túrin strode to Brodda's table, and seizing him he drew his sword, and demanded that he be told whither Morwen had gone; and Aerin declared to him that she went to Doriath to seek her son. "For the lands were freed then from evil," she said, "by the Black Sword of the south, who now has fallen, they say." Then Túrin's eyes were opened, and the last threads of Glaurung's spell were loosed; and for anguish, and wrath at the lies that had deluded him, and hatred of the oppressors of Morwen, a black rage seized him, and he slew Brodda in his hall, and other Easterlings that were his guests. Thereafter he fled out into the winter, a hunted man; but he was aided by some that remained of Hador's people and knew the ways of the wild, and with them he escaped through the falling snow and came to an outlaws' refuge in the southern mountains of Dor-lómin. Thence Túrin passed again from the land of his childhood, and returned to Sirion's vale. His heart was bitter, for to Dor-lómin he had brought only greater woe upon the remnant of his people, and they were glad of his going; and this comfort alone he had: that by the prowess of the Black Sword the ways to Doriath had been laid open to Morwen. And he said in his thought: "Then those deeds wrought not evil to all. And where else might I have better bestowed my kin, even had I come sooner? For if the Girdle of Melian be broken, then last hope is ended. Nay, it is better indeed as things be; for a shadow I cast wheresoever I come. Let Melian keep them! And I will leave them in peace unshadowed for a while."

Now Túrin coming down from Ered Wethrin sought for Finduilas in vain, roaming the woods beneath the mountains, wild and wary as a beast; and he waylaid all the roads that went north to the Pass of Sirion. But he was too late; for all the trails had grown old, or were washed away by the winter. Yet thus it was that passing southwards down Teiglin Túrin came upon some of the Men of Brethil that were surrounded by Orcs; and he delivered them, for the Orcs fled from Gurthang. He named himself Wildman of the Woods, and they besought him to come and dwell with them; but he said that he had an errand yet unachieved, to seek Finduilas, Orodreth's daughter of Nargothrond. Then Dorlas, the leader of those woodmen, told the grievous tidings of her death. For the Men of Brethil had waylaid at the Crossings of Teiglin the Orc-host that led the captives of Nargothrond, hoping to rescue them; but the Orcs had at once cruelly slain their prisoners, and Finduilas they pinned to a tree with a spear. So she died, saying at the last: "Tell the Mormegil that Finduilas is here." Therefore they had laid her in a mound near that place, and named it Haudh-en-Elleth, the Mound of the Elf-maid.

Túrin bade them lead him thither, and there he fell down into a darkness of grief that was near death. Then Dorlas by his black sword, the fame whereof had come even into the deeps of Brethil, and by his quest of the King's daughter, knew that this Wildman was indeed the Mormegil of Nargothrond, whom rumour said was the son of Húrin of Dorlómin. Therefore the woodmen lifted him up, and bore him away to their homes. Now those were set in a stockade upon a high place in the forest, Ephel Brandir upon Amon Obel; for the People of Haleth were now dwindled by war, and Brandir son of Handir who ruled them was a man of gentle mood, and lame also from childhood, and he trusted rather in secrecy than in deeds of war to save them from the power of the North. Therefore he feared the tidings that Dorlas brought, and when he beheld the face of Túrin as he lay on the bier a cloud of foreboding lay on his heart. Nonetheless being moved by his woe he took him into his own house and tended him, for he had skill in healing. And with the beginning of spring Túrin cast off his darkness, and grew hale again; and he arose, and he thought that he would remain in Brethil hidden, and put his shadow behind him, forsaking the past. He took therefore a new name, Turambar, which in the High-elven speech signified Master of Doom; and he besought the woodmen to forget that he was a stranger among them or ever bore any other name. Nonetheless he would not wholly leave deeds of war; for he could not endure that the Orcs should come to the Crossings of Teiglin or draw nigh to Haudh-en-Elleth, and he made that a place of dread for them, so that they shunned it. But he laid his black sword by, and wielded rather the bow and the spear.

Now new tidings came to Doriath concerning Nargothrond, for some that had escaped from the defeat and the sack and had survived the Fell Winter in the wild, came at last to Thingol seeking refuge; and the march-wardens brought them to the King. And some said that all the enemy had withdrawn northwards, and others that Glaurung abode still in the halls of Felagund; and some said that the Mormegil was slain, and others that he was cast under a spell by the dragon and dwelt there yet, as one changed to stone. But all declared that it was known to many in Nargothrond ere the end that Mormegil was none other than Túrin son of Húrin of Dorlómin.

Then Morwen was distraught, and refusing the counsel of Melian she rode forth alone into the wild to seek her son, or some true tidings of him. Thingol therefore sent Mablung after her, with many hardy march-wards, to find her and guard her, and to learn what news they might; but Nienor was bidden to remain behind. Yet the fearlessness of her house was hers; and in an evil hour, in hope that Morwen would return when she saw that her daughter would go with her into peril, Nienor disguised herself as one of Thingol's people, and went with that ill-fated riding.

They came upon Morwen by the banks of Sirion, and Mablung besought her to return to Menegroth; but she was fey, and would not be persuaded. Then also the coming of Nienor was revealed, and despite Morwen's command she would not go back; and Mablung perforce brought them to the hidden ferries at the Meres of Twilight, and they passed over Sirion. And after three days' journeying they came to Amon Ethir, the Hill of Spies, that long ago Felagund had caused to be raised with great labour, a league before the doors of Nargothrond. There Mablung set a guard of riders about Morwen and her daughter, and forbade them to go further. But he, seeing from the hill no sign of any enemy, went down with his scouts to the Narog, as stealthily as they could go.

But Glaurung was aware of all that they did, and he came forth in heat of wrath, and lay into the river; and a vast vapour and foul reek went up, in which Mablung and his company were blinded and lost. Then Glaurung passed east over Narog.

Seeing the onset of the dragon the guards upon Amon Ethir sought to lead Morwen and Nienor away, and fly with them with all speed back eastwards; but the wind bore the blank mists upon them, and their horses were maddened by the dragon-stench, and were ungovernable, and ran this way and that, so that some were dashed against trees and were slain, and others were borne far away. Thus the ladies were lost, and of Morwen indeed no sure tidings came ever to Doriath after. But Nienor, being thrown by her steed, yet unhurt, made her way back to Amon Ethir, there to await Mablung, and came thus above the reek into the sunlight; and looking westward she stared straight into the eyes of Glaurung, whose head lay upon the hill-top.

Her will strove with him for a while, but he put forth his power, and having learned who she was he constrained her to gaze into his eyes, and he laid a spell of utter darkness and forgetfulness upon her, so that she could remember nothing that had ever befallen her, nor her own name, nor the name of any other thing; and for many days she could neither hear, nor see, nor stir by her own will. Then Glaurung left her standing alone upon Amon Ethir, and went back to Nargothrond.

Now Mablung, who greatly daring had explored the halls of Felagund when Glaurung left them, fled from them at the approach of the dragon, and returned to Amon Ethir. The sun sank and night fell as he climbed the hill, and he found none there save Nienor, standing alone under the stars as an image of stone. No word she spoke or heard, but would follow, if he took up her hand. Therefore in great grief he led her away, though it seemed to him vain; for they were both like to perish, succourless in the wild.

But they were found by three of Mablung's companions, and slowly they journeyed northward and eastward towards the fences of the land of Doriath beyond Sirion, and the guarded bridge nigh to the inflowing of Esgalduin. Slowly the strength of Nienor returned as they drew nearer to Doriath; but still she could not speak or hear, and walked blindly as she was led. But even as they drew near the fences at last she closed her staring eyes, and would sleep; and they laid her down, and rested also, unheedfully, for they were utterly outworn. There they were assailed by an Orc-band, such as now roamed often as nigh the fences of Doriath as they dared. But Nienor in that hour recovered hearing and sight, and being awakened by the cries of the Orcs she sprang up in terror, and fled ere they could come to her.

Then the Orcs gave chase, and the Elves after; and they overtook the Orcs and slew them ere they could harm her, but Nienor escaped them. For she fled as in a madness of fear, swifter than a deer, and tore off all her clothing as she ran, until she was naked; and she passed out of their sight, running northward, and though they sought her long they found her not, nor any trace of her. And at last Mablung in despair returned to Menegroth and told the tidings. Then Thingol and Melian were filled with grief; but Mablung went forth, and sought long in vain for tidings of Morwen and Nienor.

But Nienor ran on into the woods until she was spent, and then fell, and slept, and awoke; and it was a sunlit morning, and she rejoiced in light as it were a new thing, and all things else that she saw seemed new and strange, for she had no names for them. Nothing did she remember save a darkness that lay behind her, and a shadow of fear; therefore she went warily as a hunted beast, and became famished, for she had no food and knew not how to seek it. But coming at last to the Crossings of Teiglin she passed over, seeking the shelter of the great trees of Brethil, for she was afraid, and it seemed to her that the darkness was overtaking her again from which she had fled.

But it was a great storm of thunder that came up from the south, and in terror she cast herself down upon the mound of Haudh-en-Elleth, stopping her ears from the thunder; but the rain smote her and drenched her, and she lay like a wild beast that is dying. There Turambar found her, as he came to the Crossings of Teiglin, having heard rumour of Orcs that roamed near; and seeing in a flare of lightning the body as it seemed of a slain maiden lying upon the mound of Finduilas he was stricken to the heart. But the woodmen lifted her up, and Turambar cast his cloak about her, and they took her to a lodge nearby, and warmed her, and gave her food. And as soon as she looked upon Turambar she was comforted, for it seemed to her that she had found at last something that she had sought in her darkness; and she would not be parted from him. But when he asked her

concerning her name and her kin and her misadventure, then she became troubled as a child that perceives that something is demanded but cannot understand what it may be; and she wept. Therefore Turambar said: "Do not be troubled. The tale shall wait. But I will give you a name, and I will call you Níniel, Tear-maiden." And at that name she shook her head, but said: Níniel. That was the first word she spoke after her darkness, and it remained her name among the woodmen ever after.

On the next day they bore her towards Ephel Brandir; but when they came to Dimrost, the Rainy Stair, where the tumbling stream of Celebros fell towards Teiglin, a great shuddering came upon her, wherefore afterwards that place was called Nen Girith, the Shuddering Water. Ere she came to the home of the woodmen upon Amon Obel she was sick of a fever; and long she lay thus, tended by the women of Brethil, and they taught her language as to an infant. But ere the autumn came by the skill of Brandir she was healed of her sickness, and she could speak; but nothing did she remember of the time before she was found by Turambar on the mound of Haudh-en-Elleth. And Brandir loved her; but all her heart was given to Turambar.

In that time the woodmen were not troubled by the Orcs, and Turambar went not to war, and there was peace in Brethil. His heart turned to Níniel, and he asked her in marriage; but for that time she delayed in spite of her love. For Brandir foreboded he knew not what, and sought to restrain her, rather for her sake than his own or rivalry with Turambar; and he revealed to her that Turambar was Túrin son of Húrin, and though she knew not the name a shadow fell upon her mind.

But when three years were passed since the sack of Nargothrond Turambar asked Níniel again, and vowed that now he would wed her, or else go back to war in the wild. And Níniel took him with joy, and they were wedded at the midsummer, and the woodmen of Brethil made a great feast. But ere the end of the year Glaurung sent Orcs of his dominion against Brethil; and Turambar sat at home deedless, for he had promised to Níniel that he would go to battle only if their homes were assailed. But the woodmen were worsted, and Dorlas upbraided him that he would not aid the people that he had taken for his own. Then Turambar arose and brought forth again his black sword, and he gathered a great company of the Men of Brethil, and they defeated the Orcs utterly. But Glaurung heard tidings that the Black Sword was in Brethil, and he pondered what he heard, devising new evil.

In the spring of the year after Níniel conceived, and she became wan and sad; and at the same time there came to Ephel Brandir the first rumours that Glaurung had issued from Nargothrond. Then Turambar sent out scouts far afield, for now he ordered things as he would, and few gave heed to Brandir. As it drew near to summer Glaurung came to the borders of Brethil, and lay near the west shores of Teiglin; and then there was great fear among the woodfolk, for it was now plain that the Great Worm would assail them and ravage their land, and not pass by, returning to Angband, as they had hoped. They sought therefore the counsel of Turambar; and he counselled them that it was vain to go against Glaurung with all their force, for only by cunning and good fortune could they defeat him. He offered therefore himself to seek the dragon on the borders of the land, and bade the rest of the people to remain at Ephel Brandir, but to prepare for flight. For if Glaurung had the victory, he would come first to the woodmen's homes to destroy them, and they could not hope to withstand him; but if they then scattered far and wide then many might escape, for Glaurung would not take up his dwelling in Brethil, and would return soon to Nargothrond.

Then Turambar asked for companions willing to aid him in his peril; and Dorlas stood forth, but no others. Therefore Dorlas upbraided the people, and spoke scorn of Brandir, who could not play the part of the heir of the house of Haleth; and Brandir was shamed before his people, and was bitter at heart. But Hunthor, kinsman of Brandir, asked his leave to go in his stead. Then Turambar said farewell to Níniel, and she was filled with fear and foreboding, and their parting was sorrowful; but Turambar set out with his two companions and went to Nen Girith.

Then Níniel being unable to endure her fear, and unwilling to wait in the Ephel tidings of Turambar's fortune, set forth after him, and a great company went with her. At this Brandir was filled all the more with dread, and he sought to dissuade her and the people that would go with her from this rashness, but they heeded him not. Therefore he renounced his lordship, and all love for the people that had scorned him, and having naught left but his love for Níniel he girt himself with a sword and went after her; but being lame he fell far behind.

Now Turambar came to Nen Girith at sundown, and there he learned that Glaurung lay on the brink of the high shores of Teiglin, and was like to move when night fell. Then he called those tidings good; for the dragon lay at Cabed-en-Aras, where the river ran in a deep and narrow gorge that a hunted deer might overleap, and Turambar thought that he would seek no further, but would attempt to pass over the gorge. Therefore he purposed to creep down at dusk, and descend into the ravine under night, and cross over the wild water; and then to climb up the further cliff, and so come to the dragon beneath his guard.

This counsel he took, but the heart of Dorlas failed when they came to the races of Teiglin in the dark, and he dared not attempt the perilous crossing, but drew back and lurked in the woods, burdened with shame. Turambar and Hunthor, nonetheless, crossed over in safety, for the loud roaring of the water drowned all other sounds, and Glaurung slept. But ere the middle-night the dragon roused, and with a great noise and blast cast his forward part across the chasm, and began to draw his bulk after. Turambar and Hunthor were well-nigh overcome by the heat and the stench, as they sought in haste for a way up to come at Glaurung; and Hunthor was slain by a great stone that was dislodged from on high by the passage of the dragon, and smote him on the head and cast him into the river. So he ended, of the house of Haleth not the least valiant.

Then Turambar summoned all his will and courage and climbed the cliff alone, and came beneath the dragon. Then he drew Gurthang, and with all the might of his arm, and of his hate, he thrust it into the soft belly of the Worm, even up to the hilts. But when Glaurung felt his death-pang, he screamed, and in his dreadful throe he heaved up his bulk and hurled himself across the chasm, and there lay lashing and coiling in his agony. And he set all in a blaze about him, and beat all to ruin, until at last his fires died, and he lay still.

Now Gurthang had been wrested from Turambar's hand in the throe of Glaurung, and it clave to the belly of the dragon. Turambar therefore crossed the water once more, desiring to recover his sword and to look upon his foe; and he found him stretched at his length, and rolled upon one side, and the hilts of Gurthang stood in his belly. Then Turambar seized the hilts and set his foot upon the belly, and cried in mockery of the dragon and his words at Nargothrond: "Hail, Worm of Morgoth! Well met again! Die now and the darkness have thee! Thus is Túrin son of Húrin avenged."

Then he wrenched out the sword, but a spout of black blood followed it, and fell on his hand, and the venom burned it. And thereupon Glaurung opened his eyes and looked upon Turambar with such malice that it smote him as a blow; and by that stroke and the anguish of the venom he fell into a dark swoon, and lay as one dead, and his sword was beneath him.

The screams of Glaurung rang in the woods, and came to the people that waited at Nen Girith; and when those that looked forth heard them, and saw afar the ruin and burning that the dragon made, they deemed that he had triumphed and was destroying those that assailed him. And Níniel sat and shuddered beside the falling water, and at the voice of Glaurung her darkness crept upon her again, so that she could not stir from that place of her own will.

Even so Brandir found her, for he came to Nen Girith at last, limping wearily; and when he heard that the dragon had crossed the river and had beaten down his foes, his heart yearned towards Níniel in pity. Yet he thought also: "Turambar is dead, but Níniel lives. Now it may be that she will come with me, and I will lead her away, and so we shall escape from the dragon together." After a while therefore he stood by Níniel, and he said: "Come! It is time to go. If you will, I will lead you." And he took her hand, and she arose silently, and followed him; and in the darkness none saw them go.

But as they went down the path to the Crossings the moon rose, and cast a grey light on the land, and Níniel said: "Is this the way?" And Brandir answered that he knew no way, save to flee as they might from Glaurung, and escape into the wild. But Níniel said: "The Black Sword was my beloved and my husband. To seek him only do I go. What else could you think?" And she sped on before him. Thus she came towards the Crossings of Teiglin and beheld Haudh-en-Elleth in the white moonlight, and great dread came on her. Then with a cry she turned away, casting off her cloak, and fled southward along the river, and her white raiment shone in the moon.

Thus Brandir saw her from the hill-side, and turned to cross her path, but he was still behind her when she came to the ruin of Glaurung nigh the brink of Cabed-en-Aras. There she saw the dragon lying, but she heeded him



not, for a man lay beside him; and she ran to Turambar, and called his name in vain. Then finding that his hand was burned she washed it with tears and bound it about with a strip of her raiment, and she kissed him and cried on him again to awake. Thereat Glaurung stirred for the last time ere he died, and he spoke with his last breath, saying: "Hail, Nienor, daughter of Húrin. We meet again ere the end. I give thee joy that thou hast found thy brother at last. And now thou shalt know him: a stabber in the dark, treacherous to foes, faithless to friends, and a curse unto his kin, Túrin son of Húrin! But the worst of all his deeds thou shalt feel in thyself."

Then Glaurung died, and the veil of his malice was taken from her, and she remembered all the days of her life. Looking down upon Túrin she cried: "Farewell, O twice beloved! *A Túrin Turambar turun ambartanen*: master of doom by doom mastered! O happy to be dead!" Then Brandir who had heard all, standing stricken upon the edge of ruin, hastened towards her; but she ran from him distraught with horror and anguish, and coming to the brink of Cabed-en-Aras she cast herself over, and was lost in the wild water.

Then Brandir came and looked down, and turned away in horror; and though he no longer desired life, he could not seek death in that roaring water. And thereafter no man looked again upon Cabed-en-Aras, nor would any beast or bird come there, nor any tree grow; and it was named Cabed Naeramarth, the Leap of Dreadful Doom.

But Brandir made his way back to Nen Girith, to bring tidings to the people; and he met Dorlas in the woods, and slew him: the first blood that ever he had spilled, and the last. And he came to Nen Girith, and men cried to him: "Have you seen her? For Níniel is gone."

And he answered: "Níniel is gone for ever. The Dragon is dead, and Turambar is dead; and those tidings are good." The people murmured at these words, saying that he was crazed; but Brandir said: "Hear me to the end! Níniel the beloved is also dead. She cast herself into Teiglin, desiring life no more; for she learned that she was none other than Nienor daughter of Húrin of Dor-lómin, ere her forgetfulness came upon her, and that Turambar was her brother, Túrin son of Húrin."

But even as he ceased, and the people wept, Túrin himself came before them. For when the dragon died, his swoon left him, and he fell into a deep sleep of weariness. But the cold of the night troubled him, and the hilts of Gurthang drove into his side, and he awoke. Then he saw that one had tended his hand, and he wondered much that he was left nonetheless to lie upon the cold ground; and he called, and hearing no answer he went in search of aid, for he was weary and sick.

But when the people saw him they drew back in fear, thinking that it was his unquiet spirit; and he said: "Nay, be glad; for the Dragon is dead, and I live. But wherefore have you scorned my counsel, and come into peril? And where is Níniel? For her I would see. And surely you did not bring her from her home?"

Then Brandir told him that it was so, and Níniel was dead. But the wife of Dorlas cried out: "Nay, lord, he is crazed. For he came here saying that you were dead, and he called it good tidings. But you live."

Then Turambar was wrathful, and believed that all Brandir said or did was done in malice towards himself and Níniel, begrudging their love; and he spoke evilly to Brandir, calling him Club-foot. Then Brandir reported all that he had heard, and named Níniel Nienor daughter of Húrin, and he cried out upon Turambar with the last words of Glaurung, that he was a curse unto his kin and to all that harboured him.

Then Turambar fell into a fury, for in those words he heard the feet of his doom overtaking him; and he charged Brandir with leading Níniel to her death, and publishing with delight the lies of Glaurung, if indeed he devised them not himself. Then he cursed Brandir, and slew him; and he fled from the people into the woods. But after a while his madness left him, and he came to Haudh-en-Elleth, and there sat, and pondered all his deeds. And he cried upon Finduilas to bring him counsel; for he knew not whether he would do now more ill to go to Doriath to seek his kin, or to forsake them for ever and seek death in battle.

And even as he sat there Mablung with a company of Grey-elves came over the Crossings of Teiglin, and he knew Túrin, and hailed him, and was glad indeed to find him yet living; for he had learned of the coming forth of Glaurung and that his path led to Brethil, and also he had heard report that the Black Sword of Nargothrond now dwelt there. Therefore he came to give warning to Túrin, and help if need be; but Túrin said: "You come too late. The Dragon is dead."

Then they marvelled, and gave him great praise; but he cared nothing for it, and said: "This only I ask: give me news of my kin, for in Dor-lómin I learned that they had gone to the Hidden Kingdom."

Then Mablung was dismayed, but needs must tell to Túrin how Morwen was lost, and Nienor cast into a spell of dumb forgetfulness, and how she escaped them upon the borders of Doriath and fled northwards. Then at last Túrin knew that doom had overtaken him, and that he had slain Brandir unjustly; so that the words of Glaurung were fulfilled in him. And he laughed as one fey, crying: "This is a bitter jest indeed!" But he bade Mablung go, and return to Doriath, with curses upon it. "And a curse too upon your errand!" he cried. "This only was wanting. Now comes the night."

Then he fled from them like the wind, and they were amazed, wondering what madness had seized him; and they followed after him. But Túrin far out-ran them; and he came to Cabed-en-Aras, and heard the roaring of the water, and saw that all the leaves fell sere from the trees, as though winter had come. There he drew forth his sword, that now alone remained to him of all his possessions, and he said: "Hail Gurthang! No lord or loyalty dost thou know, save the hand that wieldeth thee. From no blood wilt thou shrink. Wilt thou therefore take Túrin Turambar, wilt thou slay me swiftly?"

And from the blade rang a cold voice in answer: "Yea, I will drink thy blood gladly, that so I may forget the blood of Beleg my master, and the blood of Brandir slain unjustly. I will slay thee swiftly."

Then Túrin set the hilts upon the ground, and cast himself upon the point of Gurthang, and the black blade took his life. But Mablung and the Elves came and looked on the shape of Glaurung lying dead, and upon the body of Túrin, and they grieved; and when Men of Brethil came thither, and they learned the reasons of Túrin's madness and death, they were aghast; and Mablung said bitterly: "I also have been meshed in the doom of the Children of Húrin, and thus with my tidings have slain one that I loved."

Then they lifted up Túrin, and found that Gurthang had broken asunder. But Elves and Men gathered there great store of wood, and they made a mighty burning, and the Dragon was consumed to ashes. Túrin they laid in a high mound where he had fallen, and the shards of Gurthang were laid beside him. And when all was done, the Elves sang a lament for the Children of Húrin, and a great grey stone was set upon the mound, and thereon was carven in runes of Doriath:

TÚRIN TURAMBAR DAGNIR GLAURUNGA

and beneath they wrote also:

NIENOR NÍNIEL

But she was not there, nor was it ever known whither the cold waters of Teiglin had taken her.



## Chapter 22: Of The Ruin Of Doriath

So ended the tale of Túrin Turambar; but Morgoth did not sleep nor rest from evil, and his dealings with the house of Hador were not yet ended. Against them his malice was unsated, though Húrin was under his eye, and Morwen wandered distraught in the wild.

Unhappy was the lot of Húrin; for all that Morgoth knew of the working of his malice Húrin knew also, but lies were mingled with the truth, and aught that was good was hidden or distorted. In all ways Morgoth sought most to cast an evil light on those things that Thingol and Melian had done, for he hated them, and feared them. When therefore he judged the time to be ripe, he released Húrin from his bondage, bidding him go whither he would; and he feigned that in this he was moved by pity as for an enemy utterly defeated. But he lied, for his purpose was that Húrin should still further his hatred for Elves and Men, ere he died.

Then little though he trusted the words of Morgoth, knowing indeed that he was without pity, Húrin took his freedom, and went forth in grief, embittered by the words of the Dark Lord; and a year was now gone since the death of Túrin his son. For twenty-eight years he had been captive in Angband, and he was grown grim to look upon. His hair and beard were white and long, but he walked unbowed, bearing a great black staff; and he was girt with a sword. Thus he passed into Hithlum, and tidings came to the chieftains of the Easterlings that there was a great riding of captains and black soldiers of Angband over the sands of Anfauglith, and with them came an old man, as one that was held in high honour. Therefore they did not lay hands on Húrin, but let him walk at will in those lands; in which they were wise, for the remnant of his own people shunned him, because of his coming from Angband as one in league and honour with Morgoth.

Thus his freedom did but increase the bitterness of Húrin's heart; and he departed from the land of Hithlum and went up into the mountains. Thence he descried far off amid the clouds the peaks of the Crissaegrim, and he remembered Turgon; and he desired to come again to the hidden realm of Gondolin. He went down therefore from Ered Wethrin, and he knew not that the creatures of Morgoth watched all his steps; and crossing over the Brithiach he passed into Dimbar, and came to the dark feet of the Echoriath. All the land was cold and desolate, and he looked about him with little hope, standing at the foot of a great fall of stones beneath a sheer rock-wall; and he knew not that this was all that was now left to see of the old Way of Escape: the Dry River was blocked, and the arched gate was buried. Then Húrin looked up to the grey sky, thinking that he might once more descry the eagles, as he had done long ago in his youth; but he saw only the shadows blown from the east, and clouds swirling about the inaccessible peaks, and he heard only the wind hissing over the stones.

But the watch of the great eagles was now redoubled, and they marked Húrin well, far below, forlorn in the fading light; and straightway Thorondor himself, since the tidings seemed great, brought word to Turgon. But Turgon said: "Does Morgoth sleep? You were mistaken."

"Not so," said Thorondor. "If the Eagles of Manwë were wont to err thus, then long ago, lord, your hiding would have been in vain."

"Then your words bode ill," said Turgon; "for they can bear but one meaning. Even Húrin Thalion has surrendered to the will of Morgoth. My heart is shut."

But when Thorondor was gone, Turgon sat long in thought, and he was troubled, remembering the deeds of Húrin of Dor-lómin; and he opened his heart, and sent to the eagles to seek for Húrin, and to bring him if they might to Gondolin. But it was too late, and they never saw him again in light or in shadow.

For Húrin stood in despair before the silent cliffs of the Echoriath, and the westering sun, piercing the clouds, stained his white hair with red. Then he cried aloud in the wilderness, heedless of any ears, and he cursed the pitiless land; and standing at last upon a high rock he looked towards Gondolin and called in a great voice:

“Turgon, Turgon, remember the Fen of Serech! O Turgon, will you not hear in your hidden halls?” But there was no sound save the wind in the dry grasses. “Even so they hissed in Serech at the sunset,” he said; and as he spoke the sun went behind the Mountains of Shadow, and a darkness fell about him, and the wind ceased, and there was silence in the waste.

Yet there were ears that heard the words that Húrin spoke, and report of all came soon to the Dark Throne in the north; and Morgoth smiled, for he knew now clearly in what region Turgon dwelt, though because of the eagles no spy of his could yet come within sight of the land behind the Encircling Mountains. This was the first evil that the freedom of Húrin achieved.

As darkness fell Húrin stumbled from the rock, and fell into a heavy sleep of grief. But in his sleep he heard the voice of Morwen lamenting, and often she spoke his name; and it seemed to him that her voice came out of Brethil. Therefore when he awoke with the coming of day he arose, and went back to the Brithiach; and passing along the eaves of Brethil he came at a time of night to the Crossings of Teiglin. The night-sentinels saw him, but they were filled with dread, for they thought that they saw a ghost out of some ancient battle-mound that walked with darkness about it; and therefore Húrin was not stayed, and he came at last to the place of the burning of Glaurung, and saw the tall stone standing near the brink of Cabed Naeramarth.

But Húrin did not look at the stone, for he knew what was written there; and his eyes had seen that he was not alone. Sitting in the shadow of the stone there was a woman, bent over her knees; and as Húrin stood there silent she cast back her tattered hood and lifted her face. Grey she was and old, but suddenly her eyes looked into his, and he knew her; for though they were wild and full of fear, that light still gleamed in them that long ago had earned for her the name Eledhwen, proudest and most beautiful of mortal women in the days of old.

“You come at last,” she said. “I have waited too long.”

“It was a dark road. I have come as I could,” he answered.

“But you are too late,” said Morwen. “They are lost.”

“I know it,” he said. “But you are not.”

But Morwen said: “Almost. I am spent. I shall go with the sun. Now little time is left: if you know, tell me! How did she find him?”

But Húrin did not answer, and they sat beside the stone, and did not speak again; and when the sun went down Morwen sighed and clasped his hand, and was still; and Húrin knew that she had died. He looked down at her in the twilight and it seemed to him that the lines of grief and cruel hardship were smoothed away. “She was not conquered,” he said; and he closed her eyes, and sat unmoving beside her as the night drew down. The waters of Cabed Naeramarth roared on, but he heard no sound, and he saw nothing, and felt nothing, for his heart was stone within him. But there came a chill wind that drove sharp rain into his face; and he was roused, and anger rose in him like smoke, mastering reason, so that all his desire was to seek vengeance for his wrongs and for the wrongs of his kin, accusing in his anguish all those who ever had dealings with them. Then he rose up, and he made a grave for Morwen above Cabed Naeramarth on the west side of the stone; and upon it he cut these words: *Here lies also Morwen Eledhwen.*

It is told that a seer and harp-player of Brethil named Glirhuin made a song, saying that the Stone of the Hapless should not be defiled by Morgoth nor ever thrown down, not though the sea should drown all the land; as after indeed befell, and still Tol Morwen stands alone in the water beyond the new coasts that were made in the days of the wrath of the Valar. But Húrin does not lie there, for his doom drove him on, and the Shadow still followed him.

Now Húrin crossed over Teiglin and passed southwards down the ancient road that led to Nargothrond; and he saw far off to the eastward the lonely height of Amon Rûdh, and knew what had befallen there. At length he came to the banks of Narog, and ventured the passage of the wild river upon the fallen stones of the bridge, as Mablung of Doriath had ventured it before him; and he stood before the broken Doors of Felagund, leaning upon his staff.

Here it must be told that after the departure of Glaurung Mîm the Petty-Dwarf had found his way to Nargothrond, and crept within the ruined halls; and he took possession of them, and sat there fingering the gold and the gems, letting them run ever through his hands, for none came nigh to despoil him, from dread of the spirit of Glaurung and his very memory. But now one had come, and stood upon the threshold; and Mîm came forth, and demanded to know his purpose. But Húrin said: "Who are you, that would hinder me from entering the house of Finrod Felagund?"

Then the Dwarf answered: "I am Mîm; and before the proud ones came from over the Sea, Dwarves delved the halls of Nulukkizdîn. I have but returned to take what is mine; for I am the last of my people."

"Then you shall enjoy your inheritance no longer," said Húrin; "for I am Húrin son of Galdor, returned out of Angband, and my son was Túrin Turambar, whom you have not forgotten; and he it was that slew Glaurung the Dragon, who wasted these halls where now you sit; and not unknown is it to me by whom the Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin was betrayed."

Then Mîm in great fear besought Húrin to take what he would, but to spare his life; but Húrin gave no heed to his prayer, and slew him there before the doors of Nargothrond. Then he entered in, and stayed a while in that dreadful place, where the treasures of Valinor lay strewn upon the floors in darkness and decay; but it is told that when Húrin came forth from the wreck of Nargothrond and stood again beneath the sky he bore with him out of all that great hoard but one thing only.

Now Húrin journeyed eastward, and he came to the Meres of Twilight above the Falls of Sirion; and there he was taken by the Elves that guarded the western marches of Doriath, and brought before King Thingol in the Thousand Caves. Then Thingol was filled with wonder and grief when he looked on him, and knew that grim and aged man for Húrin Thalion, the captive of Morgoth; but he greeted him fairly and showed him honour. Húrin made no answer to the King, but drew forth from beneath his cloak that one thing which he had taken with him out of Nargothrond; and that was no lesser treasure than the Nauglamír, the Necklace of the Dwarves, that was made for Finrod Felagund long years before by the craftsmen of Nogrod and Belegost, most famed of all their works in the Elder Days, and prized by Finrod while he lived above all the treasures of Nargothrond. And Húrin cast it at the feet of Thingol with wild and bitter words.

"Receive thou thy fee," he cried, "for thy fair keeping of my children and my wife! For this is the Nauglamír, whose name is known to many among Elves and Men; and I bring it to thee out of the darkness of Nargothrond, where Finrod thy kinsman left it behind him when he set forth with Beren son of Barahir to fulfil the errand of Thingol of Doriath!"

Then Thingol looked upon the great treasure, and knew it for the Nauglamír, and well did he understand Húrin's intent; but being filled with pity he restrained his wrath, and endured Húrin's scorn. And at the last Melian spoke, and said: "Húrin Thalion, Morgoth hath bewitched thee; for he that seeth through Morgoth's eyes, willing or unwilling, seeth all things crooked. Long was Túrin thy son fostered in the halls of Menegroth, and shown love and honour as the son of the King; and it was not by the King's will nor by mine that he came never back to Doriath. And afterwards thy wife and thy daughter were harboured here with honour and goodwill; and we sought by all means that we might to dissuade Morwen from the road to Nargothrond. With the voice of Morgoth thou dost now upbraid thy friends."

And hearing the words of Melian Húrin stood moveless, and he gazed long into the eyes of the Queen; and there in Menegroth, defended still by the Girdle of Melian from the darkness of the Enemy, he read the truth of all that was done, and tasted at last the fullness of woe that was measured for him by Morgoth Bauglir. And he spoke no more of what was past, but stooping lifted up the Nauglamír from where it lay before Thingol's chair, and he gave it to him, saying: "Receive now, lord, the Necklace of the Dwarves, as a gift from one who has nothing, and as a memorial of Húrin of Dor-lómin. For now my fate is fulfilled, and the purpose of Morgoth achieved; but I am his thrall no longer."

Then he turned away, and passed out from the Thousand Caves, and all that saw him fell back before his face; and none sought to withstand his going, nor did any know whither he went. But it is said that Húrin would not live thereafter, being bereft of all purpose and desire, and cast himself at last into the western sea; and so ended the mightiest of the warriors of mortal Men.

But when Húrin was gone from Menegroth, Thingol sat long in silence, gazing upon the great treasure that lay upon his knees; and it came into his mind that it should be remade, and in it should be set the Silmaril. For as the years passed Thingol's thought turned unceasingly to the jewel of Fëanor, and became bound to it, and he liked not to let it rest even behind the doors of his inmost treasury; and he was minded now to bear it with him always, waking and sleeping.

In those days the Dwarves still came on their journeys into Beleriand from their mansions in Ered Lindon, and passing over Gelion at Sarn Athrad, the Ford of Stones, they travelled the ancient road to Doriath; for their skill in the working of metal and stone was very great, and there was much need of their craft in the halls of Menegroth. But they came now no longer in small parties as aforetime, but in great companies well armed for their protection in the perilous lands between Aros and Gelion; and they dwelt in Menegroth at such times in chambers and smithies set apart for them. At that very time great craftsmen of Nogrod were lately come into Doriath; and the King therefore summoning them declared his desire, that if their skill were great enough they should remake the Nauglamír, and in it set the Silmaril. Then the Dwarves looked upon the work of their fathers, and they beheld with wonder the shining jewel of Fëanor; and they were filled with a great lust to possess them, and carry them off to their far homes in the mountains. But they dissembled their mind, and consented to the task.

Long was their labour; and Thingol went down alone to their deep smithies, and sat ever among them as they worked. In time his desire was achieved, and the greatest of the works of Elves and Dwarves were brought together and made one; and its beauty was very great, for now the countless jewels of the Nauglamír did reflect and cast abroad in marvellous hues the light of the Silmaril amidmost. Then Thingol, being alone among them, made to take it up and clasp it about his neck; but the Dwarves in that moment withheld it from him, and demanded that he yield it up to them, saying: "By what right does the Elvenking lay claim to the Nauglamír, that was made by our fathers for Finrod Felagund who is dead? It has come to him but by the hand of Húrin the Man of Dor-lómin, who took it as a thief out of the darkness of Nargothrond." But Thingol perceived their hearts, and saw well that desiring the Silmaril they sought but a pretext and fair cloak for their true intent; and in his wrath and pride he gave no heed to his peril, but spoke to them in scorn, saying: "How do ye of uncouth race dare to demand aught of me, Elu Thingol, Lord of Beleriand, whose life began by the waters of Cuiviénen years uncounted ere the fathers of the stunted people awoke?" And standing tall and proud among them he bade them with shameful words be gone unrequited out of Doriath.

Then the lust of the Dwarves was kindled to rage by the words of the King; and they rose up about him, and laid hands on him, and slew him as he stood. So died in the deep places of Menegroth Elwë Singollo, King of Doriath, who alone of all the Children of Ilúvatar was joined with one of the Ainur; and he who, alone of the Forsaken Elves, had seen the light of the Trees of Valinor, with his last sight gazed upon the Silmaril.

Then the Dwarves taking the Nauglamír passed out of Menegroth and fled eastwards through Region. But tidings went swiftly through the forest, and few of that company came over Aros, for they were pursued to the death as they sought the eastward road; and the Nauglamír was retaken, and brought back in bitter grief to Melian the Queen. Yet two there were of the slayers of Thingol who escaped from the pursuit on the eastern marches, and returned at last to their city far off in the Blue Mountains; and there in Nogrod they told somewhat of all that had befallen, saying that the Dwarves were slain in Doriath by command of the Elvenking, who thus would cheat them of their reward.

Then great was the wrath and lamentation of the Dwarves of Nogrod for the death of their kin and their great craftsmen, and they tore their beards, and wailed; and long they sat taking thought for vengeance. It is told that they asked aid from Belegost, but it was denied them, and the Dwarves of Belegost sought to dissuade them from their purpose; but their counsel was unavailing, and ere long a great host came forth from Nogrod, and crossing over Gelion marched westward through Beleriand.

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Upon Doriath a heavy change had fallen. Melian sat long in silence beside Thingol the King, and her thought passed back into the starlit years and to their first meeting among the nightingales of Nan Elmoth in ages past; and she knew that her parting from Thingol was the forerunner of a greater parting, and that the doom of

Doriath was drawing nigh. For Melian was of the divine race of the Valar, and she was a Maia of great power and wisdom; but for love of Elwë Singollo she took upon herself the form of the Elder Children of Ilúvatar, and in that union she became bound by the chain and trammels of the flesh of Arda. In that form she bore to him Lúthien Tinúviel; and in that form she gained a power over the substance of Arda, and by the Girdle of Melian was Doriath defended through long ages from the evils without. But now Thingol lay dead, and his spirit had passed to the halls of Mandos; and with his death a change came also upon Melian. Thus it came to pass that her power was withdrawn in that time from the forests of Neldoreth and Region, and Esgalduin the enchanted river spoke with a different voice, and Doriath lay open to its enemies.

Thereafter Melian spoke to none save to Mablung only, bidding him take heed to the Silmaril, and to send word speedily to Beren and Lúthien in Ossiriand; and she vanished out of Middle-earth, and passed to the land of the Valar beyond the western sea, to muse upon her sorrows in the gardens of Lórien, whence she came, and this tale speaks of her no more.

Thus it was that the host of the Naugrim crossing over Aros passed unhindered into the woods of Doriath; and none withstood them, for they were many and fierce, and the captains of the Grey-elves were cast into doubt and despair, and went hither and thither purposeless. But the Dwarves held on their way, and passed over the great bridge, and entered into Menegroth; and there befell a thing most grievous among the sorrowful deeds of the Elder Days. For there was battle in the Thousand Caves, and many Elves and Dwarves were slain; and it has not been forgotten. But the Dwarves were victorious, and the halls of Thingol were ransacked and plundered. There fell Mablung of the Heavy Hand before the doors of the treasury wherein lay the Nauglamír; and the Silmaril was taken.

At that time Beren and Lúthien yet dwelt in Tol Galen, the Green Isle, in the River Adurant, southernmost of the streams that falling from Ered Lindon flowed down to join with Gelion; and their son Dior Eluchíl had to wife Nimloth, kinswoman of Celeborn, prince of Doriath, who was wedded to the Lady Galadriel. The sons of Dior and Nimloth were Eluréd and Elurín; and a daughter also was born to them, and she was named Elwing, which is Star-spray, for she was born on a night of stars, whose light glittered in the spray of the waterfall of Lanthir Lamath beside her father's house.

Now word went swiftly among the Elves of Ossiriand that a great host of Dwarves bearing gear of war had come down out of the mountains and passed over Gelion at the Ford of Stones. These tidings came soon to Beren and Lúthien; and in that time also a messenger came to them out of Doriath telling of what had befallen there. Then Beren arose and left Tol Galen, and summoning to him Dior his son they went north to the River Ascar; and with them went many of the Green-elves of Ossiriand.

Thus it came to pass that when the Dwarves of Nogrod, returning from Menegroth with diminished host, came again to Sarn Athrad, they were assailed by unseen enemies; for as they climbed up Gelion's banks burdened with the spoils of Doriath, suddenly all the woods were filled with the sound of elven-horns, and shafts sped upon them from every side. There very many of the Dwarves were slain in the first onset; but some escaping from the ambush held together, and fled eastwards towards the mountains. And as they climbed the long slopes beneath Mount Dolmed there came forth the Shepherds of the Trees, and they drove the Dwarves into the shadowy woods of Ered Lindon: whence, it is said, came never one to climb the high passes that led to their homes.

In that battle by Sarn Athrad Beren fought his last fight, and himself slew the Lord of Nogrod, and wrested from him the Necklace of the Dwarves; but he dying laid his curse upon all the treasure. Then Beren gazed in wonder on the selfsame jewel of Fëanor that he had cut from Morgoth's iron crown, now shining set amid gold and gems by the cunning of the Dwarves; and he washed it clean of blood in the waters of the river. And when all was finished the treasure of Doriath was drowned in the River Ascar, and from that time the river was named anew, Rathlóriel, the Goldenbed; but Beren took the Nauglamír and returned to Tol Galen. Little did it ease the grief of Lúthien to learn that the Lord of Nogrod was slain and many Dwarves beside; but it is said and sung that Lúthien wearing that necklace and that immortal jewel was the vision of greatest beauty and glory that has ever been outside the realm of Valinor; and for a little while the Land of the Dead that Live became like a vision of the land of the Valar, and no place has been since so fair, so fruitful, or so filled with light.

Now Dior Thingol's heir bade farewell to Beren and Lúthien, and departing from Lanthir Lamath with Nimloth his wife he came to Menegroth, and abode there; and with them went their young sons Eluréd and Elurín, and Elwing their daughter. Then the Sindar received them with joy, and they arose from the darkness of their grief for fallen kin and King and for the departure of Melian; and Dior Eluchíl set himself to raise anew the glory of the kingdom of Doriath.

There came a night of autumn, and when it grew late, one came and smote upon the doors of Menegroth, demanding admittance to the King. He was a lord of the Green-elves hastening from Ossiriand, and the doorwards brought him to where Dior sat alone in his chamber; and there in silence he gave to the King a coffer, and took his leave. But in that coffer lay the Necklace of the Dwarves, wherein was set the Silmaril; and Dior looking upon it knew it for a sign that Beren Erchamion and Lúthien Tinúviel had died indeed, and gone where go the race of Men to a fate beyond the world.

Long did Dior gaze upon the Silmaril, which his father and mother had brought beyond hope out of the terror of Morgoth; and his grief was great that death had come upon them so soon. But the wise have said that the Silmaril hastened their end; for the flame of the beauty of Lúthien as she wore it was too bright for mortal lands.

Then Dior arose, and about his neck he clasped the Nauglamír; and now he appeared as the fairest of all the children of the world, of threefold race: of the Edain, and of the Eldar, and of the Maiar of the Blessed Realm.

But now the rumour ran among the scattered Elves of Beleriand that Dior Thingol's heir wore the Nauglamír, and they said: "A Silmaril of Fëanor burns again in the woods of Doriath"; and the oath of the sons of Fëanor was waked again from sleep. For while Lúthien wore the Necklace of the Dwarves no Elf would dare to assail her; but now hearing of the renewal of Doriath and of Dior's pride the seven gathered again from wandering, and they sent to him to claim their own.

But Dior returned no answer to the sons of Fëanor; and Celegorm stirred up his brothers to prepare an assault upon Doriath. They came at unawares in the middle of winter, and fought with Dior in the Thousand Caves; and so befell the second slaying of Elf by Elf. There fell Celegorm by Dior's hand, and there fell Curufin, and dark Caranthir; but Dior was slain also, and Nimloth his wife, and the cruel servants of Celegorm seized his young sons and left them to starve in the forest. Of this Maedhros indeed repented, and sought for them long in the woods of Doriath; but his search was unavailing, and of the fate of Eluréd and Elurín no tale tells.

Thus Doriath was destroyed, and never rose again. But the sons of Fëanor gained not what they sought; for a remnant of the people fled before them, and with them was Elwing Dior's daughter, and they escaped, and bearing with them the Silmaril they came in time to the mouths of the River Sirion by the sea.





## Chapter 23: Of Tuor And The Fall Of Gondolin

It has been told that Huor the brother of Húrin was slain in the Battle of Unnumbered Tears; and in the winter of that year Rían his wife bore a child in the wilds of Mithrim, and he was named Tuor, and was taken to foster by Annael of the Grey-elves, who yet lived in those hills. Now when Tuor was sixteen years old the Elves were minded to leave the caves of Androth where they dwelt, and to make their way secretly to the Havens of Sirion in the distant south; but they were assailed by Orcs and Easterlings before they made good their escape, and Tuor was taken captive and enslaved by Lorgan, chief of the Easterlings of Hithlum. For three years he endured that thralldom, but at the end of that time he escaped; and returning to the caves of Androth he dwelt there alone, and did such great hurt to the Easterlings that Lorgan set a price upon his head.

But when Tuor had lived thus in solitude as an outlaw for four years, Ulmo set it in his heart to depart from the land of his fathers, for he had chosen Tuor as the instrument of his designs; and leaving once more the caves of Androth he went westwards across Dor-lómin, and found Annon-in-Gelydh, the Gate of the Noldor, which the people of Turgon built when they dwelt in Nevrast long years before. Thence a dark tunnel led beneath the mountains, and issued into Cirith Ninniach, the Rainbow Cleft, through which a turbulent water ran towards the western sea. Thus it was that Tuor's flight from Hithlum was marked by neither Man nor Orc, and no knowledge of it came to the ears of Morgoth.

And Tuor came into Nevrast, and looking upon Belegaer the Great Sea he was enamoured of it, and the sound of it and the longing for it were ever in his heart and ear, and an unquiet was on him that took him at last into the depths of the realms of Ulmo. Then he dwelt in Nevrast alone, and the summer of that year passed, and the doom of Nargothrond drew near; but when the autumn came he saw seven great swans flying south, and he knew them for a sign that he had tarried overlong, and he followed their flight along the shores of the sea. Thus he came at length to the deserted halls of Vinyamar beneath Mount Taras, and he entered in, and found there the shield and hauberk, and the sword and helm, that Turgon had left there by the command of Ulmo long before; and he arrayed himself in those arms, and went down to the shore. But there came a great storm out of the west, and out of that storm Ulmo the Lord of Waters arose in majesty and spoke to Tuor as he stood beside the sea. And Ulmo bade him depart from that place and seek out the hidden kingdom of Gondolin; and he gave Tuor a great cloak, to mantle him in shadow from the eyes of his enemies.

But in the morning when the storm was passed, Tuor came upon an Elf standing beside the walls of Vinyamar; and he was Voronwë, son of Aranwë, of Gondolin, who sailed in the last ship that Turgon sent into the West. But when that ship returning at last out of the deep ocean foundered in the great storm within sight of the coasts of Middle-earth, Ulmo took him up, alone of all its mariners, and cast him onto the land near Vinyamar; and learning of the command laid upon Tuor by the Lord of Waters Voronwë was filled with wonder, and did not refuse him his guidance to the hidden door of Gondolin. Therefore they set out together from that place, and as the Fell Winter of that year came down upon them out of the north they went warily eastward under the eaves of the Mountains of Shadow.

At length they came in their journeying to the Pools of Ivrin, and looked with grief on the defilement wrought there by the passage of Glaurung the Dragon; but even as they gazed upon it they saw one going northward in haste, and he was a tall Man, clad in black, and bearing a black sword. But they knew not who he was, nor anything of what had befallen in the south; and he passed them by, and they said no word.

And at the last by the power that Ulmo set upon them they came to the hidden door of Gondolin, and passing down the tunnel they reached the inner gate, and were taken by the guard as prisoners. Then they were led up the mighty ravine of Orfalch Echor, barred by seven gates, and brought before Ecthelion of the Fountain, the warden of the great gate at the end of the climbing road; and there Tuor cast aside his cloak, and from the arms

that he bore from Vinyamar it was seen that he was in truth one sent by Ulmo. Then Tuor looked down upon the fair vale of Tumladen, set as a green jewel amid the encircling hills; and he saw far off upon the rocky height of Amon Gwareth Gondolin the great, city of seven names, whose fame and glory is mightiest in song of all dwellings of the Elves in the Hither Lands. At the bidding of Ecthelion trumpets were blown on the towers of the great gate, and they echoed in the hills; and far off but clear there came a sound of answering trumpets blown upon the white walls of the city, flushed with the rose of dawn upon the plain.

Thus it was that the son of Huor rode across Tumladen, and came to the gate of Gondolin; and passing up the wide stairways of the city he was brought at last to the Tower of the King, and looked upon the images of the Trees of Valinor. Then Tuor stood before Turgon son of Fingolfin, High King of the Noldor, and upon the King's right hand there stood Maeglin his sister-son, but upon his left hand sat Idril Celebrindal his daughter; and all that heard the voice of Tuor marvelled, doubting that this were in truth a Man of mortal race, for his words were the words of the Lord of Waters that came to him in that hour. And he gave warning to Turgon that the Curse of Mandos now hastened to its fulfilment, when all the works of the Noldor should perish; and he bade him depart, and abandon the fair and mighty city that he had built, and go down Sirion to the sea.

Then Turgon pondered long the counsel of Ulmo, and there came into his mind the words that were spoken to him in Vinyamar: "Love not too well the work of thy hands and the devices of thy heart; and remember that the true hope of the Noldor lieth in the West, and cometh from the Sea." But Turgon was become proud, and Gondolin as beautiful as a memory of Elven Tirion, and he trusted still in its secret and impregnable strength, though even a Vala should gainsay it; and after the Nirnaeth Arnoediad the people of that city desired never again to mingle in the woes of Elves and Men without, nor to return through dread and danger into the West. Shut behind their pathless and enchanted hills they suffered none to enter, though he fled from Morgoth hate-pursued; and tidings of the lands beyond came to them faint and far, and they heeded them little. The spies of Angband sought for them in vain; and their dwelling was as a rumour, and a secret that none could find. Maeglin spoke ever against Tuor in the councils of the King, and his words seemed the more weighty in that they went with Turgon's heart; and at the last he rejected the bidding of Ulmo and refused his counsel. But in the warning of the Vala he heard again the words that were spoken before the departing Noldor on the coast of Araman long ago; and the fear of treason was awakened in Turgon's heart. Therefore in that time the very entrance to the hidden door in the Encircling Mountains was caused to be blocked up; and thereafter none went ever forth from Gondolin on any errand of peace or war, while that city stood. Tidings were brought by Thorondor Lord of Eagles of the fall of Nargothrond, and after of the slaying of Thingol and of Dior his heir, and of the ruin of Doriath; but Turgon shut his ear to word of the woes without, and vowed to march never at the side of any son of Fëanor; and his people he forbade ever to pass the leaguer of the hills.

And Tuor remained in Gondolin, for its bliss and its beauty and the wisdom of its people held him enthralled; and he became mighty in stature and in mind, and learned deeply of the lore of the exiled Elves. Then the heart of Idril was turned to him, and his to her; and Maeglin's secret hatred grew ever greater, for he desired above all things to possess her, the only heir of the King of Gondolin. But so high did Tuor stand in the favour of the King that when he had dwelt there for seven years Turgon did not refuse him even the hand of his daughter; for though he would not heed the bidding of Ulmo, he perceived that the fate of the Noldor was wound with the one whom Ulmo had sent; and he did not forget the words that Huor spoke to him before the host of Gondolin departed from the Battle of Unnumbered Tears.

Then there was made a great and joyful feast, for Tuor had won the hearts of all that people, save only of Maeglin and his secret following; and thus there came to pass the second union of Elves and Men.

In the spring of the year after was born in Gondolin Eärendil Halfelven, the son of Tuor and Idril Celebrindal; and that was five hundred years and three since the coming of the Noldor to Middle-earth. Of surpassing beauty was Eärendil, for a light was in his face as the light of heaven, and he had the beauty and the wisdom of the Eldar and the strength and hardihood of the Men of old; and the Sea spoke ever in his ear and heart, even as with Tuor his father.

Then the days of Gondolin were yet full of joy and peace; and none knew that the region wherein the Hidden Kingdom lay had been at last revealed to Morgoth by the cries of Húrin, when standing in the wilderness beyond the Encircling Mountains and finding no entrance he called on Turgon in despair. Thereafter the

thought of Morgoth was bent unceasing on the mountainous land between Anach and the upper waters of Sirion, whither his servants had never passed; yet still no spy or creature out of Angband could come there because of the vigilance of the eagles, and Morgoth was thwarted in the fulfilment of his designs. But Idril Celebrindal was wise and far-seeing, and her heart misgave her, and foreboding crept upon her spirit as a cloud. Therefore in that time she let prepare a secret way, that should lead down from the city and passing out beneath the surface of the plain issue far beyond the walls, northward of Amon Gwareth; and she contrived it that the work was known but to few, and no whisper of it came to Maeglin's ears.

Now on a time, when Eärendil was yet young, Maeglin was lost. For he, as has been told, loved mining and quarrying after metals above all other craft; and he was master and leader of the Elves who worked in the mountains distant from the city, seeking after metals for their smithying of things both of peace and war. But often Maeglin went with few of his folk beyond the leaguer of the hills, and the King knew not that his bidding was defied; and thus it came to pass, as fate willed, that Maeglin was taken prisoner by Orcs, and brought to Angband. Maeglin was no weakling or craven, but the torment wherewith he was threatened cowed his spirit, and he purchased his life and freedom by revealing to Morgoth the very place of Gondolin and the ways whereby it might be found and assailed. Great indeed was the joy of Morgoth, and to Maeglin he promised the lordship of Gondolin as his vassal, and the possession of Idril Celebrindal, when the city should be taken; and indeed desire for Idril and hatred for Tuor led Maeglin the easier to his treachery, most infamous in all the histories of the Elder Days. But Morgoth sent him back to Gondolin, lest any should suspect the betrayal, and so that Maeglin should aid the assault from within, when the hour came; and he abode in the halls of the King with smiling face and evil in his heart, while the darkness gathered ever deeper upon Idril.

At last, in the year when Eärendil was seven years old, Morgoth was ready, and he loosed upon Gondolin his Balrogs, and his Orcs, and his wolves; and with them came dragons of the brood of Glaurung, and they were become now many and terrible. The host of Morgoth came over the northern hills where the height was greatest and the watch least vigilant, and it came at night upon a time of festival, when all the people of Gondolin were upon the walls to await the rising sun, and sing their songs at its uplifting; for the morrow was the great feast that they named the Gates of Summer. But the red light mounted the hills in the north and not in the east; and there was no stay in the advance of the foe until they were beneath the very walls of Gondolin, and the city was beleaguered without hope. Of the deeds of desperate valour there done, by the chieftains of the noble houses and their warriors, and not least by Tuor, much is told in *The Fall of Gondolin*: of the battle of Ecthelion of the Fountain with Gothmog Lord of Balrogs in the very square of the King, where each slew the other, and of the defence of the tower of Turgon by the people of his household, until the tower was overthrown; and mighty was its fall and the fall of Turgon in its ruin.

Tuor sought to rescue Idril from the sack of the city, but Maeglin had laid hands on her, and on Eärendil; and Tuor fought with Maeglin on the walls, and cast him far out, and his body as it fell smote the rocky slopes of Amon Gwareth thrice ere it pitched into the flames below. Then Tuor and Idril led such remnants of the people of Gondolin as they could gather in the confusion of the burning down the secret way which Idril had prepared; and of that passage the captains of Angband knew nothing, and thought not that any fugitives would take a path towards the north and the highest parts of the mountains and the highest to Angband. The fume of the burning, and the steam of the fair fountains of Gondolin withering in the flame of the dragons of the north, fell upon the vale of Tumladen in mournful mists; and thus was the escape of Tuor and his company aided, for there was still a long and open road to follow from the tunnels mouth to the foothills of the mountains. Nonetheless they came thither, and beyond hope they climbed, in woe and misery, for the high places were cold and terrible, and they had among them many that were wounded, and women and children.

There was a dreadful pass, Cirith Thoronath it was named, the Eagles' Cleft, where beneath the shadow of the highest peaks a narrow path wound its way; on the right hand it was walled by a precipice, and on the left a dreadful fall leapt into emptiness. Along that narrow way their march was strung, when they were ambushed by Orcs, for Morgoth had set watchers all about the encircling hills; and a Balrog was with them. Then dreadful was their plight, and hardly would they have been saved by the valour of yellow-haired Glorfindel, chief of the House of the Golden Flower of Gondolin, had not Thorondor come timely to their aid.

Many are the songs that have been sung of the duel of Glorfindel with the Balrog upon a pinnacle of rock in that high place; and both fell to ruin in the abyss. But the eagles coming stooped upon the Orcs, and drove them shrieking back; and all were slain or cast into the deeps, so that rumour of the escape from Gondolin came not until long after to Morgoth's ears. Then Thorondor bore up Glorfindel's body out of the abyss, and they buried him in a mound of stones beside the pass; and a green turf came there, and yellow flowers bloomed upon it amid the barrenness of stone, until the world was changed.

Thus led by Tuor son of Huor the remnant of Gondolin passed over the mountains, and came down into the Vale of Sirion; and fleeing southward by weary and dangerous marches they came at length to Nan-tathren, the Land of Willows, for the power of Ulmo yet ran in the great river, and it was about them. There they rested a while, and were healed of their hurts and weariness; but their sorrow could not be healed. And they made a feast in memory of Gondolin and of the Elves that had perished there, the maidens, and the wives, and the warriors of the King; and for Glorfindel the beloved many were the songs they sang, under the willows of Nan-tathren in the waning of the year. There Tuor made a song for Eärendil his son, concerning the coming of Ulmo the Lord of Waters to the shores of Nevrast aforetime; and the sea-longing woke in his heart, and in his son's also. Therefore Idril and Tuor departed from Nan-tathren, and went southwards down the river to the sea; and they dwelt there by the mouths of Sirion, and joined their people to the company of Elwing Dior's daughter, that had fled thither but a little while before. And when the tidings came to Balar of the fall of Gondolin and the death of Turgon, Ereinion Gil-galad son of Fingon was named High King of the Noldor in Middle-earth.

But Morgoth thought that his triumph was fulfilled, recking little of the sons of Fëanor, and of their oath, which had harmed him never and turned always to his mightiest aid; and in his black thought he laughed, regretting not the one Silmaril that he had lost, for by it as he deemed the last shred of the people of the Eldar should vanish from Middle-earth and trouble it no more. If he knew of the dwelling by the waters of Sirion, he gave no sign, biding his time, and waiting upon the working of oath and lie. Yet by Sirion and the sea there grew up an Elven-folk, the gleanings of Doriath and Gondolin; and from Balar the mariners of Círdan came among them, and they took to the waves and the building of ships, dwelling ever nigh to the coasts of Arvernien, under the shadow of Ulmo's hand.

And it is said that in that time Ulmo came to Valinor out of the deep waters, and spoke there to the Valar of the need of the Elves; and he called on them to forgive them, and rescue them from the overmastering might of Morgoth, and win back the Silmarils, wherein alone now bloomed the light of the Days of Bliss when the Two Trees still shone in Valinor. But Manwë moved not; and of the counsels of his heart what tale shall tell? The wise have said that the hour was not yet come, and that only one speaking in person for the cause of both Elves and Men, pleading for pardon on their mis-deeds and pity on their woes, might move the counsels of the Powers; and the oath of Fëanor perhaps even Manwë could not loose, until it found its end, and the sons of Fëanor relinquished the Silmarils, upon which they had laid their ruthless claim. For the light which lit the Silmarils the Valar themselves had made.

In those days Tuor felt old age creep upon him, and ever a longing for the deeps of the Sea grew stronger in his heart. Therefore he built a great ship, and he named it Eärrámë, which is Sea-Wing; and with Idril Celebrindal he set sail into the sunset and the West, and came no more into any tale or song. But in after days it was sung that Tuor alone of mortal Men was numbered among the elder race, and was joined with the Noldor, whom he loved; and his fate is sundered from the fate of Men.



## Chapter 24: Of The Voyage Of Eärendil And The War Of Wrath

Bright Eärendil was then lord of the people that dwelt nigh to Sirion's mouths; and he took to wife Elwing the fair, and she bore to him Elrond and Elros, who are called the Halfelven. Yet Eärendil could not rest, and his voyages about the shores of the Hither Lands eased not his unquiet. Two purposes grew in his heart, blended as one in longing for the wide Sea: he sought to sail thereon, seeking after Tuor and Idril who returned not; and he thought to find perhaps the last shore, and bring ere he died the message of Elves and Men to the Valar in the West, that should move their hearts to pity for the sorrows of Middle-earth.

Now Eärendil became fast in friendship with Círdan the Shipwright, who dwelt on the Isle of Balar with those of his people who escaped from the sack of the Havens of Brithombar and Eglarest. With the aid of Círdan Eärendil built Vingilot, the Foam-flower, fairest of the ships of song; golden were its oars and white its timbers, hewn in the birchwoods of Nimbrethil, and its sails were as the argent moon. In the *Lay of Eärendil* is many a thing sung of his adventures in the deep and in lands untrodden, and in many seas and in many isles; but Elwing was not with him, and she sat in sorrow by the mouths of Sirion.

Eärendil found not Tuor nor Idril, nor came he ever on that journey to the shores of Valinor, defeated by shadows and enchantment, driven by repelling winds, until in longing for Elwing he turned homeward towards the coast of Beleriand. And his heart bade him haste, for a sudden fear had fallen on him out of dreams; and the winds that before he had striven with might not now bear him back as swift as his desire.

Now when first the tidings came to Maedhros that Elwing yet lived, and dwelt in possession of the Silmaril by the mouths of Sirion, he repenting of the deeds in Doriath withheld his hand. But in time the knowledge of their oath unfulfilled returned to torment him and his brothers, and gathering from their wandering hunting-paths they sent messages to the Havens of friendship and yet of stern demand. Then Elwing and the people of Sirion would not yield the jewel which Beren had won and Lúthien had worn, and for which Dior the fair was slain; and least of all while Eärendil their lord was on the sea, for it seemed to them that in the Silmaril lay the healing and the blessing that had come upon their houses and their ships. And so there came to pass the last and cruellest of the slayings of Elf by Elf; and that was the third of the great wrongs achieved by the accursed oath.

For the sons of Fëanor that yet lived came down suddenly upon the exiles of Gondolin and the remnant of Doriath, and destroyed them. In that battle some of their people stood aside, and some few rebelled and were slain upon the other part aiding Elwing against their own lords (for such was the sorrow and confusion in the hearts of the Eldar in those days); but Maedhros and Maglor won the day, though they alone remained thereafter of the sons of Fëanor, for both Amrod and Amras were slain. Too late the ships of Círdan and Gil-galad the High King came hasting to the aid of the Elves of Sirion; and Elwing was gone, and her sons. Then such few of that people as did not perish in the assault joined themselves to Gil-galad, and went with him to Balar; and they told that Elros and Elrond were taken captive, but Elwing with the Silmaril upon her breast had cast herself into the sea.

Thus Maedhros and Maglor gained not the jewel; but it was not lost. For Ulmo bore up Elwing out of the waves, and he gave her the likeness of a great white bird, and upon her breast there shone as a star the Silmaril, as she flew over the water to seek Eärendil her beloved. On a time of night Eärendil at the helm of his ship saw her come towards him, as a white cloud exceeding swift beneath the moon, as a star over the sea moving in strange course, a pale flame on wings of storm. And it is sung that she fell from the air upon the timbers of Vingilot, in a swoon, nigh unto death for the urgency of her speed, and Eärendil took her to his bosom; but in the morning with marvelling eyes he beheld his wife in her own form beside him with her hair upon his face, and she slept.

Great was the sorrow of Eärendil and Elwing for the ruin of the havens of Sirion, and the captivity of their sons, and they feared that they would be slain; but it was not so. For Maglor took pity upon Elros and Elrond, and he cherished them, and love grew after between them, as little might be thought; but Maglor's heart was sick and weary with the burden of the dreadful oath.

Yet Eärendil saw now no hope left in the lands of Middle-earth, and he turned again in despair and came not home, but sought back once more to Valinor with Elwing at his side. He stood now most often at the prow of Vingilot, and the Silmaril was bound upon his brow; and ever its light grew greater as they drew into the West. And the wise have said that it was by reason of the power of that holy jewel that they came in time to waters that no vessels save those of the Teleri had known; and they came to the Enchanted Isles and escaped their enchantment; and they came into the Shadowy Seas and passed their shadows, and they looked upon Tol Eressëa the Lonely Isle, but tarried not; and at the last they cast anchor in the Bay of Eldamar, and the Teleri saw the coming of that ship out of the East and they were amazed, gazing from afar upon the light of the Silmaril, and it was very great. Then Eärendil, first of living Men, landed on the immortal shores; and he spoke there to Elwing and to those that were with him, and they were three mariners who had sailed all the seas beside him: Falathar, Erellont, and Aerandir were their names. And Eärendil said to them: "Here none but myself shall set foot, lest you fall under the wrath of the Valar. But that peril I will take on myself alone, for the sake of the Two Kindreds."

But Elwing answered: "Then would our paths be sundered for ever; but all thy perils I will take on myself also." And she leaped into the white foam and ran towards him; but Eärendil was sorrowful, for he feared the anger of the Lords of the West upon any of Middle-earth that should dare to pass the leaguer of Aman. And there they bade farewell to the companions of their voyage, and were taken from them for ever.

Then Eärendil said to Elwing: "Await me here; for one only may bring the message that it is my fate to bear." And he went up alone into the land, and came into the Calacirya, and it seemed to him empty and silent; for even as Morgoth and Ungoliant came in ages past, so now Eärendil had come at a time of festival, and wellnigh all the Elvenfolk were gone to Valimar, or were gathered in the halls of Manwë upon Taniquetil, and few were left to keep watch upon the walls of Tirion.

But some there were who saw him from afar, and the great light that he bore; and they went in haste to Valimar. But Eärendil climbed the green hill of Túna and found it bare; and he entered into the streets of Tirion, and they were empty; and his heart was heavy, for he feared that some evil had come even to the Blessed Realm. He walked in the deserted ways of Tirion, and the dust upon his raiment and his shoes was a dust of diamonds, and he shone and glistened as he climbed the long white stairs. And he called aloud in many tongues, both of Elves and Men, but there were none to answer him. Therefore he turned back at last towards the sea; but even as he took the shoreward road one stood upon the hill and called to him in a great voice, crying:

"Hail Eärendil, of mariners most renowned, the looked for that cometh at unawares, the longed for that cometh beyond hope! Hail Eärendil, bearer of light before the Sun and Moon! Splendour of the Children of Earth, star in the darkness, jewel in the sunset, radiant in the morning!"

That voice was the voice of Eönwë, herald of Manwë, and he came from Valimar, and summoned Eärendil to come before the Powers of Arda. And Eärendil went into Valinor and to the halls of Valimar, and never again set foot upon the lands of Men. Then the Valar took counsel together, and they summoned Ulmo from the deeps of the sea; and Eärendil stood before their faces, and delivered the errand of the Two Kindreds. Pardon he asked for the Noldor and pity for their great sorrows, and mercy upon Men and Elves and succour in their need. And his prayer was granted.

It is told among the Elves that after Eärendil had departed, seeking Elwing his wife, Mandos spoke concerning his fate; and he said: "Shall mortal Man step living upon the undying lands, and yet live?" But Ulmo said: "For this he was born into the world. And say unto me: whether is he Eärendil Tuor's son of the line of Hador, or the son of Idril, Turgon's daughter, of the Elven-house of Finwë?" And Mandos answered: "Equally the Noldor, who went wilfully into exile, may not return hither."

But when all was spoken, Manwë gave judgement, and he said: "In this matter the power of doom is given to me. The peril that he ventured for love of the Two Kindreds shall not fall upon Eärendil, nor shall it fall upon

Elwing his wife, who entered into peril for love of him; but they shall not walk again ever among Elves or Men in the Outer Lands. And this is my decree concerning them: to Eärendil and to Elwing, and to their sons, shall be given leave each to choose freely to which kindred their fates shall be joined, and under which kindred they shall be judged.”

Now when Eärendil was long time gone Elwing became lonely and afraid; and wandering by the margin of the sea she came near to Alqualondë, where lay the Telerin fleets. There the Teleri befriended her, and they listened to her tales of Doriath and Gondolin and the griefs of Beleriand, and they were filled with pity and wonder; and there Eärendil returning found her, at the Haven of the Swans. But ere long they were summoned to Valimar; and there the decree of the Elder King was declared to them.

Then Eärendil said to Elwing: “Choose thou, for now I am weary of the world.” And Elwing chose to be judged among the Firstborn Children of Ilúvatar, because of Lúthien; and for her sake Eärendil chose alike, though his heart was rather with the kindred of Men and the people of his father. Then at the bidding of the Valar Eönwë went to the shore of Aman, where the companions of Eärendil still remained, awaiting tidings; and he took a boat, and the three mariners were set therein, and the Valar drove them away into the East with a great wind. But they took Vingilot, and hallowed it, and bore it away through Valinor to the uttermost rim of the world; and there it passed through the Door of Night and was lifted up even into the oceans of heaven.

Now fair and marvellous was that vessel made, and it was filled with a wavering flame, pure and bright; and Eärendil the Mariner sat at the helm, glistening with dust of elven-gems, and the Silmaril was bound upon his brow. Far he journeyed in that ship, even into the starless voids; but most often was he seen at morning or at evening, glimmering in sunrise or sunset, as he came back to Valinor from voyages beyond the confines of the world.

On those journeys Elwing did not go, for she might not endure the cold and the pathless voids, and she loved rather the earth and the sweet winds that blow on sea and hill. Therefore there was built for her a white tower northward upon the borders of the Sundering Seas; and thither at times all the sea-birds of the earth repaired. And it is said that Elwing learned the tongues of birds, who herself had once worn their shape; and they taught her the craft of flight, and her wings were of white and silver-grey. And at times, when Eärendil returning drew near again to Arda, she would fly to meet him, even as she had flown long ago, when she was rescued from the sea. Then the far-sighted among the Elves that dwelt in the Lonely Isle would see her like a white bird, shining, rose-stained in the sunset, as she soared in joy to greet the coming of Vingilot to haven.

Now when first Vingilot was set to sail in the seas of heaven, it rose unlooked for, glittering and bright; and the people of Middle-earth beheld it from afar and wondered, and they took it for a sign, and called it Gil-Estel, the Star of High Hope. And when this new star was seen at evening, Maedhros spoke to Maglor his brother, and he said: “Surely that is a Silmaril that shines now in the West?”

And Maglor answered: “If it be truly the Silmaril which we saw cast into the sea that rises again by the power of the Valar, then let us be glad; for its glory is seen now by many, and is yet secure from all evil.” Then the Elves looked up, and despaired no longer; but Morgoth was filled with doubt.

Yet it is said that Morgoth looked not for the assault that came upon him from the West; for so great was his pride become that he deemed that none would ever again come with open war against him. Moreover he thought that he had for ever estranged the Noldor from the Lords of the West, and that content in their blissful realm the Valar would heed no more his kingdom in the world without; for to him that is pitiless the deeds of pity are ever strange and beyond reckoning. But the host of the Valar prepared for battle; and beneath their white banners marched the Vanyar, the people of Ingwë, and those also of the Noldor who never departed from Valinor, whose leader was Finarfin the son of Finwë. Few of the Teleri were willing to go forth to war, for they remembered the slaying at the Swanhaven, and the rape of their ships; but they hearkened to Elwing, who was the daughter of Dior Eluchíl and come of their own kindred, and they sent mariners enough to sail the ships that bore the host of Valinor east over the sea. Yet they stayed aboard their vessels, and none of them set foot upon the Hither Lands.

Of the march of the host of the Valar to the north of Middle-earth little is said in any tale; for among them went none of those Elves who had dwelt and suffered in the Hither Lands, and who made the histories of those days

that still are known; and tidings of these things they only learned long afterwards from their kinsfolk in Aman. But at the last the might of Valinor came up out of the West, and the challenge of the trumpets of Eönwë filled the sky; and Beleriand was ablaze with the glory of their arms, for the host of the Valar were arrayed in forms young and fair and terrible, and the mountains rang beneath their feet.

The meeting of the hosts of the West and of the North is named the Great Battle, and the War of Wrath. There was marshalled the whole power of the Throne of Morgoth, and it had become great beyond count, so that Anfauglith could not contain it; and all the North was aflame with war.

But it availed him not. The Balrogs were destroyed, save some few that fled and hid themselves in caverns inaccessible at the roots of the earth; and the uncounted legions of the Orcs perished like straw in a great fire, or were swept like shrivelled leaves before a burning wind. Few remained to trouble the world for long years after. And such few as were left of the three houses of the Elf-friends, Fathers of Men, fought upon the part of the Valar; and they were avenged in those days for Baragund and Barahir, Galdor and Gundor, Huor and Húrin, and many others of their lords. But a great part of the sons of Men, whether of the people of Uldor or others new-come out of the east, marched with the Enemy; and the Elves do not forget it.

Then, seeing that his hosts were overthrown and his power dispersed, Morgoth quailed, and he dared not to come forth himself. But he loosed upon his foes the last desperate assault that he had prepared, and out of the pits of Angband there issued the winged dragons, that had not before been seen; and so sudden and ruinous was the onset of that dreadful fleet that the host of the Valar was driven back, for the coming of the dragons was with great thunder, and lightning, and a tempest of fire.

But Eärendil came, shining with white flame, and about Vingilot were gathered all the great birds of heaven and Thorondor was their captain, and there was battle in the air all the day and through a dark night of doubt. Before the rising of the sun Eärendil slew Ancalagon the Black, the mightiest of the dragon-host, and cast him from the sky; and he fell upon the towers of Thangorodrim, and they were broken in his ruin. Then the sun rose, and the host of the Valar prevailed, and well-nigh all the dragons were destroyed; and all the pits of Morgoth were broken and unroofed, and the might of the Valar descended into the deeps of the earth. There Morgoth stood at last at bay, and yet unvaliant. He fled into the deepest of his mines, and sued for peace and pardon; but his feet were hewn from under him, and he was hurled upon his face. Then he was bound with the chain Angainor which he had worn aforetime, and his iron crown they beat into a collar for his neck, and his head was bowed upon his knees. And the two Silmarils which remained to Morgoth were taken from his crown, and they shone unsullied beneath the sky; and Eönwë took them, and guarded them.

Thus an end was made of the power of Angband in the North, and the evil realm was brought to naught; and out of the deep prisons a multitude of slaves came forth beyond all hope into the light of day, and they looked upon a world that was changed. For so great was the fury of those adversaries that the northern regions of the western world were rent asunder, and the sea roared in through many chasms, and there was confusion and great noise; and rivers perished or found new paths, and the valleys were upheaved and the hills trod down; and Sirion was no more.

Then Eönwë as herald of the Elder King summoned the Elves of Beleriand to depart from Middle-earth. But Maedhros and Maglor would not hearken, and they prepared, though now with weariness and loathing, to attempt in despair the fulfilment of their oath; for they would have given battle for the Silmarils, were they withheld, even against the victorious host of Valinor, even though they stood alone against all the world. And they sent a message therefore to Eönwë, bidding him yield up now those jewels which of old Fëanor their father made and Morgoth stole from him.

But Eönwë answered that the right to the work of their father, which the sons of Fëanor formerly possessed, had now perished, because of their many and merciless deeds, being blinded by their oath, and most of all because of their slaying of Dior and the assault upon the Havens. The light of the Silmarils should go now into the West, whence it came in the beginning; and to Valinor must Maedhros and Maglor return, and there abide the judgement of the Valar, by whose decree alone would Eönwë yield the jewels from his charge. Then Maglor desired indeed to submit, for his heart was sorrowful, and he said: "The oath says not that we may not bide our time, and it may be that in Valinor all shall be forgiven and forgot, and we shall come into our own in peace."



But Maedhros answered that if they returned to Aman but the favour of the Valar were withheld from them, then their oath would still remain, but its fulfilment be beyond all hope; and he said: “Who can tell to what dreadful doom we shall come, if we disobey the Powers in their own land, or purpose ever to bring war again into their holy realm?”

Yet Maglor still held back, saying: “If Manwë and Varda themselves deny the fulfilment of an oath to which we named them in witness, is it not made void?”

And Maedhros answered: “But how shall our voices reach to Ilúvatar beyond the Circles of the World? And by Ilúvatar we swore in our madness, and called the Everlasting Darkness upon us, if we kept not our word. Who shall release us?”

“If none can release us,” said Maglor, “then indeed the Everlasting Darkness shall be our lot, whether we keep our oath or break it; but less evil shall we do in the breaking.”

Yet he yielded at last to the will of Maedhros, and they took counsel together how they should lay hands on the Silmarils. And they disguised themselves, and came in the night to the camp of Eönwë, and crept into the place where the Silmarils were guarded; and they slew the guards, and laid hands on the jewels. Then all the camp was raised against them, and they prepared to die, defending themselves until the last. But Eönwë would not permit the slaying of the sons of Fëanor; and departing unfought they fled far away. Each of them took to himself a Silmaril, for they said: “Since one is lost to us, and but two remain, and we two alone of our brothers, so is it plain that fate would have us share the heirlooms of our father.”

But the jewel burned the hand of Maedhros in pain unbearable; and he perceived that it was as Eönwë had said, and that his right thereto had become void, and that the oath was vain. And being in anguish and despair he cast himself into a gaping chasm filled with fire, and so ended; and the Silmaril that he bore was taken into the bosom of the Earth.

And it is told of Maglor that he could not endure the pain with which the Silmaril tormented him; and he cast it at last into the Sea, and thereafter he wandered ever upon the shores, singing in pain and regret beside the waves. For Maglor was mighty among the singers of old, named only after Daeron of Doriath; but he came never back among the people of the Elves. And thus it came to pass that the Silmarils found their long homes: one in the airs of heaven, and one in the fires of the heart of the world, and one in the deep waters.

In those days there was a great building of ships upon the shores of the Western Sea; and thence in many a fleet the Eldar set sail into the West, and came never back to the lands of weeping and of war. And the Vanyar returned beneath their white banners, and were borne in triumph to Valinor; but their joy in victory was diminished, for they returned without the Silmarils from Morgoth’s crown, and they knew that those jewels could not be found or brought together again unless the world be broken and remade.

And when they came into the West the Elves of Beleriand dwelt upon Tol Eressëa, the Lonely Isle, that looks both west and east; whence they might come even to Valinor. They were admitted again to the love of Manwë and the pardon of the Valar; and the Teleri forgave their ancient grief, and the curse was laid to rest.

Yet not all the Eldalië were willing to forsake the Hither Lands where they had long suffered and long dwelt; and some lingered many an age in Middle-earth. Among those were Círdan the Shipwright, and Celeborn of Doriath, with Galadriel his wife, who alone remained of those who led the Noldor to exile in Beleriand. In Middle-earth dwelt also Gil-galad the High King, and with him was Elrond Halfelven, who chose, as was granted to him, to be numbered among the Eldar; but Elros his brother chose to abide with Men. And from these brethren alone has come among Men the blood of the Firstborn and a strain of the spirits divine that were before Arda; for they were the sons of Elwing, Dior’s daughter, Lúthien’s son, child of Thingol and Melian; and Eärendil their father was the son of Idril Celebrindal, Turgon’s daughter of Gondolin.

But Morgoth himself the Valar thrust through the Door of Night beyond the Walls of the World, into the Timeless Void; and a guard is set for ever on those walls, and Eärendil keeps watch upon the ramparts of the sky. Yet the lies that Melkor, the mighty and accursed, Morgoth Bauglir, the Power of Terror and of Hate, sowed in the hearts of Elves and Men are a seed that does not die and cannot be destroyed; and ever and anon it sprouts anew, and will bear dark fruit even unto the latest days.

Here ends the SILMARILLION. If it has passed from the high and the beautiful to darkness and ruin, that was of old the fate of Arda Marred; and if any change shall come and the Marring be amended, Manwë and Varda may know; but they have not revealed it, and it is not declared in the dooms of Mandos.

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AKALLABÊTH



THE DOWNFALL OF NÚMENOR

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It is said by the Eldar that Men came into the world in the time of the Shadow of Morgoth, and they fell swiftly under his dominion; for he sent his emissaries among them, and they listened to his evil and cunning words, and they worshipped the Darkness and yet feared it. But there were some that turned from evil and left the lands of their kindred, and wandered ever westward; for they had heard a rumour that in the West there was a light which the Shadow could not dim. The servants of Morgoth pursued them with hatred, and their ways were long and hard; yet they came at last to the lands that look upon the Sea, and they entered Beleriand in the days of the War of the Jewels. The Edain these were named in the Sindarin tongue; and they became friends and allies of the Eldar, and did deeds of great valour in the war against Morgoth.

Of them was sprung, upon the side of his fathers, Bright Eärendil; and in the *Lay of Eärendil* it is told how at the last, when the victory of Morgoth was almost complete, he built his ship Vingilot, that Men called Rothinzil, and voyaged upon the unsailed seas, seeking ever for Valinor; for he desired to speak before the Powers on behalf of the Two Kindreds, that the Valar might have pity on them and send them help in their uttermost need. Therefore by Elves and Men he is called Eärendil the Blessed, for he achieved his quest after long labours and many perils, and from Valinor there came the host of the Lords of the West. But Eärendil came never back to the lands that he had loved.

In the Great Battle when at last Morgoth was overthrown and Thangorodrim was broken, the Edain alone of the kindreds of Men fought for the Valar, whereas many others fought for Morgoth. And after the victory of the Lords of the West those of the evil Men who were not destroyed fled back into the east, where many of their race were still wandering in the unharvested lands, wild and lawless, refusing alike the summons of the Valar and of Morgoth. And the evil Men came among them, and cast over them a shadow of fear, and they took them for kings. Then the Valar forsook for a time the Men of Middle-earth who had refused their summons and had taken the friends of Morgoth to be their masters; and Men dwelt in darkness and were troubled by many evil things that Morgoth had devised in the days of his dominion: demons, and dragons, and misshapen beasts, and the unclean Orcs that are mockeries of the Children of Ilúvatar. And the lot of Men was unhappy.

But Manwë put forth Morgoth and shut him beyond the World in the Void that is without; and he cannot himself return again into the World, present and visible, while the Lords of the West are still enthroned. Yet the seeds that he had planted still grew and sprouted, bearing evil fruit, if any would tend them. For his will remained and guided his servants, moving them ever to thwart the will of the Valar and to destroy those that obeyed them. This the Lords of the West knew full well. When therefore Morgoth had been thrust forth, they held council concerning the ages that should come after. The Eldar they summoned to return into the West, and those that hearkened to the summons dwelt in the Isle of Eressëa; and there is in that land a haven that is named Avallónë, for it is of all cities the nearest to Valinor, and the tower of Avallónë is the first sight that the mariner beholds when at last he draws nigh to the Undying Lands over the leagues of the Sea. To the Fathers of Men of the three faithful houses rich reward also was given. Eönwë came among them and taught them; and they were given wisdom and power and life more enduring than any others of mortal race have possessed. A land was made for the Edain to dwell in, neither part of Middle-earth nor of Valinor, for it was sundered from either by a wide sea; yet it was nearer to Valinor. It was raised by Ossë out of the depths of the Great Water, and it was established by Aulë and enriched by Yavanna; and the Eldar brought thither flowers and fountains out of Tol Eressëa. That land the Valar called Andor, the Land of Gift; and the Star of Eärendil shone bright in the West as a token that all was made ready, and as a guide over the sea; and Men marvelled to see that silver flame in the paths of the Sun.

Then the Edain set sail upon the deep waters, following the Star; and the Valar laid a peace upon the sea for many days, and sent sunlight and a sailing wind, so that the waters glittered before the eyes of the Edain like rippling glass, and the foam flew like snow before the stems of their ships. But so bright was Rothinzil that

even at morning Men could see it glimmering in the West, and in the cloudless night it shone alone, for no other star could stand beside it. And setting their course towards it the Edain came at last over leagues of sea and saw afar the land that was prepared for them, Andor, the Land of Gift, shimmering in a golden haze. Then they went up out of the sea and found a country fair and fruitful, and they were glad. And they called that land Elenna, which is Starwards; but also Anadûnê, which is Westernesse, Númenóre in the High Eldarin tongue.

This was the beginning of that people that in the Grey-elven speech are called the Dúnedain: the Númenóreans, Kings among Men. But they did not thus escape from the doom of death that Ilúvatar had set upon all Mankind, and they were mortal still, though their years were long, and they knew no sickness, ere the shadow fell upon them. Therefore they grew wise and glorious, and in all things more like to the Firstborn than any other of the kindreds of Men; and they were tall, taller than the tallest of the sons of Middle-earth; and the light of their eyes was like the bright stars. But their numbers increased only slowly in the land, for though daughters and sons were born to them, fairer than their fathers, yet their children were few.

Of old the chief city and haven of Númenor was in the midst of its western coasts, and it was called Andúnië because it faced the sunset. But in the midst of the land was a mountain tall and steep, and it was named the Meneltarma, the Pillar of Heaven, and upon it was a high place that was hallowed to Eru Ilúvatar, and it was open and unroofed, and no other temple or fane was there in the land of the Númenóreans. At the feet of the mountain were built the tombs of the Kings, and hard by upon a hill was Armenelos, fairest of cities, and there stood the tower and the citadel that was raised by Elros son of Eärendil, whom the Valar appointed to be the first King of the Dúnedain.

Now Elros and Elrond his brother were descended from the Three Houses of the Edain, but in part also both from the Eldar and the Maiar; for Idril of Gondolin and Lúthien daughter of Melian were their foremothers. The Valar indeed may not withdraw the gift of death, which comes to Men from Ilúvatar, but in the matter of the Halfelven Ilúvatar gave to them the judgement; and they judged that to the sons of Eärendil should be given choice of their own destiny. And Elrond chose to remain with the Firstborn, and to him the life of the Firstborn was granted. But to Elros, who chose to be a king of Men, still a great span of years was allotted, many times that of the Men of Middle-earth; and all his line, the kings and lords of the royal house, had long life even according to the measure of the Númenóreans. But Elros lived five hundred years, and ruled the Númenóreans four hundred years and ten.

Thus the years passed, and while Middle-earth went backward and light and wisdom faded, the Dúnedain dwelt under the protection of the Valar and in the friendship of the Eldar, and they increased in stature both of mind and body. For though this people used still their own speech, their kings and lords knew and spoke also the Elven tongue, which they had learned in the days of their alliance, and thus they held converse still with the Eldar, whether of Eressëa or of the westlands of Middle-earth. And the loremasters among them learned also the High Eldarin tongue of the Blessed Realm, in which much story and song was preserved from the beginning of the world; and they made letters and scrolls and books, and wrote in them many things of wisdom and wonder in the high tide of their realm, of which all is now forgot. So it came to pass that, beside their own names, all the lords of the Númenóreans had also Eldarin names; and the like with the cities and fair places that they founded in Númenor and on the shores of the Hither Lands.

For the Dúnedain became mighty in crafts, so that if they had had the mind they could easily have surpassed the evil kings of Middle-earth in the making of war and the forging of weapons; but they were become men of peace. Above all arts they nourished ship-building and sea-craft, and they became mariners whose like shall never be again since the world was diminished; and voyaging upon the wide seas was the chief feat and adventure of their hardy men in the gallant days of their youth.

But the Lords of Valinor forbade them to sail so far westward that the coasts of Númenor could no longer be seen; and for long the Dúnedain were content, though they did not fully understand the purpose of this ban. But the design of Manwë was that the Númenóreans should not be tempted to seek for the Blessed Realm, nor desire to overpass the limits set to their bliss, becoming enamoured of the immortality of the Valar and the Eldar and the lands where all things endure.

For in those days Valinor still remained in the world visible, and there Ilúvatar permitted the Valar to maintain upon Earth an abiding place, a memorial of that which might have been if Morgoth had not cast his shadow on the world. This the Númenóreans knew full well; and at times, when all the air was clear and the sun was in the east, they would look out and descry far off in the west a city white-shining on a distant shore, and a great harbour and a tower. For in those days the Númenóreans were far-sighted; yet even so it was only the keenest eyes among them that could see this vision, from the Meneltarma, maybe, or from some tall ship that lay off their western coast as far as it was lawful for them to go. For they did not dare to break the Ban of the Lords of the West.

But the wise among them knew that this distant land was not indeed the Blessed Realm of Valinor, but was Avallónë, the haven of the Eldar upon Eressëa, easternmost of the Undying Lands. And thence at times the Firstborn still would come sailing to Númenor in oarless boats, as white birds flying from the sunset. And they brought to Númenor many gifts: birds of song, and fragrant flowers, and herbs of great virtue. And a seedling they brought of Celeborn, the White Tree that grew in the midst of Eressëa; and that was in its turn a seedling of Galathilion the Tree of Túna, the image of Telperion that Yavanna gave to the Eldar in the Blessed Realm. And the tree grew and blossomed in the courts of the King in Armenelos; Nimloth it was named, and flowered in the evening, and the shadows of night it filled with its fragrance.

Thus it was that because of the Ban of the Valar the voyages of the Dúnedain in those days went ever eastward and not westward, from the darkness of the North to the heats of the South, and beyond the South to the Nether Darkness; and they came even into the inner seas, and sailed about Middle-earth and glimpsed from their high prows the Gates of Morning in the East. And the Dúnedain came at times to the shores of the Great Lands, and they took pity on the forsaken world of Middle-earth; and the Lords of Númenor set foot again upon the western shores in the Dark Years of Men, and none yet dared to withstand them. For most of the Men of that age that sat under the Shadow were now grown weak and fearful. And coming among them the Númenóreans taught them many things. Corn and wine they brought, and they instructed Men in the sowing of seed and the grinding of grain, in the hewing of wood and the shaping of stone, and in the ordering of their life, such as it might be in the lands of swift death and little bliss.

Then the Men of Middle-earth were comforted, and here and there upon the western shores the houseless woods drew back, and Men shook off the yoke of the offspring of Morgoth, and unlearned their terror of the dark. And they revered the memory of the tall Sea-kings, and when they had departed they called them gods, hoping for their return; for at that time the Númenóreans dwelt never long in Middle-earth, nor made there as yet any habitation of their own. Eastward they must sail, but ever west their hearts returned.

Now this yearning grew ever greater with the years; and the Númenóreans began to hunger for the undying city that they saw from afar, and the desire of everlasting life, to escape from death and the ending of delight, grew strong upon them; and ever as their power and glory grew greater their unquiet increased. For though the Valar had rewarded the Dúnedain with long life, they could not take from them the weariness of the world that comes at last, and they died, even their kings of the seed of Eärendil; and the span of their lives was brief in the eyes of the Eldar. Thus it was that a shadow fell upon them: in which maybe the will of Morgoth was at work that still moved in the world. And the Númenóreans began to murmur, at first in their hearts, and then in open words, against the doom of Men, and most of all against the Ban which forbade them to sail into the West.

And they said among themselves: "Why do the Lords of the West sit there in peace unending, while we must die and go we know not whither, leaving our home and all that we have made? And the Eldar die not, even those that rebelled against the Lords. And since we have mastered all seas, and no water is so wild or so wide that our ships cannot overcome it, why should we not go to Avallónë and greet there our friends?"

And some there were who said: "Why should we not go even to Aman, and taste there, were it but for a day, the bliss of the Powers? Have we not become mighty among the people of Arda?"

The Eldar reported these words to the Valar, and Manwë was grieved, seeing a cloud gather on the noon-tide of Númenor. And he sent messengers to the Dúnedain, who spoke earnestly to the King, and to all who would listen, concerning the fate and fashion of the world.

“The Doom of the World,” they said, “One alone can change who made it. And were you so to voyage that escaping all deceits and snares you came indeed to Aman, the Blessed Realm, little would it profit you. For it is not the land of Manwë that makes its people deathless, but the Deathless that dwell therein have hallowed the land; and there you would but wither and grow weary the sooner, as moths in a light too strong and steadfast.”

But the King said: “And does not Eärendil, my forefather, live? Or is he not in the land of Aman?”

To which they answered: “You know that he has a fate apart, and was adjudged to the Firstborn who die not; yet this also is his doom that he can never return again to mortal lands. Whereas you and your people are not of the Firstborn, but are mortal Men as Ilúvatar made you. Yet it seems that you desire now to have the good of both kindreds, to sail to Valinor when you will, and to return when you please to your homes. That cannot be. Nor can the Valar take away the gifts of Ilúvatar. The Eldar, you say, are unpunished, and even those who rebelled do not die. Yet that is to them neither reward nor punishment, but the fulfilment of their being. They cannot escape, and are bound to this world, never to leave it so long as it lasts, for its life is theirs. And you are punished for the rebellion of Men, you say, in which you had small part, and so it is that you die. But that was not at first appointed for a punishment. Thus you escape, and leave the world, and are not bound to it, in hope or in weariness. Which of us therefore should envy the others?”

And the Númenóreans answered: “Why should we not envy the Valar, or even the least of the Deathless? For of us is required a blind trust, and a hope without assurance, knowing not what lies before us in a little while. And yet we also love the Earth and would not lose it.”

Then the Messengers said: “Indeed the mind of Ilúvatar concerning you is not known to the Valar, and he has not revealed all things that are to come. But this we hold to be true, that your home is not here, neither in the Land of Aman nor anywhere within the Circles of the World. And the Doom of Men, that they should depart, was at first a gift of Ilúvatar. It became a grief to them only because coming under the shadow of Morgoth it seemed to them that they were surrounded by a great darkness, of which they were afraid; and some grew wilful and proud and would not yield, until life was reft from them. We who bear the ever-mounting burden of the years do not clearly understand this; but if that grief has returned to trouble you, as you say, then we fear that the Shadow arises once more and grows again in your hearts. Therefore, though you be the Dúnedain, fairest of Men, who escaped from the Shadow of old and fought valiantly against it, we say to you: Beware! The will of Eru may not be gainsaid; and the Valar bid you earnestly not to withhold the trust to which you are called, lest soon it become again a bond by which you are constrained. Hope rather that in the end even the least of your desires shall have fruit. The love of Arda was set in your hearts by Ilúvatar, and he does not plant to no purpose. Nonetheless, many ages of Men unborn may pass ere that purpose is made known; and to you it will be revealed and not to the Valar.”

These things took place in the days of Tar-Ciryatan the Shipbuilder, and of Tar-Atanamir his son; and they were proud men, eager for wealth, and they laid the men of Middle-earth under tribute, taking now rather than giving. It was to Tar-Atanamir that the Messengers came; and he was the thirteenth King, and in his day the Realm of Númenor had endured for more than two thousand years, and was come to the zenith of its bliss, if not yet of its power. But Atanamir was ill pleased with the counsel of the Messengers and gave little heed to it, and the greater part of his people followed him; for they wished still to escape death in their own day, not waiting upon hope. And Atanamir lived to a great age, clinging to his life beyond the end of all joy; and he was the first of the Númenóreans to do this, refusing to depart until he was witless and unmanned, and denying to his son the kingship at the height of his days. For the Lords of Númenor had been wont to wed late in their long lives and to depart and leave the mastery to their sons when these were come to full stature of body and mind.

Then Tar-Ancalimon, son of Atanamir, became King, and he was of like mind; and in his day the people of Númenor became divided. On the one hand was the greater party, and they were called the King’s Men, and they grew proud and were estranged from the Eldar and the Valar. And on the other hand was the lesser party, and they were called the Elendili, the Elf-friends; for though they remained loyal indeed to the King and the House of Elros, they wished to keep the friendship of the Eldar, and they hearkened to the counsel of the Lords of the West. Nonetheless even they, who named themselves the Faithful, did not wholly escape from the affliction of their people, and they were troubled by the thought of death.

Thus the bliss of Westernesse became diminished; but still its might and splendour increased. For the kings and their people had not yet abandoned wisdom, and if they loved the Valar no longer at least they still feared them. They did not dare openly to break the Ban or to sail beyond the limits that had been appointed. Eastwards still they steered their tall ships. But the fear of death grew ever darker upon them, and they delayed it by all means that they could; and they began to build great houses for their dead, while their wise men laboured unceasingly to discover if they might the secret of recalling life, or at the least of the prolonging of Men's days. Yet they achieved only the art of preserving incorrupt the dead flesh of Men, and they filled all the land with silent tombs in which the thought of death was enshrined in the darkness. But those that lived turned the more eagerly to pleasure and revelry, desiring ever more goods and more riches; and after the days of Tar-Ancalimon the offering of the first fruits to Eru was neglected, and men went seldom any more to the Hallow upon the heights of Meneltarma in the midst of the land.

Thus it came to pass in that time that the Númenóreans first made great settlements upon the west shores of the ancient lands; for their own land seemed to them shrunken, and they had no rest or content therein, and they desired now wealth and dominion in Middle-earth, since the West was denied. Great harbours and strong towers they made, and there many of them took up their abode; but they appeared now rather as lords and masters and gatherers of tribute than as helpers and teachers. And the great ships of the Númenóreans were borne east on the winds and returned ever laden, and the power and majesty of their kings were increased; and they drank and they feasted and they clad themselves in silver and gold.

In all this the Elf-friends had small part. They alone came now ever to the north and the land of Gil-galad, keeping their friendship with the Elves and lending them aid against Sauron; and their haven was Pelargir above the mouths of Anduin the Great. But the King's Men sailed far away to the south; and the lordships and strongholds that they made have left many rumours in the legends of Men.

In this Age, as is elsewhere told, Sauron arose again in Middle-earth, and grew, and turned back to the evil in which he was nurtured by Morgoth, becoming mighty in his service. Already in the days of Tar-Minastir, the eleventh King of Númenor, he had fortified the land of Mordor and had built there the Tower of Barad-dûr, and thereafter he strove ever for the dominion of Middle-earth, to become a king over all kings and as a god unto Men. And Sauron hated the Númenóreans, because of the deeds of their fathers and their ancient alliance with the Elves and allegiance to the Valar; nor did he forget the aid that Tar-Minastir had rendered to Gil-galad of old, in that time when the One Ring was forged and there was war between Sauron and the Elves in Eriador. Now he learned that the kings of Númenor had increased in power and splendour, and he hated them the more; and he feared them, lest they should invade his lands and wrest from him the dominion of the East. But for a long time he did not dare to challenge the Lords of the Sea, and he withdrew from the coasts.

Yet Sauron was ever guileful, and it is said that among those whom he ensnared with the Nine Rings three were great lords of Númenórean race. And when the Úlairi arose that were the Ring-wraiths, his servants, and the strength of his terror and mastery over Men had grown exceedingly great, he began to assail the strong places of the Númenóreans upon the shores of the sea.

In those days the Shadow grew deeper upon Númenor; and the lives of the Kings of the House of Elros waned because of their rebellion, but they hardened their hearts the more against the Valar. And the twentieth king took the sceptre of his fathers, and he ascended the throne in the name of Adûnakhôr, Lord of the West, forsaking the Elven-tongues and forbidding their use in his hearing. Yet in the Scroll of Kings the name Herunúmen was inscribed in the High-elven speech, because of ancient custom, which the kings feared to break utterly, lest evil befall. Now this title seemed to the Faithful over-proud, being the title of the Valar; and their hearts were sorely tried between their loyalty to the House of Elros and their reverence of the appointed Powers. But worse was yet to come. For Ar-Gimilzôr the twenty-third king was the greatest enemy of the Faithful. In his day the White Tree was untended and began to decline; and he forbade utterly the use of the Elven-tongues, and punished those that welcomed the ships of Eressëa, that still came secretly to the west-shores of the land.

Now the Elendili dwelt mostly in the western regions of Númenor; but Ar-Gimilzôr commanded all that he could discover to be of this party to remove from the west and dwell in the east of the land; and there they were watched. And the chief dwelling of the Faithful in the later days was thus nigh to the harbour of Rómenna;



thence many set sail to Middle-earth, seeking the northern coasts where they might speak still with the Eldar in the kingdom of Gil-galad. This was known to the kings, but they hindered it not, so long as the Elendili departed from their land and did not return; for they desired to end all friendship between their people and the Eldar of Eressëa, whom they named the Spies of the Valar, hoping to keep their deeds and their counsels hidden from the Lords of the West. But all that they did was known to Manwë, and the Valar were wroth with the Kings of Númenor, and gave them counsel and protection no more; and the ships of Eressëa came never again out of the sunset, and the havens of Andúnië were forlorn.

Highest in honour after the house of the kings were the Lords of Andúnië; for they were of the line of Elros, being descended from Silmarien, daughter of Tar-Elendil the fourth king of Númenor. And these lords were loyal to the kings, and revered them; and the Lord of Andúnië was ever among the chief councillors of the Sceptre. Yet also from the beginning they bore especial love to the Eldar and reverence for the Valar; and as the Shadow grew they aided the Faithful as they could. But for long they did not declare themselves openly, and sought rather to amend the hearts of the lords of the Sceptre with wiser counsels.

There was a lady Inzilbêth, renowned for her beauty, and her mother was Lindórië, sister of Eärendur, the Lord of Andúnië in the days of Ar-Sakalthôr father of Ar-Gimilzôr. Gimilzôr took her to wife, though this was little to her liking, for she was in heart one of the Faithful, being taught by her mother; but the kings and their sons were grown proud and not to be gainsaid in their wishes. No love was there between Ar-Gimilzôr and his queen, or between their sons. Inziladûn, the elder, was like his mother in mind as in body; but Gimilkhâd, the younger, went with his father, unless he were yet prouder and more wilful. To him Ar-Gimilzôr would have yielded the sceptre rather than to the elder son, if the laws had allowed.

But when Inziladûn acceded to the sceptre, he took again a title in the Elven-tongue as of old, calling himself Tar-Palantir, for he was far-sighted both in eye and in mind, and even those that hated him feared his words as those of a true-seer. He gave peace for a while to the Faithful; and he went once more at due seasons to the Hallow of Eru upon the Meneltarma, which Ar-Gimilzôr had forsaken. The White Tree he tended again with honour; and he prophesied, saying that when the Tree perished, then also would the line of the Kings come to its end. But his repentance was too late to appease the anger of the Valar with the insolence of his fathers, of which the greater part of his people did not repent. And Gimilkhâd was strong and ungentle, and he took the leadership of those that had been called the King's Men and opposed the will of his brother as openly as he dared, and yet more in secret. Thus the days of Tar-Palantir became darkened with grief; and he would spend much of his time in the west, and there ascended often the ancient tower of King Minastir upon the hill of Oromet nigh to Andúnië, whence he gazed westward in yearning, hoping to see, maybe, some sail upon the sea. But no ship came ever again from the West to Númenor, and Avallónë was veiled in cloud.

Now Gimilkhâd died two years before his two hundredth year (which was accounted an early death for one of Elros' line even in its waning), but this brought no peace to the King. For Pharazôn son of Gimilkhâd had become a man yet more restless and eager for wealth and power than his father. He had fared often abroad, as a leader in the wars that the Númenóreans made then in the coastlands of Middle-earth, seeking to extend their dominion over Men; and thus he had won great renown as a captain both by land and by sea. Therefore when he came back to Númenor, hearing of his father's death, the hearts of the people were turned to him; for he brought with him great wealth, and was for the time free in his giving.

And it came to pass that Tar-Palantir grew weary of grief and died. He had no son, but a daughter only, whom he named Míriel in the Elven-tongue; and to her now by right and the laws of the Númenóreans came the sceptre. But Pharazôn took her to wife against her will, doing evil in this and evil also in that the laws of Númenor did not permit the marriage, even in the royal house, of those more nearly akin than cousins in the second degree. And when they were wedded, he seized the sceptre into his own hand, taking the title of Ar-Pharazôn (Tar-Calion in the Elven-tongue); and the name of his queen he changed to Ar-Zimraphel.

The mightiest and proudest was Ar-Pharazôn the Golden of all those that had wielded the Sceptre of the Sea-Kings since the foundation of Númenor; and four and twenty Kings and Queens had ruled the Númenóreans before, and slept now in their deep tombs under the mount of Meneltarma, lying upon beds of gold.

And sitting upon his carven throne in the city of Armenelos in the glory of his power, he brooded darkly, thinking of war. For he had learned in Middle-earth of the strength of the realm of Sauron, and of his hatred of Westrenesse. And now there came to him the masters of ships and captains returning out of the East, and they reported that Sauron was putting forth his might, since Ar-Pharazôn had gone back from Middle-earth, and he was pressing down upon the cities by the coasts; and he had taken now the title of King of Men, and declared his purpose to drive the Númenóreans into the sea, and destroy even Númenor, if that might be.

Great was the anger of Ar-Pharazôn at these tidings, and as he pondered long in secret, his heart was filled with the desire of power unbounded and the sole dominion of his will. And he determined without counsel of the Valar, or the aid of any wisdom but his own, that the title of King of Men he would himself claim, and would compel Sauron to become his vassal and his servant; for in his pride he deemed that no king should ever arise so mighty as to vie with the Heir of Eärendil. Therefore he began in that time to smithy great hoard of weapons, and many ships of war he built and stored them with his arms; and when all was made ready he himself set sail with his host into the East.

And men saw his sails coming up out of the sunset, dyed as with scarlet and gleaming with red and gold, and fear fell upon the dwellers by the coasts, and they fled far away. But the fleet came at last to that place that was called Umbar, where was the mighty haven of the Númenóreans that no hand had wrought. Empty and silent were all the lands about when the King of the Sea marched upon Middle-earth. For seven days he journeyed with banner and trumpet, and he came to a hill, and he went up, and he set there his pavilion and his throne; and he sat him down in the midst of the land, and the tents of his host were ranged all about him, blue, golden, and white, as a field of tall flowers. Then he sent forth heralds, and he commanded Sauron to come before him and swear to him fealty.

And Sauron came. Even from his mighty tower of Baraddûr he came, and made no offer of battle. For he perceived that the power and majesty of the Kings of the Sea surpassed all rumour of them, so that he could not trust even the greatest of his servants to withstand them; and he saw not his time yet to work his will with the Dúnedain. And he was crafty, well skilled to gain what he would by subtlety when force might not avail. Therefore he humbled himself before Ar-Pharazôn and smoothed his tongue; and men wondered, for all that he said seemed fair and wise.

But Ar-Pharazôn was not yet deceived, and it came into his mind that, for the better keeping of Sauron and of his oaths of fealty, he should be brought to Númenor, there to dwell as a hostage for himself and all his servants in Middle-earth. To this Sauron assented as one constrained, yet in his secret thought he received it gladly, for it chimed indeed with his desire. And Sauron passed over the sea and looked upon the land of Númenor, and on the city of Armenelos in the days of its glory, and he was astounded; but his heart within was filled the more with envy and hate.

Yet such was the cunning of his mind and mouth, and the strength of his hidden will, that ere three years had passed he had become closest to the secret counsels of the King; for flattery sweet as honey was ever on his tongue, and knowledge he had of many things yet unrevealed to Men. And seeing the favour that he had of their lord all the councillors began to fawn upon him, save one alone, Amandil lord of Andúnië. Then slowly a change came over the land, and the hearts of the Elf-friends were sorely troubled, and many fell away out of fear; and although those that remained still called themselves the Faithful, their enemies named them rebels. For now, having the ears of men, Sauron with many arguments gainsaid all that the Valar had taught; and he bade men think that in the world, in the east and even in the west, there lay yet many seas and many lands for their winning, wherein was wealth uncounted. And still, if they should at the last come to the end of those lands and seas, beyond all lay the Ancient Darkness. "And out of it the world was made. For Darkness alone is worshipful, and the Lord thereof may yet make other worlds to be gifts to those that serve him, so that the increase of their power shall find no end."

And Ar-Pharazôn said: "Who is the Lord of the Darkness?" Then behind locked doors Sauron spoke to the King, and he lied, saying: "It is he whose name is not now spoken; for the Valar have deceived you concerning him, putting forward the name of Eru, a phantom devised in the folly of their hearts, seeking to enchain Men in servitude to themselves. For they are the oracle of this Eru, which speaks only what they will. But he that is

their master shall yet prevail, and he will deliver you from this phantom; and his name is Melkor, Lord of All, Giver of Freedom, and he shall make you stronger than they.”

Then Ar-Pharazôn the King turned back to the worship of the Dark, and of Melkor the Lord thereof, at first in secret, but ere long openly and in the face of his people; and they for the most part followed him. Yet there dwelt still a remnant of the Faithful, as has been told, at Rómenna and in the country near, and other few there were here and there in the land. The chief among them, to whom they looked for leading and courage in evil days, was Amandil, councillor of the King, and his son Elendil, whose sons were Isildur and Anárion, then young men by the reckoning of Númenor. Amandil and Elendil were great ship-captains; and they were of the line of Elros Tar-Minyatur, though not of the ruling house to whom belonged the crown and the throne in the city of Armenelos. In the days of their youth together Amandil had been dear to Pharazôn, and though he was of the Elf-friends he remained in his council until the coming of Sauron. Now he was dismissed, for Sauron hated him above all others in Númenor. But he was so noble, and had been so mighty a captain of the sea, that he was still held in honour by many of the people, and neither the King nor Sauron dared to lay hands on him as yet.

Therefore Amandil withdrew to Rómenna, and all that he trusted still to be faithful he summoned to come thither in secret; for he feared that evil would now grow apace, and all the Elf-friends were in peril. And so it soon came to pass. For the Meneltarma was utterly deserted in those days; and though not even Sauron dared to defile the high place, yet the King would let no man, upon pain of death, ascend to it, not even those of the Faithful who kept Ilúvatar in their hearts. And Sauron urged the King to cut down the White Tree, Nimloth the Fair, that grew in his courts, for it was a memorial of the Eldar and of the light of Valinor.

At the first the King would not assent to this, since he believed that the fortunes of his house were bound up with the Tree, as was forespoken by Tar-Palantir. Thus in his folly he who now hated the Eldar and the Valar vainly clung to the shadow of the old allegiance of Númenor. But when Amandil heard rumour of the evil purpose of Sauron he was grieved to the heart, knowing that in the end Sauron would surely have his will. Then he spoke to Elendil and the sons of Elendil, recalling the tale of the Trees of Valinor; and Isildur said no word, but went out by night and did a deed for which he was afterwards renowned. For he passed alone in disguise to Armenelos and to the courts of the King, which were now forbidden to the Faithful; and he came to the place of the Tree, which was forbidden to all by the orders of Sauron, and the Tree was watched day and night by guards in his service. At that time Nimloth was dark and bore no bloom, for it was late in the autumn, and its winter was nigh; and Isildur passed through the guards and took from the Tree a fruit that hung upon it, and turned to go. But the guard was aroused, and he was assailed, and fought his way out, receiving many wounds; and he escaped, and because he was disguised it was not discovered who had laid hands on the Tree. But Isildur came at last hardly back to Rómenna and delivered the fruit to the hands of Amandil, ere his strength failed him. Then the fruit was planted in secret, and it was blessed by Amandil; and a shoot arose from it and sprouted in the spring. But when its first leaf opened then Isildur, who had lain long and come near to death, arose and was troubled no more by his wounds.

None too soon was this done; for after the assault the King yielded to Sauron and felled the White Tree, and turned then wholly away from the allegiance of his fathers. But Sauron caused to be built upon the hill in the midst of the city of the Númenóreans, Armenelos the Golden, a mighty temple; and it was in the form of a circle at the base, and there the walls were fifty feet in thickness, and the width of the base was five hundred feet across the centre, and the walls rose from the ground five hundred feet, and they were crowned with a mighty dome. And that dome was roofed all with silver, and rose glittering in the sun, so that the light of it could be seen afar off; but soon the light was darkened, and the silver became black. For there was an altar of fire in the midst of the temple, and in the topmost of the dome there was a louver, whence there issued a great smoke. And the first fire upon the altar Sauron kindled with the hewn wood of Nimloth, and it crackled and was consumed; but men marvelled at the reek that went up from it, so that the land lay under a cloud for seven days, until slowly it passed into the west.

Thereafter the fire and smoke went up without ceasing; for the power of Sauron daily increased, and in that temple, with spilling of blood and torment and great wickedness, men made sacrifice to Melkor that he should release them from Death. And most often from among the Faithful they chose their victims; yet never openly on

the charge that they would not worship Melkor, the Giver of Freedom, rather was cause sought against them that they hated the King and were his rebels, or that they plotted against their kin, devising lies and poisons. These charges were for the most part false; yet those were bitter days, and hate brings forth hate.

But for all this Death did not depart from the land, rather it came sooner and more often, and in many dreadful guises. For whereas aforetime men had grown slowly old, and had laid them down in the end to sleep, when they were weary at last of the world, now madness and sickness assailed them; and yet they were afraid to die and go out into the dark, the realm of the lord that they had taken; and they cursed themselves in their agony. And men took weapons in those days and slew one another for little cause; for they were become quick to anger, and Sauron, or those whom he had bound to himself, went about the land setting man against man, so that the people murmured against the King and the lords, or against any that had aught that they had not; and the men of power took cruel revenge.

Nonetheless for long it seemed to the Númenóreans that they prospered, and if they were not increased in happiness, yet they grew more strong, and their rich men ever richer. For with the aid and counsel of Sauron they multiplied their possessions, and they devised engines, and they built ever greater ships. And they sailed now with power and armoury to Middle-earth, and they came no longer as bringers of gifts, nor even as rulers, but as fierce men of war. And they hunted the men of Middle-earth and took their goods and enslaved them, and many they slew cruelly upon their altars. For they built in their fortresses temples and great tombs in those days; and men feared them, and the memory of the kindly kings of the ancient days faded from the world and was darkened by many a tale of dread.

Thus Ar-Pharazôn, King of the Land of the Star, grew to the mightiest tyrant that had yet been in the world since the reign of Morgoth, though in truth Sauron ruled all from behind the throne. But the years passed, and the King felt the shadow of death approach, as his days lengthened; and he was filled with fear and wrath. Now came the hour that Sauron had prepared and long had awaited. And Sauron spoke to the King, saying that his strength was now so great that he might think to have his will in all things, and be subject to no command or ban.

And he said: "The Valar have possessed themselves of the land where there is no death; and they lie to you concerning it, hiding it as best they may, because of their avarice, and their fear lest the Kings of Men should wrest from them the deathless realm and rule the world in their stead. And though, doubtless, the gift of life unending is not for all, but only for such as are worthy, being men of might and pride and great lineage, yet against all justice is it done that this gift, which is his due, should be withheld from the King of Kings, Ar-Pharazôn, mightiest of the sons of Earth, to whom Manwë alone can be compared, if even he. But great kings do not brook denials, and take what is their due."

Then Ar-Pharazôn, being besotted, and walking under the shadow of death, for his span was drawing towards its end, hearkened to Sauron; and he began to ponder in his heart how he might make war upon the Valar. He was long preparing this design, and he spoke not openly of it, yet it could not be hidden from all. And Amandil, becoming aware of the purposes of the King, was dismayed and filled with a great dread, for he knew that Men could not vanquish the Valar in war, and that ruin must come upon the world, if this war were not stayed. Therefore he called his son, Elendil, and he said to him:

"The days are dark, and there is no hope for Men, for the Faithful are few. Therefore I am minded to try that counsel which our forefather Eärendil took of old, to sail into the West, be there ban or no, and to speak to the Valar, even to Manwë himself, if may be, and beseech his aid ere all is lost."

"Would you then betray the King?" said Elendil. "For you know well the charge that they make against us, that we are traitors and spies, and that until this day it has been false."

"If I thought that Manwë needed such a messenger," said Amandil, "I would betray the King. For there is but one loyalty from which no man can be absolved in heart for any cause. But it is for mercy upon Men and their deliverance from Sauron the Deceiver that I would plead, since some at least have remained faithful. And as for the Ban, I will suffer in myself the penalty, lest all my people should become guilty."

“But what think you, my father, is like to befall those of your house whom you leave behind, when your deed becomes known?”

“It must not become known,” said Amandil. “I will prepare my going in secret, and I will set sail into the east, whither daily the ships depart from our havens; and thereafter, as wind and chance may allow, I will go about, through south or north, back into the west, and seek what I may find. But for you and your folk, my son, I counsel that you should prepare yourselves other ships, and put aboard all such things as your hearts cannot bear to part with; and when the ships are ready, you should lie in the haven of Rómenna, and give out among men that you purpose, when you see your time, to follow me into the east. Amandil is no longer so dear to our kinsman upon the throne that he will grieve over much, if we seek to depart, for a season or for good. But let it not be seen that you intend to take many men, or he will be troubled, because of the war that he now plots, for which he will need all the force that he may gather. Seek out the Faithful that are known still to be true, and let them join you in secret, if they are willing to go with you, and share in your design.”

“And what shall that design be?” said Elendil.

“To meddle not in the war, and to watch,” answered Amandil. “Until I return I can say no more. But it is most like that you shall fly from the Land of the Star with no star to guide you; for that land is defiled. Then you shall lose all that you have loved, foretasting death in life, seeking a land of exile elsewhere. But east or west the Valar alone can say.”

Then Amandil said farewell to all his household, as one that is about to die. “For,” said he, “it may well prove that you will see me never again; and that I shall show you no such sign as Eärendil showed long ago. But hold you ever in readiness, for the end of the world that we have known is now at hand.”

It is said that Amandil set sail in a small ship at night, and steered first eastward, and then went about and passed into the west. And he took with him three servants, dear to his heart, and never again were they heard of by word or sign in this world, nor is there any tale or guess of their fate. Men could not a second time be saved by any such embassy, and for the treason of Númenor there was no easy absolving.

But Elendil did all that his father had bidden, and his ships lay off the east coast of the land; and the Faithful put aboard their wives and their children, and their heirlooms, and great store of goods. Many things there were of beauty and power, such as the Númenóreans had contrived in the days of their wisdom, vessels and jewels, and scrolls of lore written in scarlet and black. And Seven Stones they had, the gift of the Eldar; but in the ship of Isildur was guarded the young tree, the scion of Nimloth the Fair. Thus Elendil held himself in readiness, and did not meddle in the evil deeds of those days; and ever he looked for a sign that did not come. Then he journeyed in secret to the western shores and gazed out over the sea, for sorrow and yearning were upon him, and he greatly loved his father. But naught could he descry save the fleets of Ar-Pharazôn gathering in the havens of the west.

Now aforetime in the isle of Númenor the weather was ever apt to the needs and liking of Men: rain in due season and ever in measure; and sunshine, now warmer, now cooler, and winds from the sea. And when the wind was in the west, it seemed to many that it was filled with a fragrance, fleeting but sweet, heart-stirring, as of flowers that bloom for ever in undying meads and have no names on mortal shores. But all this was now changed; for the sky itself was darkened, and there were storms of rain and hail in those days, and violent winds; and ever and anon a great ship of the Númenóreans would founder and return not to haven, though such a grief had not till then befallen them since the rising of the Star. And out of the west there would come at times a great cloud in the evening, shaped as it were an eagle, with pinions spread to the north and the south; and slowly it would loom up, blotting out the sunset, and then uttermost night would fall upon Númenor. And some of the eagles bore lightning beneath their wings, and thunder echoed between sea and cloud.

Then men grew afraid. “Behold the Eagles of the Lords of the West!” they cried. “The Eagles of Manwë are come upon Númenor!” And they fell upon their faces.

Then some few would repent for a season, but others hardened their hearts, and they shook their fists at heaven, saying: “The Lords of the West have plotted against us. They strike first. The next blow shall be ours!” These words the King himself spoke, but they were devised by Sauron.

Now the lightnings increased and slew men upon the hills, and in the fields, and in the streets of the city; and a fiery bolt smote the dome of the Temple and shore it asunder, and it was wreathed in flame. But the Temple itself was unshaken, and Sauron stood there upon the pinnacle and defied the lightning and was unharmed; and in that hour men called him a god and did all that he would. When therefore the last portent came they heeded it little. For the land shook under them, and a groaning as of thunder underground was mingled with the roaring of the sea, and smoke issued from the peak of the Meneltarma. But all the more did Ar-Pharazôn press on with his armament.

In that time the fleets of the Númenóreans darkened the sea upon the west of the land, and they were like an archipelago of a thousand isles; their masts were as a forest upon the mountains, and their sails like a brooding cloud; and their banners were golden and black. And all things waited upon the word of Ar-Pharazôn; and Sauron withdrew into the inmost circle of the Temple, and men brought him victims to be burned.

Then the Eagles of the Lords of the West came up out of the dayfall, and they were arrayed as for battle, advancing in a line the end of which diminished beyond sight; and as they came their wings spread ever wider, grasping the sky. But the West burned red behind them, and they glowed beneath, as though they were lit with a flame of great anger, so that all Númenor was illumined as with a smouldering fire; and men looked upon the faces of their fellows, and it seemed to them that they were red with wrath.

Then Ar-Pharazôn hardened his heart, and he went aboard his mighty ship, Alcarondas, Castle of the Sea. Many-oared it was and many-masted, golden and sable; and upon it the throne of Ar-Pharazôn was set. Then he did on his panoply and his crown, and let raise his standard, and he gave the signal for the raising of the anchors; and in that hour the trumpets of Númenor outrang the thunder.

Thus the fleets of the Númenóreans moved against the menace of the West; and there was little wind, but they had many oars and many strong slaves to row beneath the lash. The sun went down, and there came a great silence. Darkness fell upon the land, and the sea was still, while the world waited for what should betide. Slowly the fleets passed out of the sight of the watchers in the havens, and their lights faded, and night took them; and in the morning they were gone. For a wind arose in the east and it wafted them away; and they broke the Ban of the Valar, and sailed into forbidden seas, going up with war against the Deathless, to wrest from them everlasting life within the Circles of the World.

But the fleets of Ar-Pharazôn came up out of the deeps of the sea and encompassed Avallónë and all the isle of Eressëa, and the Eldar mourned, for the light of the setting sun was cut off by the cloud of the Númenóreans. And at last Ar-Pharazôn came even to Aman, the Blessed Realm, and the coasts of Valinor; and still all was silent, and doom hung by a thread. For Ar-Pharazôn wavered at the end, and almost he turned back. His heart misgave him when he looked upon the soundless shores and saw Taniquetil shining, whiter than snow, colder than death, silent, immutable, terrible as the shadow of the light of Ilúvatar. But pride was now his master, and at last he left his ship and strode upon the shore, claiming the land for his own, if none should do battle for it. And a host of the Númenóreans encamped in might about Túna, whence all the Eldar had fled.

Then Manwë upon the Mountain called upon Ilúvatar, and for that time the Valar laid down their government of Arda. But Ilúvatar showed forth his power, and he changed the fashion of the world; and a great chasm opened in the sea between Númenor and the Deathless Lands, and the waters flowed down into it, and the noise and smoke of the cataracts went up to heaven, and the world was shaken. And all the fleets of the Númenóreans were drawn down into the abyss, and they were drowned and swallowed up for ever. But Ar-Pharazôn the King and the mortal warriors that had set foot upon the land of Aman were buried under falling hills: there it is said that they lie imprisoned in the Caves of the Forgotten, until the Last Battle and the Day of Doom.

But the land of Aman and Eressëa of the Eldar were taken away and removed beyond the reach of Men for ever. And Andor, the Land of Gift, Númenor of the Kings, Elenna of the Star of Eärendil, was utterly destroyed. For it was nigh to the east of the great rift, and its foundations were overturned, and it fell and went down into darkness, and is no more. And there is not now upon Earth any place abiding where the memory of a time without evil is preserved. For Ilúvatar cast back the Great Seas west of Middle-earth, and the Empty Lands east of it, and new lands and new seas were made; and the world was diminished, for Valinor and Eressëa were taken from it into the realm of hidden things.

In an hour unlooked for by Men this doom befell, on the nine and thirtieth day since the passing of the fleets. Then suddenly fire burst from the Meneltarma, and there came a mighty wind and a tumult of the earth, and the sky reeled, and the hills slid, and Númenor went down into the sea, with all its children and its wives and its maidens and its ladies proud; and all its gardens and its halls and its towers, its tombs and its riches, and its jewels and its webs and its things painted and carven, and its laughter and its mirth and its music, its wisdom and its lore: they vanished for ever. And last of all the mounting wave, green and cold and plumed with foam, climbing over the land, took to its bosom Tar-Míriel the Queen, fairer than silver or ivory or pearls. Too late she strove to ascend the steep ways of the Meneltarma to the holy place; for the waters overtook her, and her cry was lost in the roaring of the wind.

But whether or no it were that Amandil came indeed to Valinor and Manwë hearkened to his prayer, by grace of the Valar Elendil and his sons and their people were spared from the ruin of that day. For Elendil had remained in Rómenna, refusing the summons of the King when he set forth to war; and avoiding the soldiers of Sauron that came to seize him and drag him to the fires of the Temple, he went aboard his ship and stood off from the shore, waiting on the time. There he was protected by the land from the great draught of the sea that drew all towards the abyss, and afterwards he was sheltered from the first fury of the storm. But when the devouring wave rolled over the land and Númenor toppled to its fall, then he would have been overwhelmed and would have deemed it the lesser grief to perish, for no wrench of death could be more bitter than the loss and agony of that day; but the great wind took him, wilder than any wind that Men had known, roaring from the west, and it swept his ships far away; and it rent their sails and snapped their masts, hunting the unhappy men like straws upon the water.

Nine ships there were: four for Elendil, and for Isildur three, and for Anárion two; and they fled before the black gale out of the twilight of doom into the darkness of the world. And the deeps rose beneath them in towering anger, and waves like unto mountains moving with great caps of writhen snow bore them up amid the wreckage of the clouds, and after many days cast them away upon the shores of Middle-earth. And all the coasts and seaward regions of the western world suffered great change and ruin in that time; for the seas invaded the lands, and shores foundered, and ancient isles were drowned, and new isles were uplifted; and hills crumbled and rivers were turned into strange courses.

Elendil and his sons after founded kingdoms in Middle-earth; and though their lore and craft was but an echo of that which had been ere Sauron came to Númenor, yet very great it seemed to the wild men of the world. And much is said in other lore of the deeds of the heirs of Elendil in the age that came after, and of their strife with Sauron that not yet was ended.

For Sauron himself was filled with great fear at the wrath of the Valar, and the doom that Eru laid upon sea and land. It was greater far than aught he had looked for, hoping only for the death of the Númenóreans and the defeat of their proud king. And Sauron, sitting in his black seat in the midst of the Temple, had laughed when he heard the trumpets of Ar-Pharazôn sounding for battle; and again he had laughed when he heard the thunder of the storm; and a third time, even as he laughed at his own thought, thinking what he would do now in the world, being rid of the Edain for ever, he was taken in the midst of his mirth, and his seat and his temple fell into the abyss. But Sauron was not of mortal flesh, and though he was robbed now of that shape in which he had wrought so great an evil, so that he could never again appear fair to the eyes of Men, yet his spirit arose out of the deep and passed as a shadow and a black wind over the sea, and came back to Middle-earth and to Mordor that was his home. There he took up again his great Ring in Barad-dûr, and dwelt there, dark and silent, until he wrought himself a new guise, an image of malice and hatred made visible; and the Eye of Sauron the Terrible few could endure.

But these things come not into the tale of the Drowning of Númenor, of which now all is told. And even the name of that land perished, and Men spoke thereafter not of Elenna, nor of Andor the Gift that was taken away, nor of Númenórë on the confines of the world; but the exiles on the shores of the sea, if they turned towards the West in the desire of their hearts, spoke of Mar-nu-Falmar that was whelmed in the waves, Akallabêth the Downfallen, Atalantë in the Eldarin tongue.

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Among the Exiles many believed that the summit of the Meneltarma, the Pillar of Heaven, was not drowned for ever, but rose again above the waves, a lonely island lost in the great waters; for it had been a hallowed place, and even in the days of Sauron none had defiled it. And some there were of the seed of Eärendil that afterwards sought for it, because it was said among loremasters that the farsighted men of old could see from the Meneltarma a glimmer of the Deathless Land. For even after the ruin the hearts of the Dúnedain were still set westwards; and though they knew indeed that the world was changed, they said: “Avallónë is vanished from the Earth and the Land of Aman is taken away, and in the world of this present darkness they cannot be found. Yet once they were, and therefore they still are, in true being and in the whole shape of the world as at first it was devised.”

For the Dúnedain held that even mortal Men, if so blessed, might look upon other times than those of their bodies’ life; and they longed ever to escape from the shadows of their exile and to see in some fashion the light that dies not; for the sorrow of the thought of death had pursued them over the deeps of the sea. Thus it was that great mariners among them would still search the empty seas, hoping to come upon the Isle of Meneltarma, and there to see a vision of things that were. But they found it not. And those that sailed far came only to the new lands, and found them like to the old lands, and subject to death. And those that sailed furthest set but a girdle about the Earth and returned weary at last to the place of their beginning; and they said: “All roads are now bent.”

Thus in after days, what by the voyages of ships, what by lore and star-craft, the kings of Men knew that the world was indeed made round, and yet the Eldar were permitted still to depart and to come to the Ancient West and to Avallónë, if they would. Therefore the loremasters of Men said that a Straight Road must still be, for those that were permitted to find it. And they taught that, while the new world fell away, the old road and the path of the memory of the West still went on, as it were a mighty bridge invisible that passed through the air of breath and of flight (which were bent now as the world was bent), and traversed Ilmen which flesh unaided cannot endure, until it came to Tol Eressëa, the Lonely Isle, and maybe even beyond, to Valinor, where the Valar still dwell and watch the unfolding of the story of the world. And tales and rumours arose along the shores of the sea concerning mariners and men forlorn upon the water who, by some fate or grace or favour of the Valar, had entered in upon the Straight Way and seen the face of the world sink below them, and so had come to the lamplit quays of Avallónë, or verily to the last beaches on the margin of Aman, and there had looked upon the White Mountain, dreadful and beautiful, before they died.



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OF THE RINGS OF POWER AND THE THIRD AGE



IN WHICH THESE TALES COME TO THEIR END

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Of old there was Sauron the Maia, whom the Sindar in Beleriand named Gorthaur. In the beginning of Arda Melkor seduced him to his allegiance, and he became the greatest and most trusted of the servants of the Enemy, and the most perilous, for he could assume many forms, and for long if he willed he could still appear noble and beautiful, so as to deceive all but the most wary.

When Thangorodrim was broken and Morgoth overthrown, Sauron put on his fair hue again and did obeisance to Eönwë, the herald of Manwë, and abjured all his evil deeds. And some hold that this was not at first falsely done, but that Sauron in truth repented, if only out of fear, being dismayed by the fall of Morgoth and the great wrath of the Lords of the West. But it was not within the power of Eönwë to pardon those of his own order, and he commanded Sauron to return to Aman and there receive the judgement of Manwë. Then Sauron was ashamed, and he was unwilling to return in humiliation and to receive from the Valar a sentence, it might be, of long servitude in proof of his good faith; for under Morgoth his power had been great. Therefore when Eönwë departed he hid himself in Middle-earth; and he fell back into evil, for the bonds that Morgoth had laid upon him were very strong.

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In the Great Battle and the tumults of the fall of Thangorodrim there were mighty convulsions in the earth, and Beleriand was broken and laid waste; and northward and westward many lands sank beneath the waters of the Great Sea. In the east, in Ossiriand, the walls of Ered Luin were broken, and a great gap was made in them towards the south, and a gulf of the sea flowed in. Into that gulf the River Lhûn fell by a new course, and it was called therefore the Gulf of Lhûn. That country had of old been named Lindon by the Noldor, and this name it bore thereafter; and many of the Eldar still dwelt there, lingering, unwilling yet to forsake Beleriand where they had fought and laboured long. Gil-galad son of Fingon was their king, and with him was Elrond Halfelven, son of Eärendil the Mariner and brother of Elros first king of Númenor.

Upon the shores of the Gulf of Lhûn the Elves built their havens, and named them Mithlond; and there they held many ships, for the harbourage was good. From the Grey Havens the Eldar ever and anon set sail, fleeing from the darkness of the days of Earth; for by the mercy of the Valar the First-born could still follow the Straight Road and return, if they would, to their kindred in Eressëa and Valinor beyond the encircling seas.

Others of the Eldar there were who crossed the mountains of Ered Luin in that age and passed into the inner lands. Many of these were Teleri, survivors of Doriath and Ossiriand; and they established realms among the Silvan Elves in woods and mountains far from the sea, for which nonetheless they ever yearned in their hearts. Only in Eregion, which Men called Hollin, did Elves of Noldorin race establish a lasting realm beyond the Ered Luin. Eregion was nigh to the great mansions of the Dwarves that were named Khazad-dûm, but by the Elves Hadhodrond, and afterwards Moria. From Ost-in-Edhil, the city of the Elves, the highroad ran to the west gate of Khazad-dûm, for a friendship arose between Dwarves and Elves, such as has never elsewhere been, to the enrichment of both those peoples. In Eregion the craftsmen of the Gwaith-i-Mírdain, the People of the Jewel-smiths, surpassed in cunning all that have ever wrought, save only Fëanor himself; and indeed greatest in skill among them was Celebrimbor, son of Curufin, who was estranged from his father and remained in Nargothrond when Celegorm and Curufin were driven forth, as is told in the [\*Quenta Silmarillion\*](#).

Elsewhere in Middle-earth there was peace for many years; yet the lands were for the most part savage and desolate, save only where the people of Beleriand came. Many Elves dwelt there indeed, as they had dwelt through the countless years, wandering free in the wide lands far from the Sea; but they were Avari, to whom the deeds of Beleriand were but a rumour and Valinor only a distant name. And in the south and in the further east Men multiplied; and most of them turned to evil, for Sauron was at work.

Seeing the desolation of the world, Sauron said in his heart that the Valar, having overthrown Morgoth, had again forgotten Middle-earth; and his pride grew apace. He looked with hatred on the Eldar, and he feared the Men of Númenor who came back at whiles in their ships to the shores of Middle-earth; but for long he dissembled his mind and concealed the dark designs that he shaped in his heart.

Men he found the easiest to sway of all the peoples of the Earth; but long he sought to persuade the Elves to his service, for he knew that the Firstborn had the greater power; and he went far and wide among them, and his hue was still that of one both fair and wise. Only to Lindon he did not come, for Gil-galad and Elrond doubted him and his fair-seeming, and though they knew not who in truth he was they would not admit him to that land. But elsewhere the Elves received him gladly, and few among them hearkened to the messengers from Lindon bidding them beware; for Sauron took to himself the name of Annatar, the Lord of Gifts, and they had at first much profit from his friendship. And he said to them: "Alas, for the weakness of the great! For a mighty king is Gil-galad, and wise in all lore is Master Elrond, and yet they will not aid me in my labours. Can it be that they do not desire to see other lands become as blissful as their own? But wherefore should Middle-earth remain for ever desolate and dark, whereas the Elves could make it as fair as Eressëa, nay even as Valinor? And since you have not returned thither, as you might, I perceive that you love this Middle-earth, as do I. Is it not then our task to labour together for its enrichment, and for the raising of all the Elven-kindreds that wander here untaught to the height of that power and knowledge which those have who are beyond the Sea?"

It was in Eregion that the counsels of Sauron were most gladly received, for in that land the Noldor desired ever to increase the skill and subtlety of their works. Moreover they were not at peace in their hearts, since they had refused to return into the West, and they desired both to stay in Middle-earth, which indeed they loved, and yet to enjoy the bliss of those that had departed. Therefore they hearkened to Sauron, and they learned of him many things, for his knowledge was great. In those days the smiths of Ost-in-Edhil surpassed all that they had contrived before; and they took thought, and they made Rings of Power. But Sauron guided their labours, and he was aware of all that they did; for his desire was to set a bond upon the Elves and to bring them under his vigilance.

Now the Elves made many rings; but secretly Sauron made One Ring to rule all the others, and their power was bound up with it, to be subject wholly to it and to last only so long as it too should last. And much of the strength and will of Sauron passed into that One Ring; for the power of the Elven-rings was very great, and that which should govern them must be a thing of surpassing potency; and Sauron forged it in the Mountain of Fire in the Land of Shadow. And while he wore the One Ring he could perceive all the things that were done by means of the lesser rings, and he could see and govern the very thoughts of those that wore them.

But the Elves were not so lightly to be caught. As soon as Sauron set the One Ring upon his finger they were aware of him; and they knew him, and perceived that he would be master of them, and of all that they wrought. Then in anger and fear they took off their rings. But he, finding that he was betrayed and that the Elves were not deceived, was filled with wrath; and he came against them with open war, demanding that all the rings should be delivered to him, since the Elven-smiths could not have attained to their making without his lore and counsel. But the Elves fled from him; and three of their rings they saved, and bore them away, and hid them.

Now these were the Three that had last been made, and they possessed the greatest powers. Narya, Nenya, and Vilya, they were named, the Rings of Fire, and of Water, and of Air, set with ruby and adamant and sapphire; and of all the Elven-rings Sauron most desired to possess them, for those who had them in their keeping could ward off the decays of time and postpone the weariness of the world. But Sauron could not discover them, for they were given into the hands of the Wise, who concealed them and never again used them openly while Sauron kept the Ruling Ring. Therefore the Three remained unsullied, for they were forged by Celebrimbor alone, and the hand of Sauron had never touched them; yet they also were subject to the One.

From that time war never ceased between Sauron and the Elves; and Eregion was laid waste, and Celebrimbor slain, and the doors of Moria were shut. In that time the stronghold and refuge of Imladris, that Men called Rivendell, was founded by Elrond Halfelven; and long it endured. But Sauron gathered into his hands all the remaining Rings of Power; and he dealt them out to the other peoples of Middle-earth, hoping thus to bring under his sway all those that desired secret power beyond the measure of their kind. Seven rings he gave to the Dwarves; but to Men he gave nine, for Men proved in this matter as in others the readiest to his will. And all

those rings that he governed he perverted, the more easily since he had a part in their making, and they were accursed, and they betrayed in the end all those that used them. The Dwarves indeed proved tough and hard to tame; they ill endure the domination of others, and the thoughts of their hearts are hard to fathom, nor can they be turned to shadows. They used their rings only for the getting of wealth; but wrath and an overmastering greed of gold were kindled in their hearts, of which evil enough after came to the profit of Sauron. It is said that the foundation of each of the Seven Hoards of the Dwarf-kings of old was a golden ring; but all those hoards long ago were plundered and the Dragons devoured them, and of the Seven Rings some were consumed in fire and some Sauron recovered.

Men proved easier to ensnare. Those who used the Nine Rings became mighty in their day, kings, sorcerers, and warriors of old. They obtained glory and great wealth, yet it turned to their undoing. They had, as it seemed, unending life, yet life became unendurable to them. They could walk, if they would, unseen by all eyes in this world beneath the sun, and they could see things in worlds invisible to mortal men; but too often they beheld only the phantoms and delusions of Sauron. And one by one, sooner or later, according to their native strength and to the good or evil of their wills in the beginning, they fell under the thralldom of the ring that they bore and under the domination of the One, which was Sauron's. And they became for ever invisible save to him that wore the Ruling Ring, and they entered into the realm of shadows. The Nazgûl were they, the Ringwraiths, the Enemy's most terrible servants; darkness went with them, and they cried with the voices of death.

Now Sauron's lust and pride increased, until he knew no bounds, and he determined to make himself master of all things in Middle-earth, and to destroy the Elves, and to compass, if he might, the downfall of Númenor. He brooked no freedom nor any rivalry, and he named himself Lord of the Earth. A mask he still could wear so that if he wished he might deceive the eyes of Men, seeming to them wise and fair. But he ruled rather by force and fear, if they might avail; and those who perceived his shadow spreading over the world called him the Dark Lord and named him the Enemy; and he gathered again under his government all the evil things of the days of Morgoth that remained on earth or beneath it, and the Orcs were at his command and multiplied like flies. Thus the Black Years began, which the Elves call the Days of Flight. In that time many of the Elves of Middle-earth fled to Lindon and thence over the seas never to return; and many were destroyed by Sauron and his servants. But in Lindon Gil-galad still maintained his power, and Sauron dared not as yet to pass the Mountains of Ered Luin nor to assail the Havens; and Gil-galad was aided by the Númenóreans. Elsewhere Sauron reigned, and those who would be free took refuge in the fastnesses of wood and mountain, and ever fear pursued them. In the east and south well nigh all Men were under his dominion, and they grew strong in those days and built many towns and walls of stone, and they were numerous and fierce in war and armed with iron. To them Sauron was both king and god; and they feared him exceedingly, for he surrounded his abode with fire.

Yet there came at length a stay in the onslaught of Sauron upon the westlands. For, as is told in the *Akallabêth*, he was challenged by the might of Númenor. So great was the power and splendour of the Númenóreans in the noontide of their realm that the servants of Sauron would not withstand them, and hoping to accomplish by cunning what he could not achieve by force, he left Middle-earth for a while and went to Númenor as a hostage of Tar-Calion the King. And there he abode, until at the last by his craft he had corrupted the hearts of most of that people, and set them at war with the Valar, and so compassed their ruin, as he had long desired. But that ruin was more terrible than Sauron had foreseen, for he had forgotten the might of the Lords of the West in their anger. The world was broken, and the land was swallowed up, and the seas rose over it, and Sauron himself went down into the abyss. But his spirit arose and fled back on a dark wind to Middle-earth, seeking a home. There he found that the power of Gil-galad had grown great in the years of his absence, and it was spread now over wide regions of the north and west, and had passed beyond the Misty Mountains and the Great River even to the borders of Greenwood the Great, and was drawing nigh to the strong places where once he had dwelt secure. Then Sauron withdrew to his fortress in the Black Land and meditated war.

In that time those of the Númenóreans who were saved from destruction fled eastward, as is told in the *Akallabêth*. The chief of these were Elendil the Tall and his sons, Isildur and Anárion. Kinsmen of the King they were, descendants of Elros, but they had been unwilling to listen to Sauron, and had refused to make war on the Lords of the West. Manning their ships with all who remained faithful they forsook the land of Númenor ere ruin came upon it. They were mighty men and their ships were strong and tall, but the tempests overtook

them, and they were borne aloft on hills of water even to the clouds, and they descended upon Middle-earth like birds of the storm.

Elendil was cast up by the waves in the land of Lindon, and he was befriended by Gil-galad. Thence he passed up the River Lhûn, and beyond Ered Luin he established his realm, and his people dwelt in many places in Eriador about the courses of the Lhûn and the Baranduin; but his chief city was at Annúminas beside the water of Lake Nenuial. At Fornost upon the North Downs also the Númenóreans dwelt, and in Cardolan, and in the hills of Rhudaur; and towers they raised upon Eryn Beraid and upon Amon Sûl; and there remain many barrows and ruined works in those places, but the towers of Eryn Beraid still look towards the sea.

Isildur and Anárion were borne away southwards, and at the last they brought their ships up the Great River Anduin, that flows out of Rhovanion into the western sea in the Bay of Belfalas; and they established a realm in those lands that were after called Gondor, whereas the Northern Kingdom was named Arnor. Long before in the days of their power the mariners of Númenor had established a haven and strong places about the mouths of Anduin, in despite of Sauron in the Black Land that lay nigh upon the east. In the later days to this haven came only the Faithful of Númenor, and many therefore of the folk of the coastlands in that region were in whole or in part akin to the Elf-friends and the people of Elendil, and they welcomed his sons. The chief city of this southern realm was Osgiliath, through the midst of which the Great River flowed; and the Númenóreans built there a great bridge, upon which there were towers and houses of stone wonderful to behold, and tall ships came up out of the sea to the quays of the city. Other strong places they built also upon either hand: Minas Ithil, the Tower of the Rising Moon, eastward upon a shoulder of the Mountains of Shadow as a threat to Mordor; and to the westward Minas Anor, the Tower of the Setting Sun, at the feet of Mount Mindolluin, as a shield against the wild men of the dales. In Minas Ithil was the house of Isildur, and in Minas Anor the house of Anárion, but they shared the realm between them and their thrones were set side by side in the Great Hall of Osgiliath. These were the chief dwellings of the Númenóreans in Gondor, but other works marvellous and strong they built in the land in the days of their power, at the Argonath, and at Aglarond, and at Erech; and in the circle of Angrenost, which Men called Isengard, they made the Pinnacle of Orthanc of unbreakable stone.

Many treasures and great heirlooms of virtue and wonder the Exiles had brought from Númenor; and of these the most renowned were the Seven Stones and the White Tree. The White Tree was grown from the fruit of Nimloth the Fair that stood in the courts of the King at Armenelos in Númenor, ere Sauron burned it; and Nimloth was in its turn descended from the Tree of Tirion, that was an image of the Eldest of Trees, White Telperion which Yavanna caused to grow in the land of the Valar. The Tree, memorial of the Eldar and of the light of Valinor, was planted in Minas Ithil before the house of Isildur, since he it was that had saved the fruit from destruction; but the Stones were divided.

Three Elendil took, and his sons each two. Those of Elendil were set in towers upon Eryn Beraid, and upon Amon Sûl, and in the city of Annúminas. But those of his sons were at Minas Ithil and Minas Anor, and at Orthanc and in Osgiliath. Now these Stones had this virtue that those who looked therein might perceive in them things far off, whether in place or in time. For the most part they revealed only things near to another kindred Stone, for the Stones each called to each; but those who possessed great strength of will and of mind might learn to direct their gaze whither they would. Thus the Númenóreans were aware of many things that their enemies wished to conceal, and little escaped their vigilance in the days of their might.

It is said that the towers of Eryn Beraid were not built indeed by the Exiles of Númenor, but were raised by Gilgalad for Elendil, his friend; and the Seeing Stone of Eryn Beraid was set in Elostirion, the tallest of the towers. Thither Elendil would repair, and thence he would gaze out over the sundering seas, when the yearning of exile was upon him; and it is believed that thus he would at times see far away even the Tower of Avallónë upon Eressëa, where the Master-stone abode, and yet abides. These stones were gifts of the Eldar to Amandil, father of Elendil, for the comfort of the Faithful of Númenor in their dark days, when the Elves might come no longer to that land under the shadow of Sauron. They were called the Palantíri, those that watch from afar; but all those that were brought to Middle-earth long ago were lost.

Thus the Exiles of Númenor established their realms in Arnor and in Gondor; but ere many years had passed it became manifest that their enemy, Sauron, had also returned. He came in secret, as has been told, to his ancient kingdom of Mordor beyond the Ephel Dúath, the Mountains of Shadow, and that country marched with Gondor

upon the east. There above the valley of Gorgoroth was built his fortress vast and strong, Barad-dûr, the Dark Tower; and there was a fiery mountain in that land that the Elves named Orodruin. Indeed for that reason Sauron had set there his dwelling long before, for he used the fire that welled there from the heart of the earth in his sorceries and in his forging; and in the midst of the Land of Mordor he had fashioned the Ruling Ring. There now he brooded in the dark, until he had wrought for himself a new shape; and it was terrible, for his fair semblance had departed for ever when he was cast into the abyss at the drowning of Númenor. He took up again the great Ring and clothed himself in power; and the malice of the Eye of Sauron few even of the great among Elves and Men could endure.

Now Sauron prepared war against the Eldar and the Men of Westnesse, and the fires of the Mountain were wakened again. Wherefore seeing the smoke of Orodruin from afar, and perceiving that Sauron had returned, the Númenóreans named that mountain anew Amon Amarth, which is Mount Doom. And Sauron gathered to him great strength of his servants out of the east and the south; and among them were not a few of the high race of Númenor. For in the days of the sojourn of Sauron in that land the hearts of well nigh all its people had been turned towards darkness. Therefore many of those who sailed east in that time and made fortresses and dwellings upon the coasts were already bent to his will, and they served him still gladly in Middle-earth. But because of the power of Gil-galad these renegades, lords both mighty and evil, for the most part took up their abodes in the southlands far away; yet two there were, Herumor and Fuinur, who rose to power among the Haradrim, a great and cruel people that dwelt in the wide lands south of Mordor beyond the mouths of Anduin.

When therefore Sauron saw his time he came with great force against the new realm of Gondor, and he took Minas Ithil, and he destroyed the White Tree of Isildur that grew there. But Isildur escaped, and taking with him a seedling of the Tree he went with his wife and his sons by ship down the River, and they sailed from the mouths of Anduin seeking Elendil. Meanwhile Anárion held Osgiliath against the Enemy, and for that time drove him back to the mountains; but Sauron gathered his strength again, and Anárion knew that unless help should come his kingdom would not long stand.

Now Elendil and Gil-galad took counsel together, for they perceived that Sauron would grow too strong and would overcome all his enemies one by one, if they did not unite against him. Therefore they made that League which is called the Last Alliance, and they marched east into Middle-earth gathering a great host of Elves and Men; and they halted for a while at Imladris. It is said that the host that was there assembled was fairer and more splendid in arms than any that has since been seen in Middle-earth, and none greater has been mustered since the host of the Valar went against Thangorodrim.

From Imladris they crossed the Misty Mountains by many passes and marched down the River Anduin, and so came at last upon the host of Sauron on Dagorlad, the Battle Plain, which lies before the gate of the Black Land. All living things were divided in that day, and some of every kind, even of beasts and birds, were found in either host, save the Elves only. They alone were undivided and followed Gil-galad. Of the Dwarves few fought upon either side; but the kindred of Durin of Moria fought against Sauron.

The host of Gil-galad and Elendil had the victory, for the might of the Elves was still great in those days, and the Númenóreans were strong and tall, and terrible in their wrath. Against Aeglos the spear of Gil-galad none could stand; and the sword of Elendil filled Orcs and Men with fear, for it shone with the light of the sun and of the moon, and it was named Narsil.

Then Gil-galad and Elendil passed into Mordor and encompassed the stronghold of Sauron; and they laid siege to it for seven years, and suffered grievous loss by fire and by the darts and bolts of the Enemy, and Sauron sent many sorties against them. There in the valley of Gorgoroth Anárion son of Elendil was slain, and many others. But at the last the siege was so strait that Sauron himself came forth; and he wrestled with Gil-galad and Elendil, and they both were slain, and the sword of Elendil broke under him as he fell. But Sauron also was thrown down, and with the hilt-shard of Narsil Isildur cut the Ruling Ring from the hand of Sauron and took it for his own. Then Sauron was for that time vanquished, and he forsook his body, and his spirit fled far away and hid in waste places; and he took no visible shape again for many long years.

Thus began the Third Age of the World, after the Eldest Days and the Black Years; and there was still hope in that time and the memory of mirth, and for long the White Tree of the Eldar flowered in the courts of the Kings

of Men, for the seedling which he had saved Isildur planted in the citadel of Anor in memory of his brother, ere he departed from Gondor. The servants of Sauron were routed and dispersed, yet they were not wholly destroyed; and though many Men turned now from evil and became subject to the heirs of Elendil, yet many more remembered Sauron in their hearts and hated the kingdoms of the West. The Dark Tower was levelled to the ground, yet its foundations remained, and it was not forgotten. The Númenóreans indeed set a guard upon the land of Mordor, but none dared dwell there because of the terror of the memory of Sauron, and because of the Mountain of Fire that stood nigh to Barad-dûr; and the valley of Gorgoroth was filled with ash. Many of the Elves and many of the Númenóreans and of Men who were their allies had perished in the Battle and the Siege; and Elendil the Tall and Gil-galad the High King were no more. Never again was such a host assembled, nor was there any such league of Elves and Men; for after Elendil's day the two kindreds became estranged.

The Ruling Ring passed out of the knowledge even of the Wise in that age; yet it was not unmade. For Isildur would not surrender it to Elrond and Círdan who stood by. They counselled him to cast it into the fire of Orodruin nigh at hand, in which it had been forged, so that it should perish, and the power of Sauron be for ever diminished, and he should remain only as a shadow of malice in the wilderness. But Isildur refused this counsel, saying: "This I will have as weregild for my father's death, and my brother's. Was it not I that dealt the Enemy his death-blow?" And the Ring that he held seemed to him exceedingly fair to look on; and he would not suffer it to be destroyed. Taking it therefore he returned at first to Minas Anor, and there planted the White Tree in memory of his brother Anárion. But soon he departed, and after he had given counsel to Meneldil, his brother's son, and had committed to him the realm of the south, he bore away the Ring, to be an heirloom of his house, and marched north from Gondor by the way that Elendil had come; and he forsook the South Kingdom, for he purposed to take up his father's realm in Eriador, far from the shadow of the Black Land.

But Isildur was overwhelmed by a host of Orcs that lay in wait in the Misty Mountains; and they descended upon him at unawares in his camp between the Greenwood and the Great River, nigh to Loeg Ningloron, the Gladden Fields, for he was heedless and set no guard, deeming that all his foes were overthrown. There well nigh all his people were slain, and among them were his three elder sons, Elendur, Aratan, and Ciryon; but his wife and his youngest son, Valandil, he had left in Imladris when he went to the war. Isildur himself escaped by means of the Ring, for when he wore it he was invisible to all eyes; but the Orcs hunted him by scent and slot, until he came to the River and plunged in. There the Ring betrayed him and avenged its maker, for it slipped from his finger as he swam, and it was lost in the water. Then the Orcs saw him as he laboured in the stream, and they shot him with many arrows, and that was his end. Only three of his people came ever back over the mountains after long wandering; and of these one was Ohtar his esquire, to whose keeping he had given the shards of the sword of Elendil.

Thus Narsil came in due time to the hand of Valandil, Isildur's heir, in Imladris; but the blade was broken and its light was extinguished, and it was not forged anew. And Master Elrond foretold that this would not be done until the Ruling Ring should be found again and Sauron should return; but the hope of Elves and Men was that these things might never come to pass.

Valandil took up his abode in Annúminas, but his folk were diminished, and of the Númenóreans and of the Men of Eriador there remained now too few to people the land or to maintain all the places that Elendil had built; in Dagorlad, and in Mordor, and upon the Gladden Fields many had fallen. And it came to pass after the days of Eärendur, the seventh king that followed Valandil, that the Men of Westerosse, the Dúnedain of the North, became divided into petty realms and lordships, and their foes devoured them one by one. Ever they dwindled with the years, until their glory passed, leaving only green mounds in the grass. At length naught was left of them but a strange people wandering secretly in the wild, and other men knew not their homes nor the purpose of their journeys, and save in Imladris, in the house of Elrond, their ancestry was forgotten. Yet the shards of the sword were cherished during many lives of Men by the heirs of Isildur; and their line, from father to son, remained unbroken.

In the south the realm of Gondor endured, and for a time its splendour grew, until it recalled the wealth and majesty of Númenor ere it fell. High towers the people of Gondor built, and strong places, and havens of many ships; and the Winged Crown of the Kings of Men was held in awe by people of many lands and tongues. For many a year the White Tree grew before the King's house in Minas Anor, the seed of that tree which Isildur

brought out of the deeps of the sea from Númenor; and the seed before that came from Avallónë, and before that from Valinor in the Day before days when the world was young.

Yet at the last, in the wearing of the swift years of Middle-earth, Gondor waned, and the line of Meneldil son of Anárion failed. For the blood of the Númenóreans became much mingled with that of other men, and their power and wisdom was diminished, and their life-span was shortened, and the watch upon Mordor slumbered. And in the days of Telemnar, the third and twentieth of the line of Meneldil, a plague came upon dark winds out of the east, and it smote the King and his children, and many of the people of Gondor perished. Then the forts on the borders of Mordor were deserted, and Minas Ithil was emptied of its people; and evil entered again into the Black Land secretly, and the ashes of Gorgoroth were stirred as by a cold wind, for dark shapes gathered there. It is said that these were indeed the Úlairi, whom Sauron called the Nazgûl, the Nine Ringwraiths that had long remained hidden, but returned now to prepare the ways of their Master, for he had begun to grow again.

And in the days of Eärnil they made their first stroke, and they came by night out of Mordor over the passes of the Mountains of Shadow, and took Minas Ithil for their abode; and they made it a place of such dread that none dared to look upon it. Thereafter it was called Minas Morgul, the Tower of Sorcery; and Minas Morgul was ever at war with Minas Anor in the west. Then Osgiliath, which in the waning of the people had long been deserted, became a place of ruins and a city of ghosts. But Minas Anor endured, and it was named anew Minas Tirith, the Tower of Guard; for there the kings caused to be built in the citadel a white tower, very tall and fair, and its eye was upon many lands. Proud still and strong was that city, and in it the White Tree still flowered for a while before the house of the Kings; and there the remnant of the Númenóreans still defended the passage of the River against the terrors of Minas Morgul and against all the enemies of the West, Orcs and monsters and evil Men; and thus the lands behind them, west of Anduin, were protected from war and destruction.

Still Minas Tirith endured after the days of Eärnur, son of Eärnil, and the last King of Gondor. He it was that rode alone to the gates of Minas Morgul to meet the challenge of the Morgul-lord; and he met him in single combat, but he was betrayed by the Nazgûl and taken alive into the city of torment, and no living man saw him ever again. Now Eärnur left no heir, but when the line of the Kings failed the Stewards of the house of Mardil the Faithful ruled the city and its ever-shrinking realm; and the Rohirrim, the Horsemen of the North, came and dwelt in the green land of Rohan, which before was named Calenardhon and was a part of the kingdom of Gondor; and the Rohirrim aided the Lords of the City in their wars. And northward, beyond the Falls of Rauros and the Gates of Argonath, there were as yet other defences, powers more ancient of which Men knew little, against whom the things of evil did not dare to move, until in the ripening of time their dark lord, Sauron, should come forth again. And until that time was come, never again after the days of Eärnil did the Nazgûl dare to cross the River or to come forth from their city in shape visible to Men.

In all the days of the Third Age, after the fall of Gil-galad, Master Elrond abode in Imladris, and he gathered there many Elves, and other folk of wisdom and power from among all the kindreds of Middle-earth, and he preserved through many lives of Men the memory of all that had been fair; and the house of Elrond was a refuge for the weary and the oppressed, and a treasury of good counsel and wise lore. In that house were harboured the Heirs of Isildur, in childhood and old age, because of the kinship of their blood with Elrond himself, and because he knew in his wisdom that one should come of their line to whom a great part was appointed in the last deeds of that Age. And until that time came the shards of Elendil's sword were given into the keeping of Elrond, when the days of the Dúnedain darkened and they became a wandering people.

In Eriador Imladris was the chief dwelling of the High Elves; but at the Grey Havens of Lindon there abode also a remnant of the people of Gil-galad the Elvenking. At times they would wander into the lands of Eriador, but for the most part they dwelt near the shores of the sea, building and tending the elven-ships wherein those of the Firstborn who grew weary of the world set sail into the uttermost West. Círdan the Shipwright was lord of the Havens and mighty among the Wise.

Of the Three Rings that the Elves had preserved unsullied no open word was ever spoken among the Wise, and few even of the Eldar knew where they were bestowed. Yet after the fall of Sauron their power was ever at work, and where they abode there mirth also dwelt and all things were unstained by the griefs of time. Therefore ere the Third Age was ended the Elves perceived that the Ring of Sapphire was with Elrond, in the



fair valley of Rivendell, upon whose house the stars of heaven most brightly shone; whereas the Ring of Adamant was in the Land of Lórien where dwelt the Lady Galadriel. A queen she was of the woodland Elves, the wife of Celeborn of Doriath, yet she herself was of the Noldor and remembered the Day before days in Valinor, and she was the mightiest and fairest of all the Elves that remained in Middle-earth. But the Red Ring remained hidden until the end, and none save Elrond and Galadriel and Círdan knew to whom it had been committed.

Thus it was that in two domains the bliss and beauty of the Elves remained still undiminished while that Age endured: in Imladris; and in Lothlórien, the hidden land between Celebrant and Anduin, where the trees bore flowers of gold and no Orc or evil thing dared ever come. Yet many voices were heard among the Elves foreboding that, if Sauron should come again, then either he would find the Ruling Ring that was lost, or at the best his enemies would discover it and destroy it; but in either chance the powers of the Three must then fail and all things maintained by them must fade, and so the Elves should pass into the twilight and the Dominion of Men begin.

And so indeed it has since befallen: the One and the Seven and the Nine are destroyed; and the Three have passed away, and with them the Third Age is ended, and the Tales of the Eldar in Middle-earth draw to their close. Those were the Fading Years, and in them the last flowering of the Elves east of the Sea came to its winter. In that time the Noldor walked still in the Hither Lands, mightiest and fairest of the children of the world, and their tongues were still heard by mortal ears. Many things of beauty and wonder remained on earth in that time, and many things also of evil and dread: Orcs there were and trolls and dragons and fell beasts, and strange creatures old and wise in the woods whose names are forgotten; Dwarves still laboured in the hills and wrought with patient craft works of metal and stone that none now can rival. But the Dominion of Men was preparing and all things were changing, until at last the Dark Lord arose in Mirkwood again.

Now of old the name of that forest was Greenwood the Great, and its wide halls and aisles were the haunt of many beasts and of birds of bright song; and there was the realm of King Thranduil under the oak and the beech. But after many years, when well nigh a third of that age of the world had passed, a darkness crept slowly through the wood from the southward, and fear walked there in shadowy glades; fell beasts came hunting, and cruel and evil creatures laid there their snares.

Then the name of the forest was changed and Mirkwood it was called, for the nightshade lay deep there, and few dared to pass through, save only in the north where Thranduil's people still held the evil at bay. Whence it came few could tell, and it was long ere even the Wise could discover it. It was the shadow of Sauron and the sign of his return. For coming out of the wastes of the East he took up his abode in the south of the forest, and slowly he grew and took shape there again; in a dark hill he made his dwelling and wrought there his sorcery, and all folk feared the Sorcerer of Dol Guldur, and yet they knew not at first how great was their peril.

Even as the first shadows were felt in Mirkwood there appeared in the west of Middle-earth the Istari, whom Men called the Wizards. None knew at that time whence they were, save Círdan of the Havens, and only to Elrond and to Galadriel did he reveal that they came over the Sea. But afterwards it was said among the Elves that they were messengers sent by the Lords of the West to contest the power of Sauron, if he should arise again, and to move Elves and Men and all living things of good will to valiant deeds. In the likeness of Men they appeared, old but vigorous, and they changed little with the years, and aged but slowly, though great cares lay on them; great wisdom they had, and many powers of mind and hand. Long they journeyed far and wide among Elves and Men, and held converse also with beasts and with birds; and the peoples of Middle-earth gave to them many names, for their true names they did not reveal. Chief among them were those whom the Elves called Mithrandir and Curunír, but Men in the North named Gandalf and Saruman. Of these Curunír was the eldest and came first, and after him came Mithrandir and Radagast, and others of the Istari who went into the east of Middle-earth, and do not come into these tales. Radagast was the friend of all beasts and birds; but Curunír went most among Men, and he was subtle in speech and skilled in all the devices of smithcraft. Mithrandir was closest in counsel with Elrond and the Elves. He wandered far in the North and West and made never in any land any lasting abode; but Curunír journeyed into the East, and when he returned he dwelt at Orthanc in the Ring of Isengard, which the Númenóreans made in the days of their power.

Ever most vigilant was Mithrandir, and he it was that most doubted the darkness in Mirkwood, for though many deemed that it was wrought by the Ringwraiths, he feared that it was indeed the first shadow of Sauron returning; and he went to Dol Guldur, and the Sorcerer fled from him, and there was a watchful peace for a long while. But at length the Shadow returned and its power increased; and in that time was first made the Council of the Wise that is called the White Council, and therein were Elrond and Galadriel and Círdan, and other lords of the Eldar, and with them were Mithrandir and Curunír. And Curunír (that was Saruman the White) was chosen to be their chief, for he had most studied the devices of Sauron of old. Galadriel indeed had wished that Mithrandir should be the head of the Council, and Saruman begrudged them that, for his pride and desire of mastery was grown great; but Mithrandir refused the office, since he would have no ties and no allegiance, save to those who sent him, and he would abide in no place nor be subject to any summons. But Saruman now began to study the lore of the Rings of Power, their making and their history.

Now the Shadow grew ever greater, and the hearts of Elrond and Mithrandir darkened. Therefore on a time Mithrandir at great peril went again to Dol Guldur and the pits of the Sorcerer, and he discovered the truth of his fears, and escaped. And returning to Elrond he said:

“True, alas, is our guess. This is not one of the Úlairi, as many have long supposed. It is Sauron himself who has taken shape again and now grows apace; and he is gathering again all the Rings to his hand; and he seeks ever for news of the One, and of the Heirs of Isildur, if they live still on earth.”

And Elrond answered: “In the hour that Isildur took the Ring and would not surrender it, this doom was wrought, that Sauron should return.”

“Yet the One was lost,” said Mithrandir, “and while it still lies hid, we can master the Enemy, if we gather our strength and tarry not too long.”

Then the White Council was summoned; and Mithrandir urged them to swift deeds, but Curunír spoke against him, and counselled them to wait yet and to watch.

“For I believe not,” said he, “that the One will ever be found again in Middle-earth. Into Anduin it fell, and long ago, I deem, it was rolled to the Sea. There it shall lie until the end, when all this world is broken and the deeps are removed.”

Therefore naught was done at that time, though Elrond’s heart misgave him, and he said to Mithrandir: “Nonetheless I forebode that the One will yet be found, and then war will arise again, and in that war this Age will be ended. Indeed in a second darkness it will end, unless some strange chance deliver us that my eyes cannot see.”

“Many are the strange chances of the world,” said Mithrandir, “and help oft shall come from the hands of the weak when the Wise falter.”

Thus the Wise were troubled, but none as yet perceived that Curunír had turned to dark thoughts and was already a traitor in heart: for he desired that he and no other should find the Great Ring, so that he might wield it himself and order all the world to his will. Too long he had studied the ways of Sauron in hope to defeat him, and now he envied him as a rival rather than hated his works. And he deemed that the Ring, which was Sauron’s, would seek for its master as he became manifest once more; but if he were driven out again, then it would lie hid. Therefore he was willing to play with peril and let Sauron be for a time, hoping by his craft to forestall both his friends and the Enemy, when the Ring should appear.

He set a watch upon the Gladden Fields; but soon he discovered that the servants of Dol Guldur were searching all the ways of the River in that region. Then he perceived that Sauron also had learned of the manner of Isildur’s end, and he grew afraid and withdrew to Isengard and fortified it; and ever he probed deeper into the lore of the Rings of Power and the art of their forging. But he spoke of none of this to the Council, hoping still that he might be the first to hear news of the Ring. He gathered a great host of spies, and many of these were birds; for Radagast lent him his aid, divining naught of his treachery, and deeming that this was but part of the watch upon the Enemy.

But ever the shadow in Mirkwood grew deeper, and to Dol Guldur evil things repaired out of all the dark places of the world; and they were united again under one will, and their malice was directed against the Elves and the

survivors of Númenor. Therefore at last the Council was again summoned and the lore of the Rings was much debated; but Mithrandir spoke to the Council, saying:

“It is not needed that the Ring should be found, for while it abides on earth and is not unmade, still the power that it holds will live, and Sauron will grow and have hope. The might of the Elves and the Elf-friends is less now than of old. Soon he will be too strong for you, even without the Great Ring; for he rules the Nine, and of the Seven he has recovered three. We must strike.”

To this Curunír now assented, desiring that Sauron should be thrust from Dol Guldur, which was nigh to the River, and should have leisure to search there no longer. Therefore, for the last time, he aided the Council, and they put forth their strength; and they assailed Dol Guldur, and drove Sauron from his hold, and Mirkwood for a brief while was made wholesome again.

But their stroke was too late. For the Dark Lord had foreseen it, and he had long prepared all his movements; and the Úlairi, his Nine Servants, had gone before him to make ready for his coming. Therefore his flight was but a feint, and he soon returned, and ere the Wise could prevent him he re-entered his kingdom in Mordor and reared once again the dark towers of Barad-dûr. And in that year the White Council met for the last time, and Curunír withdrew to Isengard, and took counsel with none save himself.

Orcs were mustering, and far to the east and the south the wild peoples were arming. Then in the midst of gathering fear and the rumour of war the foreboding of Elrond was proved true, and the One Ring was indeed found again, by a chance more strange than even Mithrandir had foreseen; and it was hidden from Curunír and from Sauron. For it had been taken from Anduin long ere they sought for it, being found by one of the small fisher-folk that dwelt by the River, ere the Kings failed in Gondor; and by its finder it was brought beyond search into dark hiding under the roots of the mountains. There it dwelt, until even in the year of the assault upon Dol Guldur it was found again, by a wayfarer, fleeing into the depths of the earth from the pursuit of the Orcs, and passed into a far distant country, even to the land of the Periannath, the Little People, the Halflings, who dwelt in the west of Eriador. And ere that day they had been held of small account by Elves and by Men, and neither Sauron nor any of the Wise save Mithrandir had in all their counsels given thought to them.

Now by fortune and his vigilance Mithrandir first learned of the Ring, ere Sauron had news of it; yet he was dismayed and in doubt. For too great was the evil power of this thing for any of the Wise to wield, unless like Curunír he wished himself to become a tyrant and a dark lord in his turn; but neither could it be concealed from Sauron for ever, nor could it be unmade by the craft of the Elves. Therefore with the help of the Dúnedain of the North Mithrandir set a watch upon the land of the Periannath and bided his time. But Sauron had many ears, and soon he heard rumour of the One Ring, which above all things he desired, and he sent forth the Nazgûl to take it. Then war was kindled, and in battle with Sauron the Third Age ended even as it had begun.

But those who saw the things that were done in that time, deeds of valour and wonder, have elsewhere told the tale of the War of the Ring, and how it ended both in victory unlooked for and in sorrow long foreseen. Here let it be said that in those days the Heir of Isildur arose in the North, and he took the shards of the sword of Elendil, and in Imladris they were reforged; and he went then to war, a great captain of Men. He was Aragorn son of Arathorn, the nine and thirtieth heir in the right line from Isildur, and yet more like to Elendil than any before him. Battle there was in Rohan, and Curunír the traitor was thrown down and Isengard broken; and before the City of Gondor a great field was fought, and the Lord of Morgul, Captain of Sauron, there passed into darkness; and the Heir of Isildur led the host of the West to the Black Gates of Mordor.

In that last battle were Mithrandir, and the sons of Elrond, and the King of Rohan, and lords of Gondor, and the Heir of Isildur with the Dúnedain of the North. There at the last they looked upon death and defeat, and all their valour was in vain; for Sauron was too strong. Yet in that hour was put to the proof that which Mithrandir had spoken, and help came from the hands of the weak when the Wise faltered. For, as many songs have since sung, it was the Periannath, the Little People, dwellers in hillsides and meadows, that brought them deliverance.

For Frodo the Halfling, it is said, at the bidding of Mithrandir took on himself the burden, and alone with his servant he passed through peril and darkness and came at last in Sauron's despite even to Mount Doom; and there into the Fire where it was wrought he cast the Great Ring of Power, and so at last it was unmade and its evil consumed.

Then Sauron failed, and he was utterly vanquished and passed away like a shadow of malice; and the towers of Baraddûr crumbled in ruin, and at the rumour of their fall many lands trembled. Thus peace came again, and a new Spring opened on earth; and the Heir of Isildur was crowned King of Gondor and Arnor, and the might of the Dúnedain was lifted up and their glory renewed. In the courts of Minas Anor the White Tree flowered again, for a seedling was found by Mithrandir in the snows of Mindolluin that rose tall and white above the City of Gondor; and while it still grew there the Elder Days were not wholly forgotten in the hearts of the Kings.

Now all these things were achieved for the most part by the counsel and vigilance of Mithrandir, and in the last few days he was revealed as a lord of great reverence, and clad in white he rode into battle; but not until the time came for him to depart was it known that he had long guarded the Red Ring of Fire. At the first that Ring had been entrusted to Círdan, Lord of the Havens; but he had surrendered it to Mithrandir, for he knew whence he came and whither at last he would return.

“Take now this Ring,” he said; “for thy labours and thy cares will be heavy, but in all it will support thee and defend thee from weariness. For this is the Ring of Fire, and herewith, maybe, thou shalt rekindle hearts to the valour of old in a world that grows chill. But as for me, my heart is with the Sea, and I will dwell by the grey shores, guarding the Havens until the last ship sails. Then I shall await thee.”

White was that ship and long was it a-building, and long it awaited the end of which Círdan had spoken. But when all these things were done, and the Heir of Isildur had taken up the lordship of Men, and the dominion of the West had passed to him, then it was made plain that the power of the Three Rings also was ended, and to the Firstborn the world grew old and grey. In that time the last of the Noldor set sail from the Havens and left Middle-earth for ever. And latest of all the Keepers of the Three Rings rode to the Sea, and Master Elrond took there the ship that Círdan had made ready. In the twilight of autumn it sailed out of Mithlond, until the seas of the Bent World fell away beneath it, and the winds of the round sky troubled it no more, and borne upon the high airs above the mists of the world it passed into the Ancient West, and an end was come for the Eldar of story and of song.



J.R.R. TOLKIEN  
**THE HOBBIT**  
OR  
THERE AND BACK AGAIN



Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

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## Foreword

*The Hobbit* was first published on 21 September 1937, and for its fiftieth anniversary edition Rayner Unwin suggested to me that it would be of interest to include in it some unpublished or little known illustrations by my father, and also one of three manuscript sheets (each written on both sides, making six pages in all) that alone survive today of the original draft of the first chapter, *An Unexpected Party*. This particular sheet was preserved, no doubt, because on it there was also the first sketch of Thrór's Map. This preface is mostly concerned with this text and with pictures and designs; an account of the writing of *The Hobbit* (or what can be known of it) and the story of its publication are given by Humphrey Carpenter in *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Biography*, pp. 177-82.

On the now very battered manuscript sheet reproduced on the following pages my father afterwards wrote: 'Only page preserved of the first scrawled copy of *The Hobbit* which did not reach beyond the first chapter.'<sup>10</sup> Since the writing is indeed a scrawl and very hard to read, I set it out in print here. The text will be found to correspond, with many differences, to that in this book on pp. 20-21, but if the bottom of the second side of the sheet was the end of the text the entire history related by Gandalf and Thorin Oakenshield had yet to emerge.

'Why?'

'Because it is too small. "Five feet high is the door, and three abreast [*first written* four abreast] may enter it" say the runes. But Pryftan could not creep in a hole that size, not even when he was a young dragon, certainly not after he had devoured so many maidens of the valley.'

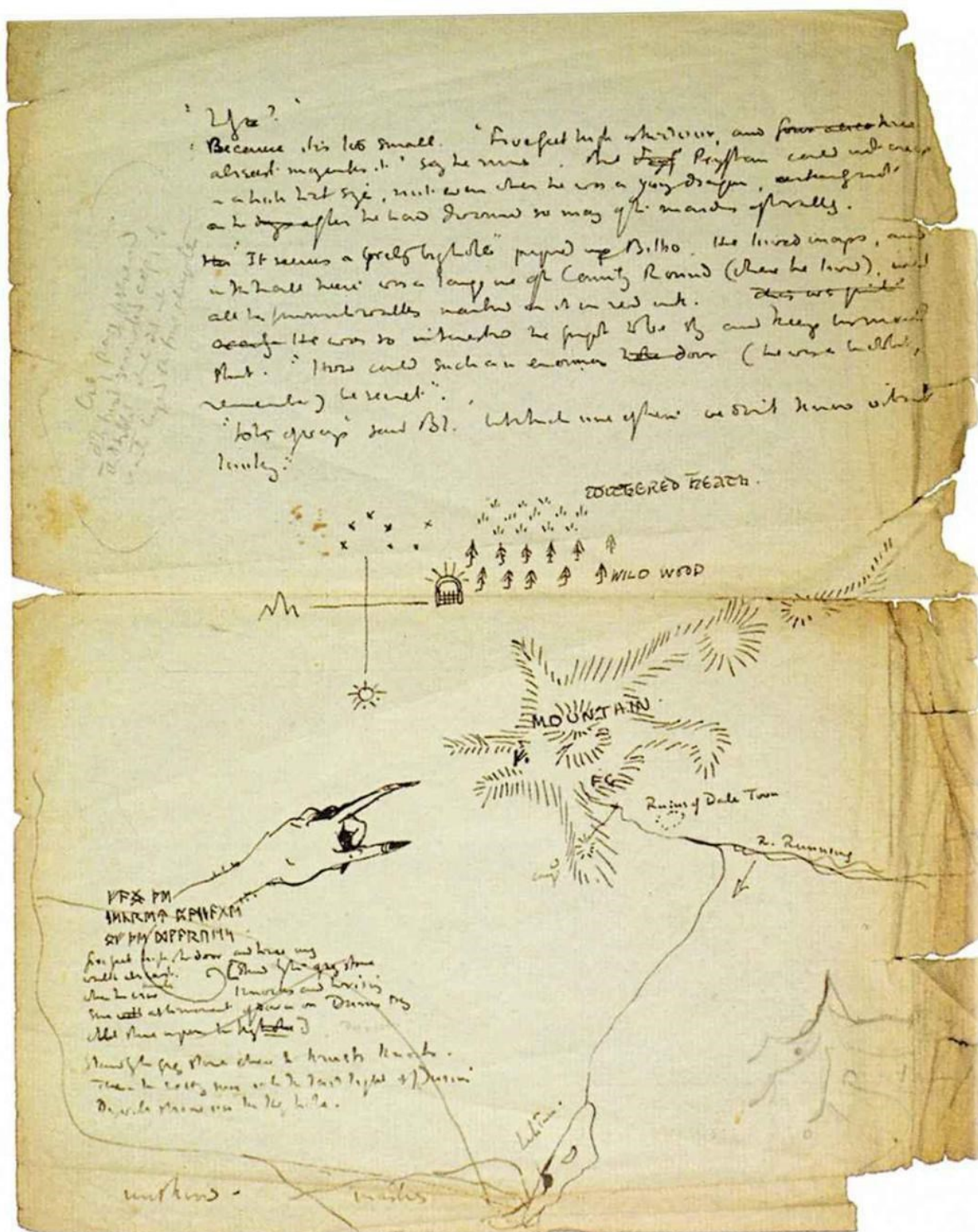
'It seems a pretty big hole,' piped Bilbo. He loved maps, and in the hall there was a large one of the County Round (where he lived), with all his favourite walks marked on it in red ink. He was so interested he forgot to be shy and keep his mouth shut. 'How could such an enormous door' (he was a hobbit, remember) 'be secret?'

'Lots of ways,' said Bl[adorthin], 'but which one of them we don't know without looking.'

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<sup>10</sup> When he wrote this note my father knew only of the sheet that I have reproduced, but two others had in fact been included in the *Hobbit* manuscripts that went to Marquette University in 1957.





A page from the earliest manuscript of *The Hobbit*

At the top of the other side of the page there is a list of the dwarves, which includes 'Gandalf'; and against this my father afterwards wrote in pencil: 'NB Gandalf was originally chief Dwarf (=Thorin) and Gandalf was called Bladorthin.' The names of the dwarves in *The Hobbit* were taken from verses of a very ancient Norse poem called *Völuspá*, where many dwarf-names are given, and among them *Gandalf*. The only other difference in this original list is that *Oi* appears for *Ori* (in the *Völuspá* there is the name *Ái*). *Bladorthin* became the name of a long-dead king who is mentioned once in *The Hobbit* ([p. 230](#)) but nowhere else.





‘The burglar,’ said Dwalin. ‘Precisely,’ said Blad[orthin], not allowing Bilbo time to object. ‘I told you last Thursday it would have to be a burglary not a battle, and a burglar I promised to find. I hope no-one is going to say I put the sign on the wrong door again.’ He frowned so frightfully at Bilbo that the little man dared not say anything though he was bursting with questions.

‘Warriors are very busy fighting one another in far lands,’ went on Bl[adorthin], ‘and in this neighbourhood there are none or few [*struck out*: left, of men, dwarves, elves or hobbits], not to speak of heroes. Swords in the world are mostly blunt, and axes used on trees and shields for dish-covers, and dragons comfortably far-off. But burglary is I think indicated in any case by the presence of the back door.’

‘What is your plan?’ they all said. ‘To go to the back door, sit on the step—and think of one—if one does not sprout up on the way,’ said the wizard. ‘There is no time to lose. You must be off before daybreak and well on your way.’

I cannot read the last word, unless it is ‘Dwarves’. This text is in fact slightly nearer to that of *The Hobbit* as it was originally published than to the text in this book (many changes were made in the editions of 1951 and 1966): for instance, in the book as it came out in 1937 Smaug is still said to have devoured ‘so many maidens of the valley’.

Turning now to the map which accompanies the text, the runes beside the pointing hand read:

#### FANG THE SECRET PASSAGE OF THE DWARVES

I do not know how to interpret the first word. It certainly begins *fa*, and the third rune seems to be that called in Old English ‘Ing,’ with the value *ng* (it is found in the word *setting* in the Moon-runes on Thrór’s Map as published). Conceivably it was to be the name of the passage—and the rune for *f* stands against the ‘back door’ on the map.

Beneath the runes is ‘five feet high the door and three may walk abreast’, and then a first draft of the text of the Moon-runes read by Elrond (p. 55): ‘Stand by the grey stone when [*or* where] the crow knocks and the rising sun at the moment of dawn on Durin’s Day will shine upon the key hole.’ The last word is struck through, and *thrush* is written above *crow*. The thrush is described (p. 209) as ‘enormous’ and ‘nearly coal-black’ (but with ‘a pale yellow breast freckled with dark spots’). Then follows a second text of the Moon-runes, which was scarcely changed afterwards; but this certainly has ‘*where* the thrush knocks’, and in the original edition Elrond read it as ‘where’, although the actual runes on Thrór’s Map had ‘when’.

It will be seen that the form of the mountain’s spurs were very much [the] same as they appear on Thrór’s map as published (with the height of Ravenhill at the end of the southern spur and the camp beneath it); but the ruins of Dale are on the east side of the River Running, since they were not enclosed within a great eastward loop of the river. The device at the top of the map apparently represents the points of the compass, with the seven stars of the Great Bear in the North (the black spots to the left of the stars are merely marks on the paper), the Sun in the South, the Misty Mountains in the West and (I think) the entrance to the Elvenking’s halls in the East. The names at the bottom of the page, ‘Mirkwood’, ‘marshes’, and ‘Lake Town’, and the ‘camp’ below the mountain, were added in at the same time as the second version of the text of the Moon-runes. At the bottom on the right is the first actual sketch of the Lonely Mountain, added in pencil.

My father said several times that he had a clear recollection of writing the opening sentence of *The Hobbit*. Long after, in a letter written to W.H. Auden in 1955, he said:

*All I remember about the start of The Hobbit is sitting correcting School Certificate papers in the everlasting weariness of that annual task forced on impecunious academics with children. On a blank leaf I scrawled: ‘In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit.’ I did not and do not know why. I did nothing about it for a long time, and for some years I got no further than the production of Thrór’s Map. But it became The Hobbit in the early 1930s. . . .*

But *when* he wrote that first sentence (now known in so many languages: In einer Höhle in der Erde da lebte ein Hobbit—Dans un trou vivait un hobbit—Í holu i jörðinni bjó hobbi—In una caverna sorto terra viveva uno hobbit—Kolossa maan sisällä asui hobitti—Μέσα στη γή σέ, πιά τρύπα ζούσε κάποτε ένα χόμπιτ. . . .)—that he did not remember. My brother Michael recorded long after his recollection of the evenings when my father

would stand with his back to the fire in his small study of the house in North Oxford (22 Northmoor Road) and tell stories to my brothers and me; and he said that he remembered with perfect clarity the occasion when my father said that he was going to start telling us a long story about a small being with furry feet, and asked us what he should be called—then, answering himself, said ‘I think we’ll call him a “Hobbit”’ Since my family moved from that house at the beginning of 1930, and since my brother preserved stories of his own, in imitation of *The Hobbit*, which he had dated ‘1929’, he was convinced that *The Hobbit* ‘began’ at any rate no later than that year. His opinion was that my father had written the opening sentence ‘In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit’ in the summer before he began telling us the story, and that he repeated those opening words ‘as if he had invented them on the spur of the moment’. He also remembered that I (then between four and five years old) was greatly concerned with petty consistency as the story unfolded, and that on one occasion I interrupted: ‘Last time, *you said* Bilbo’s front door was blue, and *you said* Thorin had a golden tassel on his hood, but you’ve just said that Bilbo’s front door was green, and the tassel on Thorin’s hood was silver’; at which point my father muttered ‘Damn the boy’, and then ‘strode across the room’ to his desk to make a note.

Whether these memories were accurate in every respect or not (in any case I presumably complained about the tassel of ‘Gandalf’s’ hood), it may well be that ‘the first scrawled copy which did not reach beyond the first chapter’, and of which one page survives, belonged to that time.

In December 1937, two months after publication, I wrote to Father Christmas and gave *The Hobbit* a vigorous puff, asking him if he knew of it, and proposing it to him as an idea for Christmas presents. I informed him of the history of the book as I recollected it:

*He wrote it ages ago, and read it to John, Michael and me in our winter ‘reads’ after tea in the evening; but the ending chapters were rather roughly done, and not typed out at all; he finished it about a year ago, and lent it to someone to read. She passed it on to a person in Messrs. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. publishing service, and after a great deal of communication they brought it out, at 7/6. It is my favourite book. . . .*<sup>11</sup>

It seems that the greater part of the story was in written form by the winter of 1932, when it was read by C.S. Lewis, but that it went no further than the death of Smaug; and it was not until 1936 that ‘the ending chapters’ were written.

During those years my father was engrossed in *The Silmarillion*, the myths and legends of what afterwards became ‘the First Age of the World’ or ‘the Elder Days’, already then with long roots in his imagination and indeed in his writing. A text of *The Silmarillion* made (in all probability) in 1930 was followed by another version, richer and more developed, which was interrupted near its end when demands for a sequel to *The Hobbit* led him to put it aside and write ‘a new story about Hobbits’ in December 1937. Into that world, as he said, ‘Mr. Baggins strayed’; or as he expressed it in a letter written in 1964:

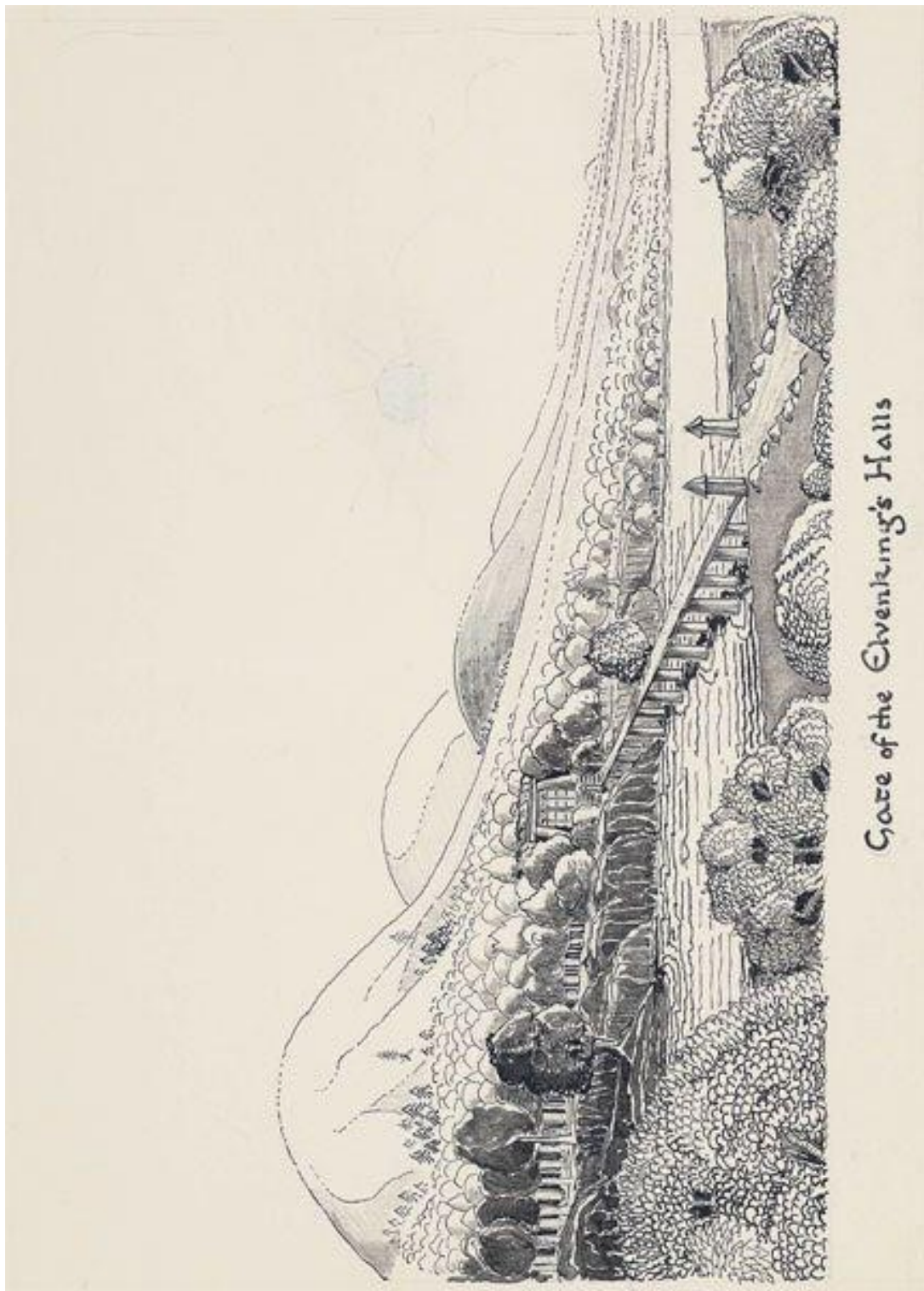
*By the time The Hobbit appeared this ‘matter of the Elder Days’ was in coherent form. The Hobbit was not intended to have anything to do with it. I had the habit while my children were still young of inventing and telling orally, sometimes of writing down, ‘children’s stories’ for their private amusement. . . . The Hobbit was intended to be one of them. It had no necessary connexion with the ‘mythology’, but naturally became attracted towards this dominant construction in my mind, causing the tale to become larger and more heroic as it proceeded.*

This ‘attraction’ exerted by ‘the matter of the Elder Days’ is shown also in his paintings and drawings from those years. Particularly striking is *The Gate of the Elvenking’s Halls* here reproduced (No. 1), if this is compared with the drawing of Nargothrond reproduced in *J.R.R. Tolkien: Artist & Illustrator*, figure 57 (see No. 2). Nargothrond was the name of the great subterranean palace and fortress built by King Finrod Felagund in *The Silmarillion*. Both at Nargothrond and at the Elvenking’s halls the entrance was on the far side of a river, and the halls were tunnelled beneath high hills.

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<sup>11</sup> The ‘someone’ was Elaine Griffiths, and the ‘person’ was Susan Dagnall. The story is told, together with the report on the book written by Rayner Unwin (then ten years old), in Humphrey Carpenter’s *Biography*, pp. 180–1.





Gate of the Elvenking's Halls

*No. 1: The Gate of the Elvenking's Halls*



*No. 2: Nargothrond*

The drawing [No. 2](#) is so similar in conception to the drawing [No. 1](#) of *The Gate of the Elvenking's Halls*, and the hills above the doors so precisely alike in both, that one might suppose them to portray the same scene; and in a sense I think that they do—even though the drawing [No. 2](#) is certainly of Nargothrond, since the entrance has the triple doors of that great fortress. But in my father's imagination, I believe, the two were visually one, or little distinguished: a single image with more than one emergence in the legends.

Another case of a scene with doubled application is the pencil and ink picture of Mirkwood in Chapter VIII, *Flies and Spiders* ([No. 3](#)), which is restored to *The Hobbit* in this edition: it appeared in the first British and American editions but was then dropped. This was redrawn from, and closely modelled on, an earlier painting, depicting a still more evil forest, Taur-na-fuin: it illustrated a story from *The Silmarillion*, the tale of Túrin, and

showed the encounter of the Elves Beleg and Gwindor, small figures among the roots of the great tree in the centre. In the Mirkwood version the Elves are gone, and instead there is a large spider (and a larger number of mushrooms). (In this case my father was prepared, long after, to give even a third application to the scene: writing on the painting the caption *Fangorn Forest* [Treebeard's forest in *The Lord of the Rings*] he let it be used as an illustration in the *J.R.R. Tolkien Calendar 1974*, and with this caption it is reproduced in *Artist & Illustrator*, no. 54. The Elves Beleg and Gwindor were now to be interpreted as the hobbits, Pippin and Merry, lost in Fangorn: but Beleg has his great sword—and is wearing shoes! My father presumably hoped that this would not be noticed, since the figures are very small—or else did not mind if it was).



*No. 3: Mirkwood. Click [here](#) for alternative image.*



He intended the black and white version, *Mirkwood*, to be the first endpaper of *The Hobbit*, and Thror's Map to be placed in Chapter I (or in Chapter III, where Elrond first observed the secret runes). The Moon-runes were originally to appear on the reverse of the map: on the first carefully drawn form of the map, which closely followed the original sketch reproduced [here](#), the caption was 'Thror's Map. Copied by B. Baggins. For moon-runes hold up to a light.' It was objected by Charles Furth of Allen & Unwin that readers would 'just turn over, instead of looking at them through the page as they should'; 'we are trying a rather more cunning method of letting the runes be both there and not there,' he wrote in January 1937. My father replied that he was 'looking forward to finding out your method of reproducing the magic runes'; but later in that month he learned that 'the "magic" was left out through a misunderstanding on the part of the block-maker.' He then drew the runes in reverse 'so that when printed they would read the right way round held up to the light. But I leave this to the Production Department, hoping nonetheless that it will not be necessary to put the magic runes on the face of the chart, which rather spoils it (unless your reference to "magic" refers to something "magical").' The question of costs seems to have settled the matter. As was explained to him, the book had to be modestly priced, and there was no margin for any illustrations; 'but when you sent us these drawings,' wrote Susan Dagnall, 'they were so charming that we could not but insert them, though economically it was quite wrong to do so.' 'Let the Production Department do as it will with the chart [Thror's Map]', my father wrote, when the decision was taken to make it an endpaper; 'I am very grateful to it.' So that it is how it has always appeared; but it seems that he had sent in two copies of the Moon-runes, and those that were printed were not 'the better drawn runes' he had substituted: 'those now shown are ill-done (and not quite upright).'

This is only a sample of that extremely courteous but slightly desperate correspondence of half a century ago. Letters crossed, and influenza struck at block-maker, printer and production department alike and at the most inopportune moments. The upper border of the *Mirkwood* picture was cut out (and never restored; since my father afterwards gave the original to a Chinese student of his it is never likely to be so). He twisted unhappily in the restriction to two colours for the maps—'the change from blue to red on end-paper 2 [the Wilderland map] is detrimental', and wondered whether to substitute blue for red on Thror's Map. Perhaps worst, and involving him in the most labour, was the dust-jacket. As originally coloured, there was a red sun and a red dragon, a red title, and a red flush on the great central mountain that appears on the spine or shelf-back. When my father sent it in in April he foresaw the objection that he had used too many colours (blue, green, red, and black): 'this could be met, with possible improvement, by substituting *white* for *red*; and omitting the sun, or drawing a line round it. The presence of the sun and moon in the sky together refers to the magic attaching to the door.' (See [p. 56](#): 'We still call it Durin's Day when the last moon of Autumn and the sun are in the sky together.') 'We would suggest removing the red,' replied Charles Furth, 'both because the title will show up better in white and because the only feature about which we are not entirely happy in the cover is the flush on the central mountain, which makes it to our eyes just a trifle like a cake.'





*J.R.R. Tolkien's original artwork for The Hobbit jacket*

My father then re-drew the jacket design. 'I have omitted the offending pink icing on the mountainous cake,' he wrote. 'It is now arranged in blue, black, green. The sun and dragon still have some red, which can be left out, in which case the sun will vanish or can have a thin black outline. The colours of the original draft were, I think, more attractive. I may say that my children (if they are anything to go by) much prefer the original, including the red flush on the central mountain—but possibly the cake-suggestion is attractive to them.' He argued still for red dragon, red sun, red title on the front cover, and other details; but Charles Furth was firm. 'Alas,' he wrote, 'the red will have to go.' 'The sun in outline is my chief sorrow,' my father wrote when he

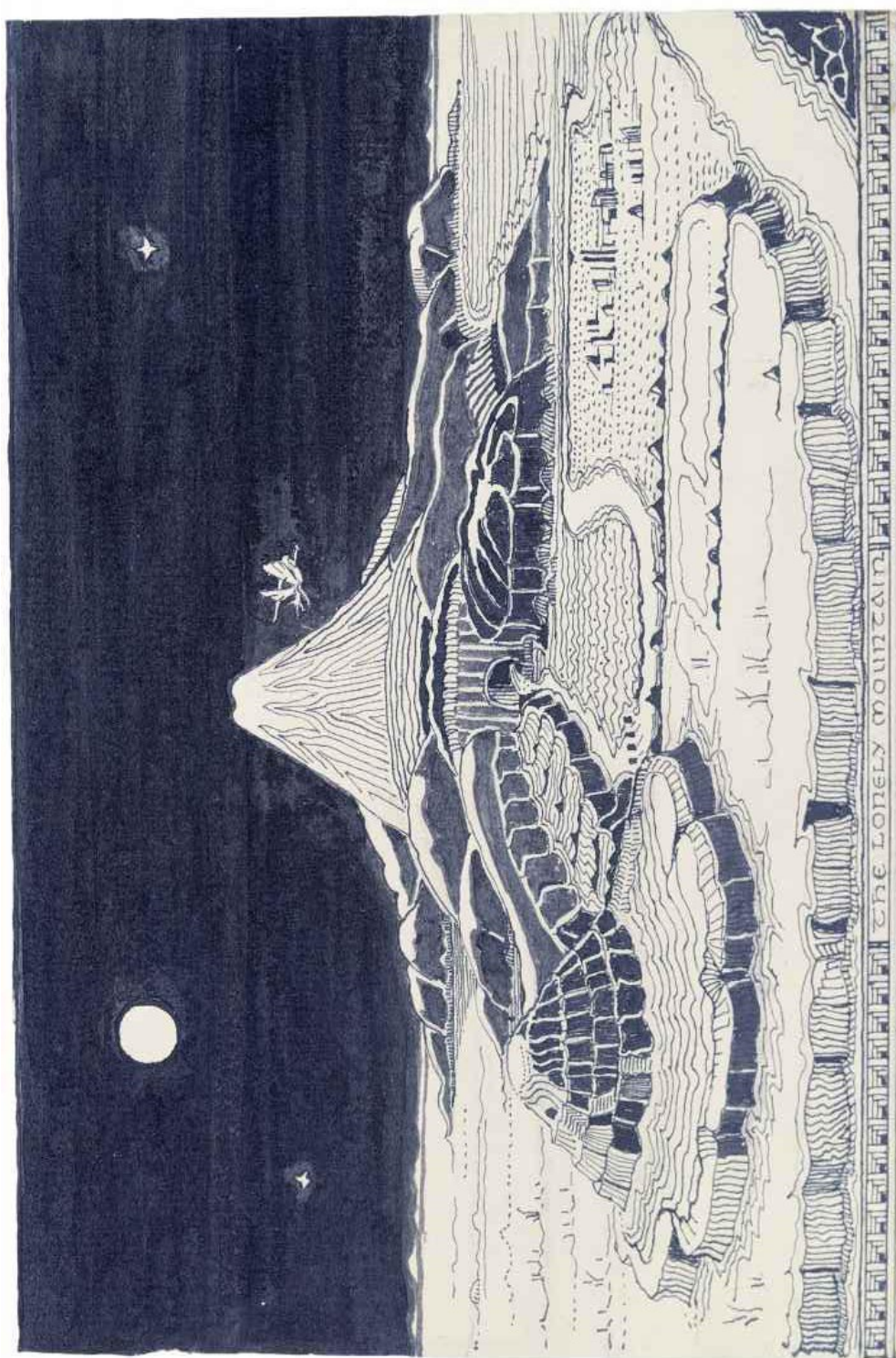
saw the final result, ‘but I realize that it cannot be helped.’<sup>12</sup> The American edition had a different jacket, because, as the publishers said, ‘Your jacket has rather a British look which always seems to disconcert and depress our book trade.’ ‘I am delighted to learn that our jacket has a British look,’ he wrote, ‘but I would not depress or disconcert their book trade for anything.’

He drew and drew again certain subjects from *The Hobbit*: most especially Hobbiton, the Lonely Mountain, and the entrance to the Elvenking’s Halls. No. 5 is a fine drawing of the Lonely Mountain in the possession of Mr Baird Searles of New York, who has most kindly allowed it to be reproduced here and provided a transparency. He received it as a present from Mr Paul Banham, to whom my father had sent it, about 1959. This shows the great meander in the River Running around the site of Dale; the water-colour of Smaug flying round the Mountain (No. 4) published in *Pictures by J.R.R. Tolkien* (no. 18) shows the course of the river still to the west of the ruins, as on the original map. The flights of steps up to the old guard-post on Ravenhill can be seen at the left (see p. 240).

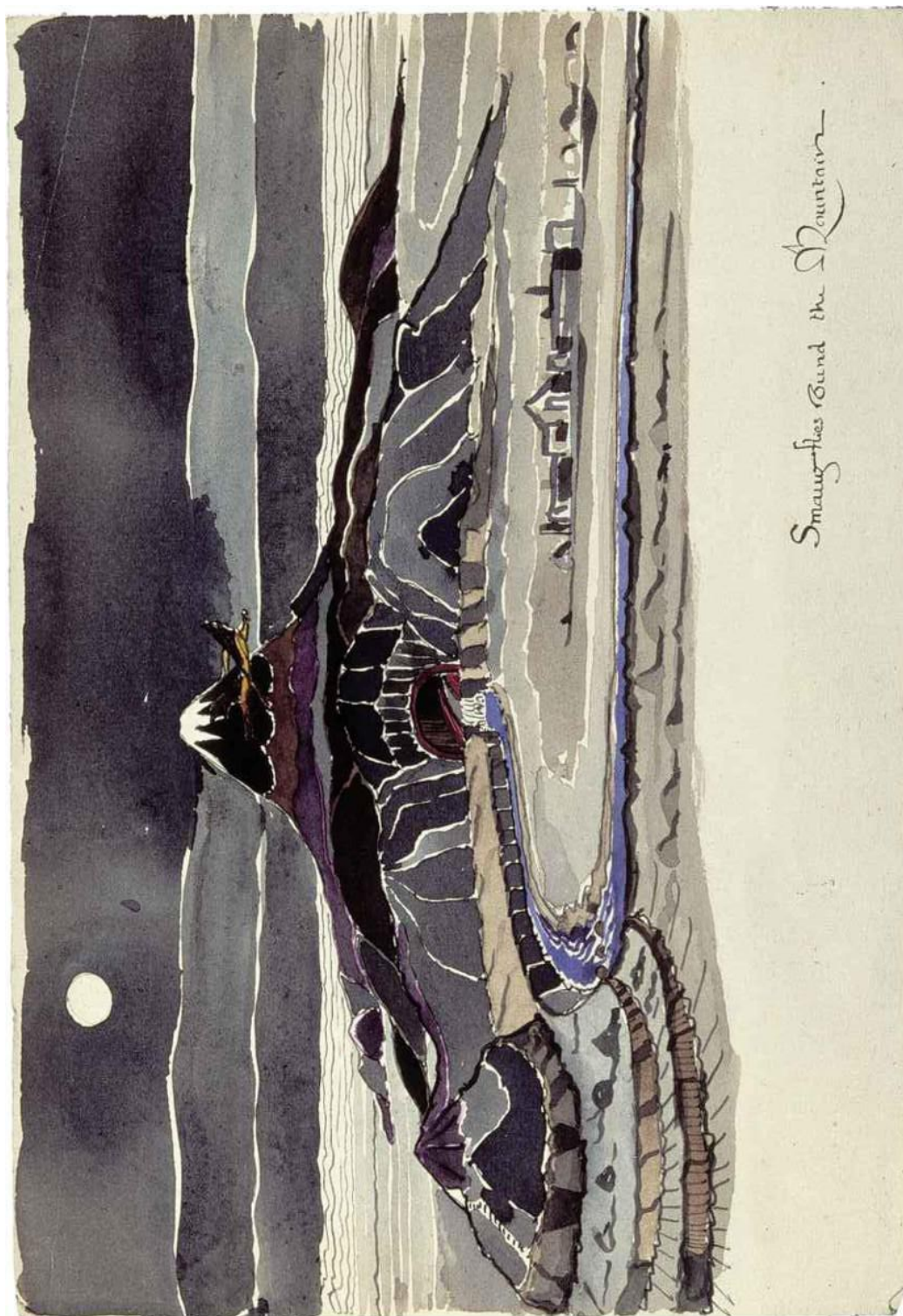
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<sup>12</sup> A red sun and dragon, and red title and author’s name, were used on the cover (a truncated version of the original dust-jacket) of the reset paperback edition of 1975, but not on the dust-jacket of the reset hardback edition of 1978.





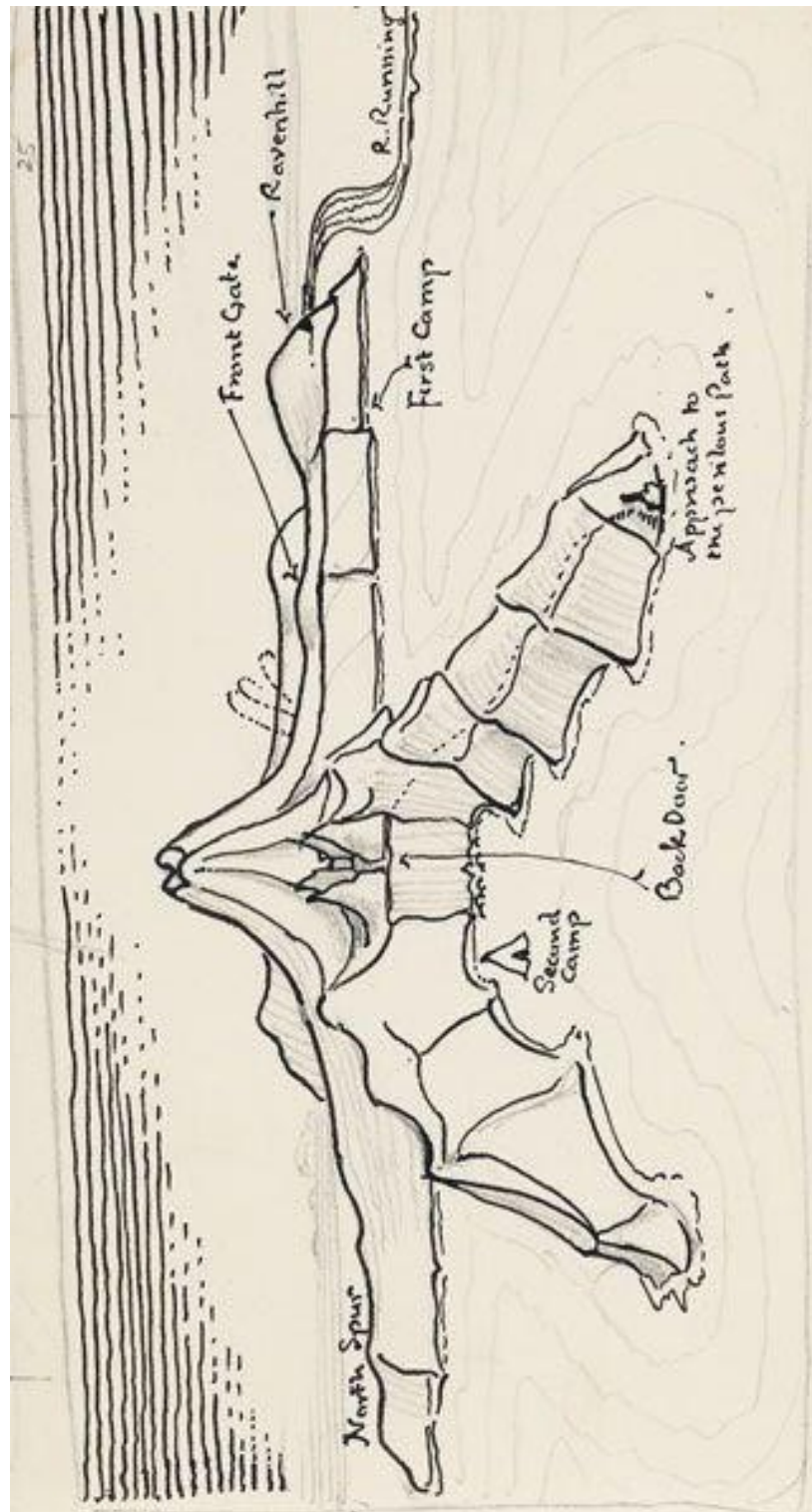
*No. 4: Smaug flies round the Mountain*



*No. 5: The Lonely Mountain*

No. 6 is a schematic drawing of the Lonely Mountain seen from the west, showing the position of the second camp and the perilous path which Bilbo with the dwarves Fili and Kili found (p. 206). This path brought them to a ledge ‘narrow and breathless’, ‘with a fall of a hundred and fifty feet beside them on to sharp rocks below’; the ledge led into a ‘little steep-walled bay’, and ‘at its inner end a flat wall rose up in the lower part, close to the ground, was as smooth and upright as mason’s work’. This is shown in No. 7, a sketch of ‘The Back Door.’ Dwarves are seen pulling up goods on ropes from the second camp below, and above are seen two figures on the path ‘that led higher and higher on to the mountain’ (p. 207).





*No. 6: The Lonely Mountain from the west*



*No. 7: The Back Door*

Three weeks after the publication of *The Hobbit*, Stanley Unwin wrote to my father saying that ‘a large public’ would be ‘clamouring next year to hear more from you about Hobbits!’ In the course of his reply (15 October 1937) he said:

*All the same I am a little perturbed. I cannot think of anything more to say about hobbits. Mr Baggins seems to have exhibited so fully both the Took and the Baggins side of their nature. But I have only too much to say, and much already written, about the world into which the hobbit intruded. You can, of course, see any of it, and say what you like about it, if and when you wish. I should rather like an opinion, other than that of Mr C. S. Lewis and my children, whether it has any value in itself, or as a marketable commodity, other than hobbits. But if it is true that The Hobbit has come to stay and more will be wanted, I will start the process of thought, and try to*

get some idea of a theme drawn from this material for treatment in a similar style and for a similar audience—possibly including actual hobbits. My daughter would like something on the Took family. One reader wants fuller details about Gandalf and the Necromancer. But that is too dark—much too dark for Richard Hughes’ snag.<sup>13</sup> I am afraid that snag appears in everything; though actually the presence (even if only on the borders) of the terrible is, I believe, what gives this world its imagined verisimilitude. A safe fairyland is untrue to all worlds. At the moment I am suffering like Mr Baggins from a touch of ‘staggerment’, and I hope I am not taking myself too seriously. But I must confess that your letter has aroused in me a faint hope. I mean, I begin to wonder whether duty and desire may not (perhaps) in future go more closely together. I have spent nearly all the vacation-times of seventeen years examining, and doing things of that sort, driven by immediate financial necessity (mainly medical and educational). Writing stories in prose or verse has been stolen, often guiltily, from time already mortgaged, and has been broken and ineffective. I may perhaps now do what I much desire to do, and not fail of financial duty. Perhaps!

*The Silmarillion*, the long unfinished poem *The Lay of Leithian* (concerned with one of the major stories of the Elder Days), and other things went to Allen and Unwin in November, and were returned in the following month. In his accompanying letter of 15 December Stanley Unwin, urging my father ‘to write another book about *The Hobbit*’, reported to him that ‘the first edition is now sold out’, and that ‘we are expecting supplies of the reprint containing the four coloured illustrations<sup>14</sup> almost immediately. If any of your friends want to make sure of their copies of the first edition they had better buy them quickly from any bookseller who still has one in stock.’

On 16 December he replied to Stanley Unwin:

*I did not think any of the stuff I dropped on you filled the bill. . . . I think it is plain that quite apart from it, a sequel or successor to *The Hobbit* is called for. I promise to give this thought and attention. But I am sure you will sympathize when I say that the construction of elaborate and consistent mythology (and two languages) rather occupies the mind, and the *Silmarils* are in my heart. So that goodness knows what will happen. Mr Baggins began as a comic tale among conventional and inconsistent Grimm’s fairy-tale dwarves, and got drawn into the edge of it—so that even Sauron the terrible peeped over the edge. And what more can hobbits do? They can be comic, but their comedy is suburban unless it is set against things more elemental.*

Three days later he wrote to Charles Furth: ‘I have written the first chapter of a new story about Hobbits—“A long expected party”’

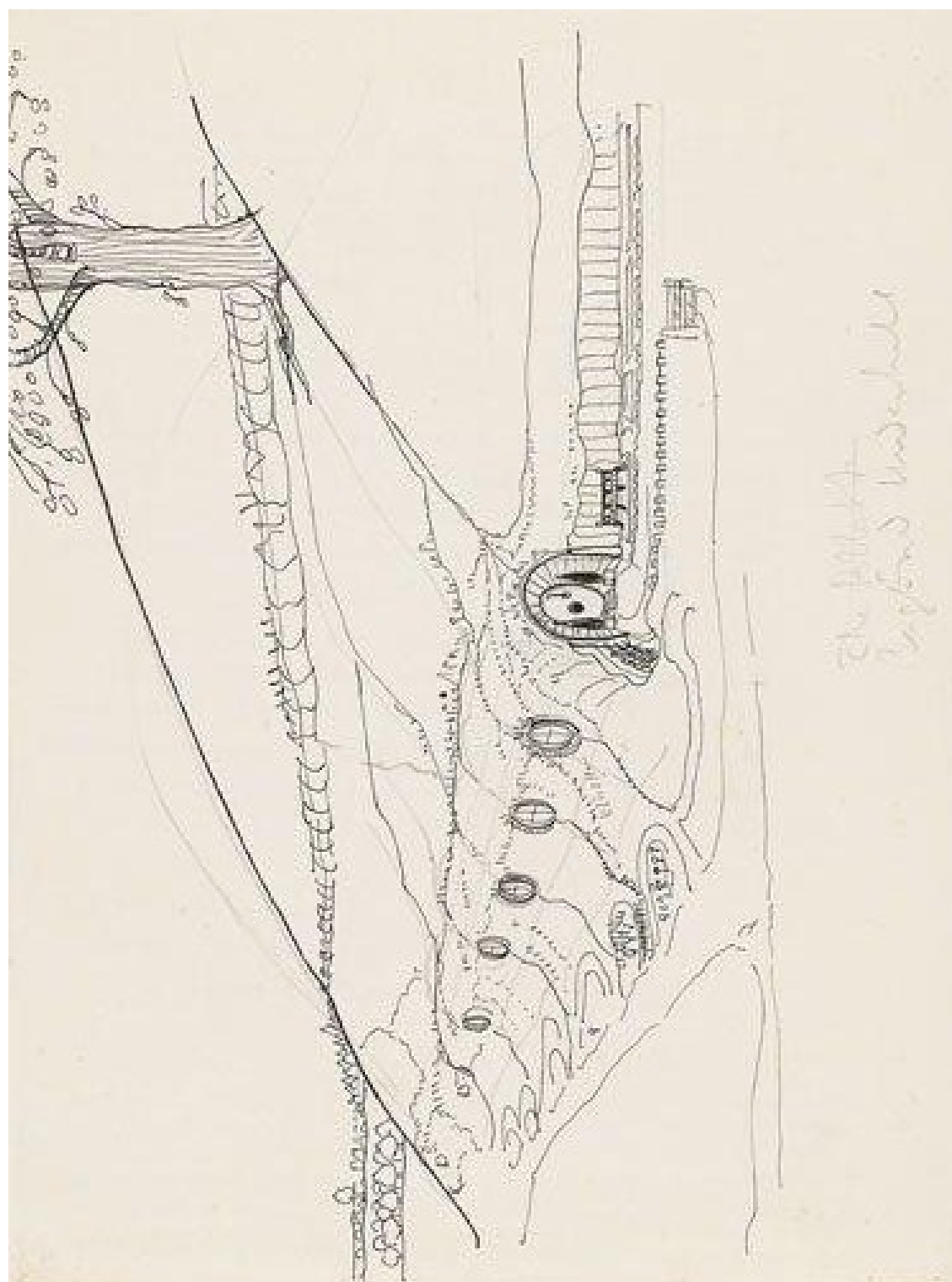
That was the first chapter of *The Lord of the Rings*.

—Christopher Tolkien

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<sup>13</sup> Richard Hughes had written to Stanley Unwin about *The Hobbit*, saying ‘The only snag I can see is that many parents . . . may be afraid that certain parts of it would be too terrifying for bedtime reading.’

<sup>14</sup> The first impression had no pictures in colour. My father was pleased with the four coloured reproductions, but regretted that ‘the Eagle picture’ (illustrating the first sentence of Chapter VI, *Queer Lodgings*) had not been included—‘merely because I should have liked to see it reproduced.’ It was in fact included in the first American edition (which did not use *Bilbo Comes to the Huts of the Raft-elves*), and finally appeared in a British edition in 1978. In my note on this painting in *Pictures* (no. 9) I said that the eagle was inspired by the painting of a Golden Eagle by Archibald Thorburn. This has been queried on the grounds that the base of the eagle’s tail is white, and so must depict a White-tailed Eagle. My father’s eagle was a Golden Eagle, nonetheless; I remember finding the picture for him in T. A. Coward, *The Birds of the British Isles* (Vol. 1 plate 132). Thorburn’s painting is of a young bird, which in this species has a white base to the tail.



The Village  
England Underhill





## Note On The Text




*The Hobbit* was first published in September 1937. Its 1951 second edition (fifth impression) contains a significantly revised portion of Chapter V, “Riddles in the Dark,” which brings the story of *The Hobbit* more in line with its sequel, *The Lord of the Rings*, then in progress. Tolkien made some further revisions to the American edition published by Ballantine Books in February 1966, and to the British third edition (sixteenth impression) published by George Allen & Unwin later that same year.

For the 1995 British hardcover edition, published by HarperCollins, the text of *The Hobbit* was entered into word-processing files, and a number of further corrections of misprints and errors were made. Since then, various editions of *The Hobbit* have been generated from that computerized text file. For the present text, that file has been compared again, line by line, with the earlier editions, and a number of further corrections have been made to present a text that, as closely as possible, represents Tolkien’s final intended form.

Readers interested in details of the changes made at various times to the text of *The Hobbit* are referred to Appendix A, “Textual and Revisional Notes,” of *The Annotated Hobbit* (1988), and *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Descriptive Bibliography* by Wayne G. Hammond, with the assistance of Douglas A. Anderson (1993).


—Douglas A. Anderson


May 2001



  
  


This is a story of long ago. At that time the languages and letters were quite different from ours of today. English is used to represent the languages. But two points may be noted. (1) In English the only correct plural of *dwarf* is *dwarfs*, and the adjective is *dwarfish*. In this story *dwarves* and *dwarvish* are used<sup>15</sup>, but only when speaking of the ancient people to whom Thorin Oakenshield and his companions belonged. (2) *Orc* is not an English word. It occurs in one or two places but is usually translated *goblin* (or *hobgoblin* for the larger kinds). *Orc* is the hobbits' form of the name given at that time to these creatures, and it is not connected at all with our *orc*, *ork*, applied to sea-animals of dolphin-kind.

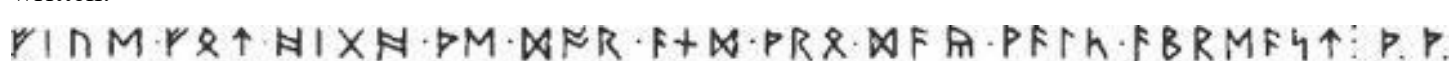
Runes were old letters originally used for cutting or scratching on wood, stone, or metal, and so were thin and angular. At the time of this tale only the Dwarves made regular use of them, especially for private or secret records. Their runes are in this book represented by English runes, which are known now to few people. If the runes on Thrór's Map are compared with the transcriptions into modern letters (on pp. 24 and 59-60), the alphabet, adapted to modern English, can be discovered and the above runic title also read. On the [Map](#) all the

normal runes are found, except  for X. I and U are used for J and V. There was no rune for Q (use CW);

nor for Z (the dwarf-rune  may be used if required). It will be found, however, that some single runes stand

for two modern letters: *th*, *ng*, *ee*; other runes of the same kind ( , *ea* and , *st*) were also

sometimes used. The secret door was marked D, . From the side a hand pointed to this, and under it was written:

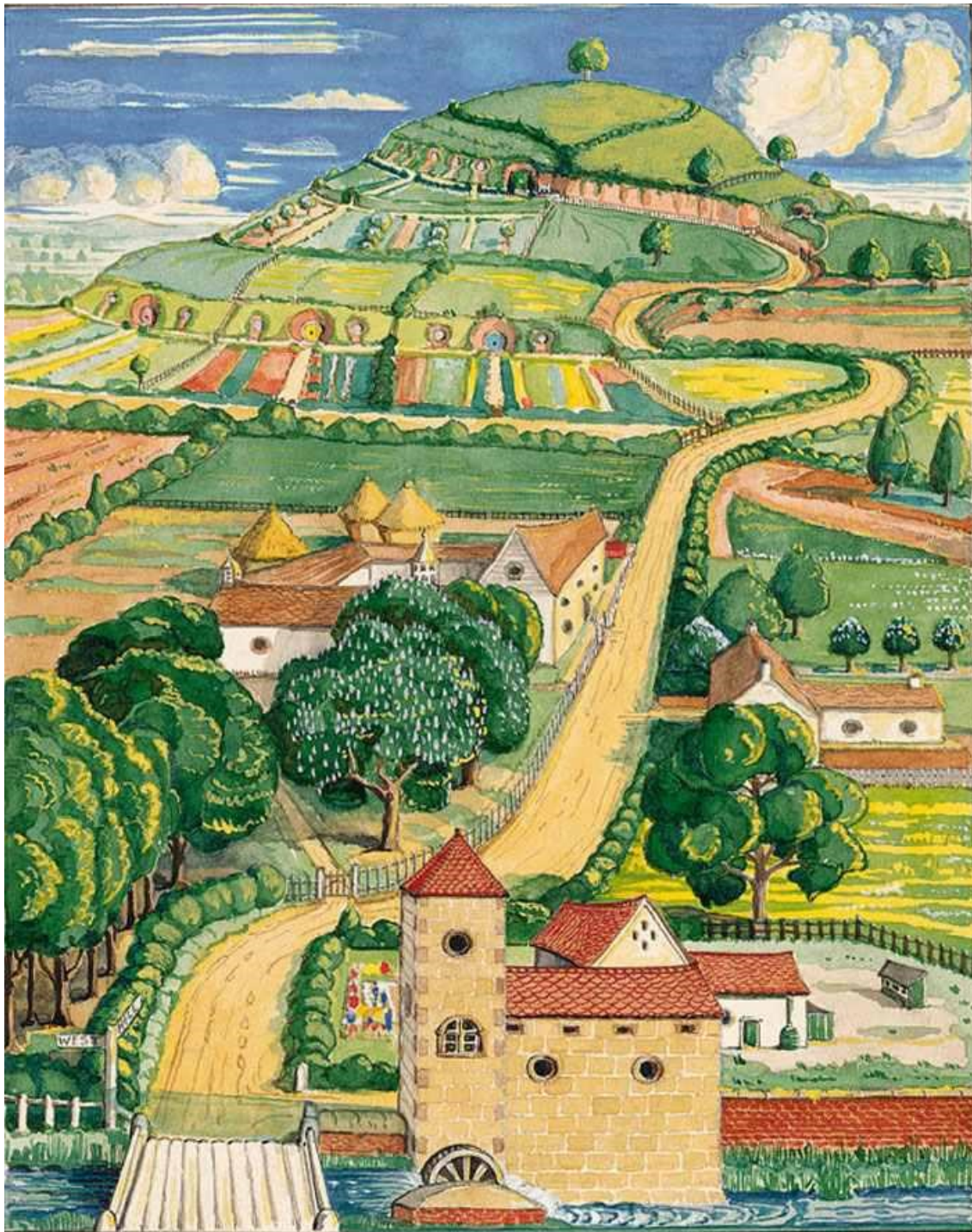


The last two runes are the initials of Thrór and Thrain. The moon-runes read by Elrond were:



On the Map the compass points are marked in runes, with East at the top, as usual in dwarf-maps, and so read clockwise: E(ast), S(outh), W(est), N(orth).

<sup>15</sup> The reason for this use is given in *The Lord of the Rings*, [Appendix F](#).



The hill : hobbiton~across~the Water



Click [here](#) for alternative image.



## Chapter I: An Unexpected Party

In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, dirty, wet hole, filled with the ends of worms and an oozy smell, nor yet a dry, bare, sandy hole with nothing in it to sit down on or to eat: it was a hobbit-hole, and that means comfort.

It had a perfectly round door like a porthole, painted green, with a shiny yellow brass knob in the exact middle. The door opened on to a tube-shaped hall like a tunnel: a very comfortable tunnel without smoke, with panelled walls, and floors tiled and carpeted, provided with polished chairs, and lots and lots of pegs for hats and coats—the hobbit was fond of visitors. The tunnel wound on and on, going fairly but not quite straight into the side of the hill—The Hill, as all the people for many miles round called it—and many little round doors opened out of it, first on one side and then on another. No going upstairs for the hobbit: bedrooms, bathrooms, cellars, pantries (lots of these), wardrobes (he had whole rooms devoted to clothes), kitchens, dining-rooms, all were on the same floor, and indeed on the same passage. The best rooms were all on the left-hand side (going in), for these were the only ones to have windows, deep-set round windows looking over his garden, and meadows beyond, sloping down to the river.

This hobbit was a very well-to-do hobbit, and his name was Baggins. The Bagginses had lived in the neighbourhood of The Hill for time out of mind, and people considered them very respectable, not only because most of them were rich, but also because they never had any adventures or did anything unexpected: you could tell what a Baggins would say on any question without the bother of asking him. This is a story of how a Baggins had an adventure, and found himself doing and saying things altogether unexpected. He may have lost the neighbours' respect, but he gained—well, you will see whether he gained anything in the end.

The mother of our particular hobbit—what is a hobbit? I suppose hobbits need some description nowadays, since they have become rare and shy of the Big People, as they call us. They are (or were) a little people, about half our height, and smaller than the bearded Dwarves. Hobbits have no beards. There is little or no magic about them, except the ordinary everyday sort which helps them to disappear quietly and quickly when large stupid folk like you and me come blundering along, making a noise like elephants which they can hear a mile off. They are inclined to be fat in the stomach; they dress in bright colours (chiefly green and yellow); wear no shoes, because their feet grow natural leathery soles and thick warm brown hair like the stuff on their heads (which is curly); have long clever brown fingers, good-natured faces, and laugh deep fruity laughs (especially after dinner, which they have twice a day when they can get it). Now you know enough to go on with. As I was saying, the mother of this hobbit—of Bilbo Baggins, that is—was the famous Belladonna Took, one of the three remarkable daughters of the Old Took, head of the hobbits who lived across The Water, the small river that ran at the foot of The Hill. It was often said (in other families) that long ago one of the Took ancestors must have taken a fairy wife. That was, of course, absurd, but certainly there was still something not entirely hobbitlike about them, and once in a while members of the Took-clan would go and have adventures. They discreetly disappeared, and the family hushed it up; but the fact remained that the Tookes were not as respectable as the Bagginses, though they were undoubtedly richer.

Not that Belladonna Took ever had any adventures after she became Mrs. Bungo Baggins. Bungo, that was Bilbo's father, built the most luxurious hobbit-hole for her (and partly with her money) that was to be found either under The Hill or over The Hill or across The Water, and there they remained to the end of their days. Still it is probable that Bilbo, her only son, although he looked and behaved exactly like a second edition of his solid and comfortable father, got something a bit queer in his make-up from the Took side, something that only waited for a chance to come out. The chance never arrived, until Bilbo Baggins was grown up, being about fifty



years old or so, and living in the beautiful hobbit-hole built by his father, which I have just described for you, until he had in fact apparently settled down immovably.

By some curious chance one morning long ago in the quiet of the world, when there was less noise and more green, and the hobbits were still numerous and prosperous, and Bilbo Baggins was standing at his door after breakfast smoking an enormous long wooden pipe that reached nearly down to his woolly toes (neatly brushed)—Gandalf came by. Gandalf! If you had heard only a quarter of what I have heard about him, and I have only heard very little of all there is to hear, you would be prepared for any sort of remarkable tale. Tales and adventures sprouted up all over the place wherever he went, in the most extraordinary fashion. He had not been down that way under The Hill for ages and ages, not since his friend the Old Took died, in fact, and the hobbits had almost forgotten what he looked like. He had been away over The Hill and across The Water on businesses of his own since they were all small hobbit-boys and hobbit-girls.

All that the unsuspecting Bilbo saw that morning was an old man with a staff. He had a tall pointed blue hat, a long grey cloak, a silver scarf over which his long white beard hung down below his waist, and immense black boots.

“Good Morning!” said Bilbo, and he meant it. The sun was shining, and the grass was very green. But Gandalf looked at him from under long bushy eyebrows that stuck out further than the brim of his shady hat.

“What do you mean?” he said. “Do you wish me a good morning, or mean that it is a good morning whether I want it or not; or that you feel good this morning; or that it is a morning to be good on?”

“All of them at once,” said Bilbo. “And a very fine morning for a pipe of tobacco out of doors, into the bargain. If you have a pipe about you, sit down and have a fill of mine! There’s no hurry, we have all the day before us!” Then Bilbo sat down on a seat by his door, crossed his legs, and blew out a beautiful grey ring of smoke that sailed up into the air without breaking and floated away over The Hill.

“Very pretty!” said Gandalf. “But I have no time to blow smoke-rings this morning. I am looking for someone to share in an adventure that I am arranging, and it’s very difficult to find anyone.”

“I should think so—in these parts! We are plain quiet folk and have no use for adventures. Nasty disturbing uncomfortable things! Make you late for dinner! I can’t think what anybody sees in them,” said our Mr. Baggins, and stuck one thumb behind his braces, and blew out another even bigger smoke-ring. Then he took out his morning letters, and began to read, pretending to take no more notice of the old man. He had decided that he was not quite his sort, and wanted him to go away. But the old man did not move. He stood leaning on his stick and gazing at the hobbit without saying anything, till Bilbo got quite uncomfortable and even a little cross.

“Good morning!” he said at last. “We don’t want any adventures here, thank you! You might try over The Hill or across The Water.” By this he meant that the conversation was at an end.

“What a lot of things you do use *Good morning* for!” said Gandalf. “Now you mean that you want to get rid of me, and that it won’t be good till I move off.”

“Not at all, not at all, my dear sir! Let me see, I don’t think I know your name?”

“Yes, yes, my dear sir—and I do know your name, Mr. Bilbo Baggins. And you do know my name, though you don’t remember that I belong to it. I am Gandalf, and Gandalf means me! To think that I should have lived to be good-morninged by Belladonna Took’s son, as if I was selling buttons at the door!”

“Gandalf, Gandalf! Good gracious me! Not the wandering wizard that gave Old Took a pair of magic diamond studs that fastened themselves and never came undone till ordered? Not the fellow who used to tell such wonderful tales at parties, about dragons and goblins and giants and the rescue of princesses and the unexpected luck of widows’ sons? Not the man that used to make such particularly excellent fireworks! I remember those! Old Took used to have them on Midsummer’s Eve. Splendid! They used to go up like great lilies and snapdragons and laburnums of fire and hang in the twilight all evening!” You will notice already that Mr. Baggins was not quite so prosy as he liked to believe, also that he was very fond of flowers. “Dear me!” he went on. “Not the Gandalf who was responsible for so many quiet lads and lasses going off into the Blue for

mad adventures? Anything from climbing trees to visiting elves—or sailing in ships, sailing to other shores! Bless me, life used to be quite inter—I mean, you used to upset things badly in these parts once upon a time. I beg your pardon, but I had no idea you were still in business.”

“Where else should I be?” said the wizard. “All the same I am pleased to find you remember something about me. You seem to remember my fireworks kindly, at any rate, and that is not without hope. Indeed for your old grandfather Took’s sake, and for the sake of poor Belladonna, I will give you what you asked for.”

“I beg your pardon, I haven’t asked for anything!”

“Yes, you have! Twice now. My pardon. I give it you. In fact I will go so far as to send you on this adventure. Very amusing for me, very good for you—and profitable too, very likely, if you ever get over it.”

“Sorry! I don’t want any adventures, thank you. Not today. Good morning! But please come to tea—any time you like! Why not tomorrow? Come tomorrow! Good bye!” With that the hobbit turned and scuttled inside his round green door, and shut it as quickly as he dared, not to seem rude. Wizards after all are wizards.

“What on earth did I ask him to tea for!” he said to himself, as he went to the pantry. He had only just had breakfast, but he thought a cake or two and a drink of something would do him good after his fright.

Gandalf in the meantime was still standing outside the door, and laughing long but quietly. After a while he stepped up, and with the spike on his staff scratched a queer sign on the hobbit’s beautiful green front-door. Then he strode away, just about the time when Bilbo was finishing his second cake and beginning to think that he had escaped adventures very well.

The next day he had almost forgotten about Gandalf. He did not remember things very well, unless he put them down on his Engagement Tablet: like this: *Gandalf Tea Wednesday*. Yesterday he had been too flustered to do anything of the kind.

Just before tea-time there came a tremendous ring on the front-door bell, and then he remembered! He rushed and put on the kettle, and put out another cup and saucer, and an extra cake or two, and ran to the door.

“I am so sorry to keep you waiting!” he was going to say, when he saw that it was not Gandalf at all. It was a dwarf with a blue beard tucked into a golden belt, and very bright eyes under his dark-green hood. As soon as the door was opened, he pushed inside, just as if he had been expected.

He hung his hooded cloak on the nearest peg, and “Dwalin at your service!” he said with a low bow.

“Bilbo Baggins at yours!” said the hobbit, too surprised to ask any questions for the moment. When the silence that followed had become uncomfortable, he added: “I am just about to take tea; pray come and have some with me.” A little stiff perhaps, but he meant it kindly. And what would you do, if an uninvited dwarf came and hung his things up in your hall without a word of explanation?

They had not been at table long, in fact they had hardly reached the third cake, when there came another even louder ring at the bell.

“Excuse me!” said the hobbit, and off he went to the door.

“So you have got here at last!” That was what he was going to say to Gandalf this time. But it was not Gandalf. Instead there was a very old-looking dwarf on the step with a white beard and a scarlet hood; and he too hopped inside as soon as the door was open, just as if he had been invited.

“I see they have begun to arrive already,” he said when he caught sight of Dwalin’s green hood hanging up. He hung his red one next to it, and “Balin at your service!” he said with his hand on his breast.

“Thank you!” said Bilbo with a gasp. It was not the correct thing to say, but *they have begun to arrive* had flustered him badly. He liked visitors, but he liked to know them before they arrived, and he preferred to ask them himself. He had a horrible thought that the cakes might run short, and then he—as the host: he knew his duty and stuck to it however painful—he might have to go without.

“Come along in, and have some tea!” he managed to say after taking a deep breath.

“A little beer would suit me better, if it is all the same to you, my good sir,” said Balin with the white beard. “But I don’t mind some cake—seed-cake, if you have any.”

“Lots!” Bilbo found himself answering, to his own surprise; and he found himself scuttling off, too, to the cellar to fill a pint beer-mug, and then to a pantry to fetch two beautiful round seed-cakes which he had baked that afternoon for his after-supper morsel.

When he got back Balin and Dwalin were talking at the table like old friends (as a matter of fact they were brothers). Bilbo plumped down the beer and the cake in front of them, when loud came a ring at the bell again, and then another ring.

“Gandalf for certain this time,” he thought as he puffed along the passage. But it was not. It was two more dwarves, both with blue hoods, silver belts, and yellow beards; and each of them carried a bag of tools and a spade. In they hopped, as soon as the door began to open—Bilbo was hardly surprised at all.

“What can I do for you, my dwarves?” he said.

“Kili at your service!” said the one. “And Fili!” added the other; and they both swept off their blue hoods and bowed.

“At yours and your family’s!” replied Bilbo, remembering his manners this time.

“Dwalin and Balin here already, I see,” said Kili. “Let us join the throng!”

“Throng!” thought Mr. Baggins. “I don’t like the sound of that. I really must sit down for a minute and collect my wits, and have a drink.” He had only just had a sip—in the corner, while the four dwarves sat round the table, and talked about mines and gold and troubles with the goblins, and the depredations of dragons, and lots of other things which he did not understand, and did not want to, for they sounded much too adventurous—when, *ding-dong-a-ling-dang*, his bell rang again, as if some naughty little hobbit-boy was trying to pull the handle off.

“Someone at the door!” he said, blinking.

“Some four, I should say by the sound,” said Fili. “Besides, we saw them coming along behind us in the distance.”

The poor little hobbit sat down in the hall and put his head in his hands, and wondered what had happened, and what was going to happen, and whether they would all stay to supper. Then the bell rang again louder than ever, and he had to run to the door. It was not four after all, it was five. Another dwarf had come along while he was wondering in the hall. He had hardly turned the knob, before they were all inside, bowing and saying “at your service” one after another. Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin, and Gloin were their names; and very soon two purple hoods, a grey hood, a brown hood, and a white hood were hanging on the pegs, and off they marched with their broad hands stuck in their gold and silver belts to join the others. Already it had almost become a throng. Some called for ale, and some for porter, and one for coffee, and all of them for cakes; so the hobbit was kept very busy for a while.

A big jug of coffee had just been set in the hearth, the seed-cakes were gone, and the dwarves were starting on a round of buttered scones, when there came—a loud knock. Not a ring, but a hard rat-tat on the hobbit’s beautiful green door. Somebody was banging with a stick!

Bilbo rushed along the passage, very angry, and altogether bewildered and bewuthered—this was the most awkward Wednesday he ever remembered. He pulled open the door with a jerk, and they all fell in, one on top of the other. More dwarves, four more! And there was Gandalf behind, leaning on his staff and laughing. He had made quite a dent on the beautiful door; he had also, by the way, knocked out the secret mark that he had put there the morning before.

“Carefully! Carefully!” he said. “It is not like you, Bilbo, to keep friends waiting on the mat, and then open the door like a pop-gun! Let me introduce Bifur, Bofur, Bombur, and especially Thorin!”

“At your service!” said Bifur, Bofur, and Bombur standing in a row. Then they hung up two yellow hoods and a pale green one; and also a sky-blue one with a long silver tassel. This last belonged to Thorin, an enormously

important dwarf, in fact no other than the great Thorin Oakenshield himself, who was not at all pleased at falling flat on Bilbo's mat with Bifur, Bofur, and Bombur on top of him. For one thing Bombur was immensely fat and heavy. Thorin indeed was very haughty, and said nothing about *service*; but poor Mr. Baggins said he was sorry so many times, that at last he grunted "pray don't mention it," and stopped frowning.

"Now we are all here!" said Gandalf, looking at the row of thirteen hoods—the best detachable party hoods—and his own hat hanging on the pegs. "Quite a merry gathering! I hope there is something left for the late-comers to eat and drink! What's that? Tea! No thank you! A little red wine, I think for me."

"And for me," said Thorin.

"And raspberry jam and apple-tart," said Bifur.

"And mince-pies and cheese," said Bofur.

"And pork-pie and salad," said Bombur.

"And more cakes—and ale—and coffee, if you don't mind," called the other dwarves through the door.

"Put on a few eggs, there's a good fellow!" Gandalf called after him, as the hobbit stumped off to the pantries. "And just bring out the cold chicken and pickles!"

"Seems to know as much about the inside of my larders as I do myself!" thought Mr. Baggins, who was feeling positively flummoxed, and was beginning to wonder whether a most wretched adventure had not come right into his house. By the time he had got all the bottles and dishes and knives and forks and glasses and plates and spoons and things piled up on big trays, he was getting very hot, and red in the face, and annoyed.

"Confusticate and bebother these dwarves!" he said aloud. "Why don't they come and lend a hand?" Lo and behold! there stood Balin and Dwalin at the door of the kitchen, and Fili and Kili behind them, and before he could say *knife* they had whisked the trays and a couple of small tables into the parlour and set out everything afresh.

Gandalf sat at the head of the party with the thirteen dwarves all round: and Bilbo sat on a stool at the fireside, nibbling at a biscuit (his appetite was quite taken away), and trying to look as if this was all perfectly ordinary and not in the least an adventure. The dwarves ate and ate, and talked and talked, and time got on. At last they pushed their chairs back, and Bilbo made a move to collect the plates and glasses.

"I suppose you will all stay to supper?" he said in his politest unpressing tones.

"Of course!" said Thorin. "And after. We shan't get through the business till late, and we must have some music first. Now to clear up!"

Thereupon the twelve dwarves—not Thorin, he was too important, and stayed talking to Gandalf—jumped to their feet, and made tall piles of all the things. Off they went, not waiting for trays, balancing columns of plates, each with a bottle on the top, with one hand, while the hobbit ran after them almost squeaking with fright: "please be careful!" and "please, don't trouble! I can manage." But the dwarves only started to sing:

*Chip the glasses and crack the plates!  
Blunt the knives and bend the forks!  
That's what Bilbo Baggins hates!  
Smash the bottles and burn the corks!*

*Cut the cloth and tread on the fat!  
Pour the milk on the pantry floor!  
Leave the bones on the bedroom mat!  
Splash the wine on every door!*

*Dump the crocks in a boiling bowl;  
Pound them up with a thumping pole;  
And when you've finished, if any are whole,*



*Send them down the hall to roll!*

*That's what Bilbo Baggins hates!  
So, carefully! carefully with the plates!*

And of course they did none of these dreadful things, and everything was cleaned and put away safe as quick as lightning, while the hobbit was turning round and round in the middle of the kitchen trying to see what they were doing. Then they went back, and found Thorin with his feet on the fender smoking a pipe. He was blowing the most enormous smoke-rings, and wherever he told one to go, it went—up the chimney, or behind the clock on the mantelpiece, or under the table, or round and round the ceiling; but wherever it went it was not quick enough to escape Gandalf. Pop! he sent a smaller smoke-ring from his short clay-pipe straight through each one of Thorin's. Then Gandalf's smoke-ring would go green and come back to hover over the wizard's head. He had a cloud of them about him already, and in the dim light it made him look strange and sorcerous. Bilbo stood still and watched—he loved smoke-rings—and then he blushed to think how proud he had been yesterday morning of the smoke-rings he had sent up the wind over The Hill.

“Now for some music!” said Thorin. “Bring out the instruments!”

Kili and Fili rushed for their bags and brought back little fiddles; Dori, Nori, and Ori brought out flutes from somewhere inside their coats; Bombur produced a drum from the hall; Bifur and Bofur went out too, and came back with clarinets that they had left among the walking-sticks. Dwalin and Balin said: “Excuse me, I left mine in the porch!” “Just bring mine in with you!” said Thorin. They came back with viols as big as themselves, and with Thorin's harp wrapped in a green cloth. It was a beautiful golden harp, and when Thorin struck it the music began all at once, so sudden and sweet that Bilbo forgot everything else, and was swept away into dark lands under strange moons, far over The Water and very far from his hobbit-hole under The Hill.

The dark came into the room from the little window that opened in the side of The Hill; the firelight flickered—it was April—and still they played on, while the shadow of Gandalf's beard wagged against the wall.

The dark filled all the room, and the fire died down, and the shadows were lost, and still they played on. And suddenly first one and then another began to sing as they played, deep-throated singing of the dwarves in the deep places of their ancient homes; and this is like a fragment of their song, if it can be like their song without their music.

*Far over the misty mountains cold  
To dungeons deep and caverns old  
We must away ere break of day  
To seek the pale enchanted gold.*

*The dwarves of yore made mighty spells,  
While hammers fell like ringing bells  
In places deep, where dark things sleep,  
In hollow halls beneath the fells.*

*For ancient king and elvish lord  
There many a gleaming golden hoard  
They shaped and wrought, and light they caught  
To hide in gems on hilt of sword.*

*On silver necklaces they strung  
The flowering stars, on crowns they hung  
The dragon-fire, in twisted wire  
They meshed the light of moon and sun.*

*Far over the misty mountains cold*

*To dungeons deep and caverns old  
We must away, ere break of day,  
To claim our long-forgotten gold.*

*Goblets they carved there for themselves  
And harps of gold; where no man delves  
There lay they long, and many a song  
Was sung unheard by men or elves.*

*The pines were roaring on the height,  
The winds were moaning in the night.  
The fire was red, it flaming spread;  
The trees like torches blazed with light.*

*The bells were ringing in the dale  
And men looked up with faces pale;  
The dragon's ire more fierce than fire  
Laid low their towers and houses frail.*

*The mountain smoked beneath the moon;  
The dwarves, they heard the tramp of doom.  
They fled their hall to dying fall  
Beneath his feet, beneath the moon.*

*Far over the misty mountains grim  
To dungeons deep and caverns dim  
We must away, ere break of day,  
To win our harps and gold from him!*

As they sang the hobbit felt the love of beautiful things made by hands and by cunning and by magic moving through him, a fierce and a jealous love, the desire of the hearts of dwarves. Then something Tookish woke up inside him, and he wished to go and see the great mountains, and hear the pine-trees and the waterfalls, and explore the caves, and wear a sword instead of a walking-stick. He looked out of the window. The stars were out in a dark sky above the trees. He thought of the jewels of the dwarves shining in dark caverns. Suddenly in the wood beyond The Water a flame leapt up—probably somebody lighting a wood-fire—and he thought of plundering dragons settling on his quiet Hill and kindling it all to flames. He shuddered; and very quickly he was plain Mr. Baggins of Bag-End, Under-Hill, again.

He got up trembling. He had less than half a mind to fetch the lamp, and more than half a mind to pretend to, and go and hide behind the beer-barrels in the cellar, and not come out again until all the dwarves had gone away. Suddenly he found that the music and the singing had stopped, and they were all looking at him with eyes shining in the dark.

“Where are you going?” said Thorin, in a tone that seemed to show that he guessed both halves of the hobbit’s mind.

“What about a little light?” said Bilbo apologetically.

“We like the dark,” said all the dwarves. “Dark for dark business! There are many hours before dawn.”

“Of course!” said Bilbo, and sat down in a hurry. He missed the stool and sat in the fender, knocking over the poker and shovel with a crash.

“Hush!” said Gandalf. “Let Thorin speak!” And this is how Thorin began.

“Gandalf, dwarves and Mr. Baggins! We are met together in the house of our friend and fellow conspirator, this most excellent and audacious hobbit—may the hair on his toes never fall out! all praise to his wine and ale!” He paused for breath and for a polite remark from the hobbit, but the compliments were quite lost on poor Bilbo Baggins, who was wagging his mouth in protest at being called *audacious* and worst of all *fellow conspirator*, though no noise came out, he was so flummoxed. So Thorin went on:

“We are met to discuss our plans, our ways, means, policy and devices. We shall soon before the break of day start on our long journey, a journey from which some of us, or perhaps all of us (except our friend and counsellor, the ingenious wizard Gandalf) may never return. It is a solemn moment. Our object is, I take it, well known to us all. To the estimable Mr. Baggins, and perhaps to one or two of the younger dwarves (I think I should be right in naming Kili and Fili, for instance), the exact situation at the moment may require a little brief explanation—”

This was Thorin’s style. He was an important dwarf. If he had been allowed, he would probably have gone on like this until he was out of breath, without telling anyone there anything that was not known already. But he was rudely interrupted. Poor Bilbo couldn’t bear it any longer. At *may never return* he began to feel a shriek coming up inside, and very soon it burst out like the whistle of an engine coming out of a tunnel. All the dwarves sprang up, knocking over the table. Gandalf struck a blue light on the end of his magic staff, and in its firework glare the poor little hobbit could be seen kneeling on the hearth-rug, shaking like a jelly that was melting. Then he fell flat on the floor, and kept on calling out “struck by lightning, struck by lightning!” over and over again; and that was all they could get out of him for a long time. So they took him and laid him out of the way on the drawing-room sofa with a drink at his elbow, and they went back to their dark business.

“Excitable little fellow,” said Gandalf, as they sat down again. “Gets funny queer fits, but he is one of the best, one of the best—as fierce as a dragon in a pinch.”

If you have ever seen a dragon in a pinch, you will realize that this was only poetical exaggeration applied to any hobbit, even to Old Took’s great-grand-uncle Bullroarer, who was so huge (for a hobbit) that he could ride a horse. He charged the ranks of the goblins of Mount Gram in the Battle of the Green Fields, and knocked their king Golfimbul’s head clean off with a wooden club. It sailed a hundred yards through the air and went down a rabbit-hole, and in this way the battle was won and the game of Golf invented at the same moment.

In the meanwhile, however, Bullroarer’s gentler descendant was reviving in the drawing-room. After a while and a drink he crept nervously to the door of the parlour. This is what he heard, Gloin speaking: “Humph!” (or some snort more or less like that). “Will he do, do you think? It is all very well for Gandalf to talk about this hobbit being fierce, but one shriek like that in a moment of excitement would be enough to wake the dragon and all his relatives, and kill the lot of us. I think it sounded more like fright than excitement! In fact, if it had not been for the sign on the door, I should have been sure we had come to the wrong house. As soon as I clapped eyes on the little fellow bobbing and puffing on the mat, I had my doubts. He looks more like a grocer than a burglar!”

Then Mr. Baggins turned the handle and went in. The Took side had won. He suddenly felt he would go without bed and breakfast to be thought fierce. As for *little fellow bobbing on the mat* it almost made him really fierce. Many a time afterwards the Baggins part regretted what he did now, and he said to himself: “Bilbo, you were a fool; you walked right in and put your foot in it.”

“Pardon me,” he said, “if I have overheard words that you were saying. I don’t pretend to understand what you are talking about, or your reference to burglars, but I think I am right in believing” (this is what he called being on his dignity) “that you think I am no good. I will show you. I have no signs on my door—it was painted a week ago—, and I am quite sure you have come to the wrong house. As soon as I saw your funny faces on the door-step, I had my doubts. But treat it as the right one. Tell me what you want done, and I will try it, if I have to walk from here to the East of East and fight the wild Were-worms in the Last Desert. I had a great-great-great-grand-uncle once, Bullroarer Took, and—”

“Yes, yes, but that was long ago,” said Gloin. “I was talking about *you*. And I assure you there is a mark on this door—the usual one in the trade, or used to be. *Burglar wants a good job, plenty of Excitement and reasonable Reward*, that’s how it is usually read. You can say *Expert Treasure-hunter* instead of *Burglar* if you like. Some

of them do. It's all the same to us. Gandalf told us that there was a man of the sort in these parts looking for a Job at once, and that he had arranged for a meeting here this Wednesday tea-time."

"Of course there is a mark," said Gandalf. "I put it there myself. For very good reasons. You asked me to find the fourteenth man for your expedition, and I chose Mr. Baggins. Just let anyone say I chose the wrong man or the wrong house, and you can stop at thirteen and have all the bad luck you like, or go back to digging coal."

He scowled so angrily at Gloin that the dwarf huddled back in his chair; and when Bilbo tried to open his mouth to ask a question, he turned and frowned at him and stuck out his bushy eyebrows, till Bilbo shut his mouth tight with a snap. "That's right," said Gandalf. "Let's have no more argument. I have chosen Mr. Baggins and that ought to be enough for all of you. If I say he is a Burglar, a Burglar he is, or will be when the time comes. There is a lot more in him than you guess, and a deal more than he has any idea of himself. You may (possibly) all live to thank me yet. Now Bilbo, my boy, fetch the lamp, and let's have a little light on this!"

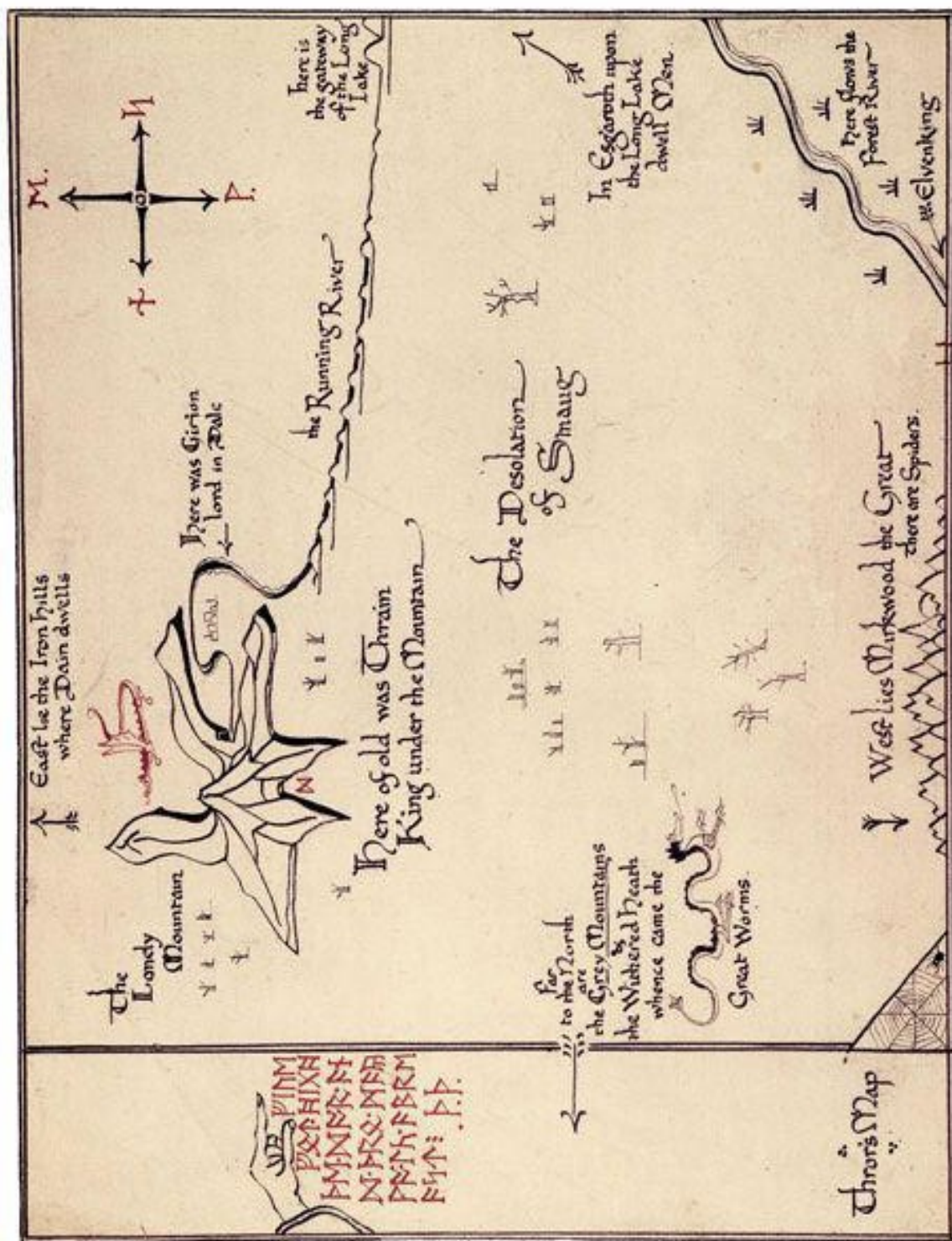
On the table in the light of a big lamp with a red shade he spread a piece of parchment rather like a map.

"This was made by Thrór, your grandfather, Thorin," he said in answer to the dwarves' excited questions. "It is a plan of the Mountain."

"I don't see that this will help us much," said Thorin disappointedly after a glance. "I remember the Mountain well enough and the lands about it. And I know where Mirkwood is, and the Withered Heath where the great dragons bred."

"There is a dragon marked in red on the Mountain," said Balin, "but it will be easy enough to find him without that, if ever we arrive there."

"There is one point that you haven't noticed," said the wizard, "and that is the secret entrance. You see that rune on the West side, and the hand pointing to it from the other runes? That marks a hidden passage to the Lower Halls." [Look at the map in this chapter, and you will see there the runes in red.]



Click [here](#) for alternative image.

“It may have been secret once,” said Thorin, “but how do we know that it is secret any longer? Old Smaug has lived there long enough now to find out anything there is to know about those caves.”

“He may—but he can’t have used it for years and years.”

“Why?”

“Because it is too small. ‘Five feet high the door and three may walk abreast’ say the runes, but Smaug could not creep into a hole that size, not even when he was a young dragon, certainly not after devouring so many of the dwarves and men of Dale.”

“It seems a great big hole to me,” squeaked Bilbo (who had no experience of dragons and only of hobbit-holes). He was getting excited and interested again, so that he forgot to keep his mouth shut. He loved maps, and in his hall there hung a large one of the Country Round with all his favourite walks marked on it in red ink. “How could such a large door be kept secret from everybody outside, apart from the dragon?” he asked. He was only a little hobbit you must remember.

“In lots of ways,” said Gandalf. “But in what way this one has been hidden we don’t know without going to see. From what it says on the map I should guess there is a closed door which has been made to look exactly like the side of the Mountain. That is the usual dwarves’ method—I think that is right, isn’t it?”

“Quite right,” said Thorin.

“Also,” went on Gandalf, “I forgot to mention that with the map went a key, a small and curious key. Here it is!” he said, and handed to Thorin a key with a long barrel and intricate wards, made of silver. “Keep it safe!”

“Indeed I will,” said Thorin, and he fastened it upon a fine chain that hung about his neck and under his jacket. “Now things begin to look more hopeful. This news alters them much for the better. So far we have had no clear idea what to do. We thought of going East, as quiet and careful as we could, as far as the Long Lake. After that the trouble would begin—”

“A long time before that, if I know anything about the roads East,” interrupted Gandalf.

“We might go from there up along the River Running,” went on Thorin taking no notice, “and so to the ruins of Dale—the old town in the valley there, under the shadow of the Mountain. But we none of us liked the idea of the Front Gate. The river runs right out of it through the great cliff at the South of the Mountain, and out of it comes the dragon too—far too often, unless he has changed his habits.”

“That would be no good,” said the wizard, “not without a mighty Warrior, even a Hero. I tried to find one; but warriors are busy fighting one another in distant lands, and in this neighbourhood heroes are scarce, or simply not to be found. Swords in these parts are mostly blunt, and axes are used for trees, and shields as cradles or dish-covers; and dragons are comfortably far-off (and therefore legendary). That is why I settled on *burglary*—especially when I remembered the existence of a Side-door. And here is our little Bilbo Baggins, *the* burglar, the chosen and selected burglar. So now let’s get on and make some plans.”

“Very well then,” said Thorin, “supposing the burglar-expert gives us some ideas or suggestions.” He turned with mock-politeness to Bilbo.

“First I should like to know a bit more about things,” said he, feeling all confused and a bit shaky inside, but so far still Tookishly determined to go on with things. “I mean about the gold and the dragon, and all that, and how it got there, and who it belongs to, and so on and further.”

“Bless me!” said Thorin, “haven’t you got a map? and didn’t you hear our song? and haven’t we been talking about all this for hours?”

“All the same, I should like it all plain and clear,” said he obstinately, putting on his business manner (usually reserved for people who tried to borrow money off him), and doing his best to appear wise and prudent and professional and live up to Gandalf’s recommendation. “Also I should like to know about risks, out-of-pocket expenses, time required and remuneration, and so forth”—by which he meant: “What am I going to get out of it? and am I going to come back alive?”

“O very well,” said Thorin. “Long ago in my grandfather Thrór’s time our family was driven out of the far North, and came back with all their wealth and their tools to this Mountain on the map. It had been discovered by my far ancestor, Thrain the Old, but now they mined and they tunnelled and they made huger halls and greater workshops—and in addition I believe they found a good deal of gold and a great many jewels too. Anyway they grew immensely rich and famous, and my grandfather was King under the Mountain again, and treated with great reverence by the mortal men, who lived to the South, and were gradually spreading up the Running River as far as the valley overshadowed by the Mountain. They built the merry town of Dale there in those days. Kings used to send for our smiths, and reward even the least skillful most richly. Fathers would beg us to take their sons as apprentices, and pay us handsomely, especially in food-supplies, which we never

bothered to grow or find for ourselves. Altogether those were good days for us, and the poorest of us had money to spend and to lend, and leisure to make beautiful things just for the fun of it, not to speak of the most marvellous and magical toys, the like of which is not to be found in the world now-a-days. So my grandfather's halls became full of armour and jewels and carvings and cups, and the toy market of Dale was the wonder of the North.

"Undoubtedly that was what brought the dragon. Dragons steal gold and jewels, you know, from men and elves and dwarves, wherever they can find them; and they guard their plunder as long as they live (which is practically for ever, unless they are killed), and never enjoy a brass ring of it. Indeed they hardly know a good bit of work from a bad, though they usually have a good notion of the current market value; and they can't make a thing for themselves, not even mend a little loose scale of their armour. There were lots of dragons in the North in those days, and gold was probably getting scarce up there, with the dwarves flying south or getting killed, and all the general waste and destruction that dragons make going from bad to worse. There was a most specially greedy, strong and wicked worm called Smaug. One day he flew up into the air and came south. The first we heard of it was a noise like a hurricane coming from the North, and the pine-trees on the Mountain creaking and cracking in the wind. Some of the dwarves who happened to be outside (I was one luckily—a fine adventurous lad in those days, always wandering about, and it saved my life that day)—well, from a good way off we saw the dragon settle on our mountain in a spout of flame. Then he came down the slopes and when he reached the woods they all went up in fire. By that time all the bells were ringing in Dale and the warriors were arming. The dwarves rushed out of their great gate; but there was the dragon waiting for them. None escaped that way. The river rushed up in steam and a fog fell on Dale, and in the fog the dragon came on them and destroyed most of the warriors—the usual unhappy story, it was only too common in those days. Then he went back and crept in through the Front Gate and routed out all the halls, and lanes, and tunnels, alleys, cellars, mansions and passages. After that there were no dwarves left alive inside, and he took all their wealth for himself. Probably, for that is the dragons' way, he has piled it all up in a great heap far inside, and sleeps on it for a bed. Later he used to crawl out of the great gate and come by night to Dale, and carry away people, especially maidens, to eat, until Dale was ruined, and all the people dead or gone. What goes on there now I don't know for certain, but I don't suppose anyone lives nearer to the Mountain than the far edge of the Long Lake now-a-days.

"The few of us that were well outside sat and wept in hiding, and cursed Smaug; and there we were unexpectedly joined by my father and my grandfather with singed beards. They looked very grim but they said very little. When I asked how they had got away, they told me to hold my tongue, and said that one day in the proper time I should know. After that we went away, and we have had to earn our livings as best we could up and down the lands, often enough sinking as low as blacksmith-work or even coalmining. But we have never forgotten our stolen treasure. And even now, when I will allow we have a good bit laid by and are not so badly off"—here Thorin stroked the gold chain round his neck—"we still mean to get it back, and to bring our curses home to Smaug—if we can.

"I have often wondered about my father's and my grand-father's escape. I see now they must have had a private Side-door which only they knew about. But apparently they made a map, and I should like to know how Gandalf got hold of it, and why it did not come down to me, the rightful heir."

"I did not 'get hold of it,' I was given it," said the wizard. "Your grandfather Thrór was killed, you remember, in the mines of Moria by Azog the Goblin."

"Curse his name, yes," said Thorin.

"And Thráin your father went away on the twenty-first of April, a hundred years ago last Thursday, and has never been seen by you since—"

"True, true," said Thorin.

"Well, your father gave me this to give to you; and if I have chosen my own time and way for handing it over, you can hardly blame me, considering the trouble I had to find you. Your father could not remember his own name when he gave me the paper, and he never told me yours; so on the whole I think I ought to be praised and thanked! Here it is," said he handing the map to Thorin.

"I don't understand," said Thorin, and Bilbo felt he would have liked to say the same. The explanation did not seem to explain.

"Your grandfather," said the wizard slowly and grimly, "gave the map to his son for safety before he went to the mines of Moria. Your father went away to try his luck with the map after your grandfather was killed; and lots of adventures of a most unpleasant sort he had, but he never got near the Mountain. How he got there I don't know, but I found him a prisoner in the dungeons of the Necromancer."

"Whatever were you doing there?" asked Thorin with a shudder, and all the dwarves shivered.

"Never you mind. I was finding things out, as usual; and a nasty dangerous business it was. Even I, Gandalf, only just escaped. I tried to save your father, but it was too late. He was witless and wandering, and had forgotten almost everything except the map and the key."

"We have long ago paid the goblins of Moria," said Thorin; "we must give a thought to the Necromancer."

"Don't be absurd! He is an enemy far beyond the powers of all the dwarves put together, if they could all be collected again from the four corners of the world. The one thing your father wished was for his son to read the map and use the key. The dragon and the Mountain are more than big enough tasks for you!"

"Hear, hear!" said Bilbo, and accidentally said it aloud.

"Hear what?" they all said turning suddenly towards him, and he was so flustered that he answered "Hear what I have got to say!"

"What's that?" they asked.

"Well, I should say that you ought to go East and have a look round. After all there is the Side-door, and dragons must sleep sometimes, I suppose. If you sit on the door-step long enough, I daresay you will think of something. And well, don't you know, I think we have talked long enough for one night, if you see what I mean. What about bed, and an early start, and all that? I will give you a good breakfast before you go."

"Before *we* go, I suppose you mean," said Thorin. "Aren't you the burglar? And isn't sitting on the door-step your job, not to speak of getting inside the door? But I agree about bed and breakfast. I like six eggs with my ham, when starting on a journey: fried not poached, and mind you don't break 'em."

After all the others had ordered their breakfasts without so much as a please (which annoyed Bilbo very much), they all got up. The hobbit had to find room for them all, and filled all his spare-rooms and made beds on chairs and sofas, before he got them all stowed and went to his own little bed very tired and not altogether happy. One thing he did make his mind up about was not to bother to get up very early and cook everybody else's wretched breakfast. The Tookishness was wearing off, and he was not now quite so sure that he was going on any journey in the morning.

As he lay in bed he could hear Thorin still humming to himself in the best bedroom next to him:

*Far over the misty mountains cold  
To dungeons deep and caverns old  
We must away, ere break of day,  
To find our long-forgotten gold.*

Bilbo went to sleep with that in his ears, and it gave him very uncomfortable dreams. It was long after the break of day, when he woke up.





## Chapter II: Roast Mutton

Up jumped Bilbo, and putting on his dressing-gown went into the dining-room. There he saw nobody, but all the signs of a large and hurried breakfast. There was a fearful mess in the room, and piles of unwashed crocks in the kitchen. Nearly every pot and pan he possessed seemed to have been used. The washing-up was so dismally real that Bilbo was forced to believe the party of the night before had not been part of his bad dreams, as he had rather hoped. Indeed he was really relieved after all to think that they had all gone without him, and without bothering to wake him up ("but with never a thank-you" he thought); and yet in a way he could not help feeling just a trifle disappointed. The feeling surprised him.

"Don't be a fool, Bilbo Baggins!" he said to himself, "thinking of dragons and all that outlandish nonsense at your age!" So he put on an apron, lit fires, boiled water, and washed up. Then he had a nice little breakfast in the kitchen before turning out the dining-room. By that time the sun was shining; and the front door was open, letting in a warm spring breeze. Bilbo began to whistle loudly and to forget about the night before. In fact he was just sitting down to a nice little second breakfast in the dining-room by the open window, when in walked Gandalf.

"My dear fellow," said he, "whenever *are* you going to come? What about *an early start?*—and here you are having breakfast, or whatever you call it, at half past ten! They left you the message, because they could not wait."

"What message?" said poor Mr. Baggins all in a fluster.

"Great Elephants!" said Gandalf, "you are not at all yourself this morning—you have never dusted the mantelpiece!"

"What's that got to do with it? I have had enough to do with washing up for fourteen!"

"If you had dusted the mantelpiece, you would have found this just under the clock," said Gandalf, handing Bilbo a note (written, of course, on his own note-paper).

This is what he read:

*"Thorin and Company to Burglar Bilbo greeting! For your hospitality our sincerest thanks, and for your offer of professional assistance our grateful acceptance. Terms: cash on delivery, up to and not exceeding one fourteenth of total profits (if any); all travelling expenses guaranteed in any event; funeral expenses to be defrayed by us or our representatives, if occasion arises and the matter is not otherwise arranged for."*

*"Thinking it unnecessary to disturb your esteemed repose, we have proceeded in advance to make requisite preparations, and shall await your respected person at the Green Dragon Inn, Bywater, at 11 a.m. sharp. Trusting that you will be punctual,*

*"We have the honour to remain*

*"Yours deeply*

*"Thorin & Co."*

"That leaves you just ten minutes. You will have to run," said Gandalf.

"But—," said Bilbo.

"No time for it," said the wizard.

"But—," said Bilbo again.

“No time for that either! Off you go!”

To the end of his days Bilbo could never remember how he found himself outside, without a hat, a walking-stick or any money, or anything that he usually took when he went out; leaving his second breakfast half-finished and quite unwashed-up, pushing his keys into Gandalf’s hands, and running as fast as his furry feet could carry him down the lane, past the great Mill, across The Water, and then on for a mile or more.

Very puffed he was, when he got to Bywater just on the stroke of eleven, and found he had come without a pocket-handkerchief!

“Bravo!” said Balin who was standing at the inn door looking out for him.

Just then all the others came round the corner of the road from the village. They were on ponies, and each pony was slung about with all kinds of baggages, packages, parcels, and paraphernalia. There was a very small pony, apparently for Bilbo.

“Up you two get, and off we go!” said Thorin.

“I’m awfully sorry,” said Bilbo, “but I have come without my hat, and I have left my pocket-handkerchief behind, and I haven’t got any money. I didn’t get your note until after 10.45 to be precise.”

“Don’t be precise,” said Dwalin, “and don’t worry! You will have to manage without pocket-handkerchiefs, and a good many other things, before you get to the journey’s end. As for a hat, I have got a spare hood and cloak in my luggage.”

That’s how they all came to start, jogging off from the inn one fine morning just before May, on laden ponies; and Bilbo was wearing a dark-green hood (a little weather-stained) and a dark-green cloak borrowed from Dwalin. They were too large for him, and he looked rather comic. What his father Bungo would have thought of him, I daren’t think. His only comfort was he couldn’t be mistaken for a dwarf, as he had no beard.

They had not been riding very long, when up came Gandalf very splendid on a white horse. He had brought a lot of pocket-handkerchiefs, and Bilbo’s pipe and tobacco. So after that the party went along very merrily, and they told stories or sang songs as they rode forward all day, except of course when they stopped for meals. These didn’t come quite as often as Bilbo would have liked them, but still he began to feel that adventures were not so bad after all.

At first they had passed through hobbit-lands, a wide respectable country inhabited by decent folk, with good roads, an inn or two, and now and then a dwarf or a farmer ambling by on business. Then they came to lands where people spoke strangely, and sang songs Bilbo had never heard before. Now they had gone on far into the Lone-lands, where there were no people left, no inns, and the roads grew steadily worse. Not far ahead were dreary hills, rising higher and higher, dark with trees. On some of them were old castles with an evil look, as if they had been built by wicked people. Everything seemed gloomy, for the weather that day had taken a nasty turn. Mostly it had been as good as May can be, can be, even in merry tales, but now it was cold and wet. In the Lone-lands they had been obliged to camp when they could, but at least it had been dry.

“To think it will soon be June!” grumbled Bilbo, as he splashed along behind the others in a very muddy track. It was after tea-time; it was pouring with rain, and had been all day; his hood was dripping into his eyes, his cloak was full of water; the pony was tired and stumbled on stones; the others were too grumpy to talk. “And I’m sure the rain has got into the dry clothes and into the food-bags,” thought Bilbo. “Bother burgling and everything to do with it! I wish I was at home in my nice hole by the fire, with the kettle just beginning to sing!” It was not the last time that he wished that!

Still the dwarves jogged on, never turning round or taking any notice of the hobbit. Somewhere behind the grey clouds the sun must have gone down, for it began to get dark as they went down into a deep valley with a river at the bottom. Wind got up, and willows along its banks bent and sighed. Fortunately the road went over an ancient stone bridge, for the river, swollen with the rains, came rushing down from the hills and mountains in the north.

It was nearly night when they had crossed over. The wind broke up the grey clouds, and a wandering moon appeared above the hills between the flying rags. Then they stopped, and Thorin muttered something about supper, "and where shall we get a dry patch to sleep on?"

Not until then did they notice that Gandalf was missing. So far he had come all the way with them, never saying if he was in the adventure or merely keeping them company for a while. He had eaten most, talked most, and laughed most. But now he simply was not there at all!

"Just when a wizard would have been most useful, too," groaned Dori and Nori (who shared the hobbit's views about regular meals, plenty and often).

They decided in the end that they would have to camp where they were. They moved to a clump of trees, and though it was drier under them, the wind shook the rain off the leaves, and the drip, drip, was most annoying. Also the mischief seemed to have got into the fire. Dwarves can make a fire almost anywhere out of almost anything, wind or no wind; but they could not do it that night, not even Oin and Gloin, who were specially good at it.

Then one of the ponies took fright at nothing and bolted. He got into the river before they could catch him; and before they could get him out again, Fili and Kili were nearly drowned, and all the baggage that he carried was washed away off him. Of course it was mostly food, and there was mighty little left for supper, and less for breakfast.

There they all sat glum and wet and muttering, while Oin and Gloin went on trying to light the fire, and quarrelling about it. Bilbo was sadly reflecting that adventures are not all pony-rides in May-sunshine, when Balin, who was always their look-out man, said: "There's a light over there!" There was a hill some way off with trees on it, pretty thick in parts. Out of the dark mass of the trees they could now see a light shining, a reddish comfortable-looking light, as it might be a fire or torches twinkling.

When they had looked at it for some while, they fell to arguing. Some said "no" and some said "yes". Some said they could but go and see, and anything was better than little supper, less breakfast, and wet clothes all the night.

Others said: "These parts are none too well known, and are too near the mountains. Travellers seldom come this way now. The old maps are no use: things have changed for the worse and the road is unguarded. They have seldom even heard of the king round here, and the less inquisitive you are as you go along, the less trouble you are likely to find." Some said: "After all there are fourteen of us." Others said: "Where has Gandalf got to?" This remark was repeated by everybody. Then the rain began to pour down worse than ever, and Oin and Gloin began to fight.

That settled it. "After all we have got a burglar with us," they said; and so they made off, leading their ponies (with all due and proper caution) in the direction of the light. They came to the hill and were soon in the wood. Up the hill they went; but there was no proper path to be seen, such as might lead to a house or a farm; and do what they could they made a deal of rustling and crackling and creaking (and a good deal of grumbling and dratting), as they went through the trees in the pitch dark.

Suddenly the red light shone out very bright through the tree-trunks not far ahead.

"Now it is the burglar's turn," they said, meaning Bilbo. "You must go on and find out all about that light, and what it is for, and if all is perfectly safe and canny," said Thorin to the hobbit. "Now scuttle off, and come back quick, if all is well. If not, come back if you can! If you can't, hoot twice like a barn-owl and once like a screech-owl, and we will do what we can."

Off Bilbo had to go, before he could explain that he could not hoot even once like any kind of owl any more than fly like a bat. But at any rate hobbits can move quietly in woods, absolutely quietly. They take a pride in it, and Bilbo had sniffed more than once at what he called "all this dwarvish racket," as they went along, though I don't suppose you or I would have noticed anything at all on a windy night, not if the whole cavalcade had passed two feet off. As for Bilbo walking primly towards the red light, I don't suppose even a weasel would have stirred a whisker at it. So, naturally, he got right up to the fire—for fire it was—without disturbing anyone. And this is what he saw.

Three very large persons sitting round a very large fire of beech-logs. They were toasting mutton on long spits of wood, and licking the gravy off their fingers. There was a fine toothsome smell. Also there was a barrel of good drink at hand, and they were drinking out of jugs. But they were trolls. Obviously trolls. Even Bilbo, in spite of his sheltered life, could see that: from the great heavy faces of them, and their size, and the shape of their legs, not to mention their language, which was not drawing-room fashion at all, at all.

“Mutton yesterday, mutton today, and blimey, if it don’t look like mutton again tomorrer,” said one of the trolls.

“Never a blinking bit of manflesh have we had for long enough,” said a second. “What the ’ell William was a-thinkin’ of to bring us into these parts at all, beats me—and the drink runnin’ short, what’s more,” he said jogging the elbow of William, who was taking a pull at his jug.

William choked. “Shut yer mouth!” he said as soon as he could. “Yer can’t expect folk to stop here for ever just to be et by you and Bert. You’ve et a village and a half between yer, since we come down from the mountains. How much more d’yer want? And time’s been up our way, when yer’d have said ’thank yer Bill’ for a nice bit o’ fat valley mutton like what this is.” He took a big bite off a sheep’s leg he was roasting, and wiped his lips on his sleeve.

Yes, I am afraid trolls do behave like that, even those with only one head each. After hearing all this Bilbo ought to have done something at once. Either he should have gone back quietly and warned his friends that there were three fair-sized trolls at hand in a nasty mood, quite likely to try roasted dwarf, or even pony, for a change; or else he should have done a bit of good quick burgling. A really first-class and legendary burglar would at this point have picked the trolls’ pockets—it is nearly always worth while, if you can manage it—, pinched the very mutton off the spits, purloined the beer, and walked off without their noticing him. Others more practical but with less professional pride would perhaps have stuck a dagger into each of them before they observed it. Then the night could have been spent cheerily.

Bilbo knew it. He had read of a good many things he had never seen or done. He was very much alarmed, as well as disgusted; he wished himself a hundred miles away, and yet—and yet somehow he could not go straight back to Thorin and Company emptyhanded. So he stood and hesitated in the shadows. Of the various burglarious proceedings he had heard of picking the trolls’ pockets seemed the least difficult, so at last he crept behind a tree just behind William.

Bert and Tom went off to the barrel. William was having another drink. Then Bilbo plucked up courage and put his little hand in William’s enormous pocket. There was a purse in it, as big as a bag to Bilbo. “Ha!” thought he, warming to his new work as he lifted it carefully out, “this is a beginning!”

It was! Trolls’ purses are the mischief, and this was no exception. “’Ere, ‘oo are you?” it squeaked, as it left the pocket; and William turned round at once and grabbed Bilbo by the neck, before he could duck behind the tree.

“Blimey, Bert, look what I’ve copped!” said William.

“What is it?” said the others coming up.

“Lumme, if I knows! What are yer?”

“Bilbo Baggins, a bur—a hobbit,” said poor Bilbo, shaking all over, and wondering how to make owl-noises before they throttled him.

“A burrahobbit?” said they a bit startled. Trolls are slow in the uptake, and mighty suspicious about anything new to them.

“What’s a burrahobbit got to do with my pocket, anyways?” said William.

“And can yer cook ’em?” said Tom.

“Yer can try,” said Bert, picking up a skewer.

“He wouldn’t make above a mouthful,” said William, who had already had a fine supper, “not when he was skinned and boned.”

“P’raps there are more like him round about, and we might make a pie,” said Bert. “Here you, are there any more of your sort a-sneakin’ in these here woods, yer nasty little rabbit,” said he looking at the hobbit’s furry feet; and he picked him up by the toes and shook him.

“Yes, lots,” said Bilbo, before he remembered not to give his friends away. “No none at all, not one,” he said immediately afterwards.

“What d’yer mean?” said Bert, holding him right way up, by the hair this time.

“What I say,” said Bilbo gasping. “And please don’t cook me, kind sirs! I am a good cook myself, and cook better than I cook, if you see what I mean. I’ll cook beautifully for you, a perfectly beautiful breakfast for you, if only you won’t have me for supper.”

“Poor little blighter,” said William. He had already had as much supper as he could hold; also he had had lots of beer. “Poor little blighter! Let him go!”

“Not till he says what he means by *lots* and *none at all*,” said Bert. “I don’t want to have me throat cut in me sleep! Hold his toes in the fire, till he talks!”

“I won’t have it,” said William. “I caught him anyway.”

“You’re a fat fool, William,” said Bert, “as I’ve said afore this evening.”

“And you’re a lout!”

“And I won’t take that from you, Bill Huggins,” says Bert, and puts his fist in William’s eye.

Then there was a gorgeous row. Bilbo had just enough wits left, when Bert dropped him on the ground, to scramble out of the way of their feet, before they were fighting like dogs, and calling one another all sorts of perfectly true and applicable names in very loud voices. Soon they were locked in one another’s arms, and rolling nearly into the fire kicking and thumping, while Tom whacked at them both with a branch to bring them to their senses—and that of course only made them madder than ever.

That would have been the time for Bilbo to have left. But his poor little feet had been very squashed in Bert’s big paw, and he had no breath in his body, and his head was going round; so there he lay for a while panting, just outside the circle of firelight.

Right in the middle of the fight up came Balin. The dwarves had heard noises from a distance, and after waiting for some time for Bilbo to come back, or to hoot like an owl, they started off one by one to creep towards the light as quietly as they could. No sooner did Tom see Balin come into the light than he gave an awful howl. Trolls simply detest the very sight of dwarves (uncooked). Bert and Bill stopped fighting immediately, and “a sack, Tom, quick!” they said. Before Balin, who was wondering where in all this commotion Bilbo was, knew what was happening, a sack was over his head, and he was down.

“There’s more to come yet,” said Tom, “or I’m mighty mistook. Lots and none at all, it is,” said he. “No burrahobbits, but lots of these here dwarves. That’s about the shape of it!”

“I reckon you’re right,” said Bert, “and we’d best get out of the light.”

And so they did. With sacks in their hands, that they used for carrying off mutton and other plunder, they waited in the shadows. As each dwarf came up and looked at the fire, and the spilled jugs, and the gnawed mutton, in surprise, pop! went a nasty smelly sack over his head, and he was down. Soon Dwalin lay by Balin, and Fili and Kili together, and Dori and Nori and Ori all in a heap, and Oin and Gloin and Bifur and Bofur and Bombur—piled uncomfortably near the fire.

“That’ll teach ’em,” said Tom; for Bifur and Bombur had given a lot of trouble, and fought like mad, as dwarves will when cornered.

Thorin came last—and he was not caught unawares. He came expecting mischief, and didn’t need to see his friends’ legs sticking out of sacks to tell him that things were not all well. He stood outside in the shadows some way off, and said: “What’s all this trouble? Who has been knocking my people about?”



“It’s trolls!” said Bilbo from behind a tree. They had forgotten all about him. “They’re hiding in the bushes with sacks,” said he.

“O! are they?” said Thorin, and he jumped forward to the fire, before they could leap on him. He caught up a big branch all on fire at one end; and Bert got that end in his eye before he could step aside. That put him out of the battle for a bit. Bilbo did his best. He caught hold of Tom’s leg—as well as he could, it was thick as a young tree-trunk—but he was sent spinning up into the top of some bushes, when Tom kicked the sparks up in Thorin’s face.



The Trolls

*Click [here](#) for alternative image.*

Tom got the branch in his teeth for that, and lost one of the front ones. It made him howl, I can tell you. But just at that moment William came up behind and popped a sack right over Thorin’s head and down to his toes. And

so the fight ended. A nice pickle they were all in now: all neatly tied up in sacks, with three angry trolls (and two with burns and bashes to remember) sitting by them, arguing whether they should roast them slowly, or mince them fine and boil them, or just sit on them one by one and squash them into jelly; and Bilbo up in a bush, with his clothes and his skin torn, not daring to move for fear they should hear him.

It was just then that Gandalf came back. But no-one saw him. The trolls had just decided to roast the dwarves now and eat them later—that was Bert's idea, and after a lot of argument they had all agreed to it.

"No good roasting 'em now, it'd take all night," said a voice. Bert thought it was William's.

"Don't start the argument all over again, Bill," he said, "or it *will* take all night."

"Who's a-arguing?" said William, who thought it was Bert that had spoken.

"You are," said Bert.

"You're a liar," said William; and so the argument began all over again. In the end they decided to mince them fine and boil them. So they got a great black pot, and they took out their knives.

"No good boiling 'em! We ain't got no water, and it's a long way to the well and all," said a voice. Bert and William thought it was Tom's.

"Shut up!" said they, "or we'll never have done. And yer can fetch the water yerself, if yer say any more."

"Shut up yerself!" said Tom, who thought it was William's voice. "Who's arguing but you, I'd like to know."

"You're a booby," said William.

"Booby yerself!" said Tom.

And so the argument began all over again, and went on hotter than ever, until at last they decided to sit on the sacks one by one and squash them, and boil them next time.

"Who shall we sit on first?" said the voice.

"Better sit on the last fellow first," said Bert, whose eye had been damaged by Thorin. He thought Tom was talking.

"Don't talk to yerself!" said Tom. "But if you wants to sit on the last one, sit on him. Which is he?"

"The one with the yellow stockings," said Bert.

"Nonsense, the one with the grey stockings," said a voice like William's.

"I made sure it was yellow," said Bert.

"Yellow it was," said William.

"Then what did yer say it was grey for?" said Bert.

"I never did. Tom said it."

"That I never did!" said Tom. "It was you."

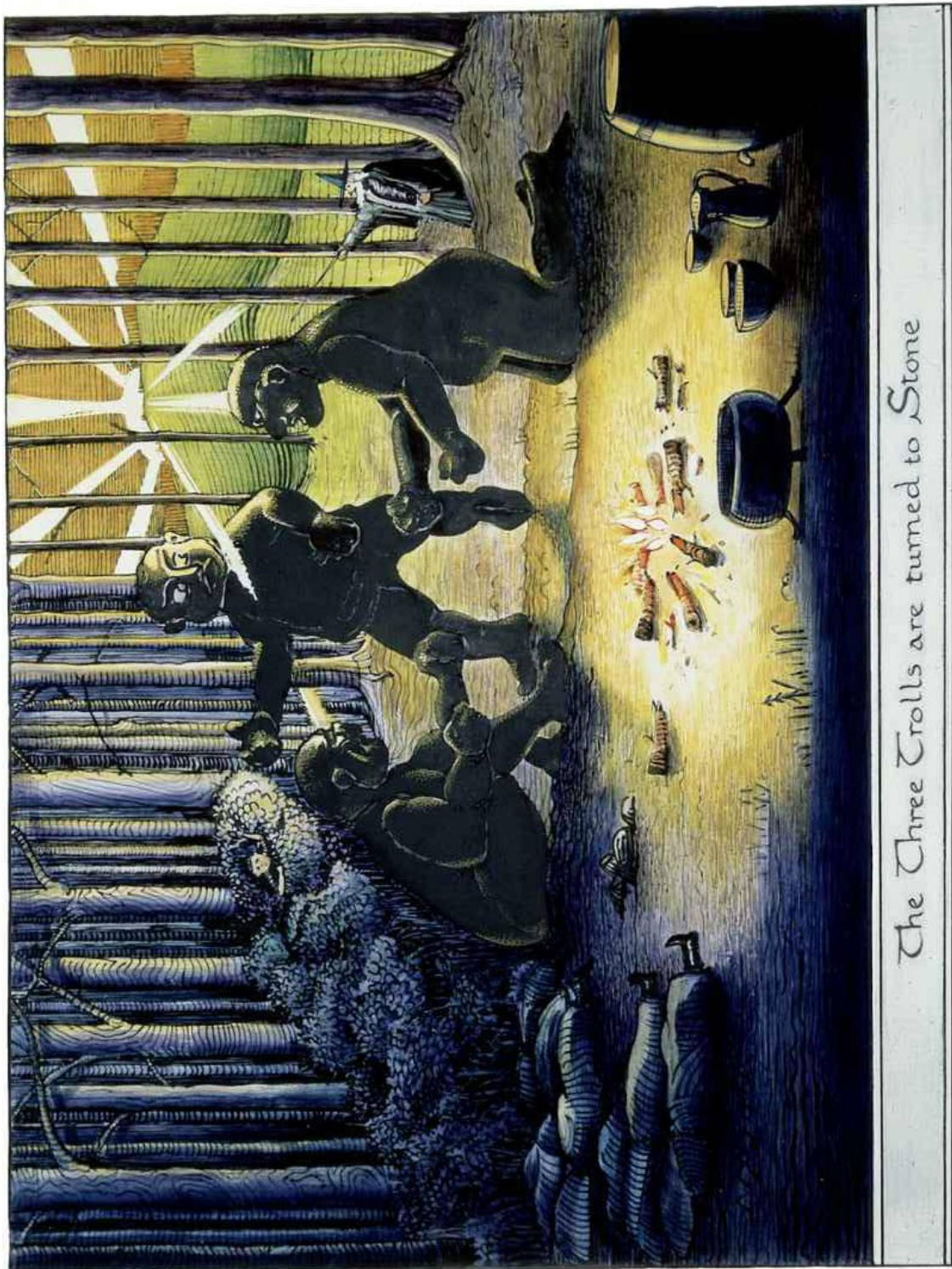
"Two to one, so shut yer mouth!" said Bert.

"Who are you a-talkin' to?" said William.

"Now stop it!" said Tom and Bert together. "The night's gettin' on, and dawn comes early. Let's get on with it!"

"Dawn take you all, and be stone to you!" said a voice that sounded like William's. But it wasn't. For just at that moment the light came over the hill, and there was a mighty twitter in the branches. William never spoke for he stood turned to stone as he stooped; and Bert and Tom were stuck like rocks as they looked at him.





The Three Trolls are turned to Stone

*Click [here](#) for alternative image.*

And there they stand to this day, all alone, unless the birds perch on them; for trolls, as you probably know, must be underground before dawn, or they go back to the stuff of the mountains they are made of, and never move again. That is what had happened to Bert and Tom and William.

“Excellent!” said Gandalf, as he stepped from behind a tree, and helped Bilbo to climb down out of a thorn-bush. Then Bilbo understood. It was the wizard’s voice that had kept the trolls bickering and quarrelling, until the light came and made an end of them.

The next thing was to untie the sacks and let out the dwarves. They were nearly suffocated, and very annoyed: they had not at all enjoyed lying there listening to the trolls making plans for roasting them and squashing them



and mincing them. They had to hear Bilbo's account of what had happened to him twice over, before they were satisfied.

"Silly time to go practising pinching and pocket-picking," said Bombur, "when what we wanted was fire and food!"

"And that's just what you wouldn't have got of those fellows without a struggle, in any case," said Gandalf. "Anyhow you are wasting time now. Don't you realize that the trolls must have a cave or a hole dug somewhere near to hide from the sun in? We must look into it!"

They searched about, and soon found the marks of trolls' stony boots going away through the trees. They followed the tracks up the hill, until hidden by bushes they came on a big door of stone leading to a cave. But they could not open it, not though they all pushed while Gandalf tried various incantations.

"Would this be any good?" asked Bilbo, when they were getting tired and angry. "I found it on the ground where the trolls had their fight." He held out a largish key, though no doubt William had thought it very small and secret. It must have fallen out of his pocket, very luckily, before he was turned to stone.

"Why on earth didn't you mention it before?" they cried. Gandalf grabbed it and fitted it into the key-hole. Then the stone door swung back with one big push, and they all went inside. There were bones on the floor and a nasty smell was in the air; but there was a good deal of food jumbled carelessly on shelves and on the ground, among an untidy litter of plunder, of all sorts from brass buttons to pots full of gold coins standing in a corner. There were lots of clothes, too, hanging on the walls—too small for trolls, I am afraid they belonged to victims—and among them were several swords of various makes, shapes, and sizes. Two caught their eyes particularly, because of their beautiful scabbards and jewelled hilts.

Gandalf and Thorin each took one of these; and Bilbo took a knife in a leather sheath. It would have made only a tiny pocket-knife for a troll, but it was as good as a short sword for the hobbit.

"These look like good blades," said the wizard, half drawing them and looking at them curiously. "They were not made by any troll, nor by any smith among men in these parts and days; but when we can read the runes on them, we shall know more about them."

"Let's get out of this horrible smell!" said Fili. So they carried out the pots of coins, and such food as was untouched and looked fit to eat, also one barrel of ale which was still full. By that time they felt like breakfast, and being very hungry they did not turn their noses up at what they had got from the trolls' larder. Their own provisions were very scanty. Now they had bread and cheese, and plenty of ale, and bacon to toast in the embers of the fire.

After that they slept, for their night had been disturbed; and they did nothing more till the afternoon. Then they brought up their ponies, and carried away the pots of gold, and buried them very secretly not far from the track by the river, putting a great many spells over them, just in case they ever had the chance to come back and recover them. When that was done, they all mounted once more, and jogged along again on the path towards the East.

"Where did you go to, if I may ask?" said Thorin to Gandalf as they rode along.

"To look ahead," said he.

"And what brought you back in the nick of time?"

"Looking behind," said he.

"Exactly!" said Thorin; "but could you be more plain?"

"I went on to spy out our road. It will soon become dangerous and difficult. Also I was anxious about replenishing our small stock of provisions. I had not gone very far, however, when I met a couple of friends of mine from Rivendell."

"Where's that?" asked Bilbo.

“Don’t interrupt!” said Gandalf. “You will get there in a few days now, if we’re lucky, and find out all about it. As I was saying I met two of Elrond’s people. They were hurrying along for fear of the trolls. It was they who told me that three of them had come down from the mountains and settled in the woods not far from the road: they had frightened everyone away from the district, and they waylaid strangers.

“I immediately had a feeling that I was wanted back. Looking behind I saw a fire in the distance and made for it. So now you know. Please be more careful, next time, or we shall never get anywhere!”

“Thank you!” said Thorin.



## Chapter III: A Short Rest

They did not sing or tell stories that day, even though the weather improved; nor the next day, nor the day after. They had begun to feel that danger was not far away on either side. They camped under the stars, and their horses had more to eat than they had; for there was plenty of grass, but there was not much in their bags, even with what they had got from the trolls. One morning they forded a river at a wide shallow place full of the noise of stones and foam. The far bank was steep and slippery. When they got to the top of it, leading their ponies, they saw that the great mountains had marched down very near to them. Already they seemed only a day's easy journey from the feet of the nearest. Dark and drear it looked, though there were patches of sunlight on its brown sides, and behind its shoulders the tips of snow-peaks gleamed.

"Is that *The Mountain*?" asked Bilbo in a solemn voice, looking at it with round eyes. He had never seen a thing that looked so big before.

"Of course not!" said Balin. "That is only the beginning of the Misty Mountains, and we have got to get through, or over, or under those somehow, before we can come into Wilderland beyond. And it is a deal of a way even from the other side of them to the Lonely Mountain in the East where Smaug lies on our treasure."

"O!" said Bilbo, and just at that moment he felt more tired than he ever remembered feeling before. He was thinking once again of his comfortable chair before the fire in his favourite sitting-room in his hobbit-hole, and of the kettle singing. Not for the last time!

Now Gandalf led the way. "We must not miss the road, or we shall be done for," he said. "We need food, for one thing, *and* rest in reasonable safety—also it is very necessary to tackle the Misty Mountains by the proper path, or else you will get lost in them, and have to come back and start at the beginning again (if you ever get back at all)."

They asked him where he was making for, and he answered: "You are come to the very edge of the Wild, as some of you may know. Hidden somewhere ahead of us is the fair valley of Rivendell where Elrond lives in the Last Homely House. I sent a message by my friends, and we are expected."

That sounded nice and comforting, but they had not got there yet, and it was not so easy as it sounds to find the Last Homely House west of the Mountains. There seemed to be no trees and no valleys and no hills to break the ground in front of them, only one vast slope going slowly up and up to meet the feet of the nearest mountain, a wide land the colour of heather and crumbling rock, with patches and slashes of grass-green and moss-green showing where water might be.

Morning passed, afternoon came; but in all the silent waste there was no sign of any dwelling. They were growing anxious, for they saw now that the house might be hidden almost anywhere between them and the mountains. They came on unexpected valleys, narrow with steep sides, that opened suddenly at their feet, and they looked down surprised to see trees below them and running water at the bottom. There were gullies that they could almost leap over, but very deep with waterfalls in them. There were dark ravines that one could neither jump over nor climb into. There were bogs, some of them green pleasant places to look at, with flowers growing bright and tall; but a pony that walked there with a pack on its back would never have come out again.

It was indeed a much wider land from the ford to the mountains than ever you would have guessed. Bilbo was astonished. The only path was marked with white stones, some of which were small, and others were half covered with moss or heather. Altogether it was a very slow business following the track, even guided by Gandalf, who seemed to know his way about pretty well.

His head and beard wagged this way and that as he looked for the stones, and they followed his lead, but they seemed no nearer to the end of the search when the day began to fail. Tea-time had long gone by, and it seemed supper-time would soon do the same. There were moths fluttering about, and the light became very dim, for the moon had not risen. Bilbo's pony began to stumble over roots and stones. They came to the edge of a steep fall in the ground so suddenly that Gandalf's horse nearly slipped down the slope.

"Here it is at last!" he called, and the others gathered round him and looked over the edge. They saw a valley far below. They could hear the voice of hurrying water in a rocky bed at the bottom; the scent of trees was in the air; and there was a light on the valley-side across the water.



Bilbo never forgot the way they slithered and slipped in the dusk down the steep zig-zag path into the secret valley of Rivendell. The air grew warmer as they got lower, and the smell of the pine-trees made him drowsy, so that every now and again he nodded and nearly fell off, or bumped his nose on the pony's neck. Their spirits



rose as they went down and down. The trees changed to beech and oak, and there was a comfortable feeling in the twilight. The last green had almost faded out of the grass, when they came at length to an open glade not far above the banks of the stream.

“Hmmm! it smells like elves!” thought Bilbo, and he looked up at the stars. They were burning bright and blue. Just then there came a burst of song like laughter in the trees:

*O! What are you doing,  
And where are you going?  
Your ponies need shoeing!  
The river is flowing!  
O! tra-la-la-lally  
here down in the valley!*

*O! What are you seeking,  
And where are you making?  
The faggots are reeking,  
The bannocks are baking!  
O! tril-lil-lil-lolly  
the valley is jolly,  
ha! ha!*

*O! Where are you going  
With beards all a-wagging?  
No knowing, no knowing  
What brings Mister Baggins  
And Balin and Dwalin  
down into the valley  
in June  
ha! ha!*

*O! Will you be staying,  
Or will you be flying?  
Your ponies are straying!  
The daylight is dying!  
To fly would be folly,  
To stay would be jolly  
And listen and hark  
Till the end of the dark  
to our tune  
ha! ha!*

So they laughed and sang in the trees; and pretty fair nonsense I daresay you think it. Not that they would care; they would only laugh all the more if you told them so. They were elves of course. Soon Bilbo caught glimpses of them as the darkness deepened. He loved elves, though he seldom met them; but he was a little frightened of them too. Dwarves don't get on well with them. Even decent enough dwarves like Thorin and his friends think them foolish (which is a very foolish thing to think), or get annoyed with them. For some elves tease them and laugh at them, and most of all at their beards.

“Well, well!” said a voice. “Just look! Bilbo the hobbit on a pony, my dear! Isn't it delicious!”

“Most astonishing wonderful!”

Then off they went into another song as ridiculous as the one I have written down in full. At last one, a tall young fellow, came out from the trees and bowed to Gandalf and to Thorin.

“Welcome to the valley!” he said.

“Thank you!” said Thorin a bit gruffly; but Gandalf was already off his horse and among the elves, talking merrily with them.

“You are a little out of your way,” said the elf: “that is, if you are making for the only path across the water and to the house beyond. We will set you right, but you had best get on foot, until you are over the bridge. Are you going to stay a bit and sing with us, or will you go straight on? Supper is preparing over there,” he said. “I can smell the wood-fires for the cooking.”

Tired as he was, Bilbo would have liked to stay a while. Elvish singing is not a thing to miss, in June under the stars, not if you care for such things. Also he would have liked to have a few private words with these people that seemed to know his names and all about him, although he had never seen them before. He thought their opinion of his adventure might be interesting. Elves know a lot and are wondrous folk for news, and know what is going on among the peoples of the land, as quick as water flows, or quicker.

But the dwarves were all for supper as soon as possible just then, and would not stay. On they all went, leading their ponies, till they were brought to a good path and so at last to the very brink of the river. It was flowing fast and noisily, as mountain-streams do of a summer evening, when sun has been all day on the snow far up above. There was only a narrow bridge of stone without a parapet, as narrow as a pony could well walk on; and over that they had to go, slow and careful, one by one, each leading his pony by the bridle. The elves had brought bright lanterns to the shore, and they sang a merry song as the party went across.

“Don’t dip your beard in the foam, father!” they cried to Thorin, who was bent almost on to his hands and knees. “It is long enough without watering it.”

“Mind Bilbo doesn’t eat all the cakes!” they called. “He is too fat to get through key-holes yet!”

“Hush, hush! Good People! and good night!” said Gandalf, who came last. “Valleys have ears, and some elves have over merry tongues. Good night!”

And so at last they all came to the Last Homely House, and found its doors flung wide.

Now it is a strange thing, but things that are good to have and days that are good to spend are soon told about, and not much to listen to; while things that are uncomfortable, palpitating, and even gruesome, may make a good tale, and take a deal of telling anyway. They stayed long in that good house, fourteen days at least, and they found it hard to leave. Bilbo would gladly have stopped there for ever and ever—even supposing a wish would have taken him right back to his hobbit-hole without trouble. Yet there is little to tell about their stay.

The master of the house was an elf-friend—one of those people whose fathers came into the strange stories before the beginning of History, the wars of the evil goblins and the elves and the first men in the North. In those days of our tale there were still some people who had both elves and heroes of the North for ancestors, and Elrond the master of the house was their chief.

He was as noble and as fair in face as an elf-lord, as strong as a warrior, as wise as a wizard, as venerable as a king of dwarves, and as kind as summer. He comes into many tales, but his part in the story of Bilbo’s great adventure is only a small one, though important, as you will see, if we ever get to the end of it. His house was perfect, whether you liked food, or sleep, or work, or story-telling, or singing, or just sitting and thinking best, or a pleasant mixture of them all. Evil things did not come into that valley.

I wish I had time to tell you even a few of the tales or one or two of the songs that they heard in that house. All of them, the ponies as well, grew refreshed and strong in a few days there. Their clothes were mended as well as their bruises, their tempers and their hopes. Their bags were filled with food and provisions light to carry but strong to bring them over the mountain passes. Their plans were improved with the best advice. So the time came to midsummer eve, and they were to go on again with the early sun on midsummer morning.

Elrond knew all about runes of every kind. That day he looked at the swords they had brought from the trolls' lair, and he said: "These are not troll-made. They are old swords, very old swords of the High Elves of the West, my kin. They were made in Gondolin for the Goblin-wars. They must have come from a dragon's hoard or goblin plunder, for dragons and goblins destroyed that city many ages ago. This, Thorin, the runes name Orcrist, the Goblin-cleaver in the ancient tongue of Gondolin; it was a famous blade. This, Gandalf, was Glamdring, Foe-hammer that the king of Gondolin once wore. Keep them well!"

"Whence did the trolls get them, I wonder?" said Thorin looking at his sword with new interest.

"I could not say," said Elrond, "but one may guess that your trolls had plundered other plunderers, or come on the remnants of old robberies in some hold in the mountains. I have heard that there are still forgotten treasures of old to be found in the deserted caverns of the mines of Moria, since the dwarf and goblin war."

Thorin pondered these words. "I will keep this sword in honour," he said. "May it soon cleave goblins once again!"

"A wish that is likely to be granted soon enough in the mountains!" said Elrond. "But show me now your map!"

He took it and gazed long at it, and he shook his head; for if he did not altogether approve of dwarves and their love of gold, he hated dragons and their cruel wickedness, and he grieved to remember the ruin of the town of Dale and its merry bells, and the burned banks of the bright River Running. The moon was shining in a broad silver crescent. He held up the map and the white light shone through it. "What is this?" he said. "There are moon-letters here, beside the plain runes which say 'five feet high the door and three may walk abreast.'"

"What are moon-letters?" asked the hobbit full of excitement. He loved maps, as I have told you before; and he also liked runes and letters and cunning handwriting, though when he wrote himself it was a bit thin and spidery.

"Moon-letters are rune-letters, but you cannot see them," said Elrond, "not when you look straight at them. They can only be seen when the moon shines behind them, and what is more, with the more cunning sort it must be a moon of the same shape and season as the day when they were written. The dwarves invented them and wrote them with silver pens, as your friends could tell you. These must have been written on a midsummer's eve in a crescent moon, a long while ago."

"What do they say?" asked Gandalf and Thorin together, a bit vexed perhaps that even Elrond should have found this out first, though really there had not been a chance before, and there would not have been another until goodness knows when.

"Stand by the grey stone when the thrush knocks," read Elrond, "and the setting sun with the last light of Durin's Day will shine upon the key-hole."

"Durin, Durin!" said Thorin. "He was the father of the fathers of the eldest race of Dwarves, the Longbeards, and my first ancestor: I am his heir."

"Then what is Durin's Day?" asked Elrond.

"The first day of the dwarves' New Year," said Thorin, "is as all should know the first day of the last moon of Autumn on the threshold of Winter. We still call it Durin's Day when the last moon of Autumn and the sun are in the sky together. But this will not help us much, I fear, for it passes our skill in these days to guess when such a time will come again."

"That remains to be seen," said Gandalf. "Is there any more writing?"

"None to be seen by this moon," said Elrond, and he gave the map back to Thorin; and then they went down to the water to see the elves dance and sing upon the midsummer's eve.

The next morning was a midsummer's morning as fair and fresh as could be dreamed: blue sky and never a cloud, and the sun dancing on the water. Now they rode away amid songs of farewell and good speed, with their hearts ready for more adventure, and with a knowledge of the road they must follow over the Misty Mountains to the land beyond.



## Chapter IV: Over Hill And Under Hill

There were many paths that led up into those mountains, and many passes over them. But most of the paths were cheats and deceptions and led nowhere or to bad ends; and most of the passes were infested by evil things and dreadful dangers. The dwarves and the hobbit, helped by the wise advice of Elrond and the knowledge and memory of Gandalf, took the right road to the right pass.

Long days after they had climbed out of the valley and left the Last Homely House miles behind, they were still going up and up and up. It was a hard path and a dangerous path, a crooked way and a lonely and a long. Now they could look back over the lands they had left, laid out behind them far below. Far, far away in the West, where things were blue and faint, Bilbo knew there lay his own country of safe and comfortable things, and his little hobbit-hole. He shivered. It was getting bitter cold up here, and the wind came shrill among the rocks. Boulders, too, at times came galloping down the mountain-sides, let loose by mid-day sun upon the snow, and passed among them (which was lucky), or over their heads (which was alarming). The nights were comfortless and chill, and they did not dare to sing or talk too loud, for the echoes were uncanny, and the silence seemed to dislike being broken—except by the noise of water and the wail of wind and the crack of stone.

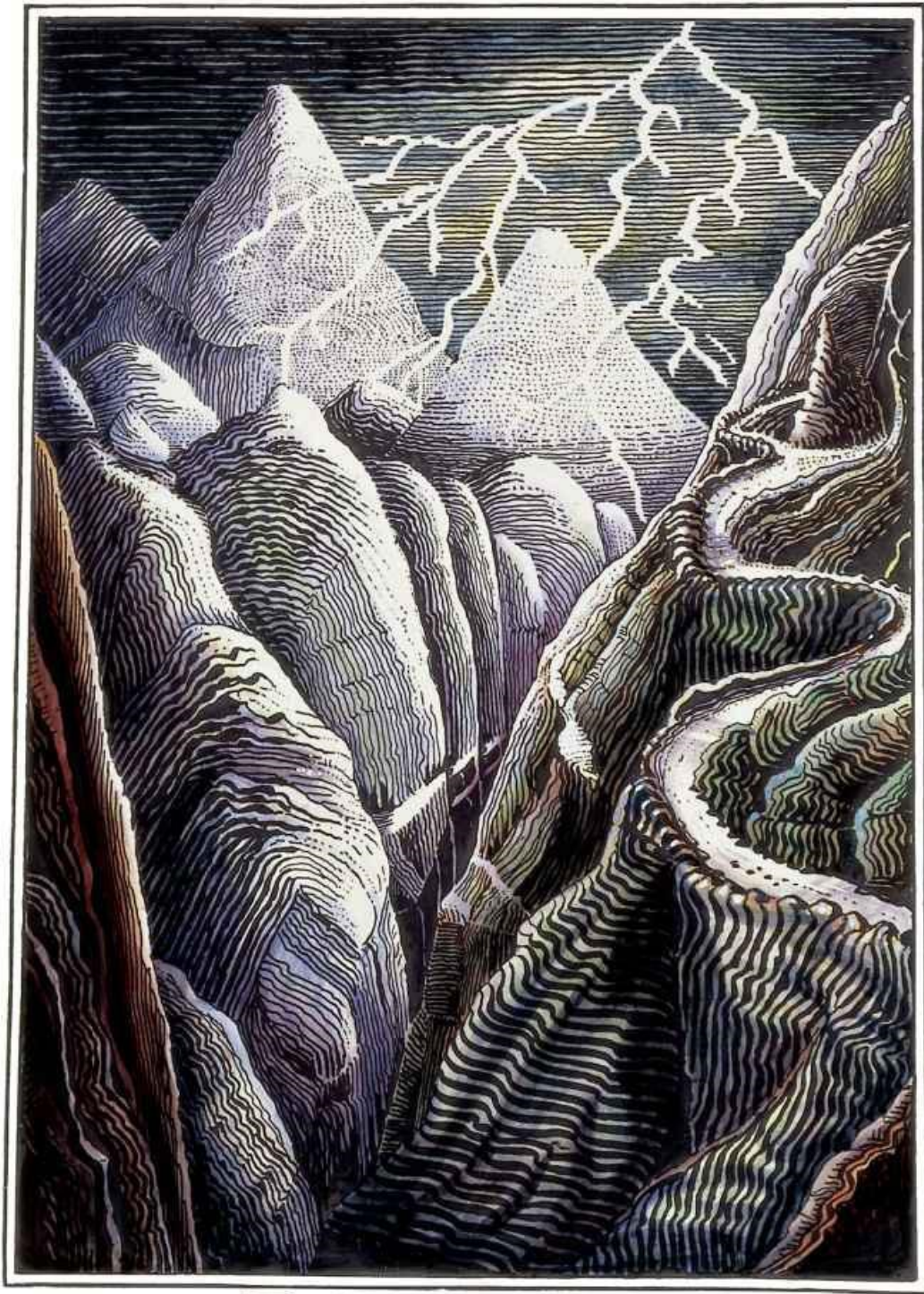
“The summer is getting on down below,” thought Bilbo, “and haymaking is going on and picnics. They will be harvesting and blackberrying, before we even begin to go down the other side at this rate.” And the others were thinking equally gloomy thoughts, although when they had said good-bye to Elrond in the high hope of a midsummer morning, they had spoken gaily of the passage of the mountains, and of riding swift across the lands beyond. They had thought of coming to the secret door in the Lonely Mountain, perhaps that very next last moon of Autumn—“and perhaps it will be Durin’s Day” they had said. Only Gandalf had shaken his head and said nothing. Dwarves had not passed that way for many years, but Gandalf had, and he knew how evil and danger had grown and thriven in the Wild, since the dragons had driven men from the lands, and the goblins had spread in secret after the battle of the Mines of Moria. Even the good plans of wise wizards like Gandalf and of good friends like Elrond go astray sometimes when you are off on dangerous adventures over the Edge of the Wild; and Gandalf was a wise enough wizard to know it.

He knew that something unexpected might happen, and he hardly dared to hope that they would pass without fearful adventure over those great tall mountains with lonely peaks and valleys where no king ruled. They did not. All was well, until one day they met a thunderstorm—more than a thunderstorm, a thunder-battle. You know how terrific a really big thunderstorm can be down in the land and in a river-valley; especially at times when two great thunderstorms meet and clash. More terrible still are thunder and lightning in the mountains at night, when storms come up from East and West and make war. The lightning splinters on the peaks, and rocks shiver, and great crashes split the air and go rolling and tumbling into every cave and hollow; and the darkness is filled with overwhelming noise and sudden light.

Bilbo had never seen or imagined anything of the kind. They were high up in a narrow place, with a dreadful fall into a dim valley at one side of them. There they were sheltering under a hanging rock for the night, and he lay beneath a blanket and shook from head to toe. When he peeped out in the lightning-flashes, he saw that across the valley the stone-giants were out, and were hurling rocks at one another for a game, and catching them, and tossing them down into the darkness where they smashed among the trees far below, or splintered into little bits with a bang. Then came a wind and a rain, and the wind whipped the rain and the hail about in every direction, so that an overhanging rock was no protection at all. Soon they were getting drenched and their ponies were standing with their heads down and their tails between their legs, and some of them were whinnying with fright. They could hear the giants guffawing and shouting all over the mountainsides.



“This won’t do at all!” said Thorin. “If we don’t get blown off, or drowned, or struck by lightning, we shall be picked up by some giant and kicked sky-high for a football.”



*The Mountain-path*

*Click [here](#) for alternative image.*

“Well, if you know of anywhere better, take us there!” said Gandalf, who was feeling very grumpy, and was far from happy about the giants himself.

The end of their argument was that they sent Fili and Kili to look for a better shelter. They had very sharp eyes, and being the youngest of the dwarves by some fifty years they usually got these sort of jobs (when everybody could see that it was absolutely no use sending Bilbo). There is nothing like looking, if you want to find something (or so Thorin said to the young dwarves). You certainly usually find something, if you look, but it is not always quite the something you were after. So it proved on this occasion.

Soon Fili and Kili came crawling back, holding on to the rocks in the wind. “We have found a dry cave,” they said, “not far round the next corner; and ponies and all could get inside.”

“Have you *thoroughly* explored it?” said the wizard, who knew that caves up in the mountains were seldom unoccupied.

“Yes, yes!” they said, though everybody knew they could not have been long about it; they had come back too quick. “It isn’t all that big, and it does not go far back.”

That, of course, is the dangerous part about caves: you don’t know how far they go back, sometimes, or where a passage behind may lead to, or what is waiting for you inside. But now Fili and Kili’s news seemed good enough. So they all got up and prepared to move. The wind was howling and the thunder still growling, and they had a business getting themselves and their ponies along. Still it was not very far to go, and before long they came to a big rock standing out into the path. If you stepped behind, you found a low arch in the side of the mountain. There was just room to get the ponies through with a squeeze, when they had been unpacked and unsaddled. As they passed under the arch, it was good to hear the wind and the rain outside instead of all about them, and to feel safe from the giants and their rocks. But the wizard was taking no risks. He lit up his wand—as he did that day in Bilbo’s dining-room that seemed so long ago, if you remember—, and by its light they explored the cave from end to end.

It seemed quite a fair size, but not too large and mysterious. It had a dry floor and some comfortable nooks. At one end there was room for the ponies; and there they stood (mighty glad of the change) steaming, and champing in their nosebags. Oin and Gloin wanted to light a fire at the door to dry their clothes, but Gandalf would not hear of it. So they spread out their wet things on the floor, and got dry ones out of their bundles; then they made their blankets comfortable, got out their pipes and blew smoke rings, which Gandalf turned into different colours and set dancing up by the roof to amuse them. They talked and talked, and forgot about the storm, and discussed what each would do with his share of the treasure (when they got it, which at the moment did not seem so impossible); and so they dropped off to sleep one by one. And that was the last time that they used the ponies, packages, baggages, tools and paraphernalia that they had brought with them.

It turned out a good thing that night that they had brought little Bilbo with them, after all. For, somehow, he could not go to sleep for a long while; and when he did sleep, he had very nasty dreams. He dreamed that a crack in the wall at the back of the cave got bigger and bigger, and opened wider and wider, and he was very afraid but could not call out or do anything but lie and look. Then he dreamed that the floor of the cave was giving way, and he was slipping—beginning to fall down, down, goodness knows where to.

At that he woke up with a horrible start, and found that part of his dream was true. A crack had opened at the back of the cave, and was already a wide passage. He was just in time to see the last of the ponies’ tails disappearing into it. Of course he gave a very loud yell, as loud a yell as a hobbit can give, which is surprising for their size.

Out jumped the goblins, big goblins, great ugly-looking goblins, lots of goblins, before you could say *rocks and blocks*. There were six to each dwarf, at least, and two even for Bilbo; and they were all grabbed and carried through the crack, before you could say *tinder and flint*. But not Gandalf. Bilbo’s yell had done that much good. It had wakened him up wide in a splintered second, and when goblins came to grab him, there was a terrific flash like lightning in the cave, a smell like gunpowder, and several of them fell dead.

The crack closed with a snap, and Bilbo and the dwarves were on the wrong side of it! Where was Gandalf? Of that neither they nor the goblins had any idea, and the goblins did not wait to find out. They seized Bilbo and the dwarves and hurried them along. It was deep, deep, dark, such as only goblins that have taken to living in the heart of the mountains can see through. The passages there were crossed and tangled in all directions, but the goblins knew their way, as well as you do to the nearest post-office; and the way went down and down, and it was most horribly stuffy. The goblins were very rough, and pinched unmercifully, and chuckled and laughed in their horrible stony voices; and Bilbo was more unhappy even than when the troll had picked him up by his toes. He wished again and again for his nice bright hobbit-hole. Not for the last time.

Now there came a glimmer of a red light before them. The goblins began to sing, or croak, keeping time with the flap of their flat feet on the stone, and shaking their prisoners as well.

*Clap! Snap! the black crack!  
Grip, grab! Pinch, nab!  
And down down to Goblin-town  
You go, my lad!*

*Clash, crash! Crush, smash!  
Hammer and tongs! Knocker and gongs!  
Pound, pound, far underground!  
Ho, ho! my lad!*

*Swish, smack! Whip crack!  
Batter and beat! Yammer and bleat!  
Work, work! Nor dare to shirk,  
While Goblins quaff, and Goblins laugh,  
Round and round far underground  
Below, my lad!*

It sounded truly terrifying. The walls echoed to the *clap, snap!* and the *crush, smash!* and to the ugly laughter of their *ho, ho! my lad!* The general meaning of the song was only too plain; for now the goblins took out whips and whipped them with a *swish, smack!*, and set them running as fast as they could in front of them; and more than one of the dwarves were already yammering and bleating like anything, when they stumbled into a big cavern.

It was lit by a great red fire in the middle, and by torches along the walls, and it was full of goblins. They all laughed and stamped and clapped their hands, when the dwarves (with poor little Bilbo at the back and nearest to the whips) came running in, while the goblin-drivers whooped and cracked their whips behind. The ponies were already there huddled in a corner; and there were all the baggages and packages lying broken open, and being rummaged by goblins, and smelt by goblins, and fingered by goblins, and quarrelled over by goblins.

I am afraid that was the last they ever saw of those excellent little ponies, including a jolly sturdy little white fellow that Elrond had lent to Gandalf, since his horse was not suitable for the mountain-paths. For goblins eat horses and ponies and donkeys (and other much more dreadful things), and they are always hungry. Just now however the prisoners were thinking only of themselves. The goblins chained their hands behind their backs and linked them all together in a line, and dragged them to the far end of the cavern with little Bilbo tugging at the end of the row.

There in the shadows on a large flat stone sat a tremendous goblin with a huge head, and armed goblins were standing round him carrying the axes and the bent swords that they use. Now goblins are cruel, wicked, and bad-hearted. They make no beautiful things, but they make many clever ones. They can tunnel and mine as well as any but the most skilled dwarves, when they take the trouble, though they are usually untidy and dirty. Hammers, axes, swords, daggers, pickaxes, tongs, and also instruments of torture, they make very well, or get other people to make to their design, prisoners and slaves that have to work till they die for want of air and light. It is not unlikely that they invented some of the machines that have since troubled the world, especially the ingenious devices for killing large numbers of people at once, for wheels and engines and explosions always delighted them, and also not working with their own hands more than they could help; but in those days and those wild parts they had not advanced (as it is called) so far. They did not hate dwarves especially, no more than they hated everybody and everything, and particularly the orderly and prosperous; in some parts wicked dwarves had even made alliances with them. But they had a special grudge against Thorin's people, because of the war which you have heard mentioned, but which does not come into this tale; and anyway goblins don't care who they catch, as long as it is done smart and secret, and the prisoners are not able to defend themselves.

"Who are these miserable persons?" said the Great Goblin.

“Dwarves, and this!” said one of the drivers, pulling at Bilbo’s chain so that he fell forward onto his knees. “We found them sheltering in our Front Porch.”

“What do you mean by it?” said the Great Goblin turning to Thorin. “Up to no good, I’ll warrant! Spying on the private business of my people, I guess! Thieves, I shouldn’t be surprised to learn! Murderers and friends of Elves, not unlikely! Come! What have you got to say?”

“Thorin the dwarf at your service!” he replied—it was merely a polite nothing. “Of the things which you suspect and imagine we had no idea at all. We sheltered from a storm in what seemed a convenient cave and unused; nothing was further from our thoughts than inconveniencing goblins in any way whatever.” That was true enough!

“Um!” said the Great Goblin. “So you say! Might I ask what you were doing up in the mountains at all, and where you were coming from, and where you were going to? In fact I should like to know all about you. Not that it will do you much good, Thorin Oakenshield, I know too much about your folk already; but let’s have the truth, or I will prepare something particularly uncomfortable for you!”

“We were on a journey to visit our relatives, our nephews and nieces, and first, second, and third cousins, and the other descendants of our grandfathers, who live on the East side of these truly hospitable mountains,” said Thorin, not quite knowing what to say all at once in a moment, when obviously the exact truth would not do at all.

“He is a liar, O truly tremendous one!” said one of the drivers. “Several of our people were struck by lightning in the cave, when we invited these creatures to come below; and they are as dead as stones. Also he has not explained this!” He held out the sword which Thorin had worn, the sword which came from the Trolls’ lair.

The Great Goblin gave a truly awful howl of rage when he looked at it, and all his soldiers gnashed their teeth, clashed their shields, and stamped. They knew the sword at once. It had killed hundreds of goblins in its time, when the fair elves of Gondolin hunted them in the hills or did battle before their walls. They had called it Orcrist, Goblin-cleaver, but the goblins called it simply Biter. They hated it and hated worse anyone that carried it.

“Murderers and elf-friends!” the Great Goblin shouted. “Slash them! Beat them! Bite them! Gnash them! Take them away to dark holes full of snakes, and never let them see the light again!” He was in such a rage that he jumped off his seat and himself rushed at Thorin with his mouth open.

Just at that moment all the lights in the cavern went out, and the great fire went off poof! into a tower of blue glowing smoke, right up to the roof, that scattered piercing white sparks all among the goblins.

The yells and yammering, croaking, jibbering and jabbering; howls, growls and curses; shrieking and skriking, that followed were beyond description. Several hundred wild cats and wolves being roasted slowly alive together would not have compared with it. The sparks were burning holes in the goblins, and the smoke that now fell from the roof made the air too thick for even their eyes to see through. Soon they were falling over one another and rolling in heaps on the floor, biting and kicking and fighting as if they had all gone mad.

Suddenly a sword flashed in its own light. Bilbo saw it go right through the Great Goblin as he stood dumbfounded in the middle of his rage. He fell dead, and the goblin soldiers fled before the sword shrieking into the darkness.

The sword went back into its sheath. “Follow me quick!” said a voice fierce and quiet; and before Bilbo understood what had happened he was trotting along again, as fast as he could trot, at the end of the line, down more dark passages with the yells of the goblin-hall growing fainter behind him. A pale light was leading them on.

“Quicker, quicker!” said the voice. “The torches will soon be relit.”

“Half a minute!” said Dori, who was at the back next to Bilbo, and a decent fellow. He made the hobbit scramble on his shoulders as best he could with his tied hands, and then off they all went at a run, with a clink-clink of chains, and many a stumble, since they had no hands to steady themselves with. Not for a long while did they stop, and by that time they must have been right down in the very mountain’s heart.



Then Gandalf lit up his wand. Of course it was Gandalf; but just then they were too busy to ask how he got there. He took out his sword again, and again it flashed in the dark by itself. It burned with a rage that made it gleam if goblins were about; now it was bright as blue flame for delight in the killing of the great lord of the cave. It made no trouble whatever of cutting through the goblin-chains and setting all the prisoners free as quickly as possible. This sword's name was Glamdring the Foe-hammer, if you remember. The goblins just called it Beater, and hated it worse than Biter if possible. Orcrist, too, had been saved; for Gandalf had brought it along as well, snatching it from one of the terrified guards. Gandalf thought of most things; and though he could not do everything, he could do a great deal for friends in a tight corner.

"Are we all here?" said he, handing his sword back to Thorin with a bow. "Let me see: one—that's Thorin; two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven; where are Fili and Kili? Here they are! twelve, thirteen—and here's Mr. Baggins: fourteen! Well, well! it might be worse, and then again it might be a good deal better. No ponies, and no food, and no knowing quite where we are, and hordes of angry goblins just behind! On we go!"

On they went. Gandalf was quite right: they began to hear goblin noises and horrible cries far behind in the passages they had come through. That sent them on faster than ever, and as poor Bilbo could not possibly go half as fast—for dwarves can roll along at a tremendous pace, I can tell you, when they have to—they took it in turn to carry him on their backs.

Still goblins go faster than dwarves, and these goblins knew the way better (they had made the paths themselves), and were madly angry; so that do what they could the dwarves heard the cries and howls getting closer and closer. Soon they could hear even the flap of the goblin feet, many many feet which seemed only just round the last corner. The blink of red torches could be seen behind them in the tunnel they were following; and they were getting deadly tired.

"Why, O why did I ever leave my hobbit-hole!" said poor Mr. Baggins bumping up and down on Bombur's back.

"Why, O why did I ever bring a wretched little hobbit on a treasure hunt!" said poor Bombur, who was fat, and staggered along with the sweat dripping down his nose in his heat and terror.

At this point Gandalf fell behind, and Thorin with him. They turned a sharp corner. "About turn!" he shouted. "Draw your sword Thorin!"

There was nothing else to be done; and the goblins did not like it. They came scurrying round the corner in full cry, and found Goblin-cleaver, and Foe-hammer shining cold and bright right in their astonished eyes. The ones in front dropped their torches and gave one yell before they were killed. The ones behind yelled still more, and leaped back knocking over those that were running after them. "Biter and Beater!" they shrieked; and soon they were all in confusion, and most of them were hustling back the way they had come.

It was quite a long while before any of them dared to turn that corner. By that time the dwarves had gone on again, a long, long, way on into the dark tunnels of the goblins' realm. When the goblins discovered that, they put out their torches and they slipped on soft shoes, and they chose out their very quickest runners with the sharpest ears and eyes. These ran forward, as swift as weasels in the dark, and with hardly any more noise than bats.

That is why neither Bilbo, nor the dwarves, nor even Gandalf heard them coming. Nor did they see them. But they were seen by the goblins that ran silently up behind, for Gandalf was letting his wand give out a faint light to help the dwarves as they went along.

Quite suddenly Dori, now at the back again carrying Bilbo, was grabbed from behind in the dark. He shouted and fell; and the hobbit rolled off his shoulders into the blackness, bumped his head on hard rock, and remembered nothing more.



## Chapter V: Riddles In The Dark

When Bilbo opened his eyes, he wondered if he had; for it was just as dark as with them shut. No-one was anywhere near him. Just imagine his fright! He could hear nothing, see nothing, and he could feel nothing except the stone of the floor.

Very slowly he got up and groped about on all fours, till he touched the wall of the tunnel; but neither up nor down it could he find anything: nothing at all, no sign of goblins, no sign of dwarves. His head was swimming, and he was far from certain even of the direction they had been going in when he had his fall. He guessed as well as he could, and crawled along for a good way, till suddenly his hand met what felt like a tiny ring of cold metal lying on the floor of the tunnel. It was a turning point in his career, but he did not know it. He put the ring in his pocket almost without thinking; certainly it did not seem of any particular use at the moment. He did not go much further, but sat down on the cold floor and gave himself up to complete miserableness, for a long while. He thought of himself frying bacon and eggs in his own kitchen at home—for he could feel inside that it was high time for some meal or other; but that only made him miserabler.

He could not think what to do; nor could he think what had happened; or why he had been left behind; or why, if he had been left behind, the goblins had not caught him; or even why his head was so sore. The truth was he had been lying quiet, out of sight and out of mind, in a very dark corner for a long while.

After some time he felt for his pipe. It was not broken, and that was something. Then he felt for his pouch, and there was some tobacco in it, and that was something more. Then he felt for matches and he could not find any at all, and that shattered his hopes completely. Just as well for him, as he agreed when he came to his senses. Goodness knows what the striking of matches and the smell of tobacco would have brought on him out of dark holes in that horrible place. Still at the moment he felt very crushed. But in slapping all his pockets and feeling all round himself for matches his hand came on the hilt of his little sword—the little dagger that he got from the trolls, and that he had quite forgotten; nor fortunately had the goblins noticed it, as he wore it inside his breeches.

Now he drew it out. It shone pale and dim before his eyes. “So it is an elvish blade, too,” he thought; “and goblins are not very near, and yet not far enough.”

But somehow he was comforted. It was rather splendid to be wearing a blade made in Gondolin for the goblin-wars of which so many songs had sung; and also he had noticed that such weapons made a great impression on goblins that came upon them suddenly.

“Go back?” he thought. “No good at all! Go sideways? Impossible! Go forward? Only thing to do! On we go!” So up he got, and trotted along with his little sword held in front of him and one hand feeling the wall, and his heart all of a patter and a pitter.

Now certainly Bilbo was in what is called a tight place. But you must remember it was not quite so tight for him as it would have been for me or for you. Hobbits are not quite like ordinary people; and after all if their holes are nice cheery places and properly aired, quite different from the tunnels of the goblins, still they are more used to tunnelling than we are, and they do not easily lose their sense of direction underground—not when their heads have recovered from being bumped. Also they can move very quietly, and hide easily, and recover wonderfully from falls and bruises, and they have a fund of wisdom and wise sayings that men have mostly never heard or have forgotten long ago.

I should not have liked to have been in Mr. Baggins’ place, all the same. The tunnel seemed to have no end. All he knew was that it was still going down pretty steadily and keeping in the same direction in spite of a twist and a turn or two. There were passages leading off to the side every now and then, as he knew by the glimmer of his

sword, or could feel with his hand on the wall. Of these he took no notice, except to hurry past for fear of goblins or half-imagined dark things coming out of them. On and on he went, and down and down; and still he heard no sound of anything except the occasional whirr of a bat by his ears, which startled him at first, till it became too frequent to bother about. I do not know how long he kept on like this, hating to go on, not daring to stop, on, on, until he was tireder than tired. It seemed like all the way to tomorrow and over it to the days beyond.

Suddenly without any warning he trotted splash into water! Ugh! it was icy cold. That pulled him up sharp and short. He did not know whether it was just a pool in the path, or the edge of an underground stream that crossed the passage, or the brink of a deep dark subterranean lake. The sword was hardly shining at all. He stopped, and he could hear, when he listened hard, drops drip-drip-dripping from an unseen roof into the water below; but there seemed no other sort of sound.

“So it is a pool or a lake, and not an underground river,” he thought. Still he did not dare to wade out into the darkness. He could not swim; and he thought, too, of nasty slimy things, with big bulging blind eyes, wriggling in the water. There are strange things living in the pools and lakes in the hearts of mountains: fish whose fathers swam in, goodness only knows how many years ago, and never swam out again, while their eyes grew bigger and bigger and bigger from trying to see in the blackness; also there are other things more slimy than fish. Even in the tunnels and caves the goblins have made for themselves there are other things living unbeknown to them that have sneaked in from outside to lie up in the dark. Some of these caves, too, go back in their beginnings to ages before the goblins, who only widened them and joined them up with passages, and the original owners are still there in odd corners, slinking and nosing about.

Deep down here by the dark water lived old Gollum, a small slimy creature. I don’t know where he came from, nor who or what he was. He was Gollum—as dark as darkness, except for two big round pale eyes in his thin face. He had a little boat, and he rowed about quite quietly on the lake; for lake it was, wide and deep and deadly cold. He paddled it with large feet dangling over the side, but never a ripple did he make. Not he. He was looking out of his pale lamp-like eyes for blind fish, which he grabbed with his long fingers as quick as thinking. He liked meat too. Goblin he thought good, when he could get it; but he took care they never found him out. He just throttled them from behind, if they ever came down alone anywhere near the edge of the water, while he was prowling about. They very seldom did, for they had a feeling that something unpleasant was lurking down there, down at the very roots of the mountain. They had come on the lake, when they were tunnelling down long ago, and they found they could go no further; so there their road ended in that direction, and there was no reason to go that way—unless the Great Goblin sent them. Sometimes he took a fancy for fish from the lake, and sometimes neither goblin nor fish came back.

Actually Gollum lived on a slimy island of rock in the middle of the lake. He was watching Bilbo now from the distance with his pale eyes like telescopes. Bilbo could not see him, but he was wondering a lot about Bilbo, for he could see that he was no goblin at all.

Gollum got into his boat and shot off from the island, while Bilbo was sitting on the brink altogether flummoxed and at the end of his way and his wits. Suddenly up came Gollum and whispered and hissed:

“Bless us and splash us, my precioussss! I guess it’s a choice feast; at least a tasty morsel it’d make us, gollum!” And when he said *gollum* he made a horrible swallowing noise in his throat. That is how he got his name, though he always called himself ‘my precious’.

The hobbit jumped nearly out of his skin when the hiss came in his ears, and he suddenly saw the pale eyes sticking out at him.

“Who are you?” he said, thrusting his dagger in front of him.

“What iss he, my precious?” whispered Gollum (who always spoke to himself through never having anyone else to speak to). This is what he had come to find out, for he was not really very hungry at the moment, only curious; otherwise he would have grabbed first and whispered afterwards.

“I am Mr. Bilbo Baggins. I have lost the dwarves and I have lost the wizard, and I don’t know where I am; and I don’t want to know, if only I can get away.”

“What’s he got in his hands?” said Gollum, looking at the sword, which he did not quite like.

“A sword, a blade which came out of Gondolin!”

“Sssss” said Gollum, and became quite polite. “Praps ye sits here and chats with it a bitsy, my preciousss. It likes riddles, praps it does, does it?” He was anxious to appear friendly, at any rate for the moment, and until he found out more about the sword and the hobbit, whether he was quite alone really, whether he was good to eat, and whether Gollum was really hungry. Riddles were all he could think of. Asking them, and sometimes guessing them, had been the only game he had ever played with other funny creatures sitting in their holes in the long, long ago, before he lost all his friends and was driven away, alone, and crept down, down, into the dark under the mountains.

“Very well,” said Bilbo, who was anxious to agree, until he found out more about the creature, whether he was quite alone, whether he was fierce or hungry, and whether he was a friend of the goblins.

“You ask first,” he said, because he had not had time to think of a riddle.

So Gollum hissed:

*What has roots as nobody sees,  
Is taller than trees,  
Up, up it goes,  
And yet never grows?*

“Easy!” said Bilbo. “Mountain, I suppose.”

“Does it guess easy? It must have a competition with us, my precious! If precious asks, and it doesn’t answer, we eats it, my preciousss. If it asks us, and we doesn’t answer, then we does what it wants, eh? We shows it the way out, yes!”

“All right!” said Bilbo, not daring to disagree, and nearly bursting his brain to think of riddles that could save him from being eaten.

*Thirty white horses on a red hill,  
First they champ,  
Then they stamp,  
Then they stand still.*

That was all he could think of to ask—the idea of eating was rather on his mind. It was rather an old one, too, and Gollum knew the answer as well as you do.

“Chestnuts, chestnuts,” he hissed. “Teeth! teeth! my preciousss; but we has only six!” Then he asked his second:

*Voiceless it cries,  
Wingless flutters,  
Toothless bites,  
Mouthless mutters.*

“Half a moment!” cried Bilbo, who was still thinking uncomfortably about eating. Fortunately he had once heard something rather like this before, and getting his wits back he thought of the answer. “Wind, wind of course,” he said, and he was so pleased that he made up one on the spot. “This’ll puzzle the nasty little underground creature,” he thought:

*An eye in a blue face  
Saw an eye in a green face.  
“That eye is like to this eye”  
Said the first eye,  
“But in low place  
Not in high place.”*



“Ss, ss, ss,” said Gollum. He had been underground a long long time, and was forgetting this sort of thing. But just as Bilbo was beginning to hope that the wretch would not be able to answer, Gollum brought up memories of ages and ages and ages before, when he lived with his grandmother in a hole in a bank by a river, “Sss, sss, my precious,” he said. “Sun on the daisies it means, it does.”

But these ordinary above ground everyday sort of riddles were tiring for him. Also they reminded him of days when he had been less lonely and sneaky and nasty, and that put him out of temper. What is more they made him hungry; so this time he tried something a bit more difficult and more unpleasant:

*It cannot be seen, cannot be felt,  
Cannot be heard, cannot be smelt.  
It lies behind stars and under hills,  
And empty holes it fills.  
It comes first and follows after,  
Ends life, kills laughter.*

Unfortunately for Gollum Bilbo had heard that sort of thing before; and the answer was all round him any way. “Dark!” he said without even scratching his head or putting on his thinking cap.

*A box without hinges, key, or lid,  
Yet golden treasure inside is hid,*

he asked to gain time, until he could think of a really hard one. This he thought a dreadfully easy chestnut, though he had not asked it in the usual words. But it proved a nasty poser for Gollum. He hissed to himself, and still he did not answer; he whispered and spluttered.

After some while Bilbo became impatient. “Well, what is it?” he said. “The answer’s not a kettle boiling over, as you seem to think from the noise you are making.”

“Give us a chance; let it give us a chance, my precious—ss—ss.”

“Well,” said Bilbo after giving him a long chance, “what about your guess?”

But suddenly Gollum remembered thieving from nests long ago, and sitting under the river bank teaching his grandmother, teaching his grandmother to suck—“Eggses!” he hissed. “Eggses it is!” Then he asked:

*Alive without breath,  
As cold as death;  
Never thirsty, ever drinking,  
All in mail never clinking.*

He also in his turn thought this was a dreadfully easy one, because he was always thinking of the answer. But he could not remember anything better at the moment, he was so flustered by the egg-question. All the same it was a poser for poor Bilbo, who never had anything to do with the water if he could help it. I imagine you know the answer, of course, or can guess it as easy as winking, since you are sitting comfortably at home and have not the danger of being eaten to disturb your thinking. Bilbo sat and cleared his throat once or twice, but no answer came.

After a while Gollum began to hiss with pleasure to himself: “Is it nice, my preciousss? Is it juicy? Is it scrumptiously crunchable?” He began to peer at Bilbo out of the darkness.

“Half a moment,” said the hobbit shivering. “I gave you a good long chance just now.”

“It must make haste, haste!” said Gollum, beginning to climb out of his boat on to the shore to get at Bilbo. But when he put his long webby foot in the water, a fish jumped out in a fright and fell on Bilbo’s toes.

“Ugh!” he said, “it is cold and clammy!”—and so he guessed. “Fish! fish!” he cried. “It is fish!”

Gollum was dreadfully disappointed; but Bilbo asked another riddle as quick as ever he could, so that Gollum had to get back into his boat and think.

*No-legs lay on one-leg, two-legs sat near on three-legs, four-legs got some.*

It was not really the right time for this riddle, but Bilbo was in a hurry. Gollum might have had some trouble guessing it, if he had asked it at another time. As it was, talking of fish, “no-legs” was not so very difficult, and after that the rest was easy. “Fish on a little table, man at table sitting on a stool, the cat has the bones” that of course is the answer, and Gollum soon gave it. Then he thought the time had come to ask something hard and horrible. This is what he said:

*This thing all things devours:  
Birds, beasts, trees, flowers;  
Gnaws iron, bites steel;  
Grinds hard stones to meal;  
Slays king, ruins town,  
And beats high mountain down.*

Poor Bilbo sat in the dark thinking of all the horrible names of all the giants and ogres he had ever heard told of in tales, but not one of them had done all these things. He had a feeling that the answer was quite different and that he ought to know it, but he could not think of it. He began to get frightened, and that is bad for thinking. Gollum began to get out of his boat. He flapped into the water and paddled to the bank; Bilbo could see his eyes coming towards him. His tongue seemed to stick in his mouth; he wanted to shout out: “Give me more time! Give me time!” But all that came out with a sudden squeal was:

“Time! Time!”

Bilbo was saved by pure luck. For that of course was the answer.

Gollum was disappointed once more; and now he was getting angry, and also tired of the game. It had made him very hungry indeed. This time he did not go back to the boat. He sat down in the dark by Bilbo. That made the hobbit most dreadfully uncomfortable and scattered his wits.

“It’s got to ask us a quesstion, my preciouss, yes, yess, yesss. Jusst one more question to guess, yes, yess,” said Gollum.

But Bilbo simply could not think of any question with that nasty wet cold thing sitting next to him, and pawing and poking him. He scratched himself, he pinched himself; still he could not think of anything.

“Ask us! ask us!” said Gollum.

Bilbo pinched himself and slapped himself; he gripped on his little sword; he even felt in his pocket with his other hand. There he found the ring he had picked up in the passage and forgotten about.

“What have I got in my pocket?” he said aloud. He was talking to himself, but Gollum thought it was a riddle, and he was frightfully upset.

“Not fair! not fair!” he hissed. “It isn’t fair, my precious, is it, to ask us what it’s got in its nasty little pocketses?”

Bilbo seeing what had happened and having nothing better to ask stuck to his question, “What have I got in my pocket?” he said louder.

“S-s-s-s-s,” hissed Gollum. “It must give us three guessseses, my preciouss, three guessseses.”

“Very well! Guess away!” said Bilbo.

“Handsese!” said Gollum.

“Wrong,” said Bilbo, who had luckily just taken his hand out again. “Guess again!”

“S-s-s-s-s,” said Gollum more upset than ever. He thought of all the things he kept in his own pockets: fish-bones, goblins’ teeth, wet shells, a bit of bat-wing, a sharp stone to sharpen his fangs on, and other nasty things. He tried to think what other people kept in their pockets.

“Knife!” he said at last.

“Wrong!” said Bilbo, who had lost his some time ago. “Last guess!”

Now Gollum was in a much worse state than when Bilbo had asked him the egg-question. He hissed and spluttered and rocked himself backwards and forwards, and slapped his feet on the floor, and wriggled and squirmed; but still he did not dare to waste his last guess.

“Come on!” said Bilbo. “I am waiting!” He tried to sound bold and cheerful, but he did not feel at all sure how the game was going to end, whether Gollum guessed right or not.

“Time’s up!” he said.

“String, or nothing!” shrieked Gollum, which was not quite fair—working in two guesses at once.

“Both wrong,” cried Bilbo very much relieved; and he jumped at once to his feet, put his back to the nearest wall, and held out his little sword. He knew, of course, that the riddle-game was sacred and of immense antiquity, and even wicked creatures were afraid to cheat when they played at it. But he felt he could not trust this slimy thing to keep any promise at a pinch. Any excuse would do for him to slide out of it. And after all that last question had not been a genuine riddle according to the ancient laws.

But at any rate Gollum did not at once attack him. He could see the sword in Bilbo’s hand. He sat still, shivering and whispering. At last Bilbo could wait no longer.

“Well?” he said. “What about your promise? I want to go. You must show me the way.”

“Did we say so, precious? Show the nasty little Baggins the way out, yes, yes. But what has it got in its pocket, eh? Not string, precious, but not nothing. Oh no! gollum!”

“Never you mind,” said Bilbo. “A promise is a promise.”

“Cross it is, impatient, precious,” hissed Gollum. “But it must wait, yes it must. We can’t go up the tunnels so hasty. We must go and get some things first, yes, things to help us.”

“Well, hurry up!” said Bilbo, relieved to think of Gollum going away. He thought he was just making an excuse and did not mean to come back. What was Gollum talking about? What useful thing could he keep out on the dark lake? But he was wrong. Gollum did mean to come back. He was angry now and hungry. And he was a miserable wicked creature, and already he had a plan.

Not far away was his island, of which Bilbo knew nothing, and there in his hiding-place he kept a few wretched oddments, and one very beautiful thing, very beautiful, very wonderful. He had a ring, a golden ring, a precious ring.

“My birthday-present!” he whispered to himself, as he had often done in the endless dark days. “That’s what we wants now, yes; we wants it!”

He wanted it because it was a ring of power, and if you slipped that ring on your finger, you were invisible; only in the full sunlight could you be seen, and then only by your shadow, and that would be shaky and faint.

“My birthday-present! It came to me on my birthday, my precious.” So he had always said to himself. But who knows how Gollum came by that present, ages ago in the old days when such rings were still at large in the world? Perhaps even the Master who ruled them could not have said. Gollum used to wear it at first, till it tired him; and then he kept it in a pouch next his skin, till it galled him; and now usually he hid it in a hole in the rock on his island, and was always going back to look at it. And still sometimes he put it on, when he could not bear to be parted from it any longer, or when he was very, very, hungry, and tired of fish. Then he would creep along dark passages looking for stray goblins. He might even venture into places where the torches were lit and made his eyes blink and smart; for he would be safe. Oh yes, quite safe. No-one would see him, no-one would notice him, till he had his fingers on their throat. Only a few hours ago he had worn it, and caught a small goblin-imp. How it squeaked! He still had a bone or two left to gnaw, but he wanted something softer.

“Quite safe, yes,” he whispered to himself. “It won’t see us, will it, my precious? No. It won’t see us, and its nasty little sword will be useless, yes quite.”

That is what was in his wicked little mind, as he slipped suddenly from Bilbo's side, and flapped back to his boat, and went off into the dark. Bilbo thought he had heard the last of him. Still he waited a while; for he had no idea how to find his way out alone.

Suddenly he heard a screech. It sent a shiver down his back. Gollum was cursing and wailing away in the gloom, not very far off by the sound of it. He was on his island, scrabbling here and there, searching and seeking in vain.

"Where iss it? Where iss it?" Bilbo heard him crying. "Losst it is, my precious, lost, lost! Curse us and crush us, my precious is lost!"

"What's the matter?" Bilbo called. "What have you lost?"

"It mustn't ask us," shrieked Gollum. "Not its business, no, gollum! It's losst, gollum, gollum, gollum."

"Well, so am I," cried Bilbo, "and I want to get unlost. And I won the game, and you promised. So come along! Come and let me out, and then go on with your looking!" Utterly miserable as Gollum sounded, Bilbo could not find much pity in his heart, and he had a feeling that anything Gollum wanted so much could hardly be something good. "Come along!" he shouted.

"No, not yet, precious!" Gollum answered. "We must search for it, it's lost, gollum."

"But you never guessed my last question, and you promised," said Bilbo.

"Never guessed!" said Gollum. Then suddenly out of the gloom came a sharp hiss. "What has it got in its pocketesses? Tell us that. It must tell first."

As far as Bilbo knew, there was no particular reason why he should not tell. Gollum's mind had jumped to a guess quicker than his; naturally, for Gollum had brooded for ages on this one thing, and he was always afraid of its being stolen. But Bilbo was annoyed at the delay. After all, he had won the game, pretty fairly, at a horrible risk. "Answers were to be guessed not given," he said.

"But it wasn't a fair question," said Gollum. "Not a riddle, precious, no."

"Oh well, if it's a matter of ordinary questions," Bilbo replied, "then I asked one first. What have you lost? Tell me that!"

"What has it got in its pocketesses?" The sound came hissing louder and sharper, and as he looked towards it, to his alarm Bilbo now saw two small points of light peering at him. As suspicion grew in Gollum's mind, the light of his eyes burned with a pale flame.

"What have you lost?" Bilbo persisted.

But now the light in Gollum's eyes had become a green fire, and it was coming swiftly nearer. Gollum was in his boat again, paddling wildly back to the dark shore; and such a rage of loss and suspicion was in his heart that no sword had any more terror for him.

Bilbo could not guess what had maddened the wretched creature, but he saw that all was up, and that Gollum meant to murder him at any rate. Just in time he turned and ran blindly back up the dark passage down which he had come, keeping close to the wall and feeling it with his left hand.

"What has it got in its pocketesses?" he heard the hiss loud behind him, and the splash as Gollum leapt from his boat. "What have I, I wonder?" he said to himself, as he panted and stumbled along. He put his left hand in his pocket. The ring felt very cold as it quietly slipped on to his groping forefinger.

The hiss was close behind him. He turned now and saw Gollum's eyes like small green lamps coming up the slope. Terrified he tried to run faster, but suddenly he struck his toes on a snag in the floor, and fell flat with his little sword under him.

In a moment Gollum was on him. But before Bilbo could do anything, recover his breath, pick himself up, or wave his sword, Gollum passed by, taking no notice of him, cursing and whispering as he ran.

What could it mean? Gollum could see in the dark. Bilbo could see the light of his eyes palely shining even from behind. Painfully he got up, and sheathed his sword, which was now glowing faintly again, then very cautiously he followed. There seemed nothing else to do. It was no good crawling back down to Gollum's water. Perhaps if he followed him, Gollum might lead him to some way of escape without meaning to.

"Curse it! curse it! curse it!" hissed Gollum. "Curse the Baggins! It's gone! What has it got in its pocketesses? Oh we guess, we guess, my precious. He's found it, yes he must have. My birthday-present."

Bilbo pricked up his ears. He was at last beginning to guess himself. He hurried a little, getting as close as he dared behind Gollum, who was still going quickly, not looking back, but turning his head from side to side, as Bilbo could see from the faint glimmer on the walls.

"My birthday-present! Curse it! How did we lose it, my precious? Yes, that's it. When we came this way last, when we twisted that nasty young squeaker. That's it. Curse it! It slipped from us, after all these ages and ages! It's gone, gollum."

Suddenly Gollum sat down and began to weep, a whistling and gurgling sound horrible to listen to. Bilbo halted and flattened himself against the tunnel-wall. After a while Gollum stopped weeping and began to talk. He seemed to be having an argument with himself.

"It's no good going back there to search, no. We doesn't remember all the places we've visited. And it's no use. The Baggins has got it in its pocketesses; the nasty noser has found it, we says."

"We guesses, precious, only guesses. We can't know till we find the nasty creature and squeezes it. But it doesn't know what the present can do, does it? It'll just keep it in its pocketesses. It doesn't know, and it can't go far. It's lost itself, the nasty nosey thing. It doesn't know the way out. It said so."

"It said so, yes; but it's tricky. It doesn't say what it means. It won't say what it's got in its pocketesses. It knows. It knows a way in, it must know a way out, yes. It's off to the back-door. To the back-door, that's it."

"The goblins will catch it then. It can't get out that way, precious."

"Ssss, sss, gollum! Goblins! Yes, but if it's got the present, our precious present, then goblins will get it, gollum! They'll find it, they'll find out what it does. We shan't ever be safe again, never, gollum! One of the goblins will put it on, and then no-one will see him. He'll be there but not seen. Not even our clever eyeses will notice him; and he'll come creepsy and tricky and catch us, gollum, gollum!"

"Then let's stop talking, precious, and make haste. If the Baggins has gone that way, we must go quick and see. Go! Not far now. Make haste!"

With a spring Gollum got up and started shambling off at a great pace. Bilbo hurried after him, still cautiously, though his chief fear now was of tripping on another snag and falling with a noise. His head was in a whirl of hope and wonder. It seemed that the ring he had was a magic ring: it made you invisible! He had heard of such things, of course, in old old tales; but it was hard to believe that he really had found one, by accident. Still there it was: Gollum with his bright eyes had passed him by, only a yard to one side.

On they went, Gollum flip-flapping ahead, hissing and cursing; Bilbo behind going as softly as a hobbit can. Soon they came to places where, as Bilbo had noticed on the way down, side-passages opened, this way and that. Gollum began at once to count them.

"One left, yes. One right, yes. Two right, yes, yes. Two left, yes, yes." And so on and on.

As the count grew he slowed down, and he began to get shaky and weepy; for he was leaving the water further and further behind, and he was getting afraid. Goblins might be about, and he had lost his ring. At last he stopped by a low opening, on their left as they went up.

"Seven right, yes. Six left, yes!" he whispered. "This is it. This is the way to the back-door, yes. Here's the passage!"

He peered in, and shrank back. "But we dursn't go in, precious, no we dursn't. Goblins down there. Lots of goblins. We smells them. Ssss!"

“What shall we do? Curse them and crush them! We must wait here, precious, wait a bit and see.”

So they came to a dead stop. Gollum had brought Bilbo to the way out after all, but Bilbo could not get in! There was Gollum sitting humped up right in the opening, and his eyes gleamed cold in his head, as he swayed it from side to side between his knees.

Bilbo crept away from the wall more quietly than a mouse; but Gollum stiffened at once, and sniffed, and his eyes went green. He hissed softly but menacingly. He could not see the hobbit, but now he was on the alert, and he had other senses that the darkness had sharpened: hearing and smell. He seemed to be crouched right down with his flat hands splayed on the floor, and his head thrust out, nose almost to the stone. Though he was only a black shadow in the gleam of his own eyes, Bilbo could see or feel that he was tense as a bowstring, gathered for a spring.

Bilbo almost stopped breathing, and went stiff himself. He was desperate. He must get away, out of this horrible darkness, while he had any strength left. He must fight. He must stab the foul thing, put its eyes out, kill it. It meant to kill him. No, not a fair fight. He was invisible now. Gollum had no sword. Gollum had not actually threatened to kill him, or tried to yet. And he was miserable, alone, lost. A sudden understanding, a pity mixed with horror, welled up in Bilbo's heart: a glimpse of endless unmarked days without light or hope of betterment, hard stone, cold fish, sneaking and whispering. All these thoughts passed in a flash of a second. He trembled. And then quite suddenly in another flash, as if lifted by a new strength and resolve, he leaped.

No great leap for a man, but a leap in the dark. Straight over Gollum's head he jumped, seven feet forward and three in the air; indeed, had he known it, he only just missed cracking his skull on the low arch of the passage.

Gollum threw himself backwards, and grabbed as the hobbit flew over him, but too late: his hands snapped on thin air, and Bilbo, falling fair on his sturdy feet, sped off down the new tunnel. He did not turn to see what Gollum was doing. There was a hissing and cursing almost at his heels at first, then it stopped. All at once there came a blood-curdling shriek, filled with hatred and despair. Gollum was defeated. He dared go no further. He had lost: lost his prey, and lost, too, the only thing he had ever cared for, his precious. The cry brought Bilbo's heart to his mouth, but still he held on. Now faint as an echo, but menacing, the voice came behind:

“Thief, thief, thief! Baggins! We hates it, we hates it, we hates it for ever!”

Then there was a silence. But that too seemed menacing to Bilbo. “If goblins are so near that he smelt them,” he thought, “then they'll have heard his shrieking and cursing. Careful now, or this way will lead you to worse things.”

The passage was low and roughly made. It was not too difficult for the hobbit, except when, in spite of all care, he stubbed his poor toes again, several times, on nasty jagged stones in the floor. “A bit low for goblins, at least for the big ones,” thought Bilbo, not knowing that even the big ones, the orcs of the mountains, go along at a great speed stooping low with their hands almost on the ground.

Soon the passage that had been sloping down began to go up again, and after a while it climbed steeply. That slowed Bilbo down. But at last the slope stopped, the passage turned a corner and dipped down again, and there, at the bottom of a short incline, he saw, filtering round another corner—a glimpse of light. Not red light, as of fire or lantern, but a pale out-of-doors sort of light. Then Bilbo began to run.

Scuttling as fast as his legs would carry him he turned the last corner and came suddenly right into an open space, where the light, after all that time in the dark, seemed dazzlingly bright. Really it was only a leak of sunshine in through a doorway, where a great door, a stone door, was left standing open.

Bilbo blinked, and then suddenly he saw the goblins: goblins in full armour with drawn swords sitting just inside the door, and watching it with wide eyes, and watching the passage that led to it. They were aroused, alert, ready for anything.

They saw him sooner than he saw them. Yes, they saw him. Whether it was an accident, or a last trick of the ring before it took a new master, it was not on his finger. With yells of delight the goblins rushed upon him.

A pang of fear and loss, like an echo of Gollum's misery, smote Bilbo, and forgetting even to draw his sword he struck his hands into his pockets. And there was the ring still, in his left pocket, and it slipped on his finger.

The goblins stopped short. They could not see a sign of him. He had vanished. They yelled twice as loud as before, but not so delightedly.

“Where is it?” they cried.

“Go back up the passage!” some shouted.

“This way!” some yelled. “That way!” others yelled.

“Look out for the door,” bellowed the captain.

Whistles blew, armour clashed, swords rattled, goblins cursed and swore and ran hither and thither, falling over one another and getting very angry. There was a terrible outcry, to-do, and disturbance.

Bilbo was dreadfully frightened, but he had the sense to understand what had happened and to sneak behind a big barrel which held drink for the goblin-guards, and so get out of the way and avoid being bumped into, trampled to death, or caught by feel.

“I must get to the door, I must get to the door!” he kept on saying to himself, but it was a long time before he ventured to try. Then it was like a horrible game of blind-man’s-buff. The place was full of goblins running about, and the poor little hobbit dodged this way and that, was knocked over by a goblin who could not make out what he had bumped into, scrambled away on all fours, slipped between the legs of the captain just in time, got up, and ran for the door.

It was still ajar, but a goblin had pushed it nearly to. Bilbo struggled but he could not move it. He tried to squeeze through the crack. He squeezed and squeezed, and he stuck! It was awful. His buttons had got wedged on the edge of the door and the door-post. He could see outside into the open air: there were a few steps running down into a narrow valley between tall mountains; the sun came out from behind a cloud and shone bright on the outside of the door—but he could not get through.

Suddenly one of the goblins inside shouted: “There is a shadow by the door. Something is outside!”

Bilbo’s heart jumped into his mouth. He gave a terrific squirm. Buttons burst off in all directions. He was through, with a torn coat and waistcoat, leaping down the steps like a goat, while bewildered goblins were still picking up his nice brass buttons on the doorstep.

Of course they soon came down after him, hooting and hallooing, and hunting among the trees. But they don’t like the sun: it makes their legs wobble and their heads giddy. They could not find Bilbo with the ring on, slipping in and out of the shadow of the trees, running quick and quiet, and keeping out of the sun; so soon they went back grumbling and cursing to guard the door. Bilbo had escaped.



## Chapter VI: Out Of The Frying-Pan Into The Fire

Bilbo had escaped the goblins, but he did not know where he was. He had lost hood, cloak, food, pony, his buttons and his friends. He wandered on and on, till the sun began to sink westwards—*behind the mountains*. Their shadows fell across Bilbo's path, and he looked back. Then he looked forward and could see before him only ridges and slopes falling towards lowlands and plains glimpsed occasionally between the trees.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "I seem to have got right to the other side of the Misty Mountains, right to the edge of the Land Beyond! Where and O where can Gandalf and the dwarves have got to? I only hope to goodness they are not still back there in the power of the goblins!"

He still wandered on, out of the little high valley, over its edge, and down the slopes beyond; but all the while a very uncomfortable thought was growing inside him. He wondered whether he ought not, now he had the magic ring, to go back into the horrible, horrible, tunnels and look for his friends. He had just made up his mind that it was his duty, that he must turn back—and very miserable he felt about it—when he heard voices.

He stopped and listened. It did not sound like goblins; so he crept forward carefully. He was on a stony path winding downwards with a rocky wall on the left hand; on the other side the ground sloped away and there were dells below the level of the path overhung with bushes and low trees. In one of these dells under the bushes people were talking.

He crept still nearer, and suddenly he saw peering between two big boulders a head with a red hood on: it was Balin doing look-out. He could have clapped and shouted for joy, but he did not. He had still got the ring on, for fear of meeting something unexpected and unpleasant, and he saw that Balin was looking straight at him without noticing him.

"I will give them all a surprise," he thought, as he crawled into the bushes at the edge of the dell. Gandalf was arguing with the dwarves. They were discussing all that had happened to them in the tunnels, and wondering and debating what they were to do now. The dwarves were grumbling, and Gandalf was saying that they could not possibly go on with their journey leaving Mr. Baggins in the hands of the goblins, without trying to find out if he was alive or dead, and without trying to rescue him.

"After all he is my friend," said the wizard, "and not a bad little chap. I feel responsible for him. I wish to goodness you had not lost him."

The dwarves wanted to know why he had ever been brought at all, why he could not stick to his friends and come along with them, and why the wizard had not chosen someone with more sense. "He has been more trouble than use so far," said one. "If we have got to go back now into those abominable tunnels to look for him, then drat him, I say."

Gandalf answered angrily: "I brought him, and I don't bring things that are of no use. Either you help me to look for him, or I go and leave you here to get out of the mess as best you can yourselves. If we can only find him again, you will thank me before all is over. Whatever did you want to go and drop him for, Dori?"

"You would have dropped him," said Dori, "if a goblin had suddenly grabbed your legs from behind in the dark, tripped up your feet, and kicked you in the back!"

"Then why didn't you pick him up again?"

"Good heavens! Can you ask! Goblins fighting and biting in the dark, everybody falling over bodies and hitting one another! You nearly chopped off my head with Glamdring, and Thorin was stabbing here there and everywhere with Orcrist. All of a sudden you gave one of your blinding flashes, and we saw the goblins



running back yelping. You shouted ‘follow me everybody!’ and everybody ought to have followed. We thought everybody had. There was no time to count, as you know quite well, till we had dashed through the gate-guards, out of the lower door, and helter-skelter down here. And here we are—without the burglar, confusticate him!”

“And here’s the burglar!” said Bilbo stepping down into the middle of them, and slipping off the ring.

Bless me, how they jumped! Then they shouted with surprise and delight. Gandalf was as astonished as any of them, but probably more pleased than all the others. He called to Balin and told him what he thought of a look-out man who let people walk right into them like that without warning. It is a fact that Bilbo’s reputation went up a very great deal with the dwarves after this. If they had still doubted that he was really a first-class burglar, in spite of Gandalf’s words, they doubted no longer. Balin was the most puzzled of all; but everyone said it was a very clever bit of work.

Indeed Bilbo was so pleased with their praise that he just chuckled inside and said nothing whatever about the ring; and when they asked him how he did it, he said: “Oh, just crept along, you know—very carefully and quietly.”

“Well, it is the first time that even a mouse has crept along carefully and quietly under my very nose and not been spotted,” said Balin, “and I take off my hood to you.” Which he did.

“Balin at your service,” said he.

“Your servant, Mr. Baggins,” said Bilbo.

Then they wanted to know all about his adventures after they had lost him, and he sat down and told them everything—except about the finding of the ring (“not just now” he thought). They were particularly interested in the riddle-competition, and shuddered most appreciatively at his description of Gollum.

“And then I couldn’t think of any other question with him sitting beside me,” ended Bilbo; “so I said ‘what’s in my pocket?’ And he couldn’t guess in three goes. So I said: ‘what about your promise? Show me the way out!’ But he came at me to kill me, and I ran, and fell over, and he missed me in the dark. Then I followed him, because I heard him talking to himself. He thought I really knew the way out, and so he was making for it. And then he sat down in the entrance, and I could not get by. So I jumped over him and escaped, and ran down to the gate.”

“What about the guards?” they asked. “Weren’t there any?”

“O yes! lots of them; but I dodged ’em. I got stuck in the door, which was only open a crack, and I lost lots of buttons,” he said sadly looking at his torn clothes. “But I squeezed through all right—and here I am.”

The dwarves looked at him with quite a new respect, when he talked about dodging guards, jumping over Gollum, and squeezing through, as if it was not very difficult or very alarming.

“What did I tell you?” said Gandalf laughing. “Mr. Baggins has more about him than you guess.” He gave Bilbo a queer look from under his bushy eyebrows, as he said this, and the hobbit wondered if he guessed at the part of his tale that he had left out.

Then he had questions of his own to ask, for if Gandalf had explained it all by now to the dwarves, Bilbo had not heard it. He wanted to know how the wizard had turned up again, and where they had all got to now.

The wizard, to tell the truth, never minded explaining his cleverness more than once, so now he told Bilbo that both he and Elrond had been well aware of the presence of evil goblins in that part of the mountains. But their main gate used to come out on a different pass, one more easy to travel by, so that they often caught people benighted near their gates. Evidently people had given up going that way, and the goblins must have opened their new entrance at the top of the pass the dwarves had taken, quite recently, because it had been found quite safe up to now.

“I must see if I can’t find a more or less decent giant to block it up again,” said Gandalf, “or soon there will be no getting over the mountains at all.”

As soon as Gandalf had heard Bilbo's yell he realized what had happened. In the flash which killed the goblins that were grabbing him he had nipped inside the crack, just as it snapped to. He followed after the drivers and prisoners right to the edge of the great hall, and there he sat down and worked up the best magic he could in the shadows.

"A very ticklish business, it was," he said. "Touch and go!"

But, of course, Gandalf had made a special study of bewitchments with fire and lights (even the hobbit had never forgotten the magic fireworks at Old Took's midsummereve parties, as you remember). The rest we all know—except that Gandalf knew all about the back-door, as the goblins called the lower gate, where Bilbo lost his buttons. As a matter of fact it was well known to anybody who was acquainted with this part of the mountains; but it took a wizard to keep his head in the tunnels and guide them in the right direction.

"They made that gate ages ago," he said, "partly for a way of escape, if they needed one; partly as a way out into the lands beyond, where they still come in the dark and do great damage. They guard it always and no-one has ever managed to block it up. They will guard it doubly after this," he laughed.

All the others laughed too. After all they had lost a good deal, but they had killed the Great Goblin and a great many others besides, and they had all escaped, so they might be said to have had the best of it so far.

But the wizard called them to their senses. "We must be getting on at once, now we are a little rested," he said. "They will be out after us in hundreds when night comes on; and already shadows are lengthening. They can smell our footsteps for hours and hours after we have passed. We must be miles on before dusk. There will be a bit of moon, if it keeps fine, and that is lucky. Not that they mind the moon much, but it will give us a little light to steer by."

"O yes!" he said in answer to more questions from the hobbit. "You lose track of time inside goblin-tunnels. Today's Thursday, and it was Monday night or Tuesday morning that we were captured. We have gone miles and miles, and come right down through the heart of the mountains, and are now on the other side—quite a short cut. But we are not at the point to which our pass would have brought us; we are too far to the North, and have some awkward country ahead. And we are still pretty high up. Let's get on!"

"I am dreadfully hungry," groaned Bilbo, who was suddenly aware that he had not had a meal since the night before the night before last. Just think of that for a hobbit! His stomach felt all empty and loose and his legs all wobbly, now that the excitement was over.

"Can't help it," said Gandalf, "unless you like to go back and ask the goblins nicely to let you have your pony back and your luggage."

"No thank you!" said Bilbo.

"Very well then, we must just tighten our belts and trudge on—or we shall be made into supper, and that will be much worse than having none ourselves."

As they went on Bilbo looked from side to side for something to eat; but the blackberries were still only in flower, and of course there were no nuts, not even hawthorn-berries. He nibbled a bit of sorrel, and he drank from a small mountain-stream that crossed the path, and he ate three wild strawberries that he found on its bank, but it was not much good.

They still went on and on. The rough path disappeared. The bushes, and the long grasses between the boulders, the patches of rabbit-cropped turf, the thyme and the sage and the marjoram, and the yellow rockroses all vanished, and they found themselves at the top of a wide steep slope of fallen stones, the remains of a landslide. When they began to go down this, rubbish and small pebbles rolled away from their feet; soon larger bits of split stone went clattering down and started other pieces below them slithering and rolling; then lumps of rock were disturbed and bounded off, crashing down with a dust and a noise. Before long the whole slope above them and below them seemed on the move, and they were sliding away, huddled all together, in a fearful confusion of slipping, rattling, cracking slabs and stones.

It was the trees at the bottom that saved them. They slid into the edge of a climbing wood of pines that here stood right up the mountain slope from the deeper darker forests of the valleys below. Some caught hold of the

trunks and swung themselves into lower branches, some (like the little hobbit) got behind a tree to shelter from the onslaught of the rocks. Soon the danger was over, the slide had stopped, and the last faint crashes could be heard as the largest of the disturbed stones went bounding and spinning among the bracken and the pine-roots far below.

“Well! that has got us on a bit,” said Gandalf; “and even goblins tracking us will have a job to come down here quietly.”

“I daresay,” grumbled Bombur; “but they won’t find it difficult to send stones bouncing down on our heads.” The dwarves (and Bilbo) were feeling far from happy, and were rubbing their bruised and damaged legs and feet.

“Nonsense! We are going to turn aside here out of the path of the slide. We must be quick! Look at the light!”

The sun had long gone behind the mountains. Already the shadows were deepening about them, though far away through the trees and over the black tops of those growing lower down they could still see the evening lights on the plains beyond. They limped along now as fast as they were able down the gentle slopes of a pine forest in a slanting path leading steadily southwards. At times they were pushing through a sea of bracken with tall fronds rising right above the hobbit’s head; at times they were marching along quiet as quiet over a floor of pine-needles; and all the while the forest-gloom got heavier and the forest-silence deeper. There was no wind that evening to bring even a sea-sighing into the branches of the trees.

“Must we go any further?” asked Bilbo, when it was so dark that he could only just see Thorin’s beard wagging beside him, and so quiet that he could hear the dwarves’ breathing like a loud noise. “My toes are all bruised and bent, and my legs ache, and my stomach is wagging like an empty sack.”

“A bit further,” said Gandalf.

After what seemed ages further they came suddenly to an opening where no trees grew. The moon was up and was shining into the clearing. Somehow it struck all of them as not at all a nice place, although there was nothing wrong to see.

All of a sudden they heard a howl away down hill, a long shuddering howl. It was answered by another away to the right and a good deal nearer to them; then by another not far away to the left. It was wolves howling at the moon, wolves gathering together!

There were no wolves living near Mr. Baggins’ hole at home, but he knew that noise. He had had it described to him often enough in tales. One of his elder cousins (on the Took side), who had been a great traveller, used to imitate it to frighten him. To hear it out in the forest under the moon was too much for Bilbo. Even magic rings are not much use against wolves—especially against the evil packs that lived under the shadow of the goblin-infested mountains, over the Edge of the Wild on the borders of the unknown. Wolves of that sort smell keener than goblins, and do not need to see you to catch you!

“What shall we do, what shall we do!” he cried. “Escaping goblins to be caught by wolves!” he said, and it became a proverb, though we now say “out of the frying-pan into the fire” in the same sort of uncomfortable situations.

“Up the trees quick!” cried Gandalf; and they ran to the trees at the edge of the glade, hunting for those that had branches fairly low, or were slender enough to swarm up. They found them as quick as ever they could, you can guess; and up they went as high as ever they could trust the branches. You would have laughed (from a safe distance), if you had seen the dwarves sitting up in the trees with their beards dangling down, like old gentlemen gone cracked and playing at being boys. Fili and Kili were at the top of a tall larch like an enormous Christmas tree. Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin, and Gloin were more comfortable in a huge pine with regular branches sticking out at intervals like the spokes of a wheel. Bifur, Bofur, Bombur, and Thorin were in another. Dwalin and Balin had swarmed up a tall slender fir with few branches and were trying to find a place to sit in the greenery of the topmost boughs. Gandalf, who was a good deal taller than the others, had found a tree into which they could not climb, a large pine standing at the very edge of the glade. He was quite hidden in its boughs, but you could see his eyes gleaming in the moon as he peeped out.

And Bilbo? He could not get into any tree, and was scuttling about from trunk to trunk, like a rabbit that has lost its hole and has a dog after it.

“You’ve left the burglar behind again!” said Nori to Dori looking down.

“I can’t be always carrying burglars on my back,” said Dori, “down tunnels and up trees! What do you think I am? A porter?”

“He’ll be eaten if we don’t do something,” said Thorin, for there were howls all round them now, getting nearer and nearer. “Dori!” he called, for Dori was lowest down in the easiest tree, “be quick, and give Mr. Baggins a hand up!”

Dori was really a decent fellow in spite of his grumbling. Poor Bilbo could not reach his hand even when he climbed down to the bottom branch and hung his arm down as far as ever he could. So Dori actually climbed out of the tree and let Bilbo scramble up and stand on his back.

Just at that moment the wolves trotted howling into the clearing. All of a sudden there were hundreds of eyes looking at them. Still Dori did not let Bilbo down. He waited till he had clambered off his shoulders into the branches, and then he jumped for the branches himself. Only just in time! A wolf snapped at his cloak as he swung up, and nearly got him. In a minute there was a whole pack of them yelping all round the tree and leaping up at the trunk, with eyes blazing and tongues hanging out.

But even the wild Wargs (for so the evil wolves over the Edge of the Wild were named) cannot climb trees. For a time they were safe. Luckily it was warm and not windy. Trees are not very comfortable to sit in for long at any time; but in the cold and the wind, with wolves all round below waiting for you, they can be perfectly miserable places.

This glade in the ring of trees was evidently a meeting-place of the wolves. More and more kept coming in. They left guards at the foot of the tree in which Dori and Bilbo were, and then went snuffling about till they had smelt out every tree that had anyone in it. These they guarded too, while all the rest (hundreds and hundreds it seemed) went and sat in a great circle in the glade; and in the middle of the circle was a great grey wolf. He spoke to them in the dreadful language of the Wargs. Gandalf understood it. Bilbo did not, but it sounded terrible to him, and as if all their talk was about cruel and wicked things, as it was. Every now and then all the Wargs in the circle would answer their grey chief all together, and their dreadful clamour almost made the hobbit fall out of his pine-tree.

I will tell you what Gandalf heard, though Bilbo did not understand it. The Wargs and the goblins often helped one another in wicked deeds. Goblins do not usually venture very far from their mountains, unless they are driven out and are looking for new homes, or are marching to war (which I am glad to say has not happened for a long while). But in those days they sometimes used to go on raids, especially to get food or slaves to work for them. Then they often got the Wargs to help and shared the plunder with them. Sometimes they rode on wolves like men do on horses. Now it seemed that a great goblin-raid had been planned for that very night. The Wargs had come to meet the goblins and the goblins were late. The reason, no doubt, was the death of the Great Goblin, and all the excitement caused by the dwarves and Bilbo and the wizard, for whom they were probably still hunting.

In spite of the dangers of this far land bold men had of late been making their way back into it from the South, cutting down trees, and building themselves places to live in among the more pleasant woods in the valleys and along the river-shores. There were many of them, and they were brave and well-armed, and even the Wargs dared not attack them if there were many together, or in the bright day. But now they had planned with the goblins’ help to come by night upon some of the villages nearest the mountains. If their plan had been carried out, there would have been none left there next day; all would have been killed except the few the goblins kept from the wolves and carried back as prisoners to their caves.

This was dreadful talk to listen to, not only because of the brave woodmen and their wives and children, but also because of the danger which now threatened Gandalf and his friends. The Wargs were angry and puzzled at finding them here in their very meeting-place. They thought they were friends of the woodmen, and were come to spy on them, and would take news of their plans down into the valleys, and then the goblins and the

wolves would have to fight a terrible battle instead of capturing prisoners and devouring people waked suddenly from their sleep. So the Wargs had no intention of going away and letting the people up the trees escape, at any rate not until morning. And long before that, they said, goblin soldiers would be coming down from the mountains; and goblins can climb trees, or cut them down.

Now you can understand why Gandalf, listening to their growling and yelping, began to be dreadfully afraid, wizard though he was, and to feel that they were in a very bad place, and had not yet escaped at all. All the same he was not going to let them have it all their own way, though he could not do very much stuck up in a tall tree with wolves all round on the ground below. He gathered the huge pine-cones from the branches of the tree. Then he set one alight with bright blue fire, and threw it whizzing down among the circle of the wolves. It struck one on the back, and immediately his shaggy coat caught fire, and he was leaping to and fro yelping horribly. Then another came and another, one in blue flames, one in red, another in green. They burst on the ground in the middle of the circle and went off in coloured sparks and smoke. A specially large one hit the chief wolf on the nose, and he leaped in the air ten feet, and then rushed round and round the circle biting and snapping even at the other wolves in his anger and fright.

The dwarves and Bilbo shouted and cheered. The rage of the wolves was terrible to see, and the commotion they made filled all the forest. Wolves are afraid of fire at all times, but this was a most horrible and uncanny fire. If a spark got in their coats it stuck and burned into them, and unless they rolled over quick they were soon all in flames. Very soon all about the glade wolves were rolling over and over to put out the sparks on their backs, while those that were burning were running about howling and setting others alight, till their own friends chased them away and they fled off down the slopes crying and yammering and looking for water.

“What is all this uproar in the forest tonight?” said the Lord of the Eagles. He was sitting, black in the moonlight, on the top of a lonely pinnacle of rock at the eastern edge of the mountains. “I hear wolves’ voices! Are the goblins at mischief in the woods?”

He swept up into the air, and immediately two of his guards from the rocks at either hand leaped up to follow him. They circled up in the sky and looked down upon the ring of the Wargs, a tiny spot far far below. But eagles have keen eyes and can see small things at a great distance. The Lord of the Eagles of the Misty Mountains had eyes that could look at the sun unblinking, and could see a rabbit moving on the ground a mile below even in the moonlight. So though he could not see the people in the trees, he could make out the commotion among the wolves and see the tiny flashes of fire, and hear the howling and yelping come up faint from far beneath him. Also he could see the glint of the moon on goblin spears and helmets, as long lines of the wicked folk crept down the hillsides from their gate and wound into the wood.

Eagles are not kindly birds. Some are cowardly and cruel. But the ancient race of the northern mountains were the greatest of all birds; they were proud and strong and noble-hearted. They did not love goblins, or fear them. When they took any notice of them at all (which was seldom, for they did not eat such creatures), they swooped on them and drove them shrieking back to their caves, and stopped whatever wickedness they were doing. The goblins hated the eagles and feared them, but could not reach their lofty seats, or drive them from the mountains.

Tonight the Lord of the Eagles was filled with curiosity to know what was afoot; so he summoned many other eagles to him, and they flew away from the mountains, and slowly circling ever round and round they came down, down, down towards the ring of the wolves and the meeting-place of the goblins.

A very good thing too! Dreadful things had been going on down there. The wolves that had caught fire and fled into the forest had set it alight in several places. It was high summer, and on this eastern side of the mountains there had been little rain for some time. Yellowing bracken, fallen branches, deep-piled pine-needles, and here and there dead trees, were soon in flames. All round the clearing of the Wargs fire was leaping. But the wolf-guards did not leave the trees. Maddened and angry they were leaping and howling round the trunks, and cursing the dwarves in their horrible language, with their tongues hanging out, and their eyes shining as red and fierce as the flames.

Then suddenly goblins came running up yelling. They thought a battle with the woodmen was going on; but they soon learned what had really happened. Some of them actually sat down and laughed. Others waved their

spears and clashed the shafts against their shields. Goblins are not afraid of fire, and they soon had a plan which seemed to them most amusing.

Some got all the wolves together in a pack. Some stacked fern and brushwood round the tree-trunks. Others rushed round and stamped and beat, and beat and stamped, until nearly all the flames were put out—but they did not put out the fire nearest to the trees where the dwarves were. That fire they fed with leaves and dead branches and bracken. Soon they had a ring of smoke and flame all round the dwarves, a ring which they kept from spreading outwards; but it closed slowly in, till the running fire was licking the fuel piled under the trees. Smoke was in Bilbo's eyes, he could feel the heat of the flames; and through the reek he could see the goblins dancing round and round in a circle like people round a midsummer bonfire. Outside the ring of dancing warriors with spears and axes stood the wolves at a respectful distance, watching and waiting.

He could hear the goblins beginning a horrible song:

*Fifteen birds in five fir-trees,  
their feathers were fanned in a fiery breeze!  
But, funny little birds, they had no wings!  
O what shall we do with the funny little things?  
Roast 'em alive, or stew them in a pot;  
fry them, boil them and eat them hot?*

Then they stopped and shouted out: "Fly away little birds! Fly away if you can! Come down little birds, or you will get roasted in your nests! Sing, sing little birds! Why don't you sing?"

"Go away! little boys!" shouted Gandalf in answer. "It isn't bird-nesting time. Also naughty little boys that play with fire get punished." He said it to make them angry, and to show them he was not frightened of them—though of course he was, wizard though he was. But they took no notice, and they went on singing.

*Burn, burn tree and fern!  
Shrivel and scorch! A fizzling torch  
To light the night for our delight,  
Ya hey!  
Bake and toast 'em, fry and roast 'em!  
till beards blaze, and eyes glaze;  
till hair smells and skins crack,  
fat melts, and bones black  
in cinders lie  
beneath the sky!  
So dwarves shall die,  
and light the night for our delight,  
Ya hey!  
Ya-harri-hey!  
Ya hoy!*

And with that *Ya hoy!* the flames were under Gandalf's tree. In a moment it spread to the others. The bark caught fire, the lower branches cracked.

Then Gandalf climbed to the top of his tree. The sudden splendour flashed from his wand like lightning, as he got ready to spring down from on high right among the spears of the goblins. That would have been the end of him, though he would probably have killed many of them as he came hurtling down like a thunderbolt. But he never leaped.

Just at that moment the Lord of the Eagles swept down from above, seized him in his talons, and was gone.

There was a howl of anger and surprise from the goblins. Loud cried the Lord of the Eagles, to whom Gandalf had now spoken. Back swept the great birds that were with him, and down they came like huge black shadows. The wolves yammered and gnashed their teeth; the goblins yelled and stamped with rage, and flung their heavy

spears in the air in vain. Over them swooped the eagles; the dark rush of their beating wings smote them to the floor or drove them far away; their talons tore at goblin faces. Other birds flew to the tree-tops and seized the dwarves, who were scrambling up now as far as they ever dared to go.

Poor little Bilbo was very nearly left behind again! He just managed to catch hold of Dori's legs, as Dori was borne off last of all; and up they went together above the tumult and the burning, Bilbo swinging in the air with his arms nearly breaking.

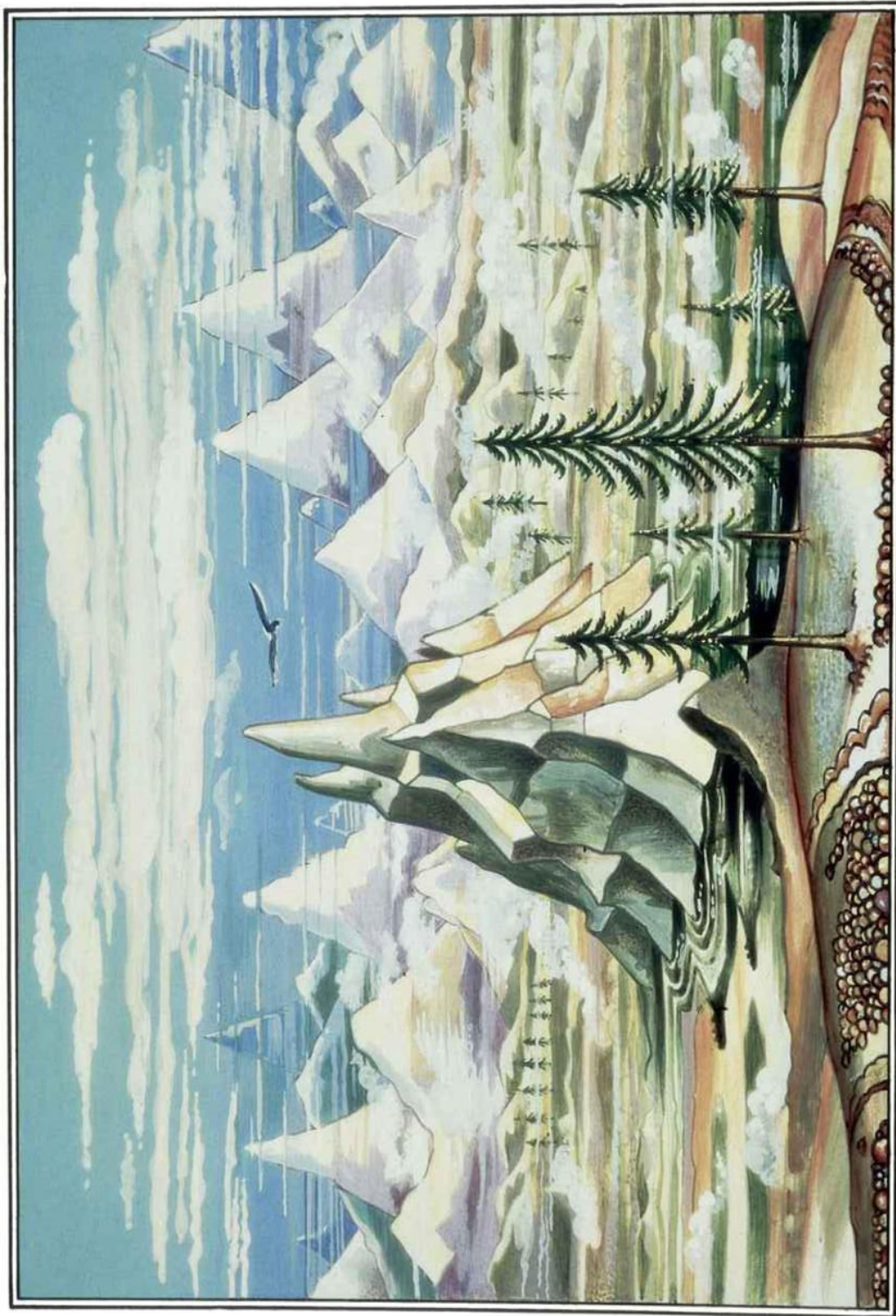
Now far below the goblins and the wolves were scattering far and wide in the woods. A few eagles were still circling and sweeping above the battle-ground. The flames about the trees sprang suddenly up above the highest branches. They went up in crackling fire. There was a sudden flurry of sparks and smoke. Bilbo had escaped only just in time!

Soon the light of the burning was faint below, a red twinkle on the black floor; and they were high up in the sky, rising all the time in strong sweeping circles. Bilbo never forgot that flight, clinging onto Dori's ankles. He moaned "my arms, my arms!"; but Dori groaned "my poor legs, my poor legs!"

At the best of times heights made Bilbo giddy. He used to turn queer if he looked over the edge of quite a little cliff; and he had never liked ladders, let alone trees (never having had to escape from wolves before). So you can imagine how his head swam now, when he looked down between his dangling toes and saw the dark lands opening wide underneath him, touched here and there with the light of the moon on a hill-side rock or a stream in the plains.

The pale peaks of the mountains were coming nearer, moonlit spikes of rock sticking out of black shadows. Summer or not, it seemed very cold. He shut his eyes and wondered if he could hold on any longer. Then he imagined what would happen if he did not. He felt sick.





The Misty Mountains looking West from the  
Eyrie towards Goblin Gate

Click [here](#) for alternative image.

The flight ended only just in time for him, just before his arms gave way. He loosed Dori's ankles with a gasp and fell onto the rough platform of an eagle's eyrie. There he lay without speaking, and his thoughts were a mixture of surprise at being saved from the fire, and fear lest he fall off that narrow place into the deep shadows on either side. He was feeling very queer indeed in his head by this time after the dreadful adventures of the last three days with next to nothing to eat, and he found himself saying aloud: "Now I know what a piece of bacon feels like when it is suddenly picked out of the pan on a fork and put back on the shelf!"

"No you don't!" he heard Dori answering, "because the bacon knows that it will get back in the pan sooner or later; and it is to be hoped we shan't. Also eagles aren't forks!"



“O no! Not a bit like storks—forks, I mean,” said Bilbo sitting up and looking anxiously at the eagle who was perched close by. He wondered what other nonsense he had been saying, and if the eagle would think it rude. You ought not to be rude to an eagle, when you are only the size of a hobbit, and are up in his eyrie at night!

The eagle only sharpened his beak on a stone and trimmed his feathers and took no notice.

Soon another eagle flew up. “The Lord of the Eagles bids you to bring your prisoners to the Great Shelf,” he cried and was off again. The other seized Dori in his claws and flew away with him into the night leaving Bilbo all alone. He had just strength to wonder what the messenger had meant by ‘prisoners,’ and to begin to think of being torn up for supper like a rabbit, when his own turn came.

The eagle came back, seized him in his talons by the back of his coat, and swooped off. This time he flew only a short way. Very soon Bilbo was laid down, trembling with fear, on a wide shelf of rock on the mountain-side. There was no path down on to it save by flying; and no path down off it except by jumping over a precipice. There he found all the others sitting with their backs to the mountain wall. The Lord of the Eagles also was there and was speaking to Gandalf.

It seemed that Bilbo was not going to be eaten after all. The wizard and the eagle-lord appeared to know one another slightly, and even to be on friendly terms. As a matter of fact Gandalf, who had often been in the mountains, had once rendered a service to the eagles and healed their lord from an arrow-wound. So you see ‘prisoners’ had meant ‘prisoners rescued from the goblins’ only, and not captives of the eagles. As Bilbo listened to the talk of Gandalf he realized that at last they were going to escape really and truly from the dreadful mountains. He was discussing plans with the Great Eagle for carrying the dwarves and himself and Bilbo far away and setting them down well on their journey across the plains below.

The Lord of the Eagles would not take them anywhere near where men lived. “They would shoot at us with their great bows of yew,” he said, “for they would think we were after their sheep. And at other times they would be right. No! we are glad to cheat the goblins of their sport, and glad to repay our thanks to you, but we will not risk ourselves for dwarves in the southward plains.”

“Very well,” said Gandalf. “Take us where and as far as you will! We are already deeply obliged to you. But in the meantime we are famished with hunger.”

“I am nearly dead of it,” said Bilbo in a weak little voice that nobody heard.

“That can perhaps be mended,” said the Lord of the Eagles.

Later on you might have seen a bright fire on the shelf of rock and the figures of the dwarves round it cooking and making a fine roasting smell. The eagles had brought up dry boughs for fuel, and they had brought rabbits, hares, and a small sheep. The dwarves managed all the preparations. Bilbo was too weak to help, and anyway he was not much good at skinning rabbits or cutting up meat, being used to having it delivered by the butcher all ready to cook. Gandalf, too, was lying down after doing his part in setting the fire going, since Oin and Gloin had lost their tinder-boxes. (Dwarves have never taken to matches even yet.)

So ended the adventures of the Misty Mountains. Soon Bilbo’s stomach was feeling full and comfortable again, and he felt he could sleep contentedly, though really he would have liked a loaf and butter better than bits of meat toasted on sticks. He slept curled up on the hard rock more soundly than ever he had done on his feather-bed in his own little hole at home. But all night he dreamed of his own house and wandered in his sleep into all his different rooms looking for something that he could not find nor remember what it looked like.



## Chapter VII: Queer Lodgings

The next morning Bilbo woke up with the early sun in his eyes. He jumped up to look at the time and to go and put his kettle on—and found he was not home at all. So he sat down and wished in vain for a wash and a brush. He did not get either, nor tea nor toast nor bacon for his breakfast, only cold mutton and rabbit. And after that he had to get ready for a fresh start.

This time he was allowed to climb on to an eagle's back and cling between his wings. The air rushed over him and he shut his eyes. The dwarves were crying farewells and promising to repay the Lord of the Eagles if ever they could, as off rose fifteen great birds from the mountain's side. The sun was still close to the eastern edge of things. The morning was cool, and mists were in the valleys and hollows and twined here and there about the peaks and pinnacles of the hills. Bilbo opened an eye to peep and saw that the birds were already high up and the world was far away, and the mountains were falling back behind them into the distance. He shut his eyes again and held on tighter.

"Don't pinch!" said his eagle. "You need not be frightened like a rabbit, even if you look rather like one. It is a fair morning with little wind. What is finer than flying?"

Bilbo would have liked to say: "A warm bath and late breakfast on the lawn afterwards;" but he thought it better to say nothing at all, and to let go his clutch just a tiny bit.

After a good while the eagles must have seen the point they were making for, even from their great height, for they began to go down circling round in great spirals. They did this for a long while, and at last the hobbit opened his eyes again. The earth was much nearer, and below them were trees that looked like oaks and elms, and wide grass lands, and a river running through it all. But cropping out of the ground, right in the path of the stream which looped itself about it, was a great rock, almost a hill of stone, like a last outpost of the distant mountains, or a huge piece cast miles into the plain by some giant among giants.

Quickly now to the top of this rock the eagles swooped one by one and set down their passengers.

"Farewell!" they cried, "wherever you fare, till your eyries receive you at the journey's end!" That is the polite thing to say among eagles.

"May the wind under your wings bear you where the sun sails and the moon walks," answered Gandalf, who knew the correct reply.



*Bilbo woke with the early sun in his eyes*

And so they parted. And though the Lord of the Eagles became in after days the King of All Birds and wore a golden crown, and his fifteen chieftains golden collars (made of the gold that the dwarves gave them), Bilbo never saw them again—except high and far off in the battle of Five Armies. But as that comes in at the end of this tale we will say no more about it just now.

There was a flat space on the top of the hill of stone and a well worn path with many steps leading down it to the river, across which a ford of huge flat stones led to the grass-land beyond the stream. There was a little cave (a wholesome one with a pebbly floor) at the foot of the steps and near the end of the stony ford. Here the party gathered and discussed what was to be done.

“I always meant to see you all safe (if possible) over the mountains,” said the wizard, “and now by good management *and* good luck I have done it. Indeed we are now a good deal further east than I ever meant to

come with you, for after all this is not my adventure. I may look in on it again before it is all over, but in the meanwhile I have some other pressing business to attend to.”

The dwarves groaned and looked most distressed, and Bilbo wept. They had begun to think Gandalf was going to come all the way and would always be there to help them out of difficulties. “I am not going to disappear this very instant,” said he. “I can give you a day or two more. Probably I can help you out of your present plight, and I need a little help myself. We have no food, and no baggage, and no ponies to ride; and you don’t know where you are. Now I can tell you that. You are still some miles north of the path which we should have been following, if we had not left the mountain pass in a hurry. Very few people live in these parts, unless they have come here since I was last down this way, which is some years ago. But there is *somebody* that I know of, who lives not far away. That Somebody made the steps on the great rock—the Carrock I believe he calls it. He does not come here often, certainly not in the daytime, and it is no good waiting for him. In fact it would be very dangerous. We must go and find him; and if all goes well at our meeting, I think I shall be off and wish you like the eagles ‘farewell wherever you fare!’”

They begged him not to leave them. They offered him dragon-gold and silver and jewels, but he would not change his mind. “We shall see, we shall see!” he said, “and I think I have earned already some of your dragon-gold—when you have got it.”

After that they stopped pleading. Then they took off their clothes and bathed in the river, which was shallow and clear and stony at the ford. When they had dried in the sun, which was now strong and warm, they were refreshed, if still sore and a little hungry. Soon they crossed the ford (carrying the hobbit), and then began to march through the long green grass and down the lines of the wide-armed oaks and the tall elms.

“And why is it called the Carrock?” asked Bilbo as he went along at the wizard’s side.

“He called it the Carrock, because carrock is his word for it. He calls things like that carrocks, and this one is *the* Carrock because it is the only one near his home and he knows it well.”

“Who calls it? Who knows it?”

“The Somebody I spoke of—a very great person. You must all be very polite when I introduce you. I shall introduce you slowly, two by two, I think; and you *must* be careful not to annoy him, or heaven knows what will happen. He can be appalling when he is angry, though he is kind enough if humoured. Still I warn you he gets angry easily.”

The dwarves all gathered round when they heard the wizard talking like this to Bilbo. “Is that the person you are taking us to now?” they asked. “Couldn’t you find someone more easy-tempered? Hadn’t you better explain it all a bit clearer?”—and so on.

“Yes it certainly is! No I could not! And I was explaining very carefully,” answered the wizard crossly. “If you must know more, his name is Beorn. He is very strong, and he is a skin-changer.”

“What! a furrier, a man that calls rabbits conies, when he doesn’t turn their skins into squirrels?” asked Bilbo.

“Good gracious heavens, no, no, NO, NO!” said Gandalf. “Don’t be a fool Mr. Baggins if you can help it; and in the name of all wonder don’t mention the word furrier again as long as you are within a hundred miles of his house, nor rug, cape, tippet, muff, nor any other such unfortunate word! He is a skin-changer. He changes his skin: sometimes he is a huge black bear, sometimes he is a great strong black-haired man with huge arms and a great beard. I cannot tell you much more, though that ought to be enough. Some say that he is a bear descended from the great and ancient bears of the mountains that lived there before the giants came. Others say that he is a man descended from the first men who lived before Smaug or the other dragons came into this part of the world, and before the goblins came into the hills out of the North. I cannot say, though I fancy the last is the true tale. He is not the sort of person to ask questions of.

“At any rate he is under no enchantment but his own. He lives in an oak-wood and has a great wooden house; and as a man he keeps cattle and horses which are nearly as marvellous as himself. They work for him and talk to him. He does not eat them; neither does he hunt or eat wild animals. He keeps hives and hives of great fierce bees, and lives most on cream and honey. As a bear he ranges far and wide. I once saw him sitting all alone on

the top of the Carrock at night watching the moon sinking towards the Misty Mountains, and I heard him growl in the tongue of bears: 'The day will come when they will perish and I shall go back!' That is why I believe he once came from the mountains himself."

Bilbo and the dwarves had now plenty to think about, and they asked no more questions. They still had a long way to walk before them. Up slope and down dale they plodded. It grew very hot. Sometimes they rested under the trees, and then Bilbo felt so hungry that he would have eaten acorns, if any had been ripe enough yet to have fallen to the ground.

It was the middle of the afternoon before they noticed that great patches of flowers had begun to spring up, all the same kinds growing together as if they had been planted. Especially there was clover, waving patches of cockscomb clover, and purple clover, and wide stretches of short white sweet honey-smelling clover. There was a buzzing and a whirring and a droning in the air. Bees were busy everywhere. And such bees! Bilbo had never seen anything like them.

"If one was to sting me," he thought, "I should swell up as big again as I am!"

They were bigger than hornets. The drones were bigger than your thumb, a good deal, and the bands of yellow on their deep black bodies shone like fiery gold.

"We are getting near," said Gandalf. "We are on the edge of his bee-pastures."

After a while they came to a belt of tall and very ancient oaks, and beyond these to a high thorn-hedge through which you could neither see nor scramble.

"You had better wait here," said the wizard to the dwarves; "and when I call or whistle begin to come after me—you will see the way I go—but only in pairs, mind, about five minutes between each pair of you. Bombur is fattest and will do for two, he had better come alone and last. Come on Mr. Baggins! There is a gate somewhere round this way." And with that he went off along the hedge taking the frightened hobbit with him.

They soon came to a wooden gate, high and broad, beyond which they could see gardens and a cluster of low wooden buildings, some thatched and made of unshaped logs: barns, stables, sheds, and a long low wooden house. Inside on the southward side of the great hedge were rows and rows of hives with bell-shaped tops made of straw. The noise of the giant bees flying to and fro and crawling in and out filled all the air.

The wizard and the hobbit pushed open the heavy creaking gate and went down a wide track towards the house. Some horses, very sleek and well-groomed, trotted up across the grass and looked at them intently with very intelligent faces; then off they galloped to the buildings.

"They have gone to tell him of the arrival of strangers," said Gandalf.

Soon they reached a courtyard, three walls of which were formed by the wooden house and its two long wings. In the middle there was lying a great oak-trunk with many lopped branches beside it. Standing near was a huge man with a thick black beard and hair, and great bare arms and legs with knotted muscles. He was clothed in a tunic of wool down to his knees, and was leaning on a large axe. The horses were standing by him with their noses at his shoulder.

"Ugh! here they are!" he said to the horses. "They don't look dangerous. You can be off!" He laughed a great rolling laugh, put down his axe and came forward.

"Who are you and what do you want?" he asked gruffly, standing in front of them and towering tall above Gandalf. As for Bilbo he could easily have trotted through his legs without ducking his head to miss the fringe of the man's brown tunic.

"I am Gandalf," said the wizard.

"Never heard of him," growled the man. "And what's this little fellow?" he said, stooping down to frown at the hobbit with his bushy black eyebrows.

"That is Mr. Baggins, a hobbit of good family and unimpeachable reputation," said Gandalf. Bilbo bowed. He had no hat to take off, and was painfully conscious of his many missing buttons. "I am a wizard," continued

Gandalf. "I have heard of you, if you have not heard of me; but perhaps you have heard of my good cousin Radagast who lives near the Southern borders of Mirkwood?"

"Yes; not a bad fellow as wizards go, I believe. I used to see him now and again," said Beorn. "Well, now I know who you are, or who you say you are. What do you want?"

"To tell you the truth, we have lost our luggage and nearly lost our way, and are rather in need of help, or at least of advice. I may say we have had rather a bad time with goblins in the mountains."

"Goblins?" said the big man less gruffly. "O ho, so you've been having trouble with *them* have you? What did you go near them for?"

"We did not mean to. They surprised us at night in a pass which we had to cross; we were coming out of the Lands over West into these countries—it is a long tale."

"Then you had better come inside and tell me some of it, if it won't take all day," said the man leading the way through a dark door that opened out of the courtyard into the house.

Following him they found themselves in a wide hall with a fire-place in the middle. Though it was summer there was a wood-fire burning and the smoke was rising to the blackened rafters in search of the way out through an opening in the roof. They passed through this dim hall, lit only by the fire and the hole above it, and came through another smaller door into a sort of veranda propped on wooden posts made of single tree-trunks. It faced south and was still warm and filled with the light of the westering sun which slanted into it, and fell golden on the garden full of flowers that came right up to the steps.





*Click [here](#) for alternative image.*

Here they sat on wooden benches while Gandalf began his tale, and Bilbo swung his dangling legs and looked at the flowers in the garden, wondering what their names could be, as he had never seen half of them before.

“I was coming over the mountains with a friend or two. . . .” said the wizard.

“Or two? I can only see one, and a little one at that,” said Beorn.

“Well to tell you the truth, I did not like to bother you with a lot of us, until I found out if you were busy. I will give a call, if I may.”

“Go on, call away!”

So Gandalf gave a long shrill whistle, and presently Thorin and Dori came round the house by the garden path and stood bowing low before them.

“One or three you meant, I see!” said Beorn. “But these aren’t hobbits, they are dwarves!”

“Thorin Oakenshield, at your service! Dori at your service!” said the two dwarves bowing again.

“I don’t need your service, thank you,” said Beorn, “but I expect you need mine. I am not over fond of dwarves; but if it is true you are Thorin (son of Thrain, son of Thrór, I believe), and that your companion is respectable, and that you are enemies of goblins and are not up to any mischief in my lands—what are you up to, by the way?”

“They are on their way to visit the land of their fathers, away east beyond Mirkwood,” put in Gandalf, “and it is entirely an accident that we are in your lands at all. We were crossing by the High Pass that should have brought us to the road that lies to the south of your country, when we were attacked by the evil goblins—as I was about to tell you.”

“Go on telling, then!” said Beorn, who was never very polite.

“There was a terrible storm; the stone-giants were out hurling rocks, and at the head of the pass we took refuge in a cave, the hobbit and I and several of our companions. . . .”

“Do you call two several?”

“Well, no. As a matter of fact there were more than two.”

“Where are they? Killed, eaten, gone home?”

“Well, no. They don’t seem all to have come when I whistled. Shy, I expect. You see, we are very much afraid that we are rather a lot for you to entertain.”

“Go on, whistle again! I am in for a party, it seems, and one or two more won’t make much difference,” growled Beorn.

Gandalf whistled again; but Nori and Ori were there almost before he had stopped, for, if you remember, Gandalf had told them to come in pairs every five minutes.

“Hullo!” said Beorn. “You came pretty quick—where were you hiding? Come on my jack-in-the-boxes!”

“Nori at your service, Ori at. . . .” they began; but Beorn interrupted them.

“Thank you! When I want your help I will ask for it. Sit down, and let’s get on with this tale, or it will be supper-time before it is ended.”

“As soon as we were asleep,” went on Gandalf, “a crack at the back of the cave opened; goblins came out and grabbed the hobbit and the dwarves and our troop of ponies—”

“Troop of ponies? What were you—a travelling circus? Or were you carrying lots of goods? Or do you always call six a troop?”

“O no! As a matter of fact there were more than six ponies, for there were more than six of us—and well, here are two more!” Just at that moment Balin and Dwalin appeared and bowed so low that their beards swept the stone floor. The big man was frowning at first, but they did their best to be frightfully polite, and kept on nodding and bending and bowing and waving their hoods before their knees (in proper dwarf-fashion), till he stopped frowning and burst into a chuckling laugh: they looked so comical.

“Troop, was right,” he said. “A fine comic one. Come in my merry men, and what are *your* names? I don’t want your service just now, only your names; and then sit down and stop wagging!”

“Balin and Dwalin,” they said not daring to be offended, and sat flop on the floor looking rather surprised.

“Now go on again!” said Beorn to the wizard.

“Where was I? O yes—I was *not* grabbed. I killed a goblin or two with a flash—”



“Good!” growled Beorn. “It is some good being a wizard, then.”

“—and slipped inside the crack before it closed. I followed down into the main hall, which was crowded with goblins. The Great Goblin was there with thirty or forty armed guards. I thought to myself ‘even if they were not all chained together, what can a dozen do against so many?’”

“A dozen! That’s the first time I’ve heard eight called a dozen. Or have you still got some more jacks that haven’t yet come out of their boxes?”

“Well, yes, there seem to be a couple more here now—Fili and Kili, I believe,” said Gandalf, as these two now appeared and stood smiling and bowing.

“That’s enough!” said Beorn. “Sit down and be quiet! Now go on, Gandalf!”

So Gandalf went on with the tale, until he came to the fight in the dark, the discovery of the lower gate, and their horror when they found that Mr. Baggins had been mislaid. “We counted ourselves and found that there was no hobbit. There were only fourteen of us left!”

“Fourteen! That’s the first time I’ve heard one from ten leave fourteen. You mean nine, or else you haven’t told me yet all the names of your party.”

“Well, of course you haven’t seen Oin and Gloin yet. And, bless me! here they are. I hope you will forgive them for bothering you.”

“O let ’em all come! Hurry up! Come along, you two, and sit down! But look here, Gandalf, even now we have only got yourself and ten dwarves and the hobbit that was lost. That only makes eleven (plus one mislaid) and not fourteen, unless wizards count differently to other people. But now please get on with the tale.” Beorn did not show it more than he could help, but really he had begun to get very interested. You see, in the old days he had known the very part of the mountains that Gandalf was describing. He nodded and he growled, when he heard of the hobbit’s reappearance and of their scramble down the stone-slide and of the wolf-ring in the woods.

When Gandalf came to their climbing into trees with the wolves all underneath, he got up and strode about and muttered: “I wish I had been there! I would have given them more than fireworks!”

“Well,” said Gandalf very glad to see that his tale was making a good impression, “I did the best I could. There we were with the wolves going mad underneath us and the forest beginning to blaze in places, when the goblins came down from the hills and discovered us. They yelled with delight and sang songs making fun of us. *Fifteen birds in five fir-trees . . .*”

“Good heavens!” growled Beorn. “Don’t pretend that goblins can’t count. They can. Twelve isn’t fifteen and they know it.”

“And so do I. There were Bifur and Bofur as well. I haven’t ventured to introduce them before, but here they are.”

In came Bifur and Bofur. “And me!” gasped Bombur puffing up behind. He was fat, and also angry at being left till last. He refused to wait five minutes, and followed immediately after the other two.

“Well, now there *are* fifteen of you; and since goblins can count, I suppose that is all that there were up the trees. Now perhaps we can finish this story without any more interruptions.” Mr. Baggins saw then how clever Gandalf had been. The interruptions had really made Beorn more interested in the story, and the story had kept him from sending the dwarves off at once like suspicious beggars. He never invited people into his house, if he could help it. He had very few friends and they lived a good way away; and he never invited more than a couple of these to his house at a time. Now he had got fifteen strangers sitting in his porch!

By the time the wizard had finished his tale and had told of the eagles’ rescue and of how they had all been brought to the Carrock, the sun had fallen behind the peaks of the Misty Mountains and the shadows were long in Beorn’s garden.

“A very good tale!” said he. “The best I have heard for a long while. If all beggars could tell such a good one, they might find me kinder. You may be making it all up, of course, but you deserve a supper for the story all the same. Let’s have something to eat!”

“Yes please!” they all said together. “Thank you very much!”

Inside the hall it was now quite dark. Beorn clapped his hands, and in trotted four beautiful white ponies and several large long-bodied grey dogs. Beorn said something to them in a queer language like animal noises turned into talk. They went out again and soon came back carrying torches in their mouths, which they lit at the fire and stuck in low brackets on the pillars of the hall about the central hearth. The dogs could stand on their hind-legs when they wished, and carry things with their fore-feet. Quickly they got out boards and trestles from the side walls and set them up near the fire.

Then baa—baa—baa! was heard, and in came some snow-white sheep led by a large coal-black ram. One bore a white cloth embroidered at the edges with figures of animals; others bore on their broad backs trays with bowls and platters and knives and wooden spoons, which the dogs took and quickly laid on the trestle-tables. These were very low, low enough even for Bilbo to sit at comfortably. Beside them a pony pushed two low-seated benches with wide rush-bottoms and little short thick legs for Gandalf and Thorin, while at the far end he put Beorn’s big black chair of the same sort (in which he sat with his great legs stuck far out under the table). These were all the chairs he had in his hall, and he probably had them low like the tables for the convenience of the wonderful animals that waited on him. What did the rest sit on? They were not forgotten. The other ponies came in rolling round drum-shaped sections of logs, smoothed and polished, and low enough even for Bilbo; so soon they were all seated at Beorn’s table, and the hall had not seen such a gathering for many a year.

There they had a supper, or a dinner, such as they had not had since they left the Last Homely House in the West and said good-bye to Elrond. The light of the torches and the fire flickered about them, and on the table were two tall red beeswax candles. All the time they ate, Beorn in his deep rolling voice told tales of the wild lands on this side of the mountains, and especially of the dark and dangerous wood, that lay outstretched far to North and South a day’s ride before them, barring their way to the East, the terrible forest of Mirkwood.

The dwarves listened and shook their beards, for they knew that they must soon venture into that forest and that after the mountains it was the worst of the perils they had to pass before they came to the dragon’s stronghold. When dinner was over they began to tell tales of their own, but Beorn seemed to be growing drowsy and paid little heed to them. They spoke most of gold and silver and jewels and the making of things by smith-craft, and Beorn did not appear to care for such things: there were no things of gold or silver in his hall, and few save the knives were made of metal at all.

They sat long at the table with their wooden drinking-bowls filled with mead. The dark night came on outside. The fires in the middle of the hall were built with fresh logs and the torches were put out, and still they sat in the light of the dancing flames with the pillars of the house standing tall behind them, and dark at the top like trees of the forest. Whether it was magic or not, it seemed to Bilbo that he heard a sound like wind in the branches stirring in the rafters, and the hoot of owls. Soon he began to nod with sleep and the voices seemed to grow far away, until he woke with a start.

The great door had creaked and slammed. Beorn was gone. The dwarves were sitting cross-legged on the floor round the fire, and presently they began to sing. Some of the verses were like this, but there were many more, and their singing went on for a long while:

*The wind was on the withered heath,  
but in the forest stirred no leaf:  
there shadows lay by night and day,  
and dark things silent crept beneath.*

*The wind came down from mountains cold,  
and like a tide it roared and rolled;  
the branches groaned, the forest moaned,  
and leaves were laid upon the mould.*

*The wind went on from West to East;  
all movement in the forest ceased,  
but shrill and harsh across the marsh  
its whistling voices were released.*

*The grasses hissed, their tassels bent,  
the reeds were rattling—on it went  
o'er shaken pool under heavens cool  
where racing clouds were torn and rent.*

*It passed the lonely Mountain bare  
and swept above the dragon's lair:  
there black and dark lay boulders stark  
and flying smoke was in the air.*

*It left the world and took its flight  
over the wide seas of the night.  
The moon set sail upon the gale,  
and stars were fanned to leaping light.*

Bilbo began to nod again. Suddenly up stood Gandalf.

"It is time for us to sleep," he said, "—for us, but not I think for Beorn. In this hall we can rest sound and safe, but I warn you all not to forget what Beorn said before he left us: you must not stray outside until the sun is up, on your peril."

Bilbo found that beds had already been laid at the side of the hall, on a sort of raised platform between the pillars and the outer wall. For him there was a little mattress of straw and woollen blankets. He snuggled into them very gladly, summertime though it was. The fire burned low and he fell asleep. Yet in the night he woke: the fire had now sunk to a few embers; the dwarves and Gandalf were all asleep, to judge by their breathing; a splash of white on the floor came from the high moon, which was peering down through the smoke-hole in the roof.

There was a growling sound outside, and a noise as of some great animal scuffling at the door. Bilbo wondered what it was, and whether it could be Beorn in enchanted shape, and if he would come in as a bear and kill them. He dived under the blankets and hid his head, and fell asleep again at last in spite of his fears.

It was full morning when he awoke. One of the dwarves had fallen over him in the shadows where he lay, and had rolled down with a bump from the platform on to the floor. It was Bofur, and he was grumbling about it, when Bilbo opened his eyes.

"Get up lazybones," he said, "or there will be no breakfast left for you."

Up jumped Bilbo. "Breakfast!" he cried. "Where is breakfast?"

"Mostly inside us," answered the other dwarves who were moving about the hall; "but what is left is out on the veranda. We have been about looking for Beorn ever since the sun got up; but there is no sign of him anywhere, though we found breakfast laid as soon as we went out."

"Where is Gandalf?" asked Bilbo, moving off to find something to eat as quick as he could.

"O! out and about somewhere," they told him. But he saw no sign of the wizard all that day until the evening. Just before sunset he walked into the hall, where the hobbit and the dwarves were having supper, waited on by Beorn's wonderful animals, as they had been all day. Of Beorn they had seen and heard nothing since the night before, and they were getting puzzled.

"Where is our host, and where have *you* been all day yourself?" they all cried.

"One question at a time—and none till after supper! I haven't had a bite since breakfast."

At last Gandalf pushed away his plate and jug—he had eaten two whole loaves (with masses of butter and honey and clotted cream) and drunk at least a quart of mead—and he took out his pipe. “I will answer the second question first,” he said, “—but bless me! this is a splendid place for smoke rings!” Indeed for a long time they could get nothing more out of him, he was so busy sending smoke rings dodging round the pillars of the hall, changing them into all sorts of different shapes and colours, and setting them at last chasing one another out of the hole in the roof. They must have looked very queer from outside, popping out into the air one after another, green, blue, red, silver-grey, yellow, white; big ones, little ones; little ones dodging through big ones and joining into figure-eights, and going off like a flock of birds into the distance.

“I have been picking out bear-tracks,” he said at last. “There must have been a regular bears’ meeting outside here last night. I soon saw that Beorn could not have made them all: there were far too many of them, and they were of various sizes too. I should say there were little bears, large bears, ordinary bears, and gigantic big bears, all dancing outside from dark to nearly dawn. They came from almost every direction, except from the west over the river, from the Mountains. In that direction only one set of footprints led—none coming, only ones going away from here. I followed these as far as the Carrock. There they disappeared into the river, but the water was too deep and strong beyond the rock for me to cross. It is easy enough, as you remember, to get from this bank to the Carrock by the ford, but on the other side is a cliff standing up from a swirling channel. I had to walk miles before I found a place where the river was wide and shallow enough for me to wade and swim, and then miles back again to pick up the tracks again. By that time it was too late for me to follow them far. They went straight off in the direction of the pine-woods on the east side of the Misty Mountains, where we had our pleasant little party with the Wargs the night before last. And now I think I have answered your first question, too,” ended Gandalf, and he sat a long while silent.

Bilbo thought he knew what the wizard meant. “What shall we do,” he cried, “if he leads all the Wargs and the goblins down here? We shall all be caught and killed! I thought you said he was not a friend of theirs.”

“So I did. And don’t be silly! You had better go to bed, your wits are sleepy.”

The hobbit felt quite crushed, and as there seemed nothing else to do he did go to bed; and while the dwarves were still singing songs he dropped asleep, still puzzling his little head about Beorn, till he dreamed a dream of hundreds of black bears dancing slow heavy dances round and round in the moonlight in the courtyard. Then he woke up when everyone else was asleep, and he heard the same scraping, scuffling, snuffling, and growling as before.

Next morning they were all wakened by Beorn himself. “So here you all are still!” he said. He picked up the hobbit and laughed: “Not eaten up by Wargs or goblins or wicked bears yet I see”; and he poked Mr. Baggins’ waistcoat most disrespectfully. “Little bunny is getting nice and fat again on bread and honey,” he chuckled. “Come and have some more!”

So they all went to breakfast with him. Beorn was most jolly for a change; indeed he seemed to be in a splendidly good humour and set them all laughing with his funny stories; nor did they have to wonder long where he had been or why he was so nice to them, for he told them himself. He had been over the river and right back up into the mountains—from which you can guess that he could travel quickly, in bear’s shape at any rate. From the burnt wolf-glade he had soon found out that part of their story was true; but he had found more than that: he had caught a Warg and a goblin wandering in the woods. From these he had got news: the goblin patrols were still hunting with Wargs for the dwarves, and they were fiercely angry because of the death of the Great Goblin, and also because of the burning of the chief wolf’s nose and the death from the wizard’s fire of many of his chief servants. So much they told him when he forced them, but he guessed there was more wickedness than this afoot, and that a great raid of the whole goblin army with their wolf-allies into the lands shadowed by the mountains might soon be made to find the dwarves, or to take vengeance on the men and creatures that lived there, and who they thought must be sheltering them.

“It was a good story, that of yours,” said Beorn, “but I like it still better now I am sure it is true. You must forgive my not taking your word. If you lived near the edge of Mirkwood, you would take the word of no-one that you did not know as well as your brother or better. As it is, I can only say that I have hurried home as fast

as I could to see that you were safe, and to offer you any help that I can. I shall think more kindly of dwarves after this. Killed the Great Goblin, killed the Great Goblin!" he chuckled fiercely to himself.

"What did you do with the goblin and the Warg?" asked Bilbo suddenly.

"Come and see!" said Beorn, and they followed round the house. A goblin's head was stuck outside the gate and a warg-skin was nailed to a tree just beyond. Beorn was a fierce enemy. But now he was their friend, and Gandalf thought it wise to tell him their whole story and the reason of their journey, so that they could get the most help he could offer.

This is what he promised to do for them. He would provide ponies for each of them, and a horse for Gandalf, for their journey to the forest, and he would lade them with food to last them for weeks with care, and packed so as to be as easy as possible to carry—nuts, flour, sealed jars of dried fruits, and red earthenware pots of honey, and twice-baked cakes that would keep good a long time, and on a little of which they could march far. The making of these was one of his secrets; but honey was in them, as in most of his foods, and they were good to eat, though they made one thirsty. Water, he said, they would not need to carry this side of the forest, for there were streams and springs along the road. "But your way through Mirkwood is dark, dangerous and difficult," he said. "Water is not easy to find there, nor food. The time is not yet come for nuts (though it may be past and gone indeed before you get to the other side), and nuts are about all that grows there fit for food; in there the wild things are dark, queer, and savage. I will provide you with skins for carrying water, and I will give you some bows and arrows. But I doubt very much whether anything you find in Mirkwood will be wholesome to eat or to drink. There is one stream there, I know, black and strong which crosses the path. That you should neither drink of, nor bathe in; for I have heard that it carries enchantment and a great drowsiness and forgetfulness. And in the dim shadows of that place I don't think you will shoot anything, wholesome or unwholesome, without straying from the path. That you **MUST NOT** do, for any reason.

"That is all the advice I can give you. Beyond the edge of the forest I cannot help you much; you must depend on your luck and your courage and the food I send with you. At the gate of the forest I must ask you to send back my horse and my ponies. But I wish you all speed, and my house is open to you, if ever you come back this way again."

They thanked him, of course, with many bows and sweepings of their hoods and with many an "at your service, O master of the wide wooden halls!" But their spirits sank at his grave words, and they all felt that the adventure was far more dangerous than they had thought, while all the time, even if they passed all the perils of the road, the dragon was waiting at the end.

All that morning they were busy with preparations. Soon after midday they ate with Beorn for the last time, and after the meal they mounted the steeds he was lending them, and bidding him many farewells they rode off through his gate at a good pace.

As soon as they left his high hedges at the east of his fenced lands they turned north and then bore to the north-west. By his advice they were no longer making for the main forest-road to the south of his land. Had they followed the pass, their path would have led them down a stream from the mountains that joined the great river miles south of the Carrock. At that point there was a deep ford which they might have passed, if they had still had their ponies, and beyond that a track led to the skirts of the wood and to the entrance of the old forest road. But Beorn had warned them that that way was now often used by the goblins, while the forest-road itself, he had heard, was overgrown and disused at the eastern end and led to impassable marshes where the paths had long been lost. Its eastern opening had also always been far to the south of the Lonely Mountain, and would have left them still with a long and difficult northward march when they got to the other side. North of the Carrock the edge of Mirkwood drew closer to the borders of the Great River, and though here the Mountains too drew down nearer, Beorn advised them to take this way; for at a place a few days' ride due north of the Carrock was the gate of a little-known pathway through Mirkwood that led almost straight towards the Lonely Mountain.

"The goblins," Beorn had said, "will not dare to cross the Great River for a hundred miles north of the Carrock nor to come near my house—it is well protected at night!—but I should ride fast; for if they make their raid soon they will cross the river to the south and scour all the edge of the forest so as to cut you off, and Wargs run

swifter than ponies. Still you are safer going north, even though you seem to be going back nearer to their strongholds; for that is what they will least expect, and they will have the longer ride to catch you. Be off now as quick as you may!"

That is why they were now riding in silence, galloping wherever the ground was grassy and smooth, with the mountains dark on their left, and in the distance the line of the river with its trees drawing ever closer. The sun had only just turned west when they started, and till evening it lay golden on the land about them. It was difficult to think of pursuing goblins behind, and when they had put many miles between them and Beorn's house they began to talk and to sing again and to forget the dark forest-path that lay in front. But in the evening when the dusk came on and the peaks of the mountains glowered against the sunset they made a camp and set a guard, and most of them slept uneasily with dreams in which there came the howl of hunting wolves and the cries of goblins.

Still the next morning dawned bright and fair again. There was an autumn-like mist white upon the ground and the air was chill, but soon the sun rose red in the East and the mists vanished, and while the shadows were still long they were off again. So they rode now for two more days, and all the while they saw nothing save grass and flowers and birds and scattered trees, and occasionally small herds of red deer browsing or sitting at noon in the shade. Sometimes Bilbo saw the horns of the harts sticking up out of the long grass, and at first he thought they were the dead branches of trees. That third evening they were so eager to press on, for Beorn had said that they should reach the forest-gate early on the fourth-day, that they rode still forward after dusk and into the night beneath the moon. As the light faded Bilbo thought he saw away to the right, or to the left, the shadowy form of a great bear prowling along in the same direction. But if he dared to mention it to Gandalf, the wizard only said: "Hush! Take no notice!"

Next day they started before dawn, though their night had been short. As soon as it was light they could see the forest coming as it were to meet them, or waiting for them like a black and frowning wall before them. The land began to slope up and up, and it seemed to the hobbit that a silence began to draw in upon them. Birds began to sing less. There were no more deer; not even rabbits were to be seen. By the afternoon they had reached the eaves of Mirkwood, and were resting almost beneath the great overhanging boughs of its outer trees. Their trunks were huge and gnarled, their branches twisted, their leaves were dark and long. Ivy grew on them and trailed along the ground.

"Well, here is Mirkwood!" said Gandalf. "The greatest of the forests of the Northern world. I hope you like the look of it. Now you must send back these excellent ponies you have borrowed."

The dwarves were inclined to grumble at this, but the wizard told them they were fools. "Beorn is not as far off as you seem to think, and you had better keep your promises anyway, for he is a bad enemy. Mr. Baggins' eyes are sharper than yours, if you have not seen each night after dark a great bear going along with us or sitting far off in the moon watching our camps. Not only to guard you and guide you, but to keep an eye on the ponies too. Beorn may be your friend, but he loves his animals as his children. You do not guess what kindness he has shown you in letting dwarves ride them so far and so fast, nor what would happen to you, if you tried to take them into the forest."

"What about the horse, then?" said Thorin. "You don't mention sending that back."

"I don't, because I am not sending it."

"What about *your* promise then?"

"I will look after that. I am not sending the horse back, I am riding it!"

Then they knew that Gandalf was going to leave them at the very edge of Mirkwood, and they were in despair. But nothing they could say would change his mind.

"Now we had this all out before, when we landed on the Carrock," he said. "It is no use arguing. I have, as I told you, some pressing business away south; and I am already late through bothering with you people. We may meet again before all is over, and then again of course we may not. That depends on your luck and on your courage and sense; and I am sending Mr. Baggins with you. I have told you before that he has more about him than you guess, and you will find that out before long. So cheer up Bilbo and don't look so glum. Cheer up

Thorin and Company! This is your expedition after all. Think of the treasure at the end, and forget the forest and the dragon, at any rate until tomorrow morning!”

When tomorrow morning came he still said the same. So now there was nothing left to do but to fill their waterskins at a clear spring they found close to the forest-gate, and unpack the ponies. They distributed the packages as fairly as they could, though Bilbo thought his lot was wearisomely heavy, and did not at all like the idea of trudging for miles and miles with all that on his back.

“Don’t you worry!” said Thorin. “It will get lighter all too soon. Before long I expect we shall all wish our packs heavier, when the food begins to run short.”

Then at last they said good-bye to their ponies and turned their heads for home. Off they trotted gaily, seeming very glad to put their tails towards the shadow of Mirkwood. As they went away Bilbo could have sworn that a thing like a bear left the shadow of the trees and shambled off quickly after them.

Now Gandalf too said farewell. Bilbo sat on the ground feeling very unhappy and wishing he was beside the wizard on his tall horse. He had gone just inside the forest after breakfast (a very poor one), and it had seemed as dark in there in the morning as at night, and very secret: “a sort of watching and waiting feeling,” he said to himself.

“Good-bye!” said Gandalf to Thorin. “And good-bye to you all, good-bye! Straight through the forest is your way now. Don’t stray off the track!—if you do, it is a thousand to one you will never find it again and never get out of Mirkwood; and then I don’t suppose I, or anyone else, will ever see you again.”

“Do we really have to go through?” groaned the hobbit.

“Yes, you do!” said the wizard, “if you want to get to the other side. You must either go through or give up your quest. And I am not going to allow you to back out now, Mr. Baggins. I am ashamed of you for thinking of it. You have got to look after all these dwarves for me,” he laughed.

“No! no!” said Bilbo. “I didn’t mean that. I meant, is there no way round?”

“There is, if you care to go two hundred miles or so out of your way north, and twice that south. But you wouldn’t get a safe path even then. There are no safe paths in this part of the world. Remember you are over the Edge of the Wild now, and in for all sorts of fun wherever you go. Before you could get round Mirkwood in the North you would be right among the slopes of the Grey Mountains, and they are simply stiff with goblins, hobgoblins, and orcs of the worst description. Before you could get round it in the South, you would get into the land of the Necromancer; and even you, Bilbo, won’t need me to tell you tales of that black sorcerer. I don’t advise you to go anywhere near the places overlooked by his dark tower! Stick to the forest-track, keep your spirits up, hope for the best, and with a tremendous slice of luck you *may* come out one day and see the Long Marshes lying below you, and beyond them, high in the East, the Lonely Mountain where dear old Smaug lives, though I hope he is not expecting you.”

“Very comforting you are to be sure,” growled Thorin. “Good-bye! If you won’t come with us, you had better get off without any more talk!”

“Good-bye then, and really good-bye!” said Gandalf, and he turned his horse and rode down into the West. But he could not resist the temptation to have the last word. Before he had passed quite out of hearing he turned and put his hands to his mouth and called to them. They heard his voice come faintly: “Good-bye! Be good, take care of yourselves—and DON’T LEAVE THE PATH!”



Then he galloped away and was soon lost to sight. “O good-bye and go away!” grunted the dwarves, all the more angry because they were really filled with dismay at losing him. Now began the most dangerous part of all the journey. They each shouldered the heavy pack and the water-skin which was their share, and turned from the light that lay on the lands outside and plunged into the forest.





## Chapter VIII: Flies And Spiders

They walked in single file. The entrance to the path was like a sort of arch leading into a gloomy tunnel made by two great trees that leant together, too old and strangled with ivy and hung with lichen to bear more than a few blackened leaves. The path itself was narrow and wound in and out among the trunks. Soon the light at the gate was like a little bright hole far behind, and the quiet was so deep that their feet seemed to thump along while all the trees leaned over them and listened.

As their eyes became used to the dimness they could see a little way to either side in a sort of darkened green glimmer. Occasionally a slender beam of sun that had the luck to slip in through some opening in the leaves far above, and still more luck in not being caught in the tangled boughs and matted twigs beneath, stabbed down thin and bright before them. But this was seldom, and it soon ceased altogether.

There were black squirrels in the wood. As Bilbo's sharp inquisitive eyes got used to seeing things he could catch glimpses of them whisking off the path and scuttling behind tree-trunks. There were queer noises too, grunts, scufflings, and hurryings in the undergrowth, and among the leaves that lay piled endlessly thick in places on the forest-floor; but what made the noises he could not see. The nastiest things they saw were the cobwebs: dark dense cobwebs with threads extraordinarily thick, often stretched from tree to tree, or tangled in the lower branches on either side of them. There were none stretched across the path, but whether because some magic kept it clear, or for what other reason they could not guess.

It was not long before they grew to hate the forest as heartily as they had hated the tunnels of the goblins, and it seemed to offer even less hope of any ending. But they had to go on and on, long after they were sick for a sight of the sun and of the sky, and longed for the feel of wind on their faces. There was no movement of air down under the forest-roof, and it was everlastingly still and dark and stuffy. Even the dwarves felt it, who were used to tunnelling, and lived at times for long whiles without the light of the sun; but the hobbit, who liked holes to make a house in but not to spend summer days in, felt that he was being slowly suffocated.

The nights were the worst. It then became pitch-dark—not what you call pitch-dark, but really pitch: so black that you really could see nothing. Bilbo tried flapping his hand in front of his nose, but he could not see it at all. Well, perhaps it is not true to say that they could see nothing: they could see eyes. They slept all closely huddled together, and took it in turns to watch; and when it was Bilbo's turn he would see gleams in the darkness round them, and sometimes pairs of yellow or red or green eyes would stare at him from a little distance, and then slowly fade and disappear and slowly shine out again in another place. And sometimes they would gleam down from the branches just above him; and that was most terrifying. But the eyes that he liked the least were horrible pale bulbous sort of eyes. "Insect eyes," he thought, "not animal eyes, only they are much too big."

Although it was not yet very cold, they tried lighting watch-fires at night, but they soon gave that up. It seemed to bring hundreds and hundreds of eyes all round them, though the creatures, whatever they were, were careful never to let their bodies show in the little flicker of the flames. Worse still it brought thousands of dark-grey and black moths, some nearly as big as your hand, flapping and whirring round their ears. They could not stand that, nor the huge bats, black as a top-hat, either; so they gave up fires and sat at night and dozed in the enormous uncanny darkness.

All this went on for what seemed to the hobbit ages upon ages; and he was always hungry, for they were extremely careful with their provisions. Even so, as days followed days, and still the forest seemed just the same, they began to get anxious. The food would not last for ever: it was in fact already beginning to get low. They tried shooting at the squirrels, and they wasted many arrows before they managed to bring one down on the path. But when they roasted it, it proved horrible to taste, and they shot no more squirrels.

They were thirsty too, for they had none too much water, and in all the time they had seen neither spring nor stream. This was their state when one day they found their path blocked by a running water. It flowed fast and strong but not very wide right across the way, and it was black, or looked it in the gloom. It was well that Beorn had warned them against it, or they would have drunk from it, whatever its colour, and filled some of their emptied skins at its bank. As it was they only thought of how to cross it without wetting themselves in its water. There had been a bridge of wood across, but it had rotted and fallen leaving only the broken posts near the bank.

Bilbo kneeling on the brink and peering forward cried: "There is a boat against the far bank! Now why couldn't it have been this side!"

"How far away do you think it is?" asked Thorin, for by now they knew Bilbo had the sharpest eyes among them.

"Not at all far. I shouldn't think above twelve yards."

"Twelve yards! I should have thought it was thirty at least, but my eyes don't see as well as they used a hundred years ago. Still twelve yards is as good as a mile. We can't jump it, and we daren't try to wade or swim."

"Can any of you throw a rope?"

"What's the good of that? The boat is sure to be tied up, even if we could hook it, which I doubt."

"I don't believe it is tied," said Bilbo, "though of course I can't be sure in this light; but it looks to me as if it was just drawn up on the bank, which is low just there where the path goes down into the water."

"Dori is the strongest, but Fili is the youngest and still has the best sight," said Thorin. "Come here Fili, and see if you can see the boat Mr. Baggins is talking about."

Fili thought he could; so when he had stared a long while to get an idea of the direction, the others brought him a rope. They had several with them, and on the end of the longest they fastened one of the large iron hooks they had used for catching their packs to the straps about their shoulders. Fili took this in his hand, balanced it for a moment, and then flung it across the stream.

Splash it fell in the water! "Not far enough!" said Bilbo who was peering forward. "A couple of feet and you would have dropped it on to the boat. Try again. I don't suppose the magic is strong enough to hurt you, if you just touch a bit of wet rope."

Fili picked up the hook when he had drawn it back, rather doubtfully all the same. This time he threw it with great strength.

"Steady!" said Bilbo, "you have thrown it right into the wood on the other side now. Draw it back gently." Fili hauled the rope back slowly, and after a while Bilbo said: "Carefully! It is lying on the boat; let's hope the hook will catch."

It did. The rope went taut, and Fili pulled in vain. Kili came to his help, and then Oin and Gloin. They tugged and tugged, and suddenly they all fell over on their backs. Bilbo was on the look out, however, caught the rope, and with a piece of stick fended off the little black boat as it came rushing across the stream. "Help!" he shouted, and Balin was just in time to seize the boat before it floated off down the current.

"It was tied after all," said he, looking at the snapped painter that was still dangling from it. "That was a good pull, my lads; and a good job that our rope was the stronger."

"Who'll cross first?" asked Bilbo.

"I shall," said Thorin, "and you will come with me, and Fili and Balin. That's as many as the boat will hold at a time. After that Kili and Oin and Gloin and Dori; next Ori and Nori, Bifur and Bofur; and last Dwalin and Bombur."

"I'm always last and I don't like it," said Bombur. "It's somebody else's turn today."

"You should not be so fat. As you are, you must be with the last and lightest boatload. Don't start grumbling against orders, or something bad will happen to you."

“There aren’t any oars. How are you going to push the boat back to the far bank?” asked the hobbit.

“Give me another length of rope and another hook,” said Fili, and when they had got it ready, he cast it into the darkness ahead and as high as he could throw it. Since it did not fall down again, they saw that it must have stuck in the branches. “Get in now,” said Fili, “and one of you haul on the rope that is stuck in a tree on the other side. One of the others must keep hold of the hook we used at first, and when we are safe on the other side he can hook it on, and you can draw the boat back.”

In this way they were all soon on the far bank safe across the enchanted stream. Dwalin had just scrambled out with the coiled rope on his arm, and Bombur (still grumbling) was getting ready to follow, when something bad did happen. There was a flying sound of hooves on the path ahead. Out of the gloom came suddenly the shape of a flying deer. It charged into the dwarves and bowled them over, then gathered itself for a leap. High it sprang and cleared the water with a mighty jump. But it did not reach the other side in safety. Thorin was the only one who had kept his feet and his wits. As soon as they had landed he had bent his bow and fitted an arrow in case any hidden guardian of the boat appeared. Now he sent a swift and sure shot into the leaping beast. As it reached the further bank it stumbled. The shadows swallowed it up, but they heard the sound of hooves quickly falter and then go still.

Before they could shout in praise of the shot, however, a dreadful wail from Bilbo put all thoughts of venison out of their minds. “Bombur has fallen in! Bombur is drowning!” he cried. It was only too true. Bombur had only one foot on the land when the hart bore down on him, and sprang over him. He had stumbled, thrusting the boat away from the bank, and then toppled back into the dark water, his hands slipping off the slimy roots at the edge, while the boat span slowly off and disappeared.

They could still see his hood above the water when they ran to the bank. Quickly, they flung a rope with a hook towards him. His hand caught it, and they pulled him to the shore. He was drenched from hair to boots, of course, but that was not the worst. When they laid him on the bank he was already fast asleep, with one hand clutching the rope so tight that they could not get it from his grasp; and fast asleep he remained in spite of all they could do.

They were still standing over him, cursing their ill luck, and Bombur’s clumsiness, and lamenting the loss of the boat which made it impossible for them to go back and look for the hart, when they became aware of the dim blowing of horns in the wood and the sound as of dogs baying far off. Then they all fell silent; and as they sat it seemed they could hear the noise of a great hunt going by to the north of the path, though they saw no sign of it.

There they sat for a long while and did not dare to make a move. Bombur slept on with a smile on his fat face, as if he no longer cared for all the troubles that vexed them. Suddenly on the path ahead appeared some white deer, a hind and fawns as snowy white as the hart had been dark. They glimmered in the shadows. Before Thorin could cry out three of the dwarves had leaped to their feet and loosed off arrows from their bows. None seemed to find their mark. The deer turned and vanished in the trees as silently as they had come, and in vain the dwarves shot their arrows after them.

“Stop! stop!” shouted Thorin; but it was too late, the excited dwarves had wasted their last arrows, and now the bows that Beorn had given them were useless.

They were a gloomy party that night, and the gloom gathered still deeper on them in the following days. They had crossed the enchanted stream; but beyond it the path seemed to straggle on just as before, and in the forest they could see no change. Yet if they had known more about it and considered the meaning of the hunt and the white deer that had appeared upon their path, they would have known that they were at last drawing towards the eastern edge, and would soon have come, if they could have kept up their courage and their hope, to thinner trees and places where the sunlight came again.

But they did not know this, and they were burdened with the heavy body of Bombur, which they had to carry along with them as best they could, taking the wearisome task in turns of four each while the others shared their packs. If these had not become all too light in the last few days, they would never have managed it; but a slumbering and smiling Bombur was a poor exchange for packs filled with food however heavy. In a few days a

time came when there was practically nothing left to eat or to drink. Nothing wholesome could they see growing in the wood, only funguses and herbs with pale leaves and unpleasant smell.

About four days from the enchanted stream they came to a part where most of the trees were beeches. They were at first inclined to be cheered by the change, for here there was no undergrowth and the shadow was not so deep. There was a greenish light about them, and in places they could see some distance to either side of the path. Yet the light only showed them endless lines of straight grey trunks like the pillars of some huge twilight hall. There was a breath of air and a noise of wind, but it had a sad sound. A few leaves came rustling down to remind them that outside autumn was coming on. Their feet ruffled among the dead leaves of countless other autumns that drifted over the banks of the path from the deep red carpets of the forest.

Still Bombur slept and they grew very weary. At times they heard disquieting laughter. Sometimes there was singing in the distance too. The laughter was the laughter of fair voices not of goblins, and the singing was beautiful, but it sounded eerie and strange, and they were not comforted, rather they hurried on from those parts with what strength they had left.

Two days later they found their path going downwards, and before long they were in a valley filled almost entirely with a mighty growth of oaks.

“Is there no end to this accursed forest?” said Thorin. “Somebody must climb a tree and see if he can get his head above the roof and have a look round. The only way is to choose the tallest tree that overhangs the path.”

Of course “somebody” meant Bilbo. They chose him, because to be of any use the climber must get his head above the topmost leaves, and so he must be light enough for the highest and slenderest branches to bear him. Poor Mr. Baggins had never had much practice in climbing trees, but they hoisted him up into the lowest branches of an enormous oak that grew right out into the path, and up he had to go as best he could. He pushed his way through the tangled twigs with many a slap in the eye; he was greened and grimed from the old bark of the greater boughs; more than once he slipped and caught himself just in time; and at last, after a dreadful struggle in a difficult place where there seemed to be no convenient branches at all, he got near the top. All the time he was wondering whether there were spiders in the tree, and how he was going to get down again (except by falling).

In the end he poked his head above the roof of leaves, and then he found spiders all right. But they were only small ones of ordinary size, and they were after the butterflies. Bilbo’s eyes were nearly blinded by the light. He could hear the dwarves shouting up at him from far below, but he could not answer, only hold on and blink. The sun was shining brilliantly, and it was a long while before he could bear it. When he could, he saw all round him a sea of dark green, ruffled here and there by the breeze; and there were everywhere hundreds of butterflies. I expect they were a kind of ‘purple emperor’, a butterfly that loves the tops of oak-woods, but these were not purple at all, they were a dark dark velvety black without any markings to be seen.

He looked at the ‘black emperors’ for a long time, and enjoyed the feel of the breeze in his hair and on his face; but at length the cries of the dwarves, who were now simply stamping with impatience down below, reminded him of his real business. It was no good. Gaze as much as he might, he could see no end to the trees and the leaves in any direction. His heart, that had been lightened by the sight of the sun and the feel of the wind, sank back into his toes: there was no food to go back to down below.

Actually, as I have told you, they were not far off the edge of the forest; and if Bilbo had had the sense to see it, the tree that he had climbed, though it was tall in itself, was standing near the bottom of a wide valley, so that from its top the trees seemed to swell up all round like the edges of a great bowl, and he could not expect to see how far the forest lasted. Still he did not see this, and he climbed down full of despair. He got to the bottom again at last, scratched, hot, and miserable, and he could not see anything in the gloom below when he got there. His report soon made the others as miserable as he was.

“The forest goes on for ever and ever and ever in all directions! Whatever shall we do? And what is the use of sending a hobbit!” they cried, as if it was his fault. They did not care tuppence about the butterflies, and were only made more angry when he told them of the beautiful breeze, which they were too heavy to climb up and feel.

That night they ate their very last scraps and crumbs of food; and next morning when they woke the first thing they noticed was that they were still gnawingly hungry, and the next thing was that it was raining and that here and there the drip of it was dropping heavily on the forest floor. That only reminded them that they were also parchingly thirsty, without doing anything to relieve them: you cannot quench a terrible thirst by standing under giant oaks and waiting for a chance drip to fall on your tongue. The only scrap of comfort there was came unexpectedly from Bombur.

He woke up suddenly and sat up scratching his head. He could not make out where he was at all, nor why he felt so hungry; for he had forgotten everything that had happened since they started their journey that May morning long ago. The last thing that he remembered was the party at the hobbit's house, and they had great difficulty in making him believe their tale of all the many adventures they had had since.

When he heard that there was nothing to eat, he sat down and wept, for he felt very weak and wobbly in the legs. "Why ever did I wake up!" he cried. "I was having such beautiful dreams. I dreamed I was walking in a forest rather like this one, only lit with torches on the trees and lamps swinging from the branches and fires burning on the ground; and there was a great feast going on, going on for ever. A woodland king was there with a crown of leaves, and there was a merry singing, and I could not count or describe the things there were to eat and drink."

"You need not try," said Thorin. "In fact if you can't talk about something else, you had better be silent. We are quite annoyed enough with you as it is. If you hadn't waked up, we should have left you to your idiotic dreams in the forest; you are no joke to carry even after weeks of short commons."

There was nothing now to be done but to tighten the belts round their empty stomachs, and hoist their empty sacks and packs, and trudge along the track without any great hope of ever getting to the end before they lay down and died of starvation. This they did all that day, going very slowly and wearily; while Bombur kept on wailing that his legs would not carry him and that he wanted to lie down and sleep.

"No you don't!" they said. "Let your legs take their share, we have carried you far enough."

All the same he suddenly refused to go a step further and flung himself on the ground. "Go on, if you must," he said. "I'm just going to lie here and sleep and dream of food, if I can't get it any other way. I hope I never wake up again."

At that very moment Balin, who was a little way ahead, called out: "What was that? I thought I saw a twinkle of light in the forest."

They all looked, and a longish way off, it seemed, they saw a red twinkle in the dark; then another and another sprang out beside it. Even Bombur got up, and they hurried along then, not caring if it was trolls or goblins. The light was in front of them and to the left of the path, and when at last they had drawn level with it, it seemed plain that torches and fires were burning under the trees, but a good way off their track.

"It looks as if my dreams were coming true," gasped Bombur puffing up behind. He wanted to rush straight off into the wood after the lights. But the others remembered only too well the warnings of the wizard and of Beorn.

"A feast would be no good, if we never got back alive from it," said Thorin.

"But without a feast we shan't remain alive much longer anyway," said Bombur, and Bilbo heartily agreed with him. They argued about it backwards and forwards for a long while, until they agreed at length to send out a couple of spies, to creep near the lights and find out more about them. But then they could not agree on who was to be sent: no-one seemed anxious to run the chance of being lost and never finding his friends again. In the end, in spite of warnings, hunger decided them, because Bombur kept on describing all the good things that were being eaten, according to his dream, in the woodland feast; so they all left the path and plunged into the forest together.

After a good deal of creeping and crawling they peered round the trunks and looked into a clearing where some trees had been felled and the ground levelled. There were many people there, elvish-looking folk, all dressed in green and brown and sitting on sawn rings of the felled trees in a great circle. There was a fire in their midst and

there were torches fastened to some of the trees round about; but most splendid sight of all: they were eating and drinking and laughing merrily.

The smell of the roast meats was so enchanting that, without waiting to consult one another, every one of them got up and scrambled forwards into the ring with the one idea of begging for some food. No sooner had the first stepped into the clearing than all the lights went out as if by magic. Somebody kicked the fire and it went up in rockets of glittering sparks and vanished. They were lost in a completely lightless dark and they could not even find one another, not for a long time at any rate. After blundering frantically in the gloom, falling over logs, bumping crash into trees, and shouting and calling till they must have waked everything in the forest for miles, at last they managed to gather themselves in a bundle and count themselves by touch. By that time they had, of course, quite forgotten in what direction the path lay, and they were all hopelessly lost, at least till morning.

There was nothing for it but to settle down for the night where they were; they did not even dare to search on the ground for scraps of food for fear of becoming separated again. But they had not been lying long, and Bilbo was only just getting drowsy, when Dori, whose turn it was to watch first, said in a loud whisper:

“The lights are coming out again over there, and there are more than ever of them.”

Up they all jumped. There, sure enough, not far away were scores of twinkling lights, and they heard the voices and the laughter quite plainly. They crept slowly towards them, in a single line, each touching the back of the one in front. When they got near Thorin said: “No rushing forward this time! No-one is to stir from hiding till I say. I shall send Mr. Baggins alone first to talk to them. They won’t be frightened of him—(‘What about me of them?’ thought Bilbo)—and any way I hope they won’t do anything nasty to him.”

When they got to the edge of the circle of lights they pushed Bilbo suddenly from behind. Before he had time to slip on his ring, he stumbled forward into the full blaze of the fire and torches. It was no good. Out went all the lights again and complete darkness fell.

If it had been difficult collecting themselves before, it was far worse this time. And they simply could not find the hobbit. Every time they counted themselves it only made thirteen. They shouted and called: “Bilbo Baggins! Hobbit! You dratted hobbit! Hi! hobbit, confusticate you, where are you?” and other things of that sort, but there was no answer.

They were just giving up hope, when Dori stumbled across him by sheer luck. In the dark he fell over what he thought was a log, and he found it was the hobbit curled up fast asleep. It took a deal of shaking to wake him, and when he was awake he was not pleased at all.

“I was having such a lovely dream,” he grumbled, “all about having a most gorgeous dinner.”

“Good heavens! he has gone like Bombur,” they said. “Don’t tell us about dreams. Dream-dinners aren’t any good, and we can’t share them.”

“They are the best I am likely to get in this beastly place,” he muttered, as he lay down beside the dwarves and tried to go back to sleep and find his dream again.

But that was not the last of the lights in the forest. Later when the night must have been getting old, Kili who was watching then, came and roused them all again, saying:

“There’s a regular blaze of light begun not far away—hundreds of torches and many fires must have been lit suddenly and by magic. And hark to the singing and the harps!”

After lying and listening for a while, they found they could not resist the desire to go nearer and try once more to get help. Up they got again; and this time the result was disastrous. The feast that they now saw was greater and more magnificent than before; and at the head of a long line of feasters sat a woodland king with a crown of leaves upon his golden hair, very much as Bombur had described the figure in his dream. The elvish folk were passing bowls from hand to hand and across the fires, and some were harping and many were singing. Their gleaming hair was twined with flowers; green and white gems glinted on their collars and their belts; and their faces and their songs were filled with mirth. Loud and clear and fair were those songs, and out stepped Thorin in to their midst.

Dead silence fell in the middle of a word. Out went all light. The fires leaped up in black smokes. Ashes and cinders were in the eyes of the dwarves, and the wood was filled again with their clamour and their cries.

Bilbo found himself running round and round (as he thought) and calling and calling: “Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin, Gloin, Fili, Kili, Bombur, Bifur, Bofur, Dwalin, Balin, Thorin Oakenshield,” while people he could not see or feel were doing the same all round him (with an occasional “Bilbo!” thrown in). But the cries of the others got steadily further and fainter, and though after a while it seemed to him they changed to yells and cries for help in the far distance, all noise at last died right away, and he was left alone in complete silence and darkness.

That was one of his most miserable moments. But he soon made up his mind that it was no good trying to do anything till day came with some little light, and quite useless to go blundering about tiring himself out with no hope of any breakfast to revive him. So he sat himself down with his back to a tree, and not for the last time fell to thinking of his far-distant hobbit-hole with its beautiful pantries. He was deep in thoughts of bacon and eggs and toast and butter when he felt something touch him. Something like a strong sticky string was against his left hand, and when he tried to move he found that his legs were already wrapped in the same stuff, so that when he got up he fell over.

Then the great spider, who had been busy tying him up while he dozed, came from behind him and came at him. He could only see the thing’s eyes, but he could feel its hairy legs as it struggled to wind its abominable threads round and round him. It was lucky that he had come to his senses in time. Soon he would not have been able to move at all. As it was, he had a desperate fight before he got free. He beat the creature off with his hands—it was trying to poison him to keep him quiet, as small spiders do to flies—until he remembered his sword and drew it out. Then the spider jumped back, and he had time to cut his legs loose. After that it was his turn to attack. The spider evidently was not used to things that carried such stings at their sides, or it would have hurried away quicker. Bilbo came at it before it could disappear and stuck it with his sword right in the eyes. Then it went mad and leaped and danced and flung out its legs in horrible jerks, until he killed it with another stroke; and then he fell down and remembered nothing more for a long while.

There was the usual dim grey light of the forest-day about him when he came to his senses. The spider lay dead beside him, and his sword-blade was stained black. Somehow the killing of the giant spider, all alone by himself in the dark without the help of the wizard or the dwarves or of anyone else, made a great difference to Mr. Baggins. He felt a different person, and much fiercer and bolder in spite of an empty stomach, as he wiped his sword on the grass and put it back into its sheath.

“I will give you a name,” he said to it, “and I shall call you *Sting*.”

After that he set out to explore. The forest was grim and silent, but obviously he had first of all to look for his friends, who were not likely to be very far off, unless they had been made prisoners by the elves (or worse things). Bilbo felt that it was unsafe to shout, and he stood a long while wondering in what direction the path lay, and in what direction he should go first to look for the dwarves.

“O! why did we not remember Beorn’s advice, and Gandalf’s!” he lamented. “What a mess we are in now! We! I only wish it was *we*: it is horrible being all alone.”

In the end he made as good a guess as he could at the direction from which the cries for help had come in the night—and by luck (he was born with a good share of it) he guessed more or less right, as you will see. Having made up his mind he crept along as cleverly as he could. Hobbits are clever at quietness, especially in woods, as I have already told you; also Bilbo had slipped on his ring before he started. That is why the spiders neither saw nor heard him coming.

He had picked his way stealthily for some distance, when he noticed a place of dense black shadow ahead of him, black even for that forest, like a patch of midnight that had never been cleared away. As he drew nearer, he saw that it was made by spider-webs one behind and over and tangled with another. Suddenly he saw, too, that there were spiders huge and horrible sitting in the branches above him, and ring or no ring he trembled with fear lest they should discover him. Standing behind a tree he watched a group of them for some time, and then in the silence and stillness of the wood he realised that these loathsome creatures were speaking one to another.

Their voices were a sort of thin creaking and hissing, but he could make out many of the words that they said. They were talking about the dwarves!

“It was a sharp struggle, but worth it,” said one. “What nasty thick skins they have to be sure, but I’ll wager there is good juice inside.”

“Aye, they’ll make fine eating, when they’ve hung a bit,” said another.

“Don’t hang ’em too long,” said a third. “They’re not as fat as they might be. Been feeding none too well of late, I should guess.”

“Kill ’em, I say,” hissed a fourth; “kill ’em now and hang ’em dead for a while.”

“They’re dead now, I’ll warrant,” said the first.

“That they are not. I saw one a-struggling just now. Just coming round again, I should say, after a bee-autiful sleep. I’ll show you.”

With that one of the fat spiders ran along a rope till it came to a dozen bundles hanging in a row from a high branch. Bilbo was horrified, now that he noticed them for the first time dangling in the shadows, to see a dwarvish foot sticking out of the bottoms of some of the bundles, or here and there the tip of a nose, or a bit of beard or of a hood.

To the fattest of these bundles the spider went—“It is poor old Bombur, I’ll bet,” thought Bilbo—and nipped hard at the nose that stuck out. There was a muffled yelp inside, and a toe shot up and kicked the spider straight and hard. There was life in Bombur still. There was a noise like the kicking of a flabby football, and the enraged spider fell off the branch, only catching itself with its own thread just in time.

The others laughed. “You were quite right,” they said, “the meat’s alive and kicking!”

“I’ll soon put an end to that,” hissed the angry spider climbing back onto the branch.

Bilbo saw that the moment had come when he must do something. He could not get up at the brutes and he had nothing to shoot with; but looking about he saw that in this place there were many stones lying in what appeared to be a now dry little watercourse. Bilbo was a pretty fair shot with a stone, and it did not take him long to find a nice smooth egg-shaped one that fitted his hand cosily. As a boy he used to practise throwing stones at things, until rabbits and squirrels, and even birds, got out of his way as quick as lightning if they saw him stoop; and even grown-up he had still spent a deal of his time at quoits, dart-throwing, shooting at the wand, bowls, ninepins and other quiet games of the aiming and throwing sort—indeed he could do lots of things, besides blowing smoke-rings, asking riddles and cooking, that I haven’t had time to tell you about. There is no time now. While he was picking up stones, the spider had reached Bombur, and soon he would have been dead. At that moment Bilbo threw. The stone struck the spider plunk on the head, and it dropped senseless off the tree, flop to the ground, with all its legs curled up.

The next stone went whizzing through a big web, snapping its cords, and taking off the spider sitting in the middle of it, whack, dead. After that there was a deal of commotion in the spider-colony, and they forgot the dwarves for a bit, I can tell you. They could not see Bilbo, but they could make a good guess at the direction from which the stones were coming. As quick as lightning they came running and swinging towards the hobbit, flinging out their long threads in all directions, till the air seemed full of waving snares.

Bilbo, however, soon slipped away to a different place. The idea came to him to lead the furious spiders further and further away from the dwarves, if he could; to make them curious, excited and angry all at once. When about fifty had gone off to the place where he had stood before, he threw some more stones at these, and at others that had stopped behind; then dancing among the trees he began to sing a song to infuriate them and bring them all after him, and also to let the dwarves hear his voice.

This is what he sang:

*Old fat spider spinning in a tree!  
Old fat spider can’t see me!  
Attercop! Attercop!*



*Won't you stop,  
Stop your spinning and look for me?*

*Old Tomnoddy, all big body,  
Old Tomnoddy can't spy me!*

*Attercop! Attercop!*

*Down you drop!*

*You'll never catch me up your tree!*

Not very good perhaps, but then you must remember that he had to make it up himself, on the spur of a very awkward moment. It did what he wanted any way. As he sang he threw some more stones and stamped. Practically all the spiders in the place came after him: some dropped to the ground, others raced along the branches, swung from tree to tree, or cast new ropes across the dark spaces. They made for his noise far quicker than he had expected. They were frightfully angry. Quite apart from the stones no spider has ever liked being called Attercop, and Tomnoddy of course is insulting to anybody.

Off Bilbo scuttled to a fresh place, but several of the spiders had run now to different points in the glade where they lived, and were busy spinning webs across all the spaces between the tree-stems. Very soon the hobbit would be caught in a thick fence of them all round him—that at least was the spiders' idea. Standing now in the middle of the hunting and spinning insects Bilbo plucked up his courage and began a new song:

*Lazy Lob and crazy Cob  
are weaving webs to wind me.  
I am far more sweet than other meat,  
but still they cannot find me!*

*Here am I, naughty little fly;  
you are fat and lazy.  
You cannot trap me, though you try,  
in your cobwebs crazy.*

With that he turned and found that the last space between two tall trees had been closed with a web—but luckily not a proper web, only great strands of double-thick spider-rope run hastily backwards and forwards from trunk to trunk. Out came his little sword. He slashed the threads to pieces and went off singing.

The spiders saw the sword, though I don't suppose they knew what it was, and at once the whole lot of them came hurrying after the hobbit along the ground and the branches, hairy legs waving, nippers and spinners snapping, eyes popping, full of froth and rage. They followed him into the forest until Bilbo had gone as far as he dared. Then quieter than a mouse he stole back.

He had precious little time, he knew, before the spiders were disgusted and came back to their trees where the dwarves were hung. In the meanwhile he had to rescue them. The worst part of the job was getting up on to the long branch where the bundles were dangling. I don't suppose he would have managed it, if a spider had not luckily left a rope hanging down; with its help, though it stuck to his hand and hurt him, he scrambled up—only to meet an old slow wicked fat-bodied spider who had remained behind to guard the prisoners, and had been busy pinching them to see which was the juiciest to eat. It had thought of starting the feast while the others were away, but Mr. Baggins was in a hurry, and before the spider knew what was happening it felt his sting and rolled off the branch dead.

Bilbo's next job was to loose a dwarf. What was he to do? If he cut the string which hung him up, the wretched dwarf would tumble thump to the ground a good way below. Wriggling along the branch (which made all the poor dwarves dance and dangle like ripe fruit) he reached the first bundle.

"Fili or Kili," he thought by the tip of a blue hood sticking out at the top. "Most likely Fili," he thought by the tip of a long nose poking out of the winding threads. He managed by leaning over to cut most of the strong sticky threads that bound him round, and then, sure enough, with a kick and a struggle most of Fili emerged. I

am afraid Bilbo actually laughed at the sight of him jerking his stiff arms and legs as he danced on the spider-string under his armpits, just like one of those funny toys bobbing on a wire.

Somehow or other Fili was got on to the branch, and then he did his best to help the hobbit, although he was feeling very sick and ill from spider-poison, and from hanging most of the night and the next day wound round and round with only his nose to breathe through. It took him ages to get the beastly stuff out of his eyes and eyebrows, and as for his beard, he had to cut most of it off. Well, between them they started to haul up first one dwarf and then another and slash them free. None of them were better off than Fili, and some of them were worse. Some had hardly been able to breathe at all (long noses are sometimes useful you see) and some had been more poisoned.

In this way they rescued Kili, Bifur, Bofur, Dori and Nori. Poor old Bombur was so exhausted—he was the fattest and had been constantly pinched and poked—that he just rolled off the branch and fell plop on to the ground, fortunately on to leaves, and lay there. But there were still five dwarves hanging at the end of the branch when the spiders began to come back, more full of rage than ever.

Bilbo immediately went to the end of the branch nearest the tree-trunk and kept back those that crawled up. He had taken off his ring when he rescued Fili and forgotten to put it on again, so now they all began to splutter and hiss:

“Now we see you, you nasty little creature! We will eat you and leave your bones and skin hanging on a tree. Ugh! he’s got a sting has he? Well, we’ll get him all the same, and then we’ll hang him head downwards for a day or two.”

While this was going on, the other dwarves were working at the rest of the captives, and cutting at the threads with their knives. Soon all would be free, though it was not clear what would happen after that. The spiders had caught them pretty easily the night before, but that had been unawares and in the dark. This time there looked like being a horrible battle.

Suddenly Bilbo noticed that some of the spiders had gathered round old Bombur on the floor, and had tied him up again and were dragging him away. He gave a shout and slashed at the spiders in front of him. They quickly gave way, and he scrambled and fell down the tree right into the middle of those on the ground. His little sword was something new in the way of stings for them. How it darted to and fro! It shone with delight as he stabbed at them. Half a dozen were killed before the rest drew off and left Bombur to Bilbo.

“Come down! Come down!” he shouted to the dwarves on the branch. “Don’t stay up there and be netted!” For he saw spiders swarming up all the neighbouring trees, and crawling along the boughs above the heads of the dwarves.

Down the dwarves scrambled or jumped or dropped, eleven all in a heap, most of them very shaky and little use on their legs. There they were at last, twelve of them counting poor old Bombur, who was being propped up on either side by his cousin Bifur, and his brother Bofur; and Bilbo was dancing about and waving his Sting; and hundreds of angry spiders were goggling at them all round and about and above. It looked pretty hopeless.

Then the battle began. Some of the dwarves had knives, and some had sticks, and all of them could get at stones; and Bilbo had his elvish dagger. Again and again the spiders were beaten off, and many of them were killed. But it could not go on for long. Bilbo was nearly tired out; only four of the dwarves were able to stand firmly, and soon they would all be overpowered like weary flies. Already the spiders were beginning to weave their webs all round them again from tree to tree.

In the end Bilbo could think of no plan except to let the dwarves into the secret of his ring. He was rather sorry about it, but it could not be helped.

“I am going to disappear,” he said. “I shall draw the spiders off, if I can; and you must keep together and make in the opposite direction. To the left there, that is more or less the way towards the place where we last saw the elf-fires.”

It was difficult to get them to understand, what with their dizzy heads, and the shouts, and the whacking of sticks and the throwing of stones; but at last Bilbo felt he could delay no longer—the spiders were drawing their circle ever closer. He suddenly slipped on his ring, and to the great astonishment of the dwarves he vanished.

Soon there came the sound of “Lazy Lob” and “Attercop” from among the trees away on the right. That upset the spiders greatly. They stopped advancing, and some went off in the direction of the voice. “Attercop” made them so angry that they lost their wits. Then Balin, who had grasped Bilbo’s plan better than the rest, led an attack. The dwarves huddled together in a knot, and sending a shower of stones they drove at the spiders on the left, and burst through the ring. Away behind them now the shouting and singing suddenly stopped.

Hoping desperately that Bilbo had not been caught the dwarves went on. Not fast enough, though. They were sick and weary, and they could not go much better than a hobble and a wobble, though many of the spiders were close behind. Every now and then they had to turn and fight the creatures that were overtaking them; and already some spiders were in the trees above them and throwing down their long clinging threads.

Things were looking pretty bad again, when suddenly Bilbo reappeared, and charged into the astonished spiders unexpectedly from the side.

“Go on! Go on!” he shouted. “I will do the stinging!”

And he did. He darted backwards and forwards, slashing at spider-threads, hacking at their legs, and stabbing at their fat bodies if they came too near. The spiders swelled with rage, and spluttered and frothed, and hissed out horrible curses; but they had become mortally afraid of Sting, and dared not come very near, now that it had come back. So curse as they would, their prey moved slowly but steadily away. It was a most terrible business, and seemed to take hours. But at last, just when Bilbo felt that he could not lift his hand for a single stroke more, the spiders suddenly gave it up, and followed them no more, but went back disappointed to their dark colony.

The dwarves then noticed that they had come to the edge of a ring where elf-fires had been. Whether it was one of those they had seen the night before, they could not tell. But it seemed that some good magic lingered in such spots, which the spiders did not like. At any rate here the light was greener, and the boughs less thick and threatening, and they had a chance to rest and draw breath.

There they lay for some time, puffing and panting. But very soon they began to ask questions. They had to have the whole vanishing business carefully explained, and the finding of the ring interested them so much that for a while they forgot their own troubles. Balin in particular insisted on having the Gollum story, riddles and all, told all over again, with the ring in its proper place. But after a time the light began to fail, and then other questions were asked. Where were they, and where was their path, and where was there any food, and what were they going to do next? These questions they asked over and over again, and it was from little Bilbo that they seemed to expect to get the answers. From which you can see that they had changed their opinion of Mr. Baggins very much, and had begun to have a great respect for him (as Gandalf had said they would). Indeed they really expected him to think of some wonderful plan for helping them, and were not merely grumbling. They knew only too well that they would soon all have been dead, if it had not been for the hobbit; and they thanked him many times. Some of them even got up and bowed right to the ground before him, though they fell over with the effort, and could not get on their legs again for some time. Knowing the truth about the vanishing did not lessen their opinion of Bilbo at all; for they saw that he had some wits, as well as luck and a magic ring—and all three are very useful possessions. In fact they praised him so much that Bilbo began to feel there really was something of a bold adventurer about himself after all, though he would have felt a lot bolder still, if there had been anything to eat.

But there was nothing, nothing at all; and none of them were fit to go and look for anything, or to search for the lost path. The lost path! No other idea would come into Bilbo’s tired head. He just sat staring in front of him at the endless trees; and after a while they all fell silent again. All except Balin. Long after the others had stopped talking and shut their eyes, he kept on muttering and chuckling to himself.

“Gollum! Well I’m blest! So that’s how he sneaked past me, is it? Now I know! Just crept quietly along did you, Mr. Baggins? Buttons all over the doorstep! Good old Bilbo—Bilbo—Bilbo—bo—bo—bo—” And then he fell asleep, and there was complete silence for a long while.

All of a sudden Dwalin opened an eye, and looked round at them. “Where is Thorin?” he asked.

It was a terrible shock. Of course there were only thirteen of them, twelve dwarves and the hobbit. Where indeed was Thorin? They wondered what evil fate had befallen him, magic or dark monsters; and shuddered as they lay lost in the forest. There they dropped off one by one into uncomfortable sleep full of horrible dreams, as evening wore to black night; and there we must leave them for the present, too sick and weary to set guards or to take turns at watching.

Thorin had been caught much faster than they had. You remember Bilbo falling like a log into sleep, as he stepped into a circle of light? The next time it had been Thorin who stepped forward, and as the lights went out he fell like a stone enchanted. All the noise of the dwarves lost in the night, their cries as the spiders caught them and bound them, and all the sounds of the battle next day, had passed over him unheard. Then the Wood-elves had come to him, and bound him, and carried him away.

The feasting people were Wood-elves, of course. These are not wicked folk. If they have a fault it is distrust of strangers. Though their magic was strong, even in those days they were wary. They differed from the High Elves of the West, and were more dangerous and less wise. For most of them (together with their scattered relations in the hills and mountains) were descended from the ancient tribes that never went to Faerie in the West. There the Light-elves and the Deep-elves and the Sea-elves went and lived for ages, and grew fairer and wiser and more learned, and invented their magic and their cunning craft in the making of beautiful and marvellous things, before some came back into the Wide World. In the Wide World the Wood-elves lingered in the twilight of our Sun and Moon, but loved best the stars; and they wandered in the great forests that grew tall in lands that are now lost. They dwelt most often by the edges of the woods, from which they could escape at times to hunt, or to ride and run over the open lands by moonlight or starlight; and after the coming of Men they took ever more and more to the gloaming and the dusk. Still elves they were and remain, and that is Good People.

In a great cave some miles within the edge of Mirkwood on its eastern side there lived at this time their greatest king. Before his huge doors of stone a river ran out of the heights of the forest and flowed on and out into the marshes at the feet of the high wooded lands. This great cave, from which countless smaller ones opened out on every side, wound far underground and had many passages and wide halls; but it was lighter and more wholesome than any goblin-dwelling, and neither so deep nor so dangerous. In fact the subjects of the king mostly lived and hunted in the open woods, and had houses or huts on the ground and in the branches. The beeches were their favourite trees. The king’s cave was his palace, and the strong place of his treasure, and the fortress of his people against their enemies.

It was also the dungeon of his prisoners. So to the cave they dragged Thorin—not too gently, for they did not love dwarves, and thought he was an enemy. In ancient days they had had wars with some of the dwarves, whom they accused of stealing their treasure. It is only fair to say that the dwarves gave a different account, and said that they only took what was their due, for the elf-king had bargained with them to shape his raw gold and silver, and had afterwards refused to give them their pay. If the elf-king had a weakness it was for treasure, especially for silver and white gems; and though his hoard was rich, he was ever eager for more, since he had not yet as great a treasure as other elf-lords of old. His people neither mined nor worked metals or jewels, nor did they bother much with trade or with tilling the earth. All this was well known to every dwarf, though Thorin’s family had had nothing to do with the old quarrel I have spoken of. Consequently Thorin was angry at their treatment of him, when they took their spell off him and he came to his senses; and also he was determined that no word of gold or jewels should be dragged out of him.

The king looked sternly on Thorin, when he was brought before him, and asked him many questions. But Thorin would only say that he was starving.

“Why did you and your folk three times try to attack my people at their merrymaking?” asked the king.

“We did not attack them,” answered Thorin; “we came to beg, because we were starving.”

“Where are your friends now, and what are they doing?”

“I don’t know, but I expect starving in the forest.”

“What were you doing in the forest?”

“Looking for food and drink, because we were starving.”

“But what brought you into the forest at all?” asked the king angrily.

At that Thorin shut his mouth and would not say another word.

“Very well!” said the king. “Take him away and keep him safe, until he feels inclined to tell the truth, even if he waits a hundred years.”

Then the elves put thongs on him, and shut him in one of the inmost caves with strong wooden doors, and left him. They gave him food and drink, plenty of both, if not very fine; for Wood-elves were not goblins, and were reasonably well-behaved even to their worst enemies, when they captured them. The giant spiders were the only living things that they had no mercy upon.

There in the king’s dungeon poor Thorin lay; and after he had got over his thankfulness for bread and meat and water, he began to wonder what had become of his unfortunate friends. It was not very long before he discovered; but that belongs to the next chapter and the beginning of another adventure in which the hobbit again showed his usefulness.



## Chapter IX: Barrels Out of Bond

The day after the battle with the spiders Bilbo and the dwarves made one last despairing effort to find a way out before they died of hunger and thirst. They got up and staggered on in the direction which eight out of the thirteen of them guessed to be the one in which the path lay; but they never found out if they were right. Such day as there ever was in the forest was fading once more into the blackness of night, when suddenly out sprang the light of many torches all round them, like hundreds of red stars. Out leaped Wood-elves with their bows and spears and called the dwarves to halt.

There was no thought of a fight. Even if the dwarves had not been in such a state that they were actually glad to be captured, their small knives, the only weapons they had, would have been of no use against the arrows of the elves that could hit a bird's eye in the dark. So they simply stopped dead and sat down and waited—all except Bilbo, who popped on his ring and slipped quickly to one side. That is why, when the elves bound the dwarves in a long line, one behind the other, and counted them, they never found or counted the hobbit.

Nor did they hear or feel him trotting along well behind their torch-light as they led off their prisoners into the forest. Each dwarf was blindfold, but that did not make much difference, for even Bilbo with the use of his eyes could not see where they were going, and neither he nor the others knew where they had started from anyway. Bilbo had all he could do to keep up with the torches, for the elves were making the dwarves go as fast as ever they could, sick and weary as they were. The king had ordered them to make haste. Suddenly the torches stopped, and the hobbit had just time to catch them up before they began to cross the bridge. This was the bridge that led across the river to the king's doors. The water flowed dark and swift and strong beneath; and at the far end were gates before the mouth of a huge cave that ran into the side of a steep slope covered with trees. There the great beeches came right down to the bank, till their feet were in the stream.

Across the bridge the elves thrust their prisoners, but Bilbo hesitated in the rear. He did not at all like the look of the cavern-mouth, and he only made up his mind not to desert his friends just in time to scuttle over at the heels of the last elves, before the great gates of the king closed behind them with a clang.

Inside the passages were lit with red torch-light, and the elf-guards sang as they marched along the twisting, crossing, and echoing paths. These were not like those of the goblin-cities; they were smaller, less deep underground, and filled with a cleaner air. In a great hall with pillars hewn out of the living stone sat the Elvenking on a chair of carven wood. On his head was a crown of berries and red leaves, for the autumn was come again. In the spring he wore a crown of woodland flowers. In his hand he held a carven staff of oak.





.The ElvenKing's Gate.

*Click [here](#) for alternative image.*

The prisoners were brought before him; and though he looked grimly at them, he told his men to unbind them, for they were ragged and weary. “Besides they need no ropes in here,” said he. “There is no escape from my magic doors for those who are once brought inside.”

Long and searchingly he questioned the dwarves about their doings, and where they were going to, and where they were coming from; but he got little more news out of them than out of Thorin. They were surly and angry and did not even pretend to be polite.

“What have we done, O king?” said Balin, who was the eldest left. “Is it a crime to be lost in the forest, to be hungry and thirsty, to be trapped by spiders? Are the spiders your tame beasts or your pets, if killing them makes you angry?”

Such a question of course made the king angrier than ever, and he answered: "It is a crime to wander in my realm without leave. Do you forget that you were in my kingdom, using the road that my people made? Did you not three times pursue and trouble my people in the forest and rouse the spiders with your riot and clamour? After all the disturbance you have made I have a right to know what brings you here, and if you will not tell me now, I will keep you all in prison until you have learned sense and manners!"

Then he ordered the dwarves each to be put in a separate cell and to be given food and drink, but not to be allowed to pass the doors of their little prisons, until one at least of them was willing to tell him all he wanted to know. But he did not tell them that Thorin was also a prisoner with him. It was Bilbo who found that out.

Poor Mr. Baggins—it was a weary long time that he lived in that place all alone, and always in hiding, never daring to take off his ring, hardly daring to sleep, even tucked away in the darkest and remotest corners he could find. For something to do he took to wandering about the Elvenking's palace. Magic shut the gates, but he could sometimes get out, if he was quick. Companies of the Wood-elves, sometimes with the king at their head, would from time to time ride out to hunt, or to other business in the woods and in the lands to the East. Then if Bilbo was very nimble, he could slip out just behind them; though it was a dangerous thing to do. More than once he was nearly caught in the doors, as they clashed together when the last elf passed; yet he did not dare to march among them because of his shadow (altogether thin and wobbly as it was in torchlight), or for fear of being bumped into and discovered. And when he did go out, which was not very often, he did no good. He did not wish to desert the dwarves, and indeed he did not know where in the world to go without them. He could not keep up with the hunting elves all the time they were out, so he never discovered the ways out of the wood, and was left to wander miserably in the forest, terrified of losing himself, until a chance came of returning. He was hungry too outside, for he was no hunter; but inside the caves he could pick up a living of some sort by stealing food from store or table when no-one was at hand.

"I am like a burglar that can't get away, but must go on miserably burgling the same house day after day," he thought. "This is the dreariest and dullest part of all this wretched, tiresome, uncomfortable adventure! I wish I was back in my hobbit-hole by my own warm fireside with the lamp shining!" He often wished, too, that he could get a message for help sent to the wizard, but that of course was quite impossible; and he soon realized that if anything was to be done, it would have to be done by Mr. Baggins, alone and unaided.

Eventually, after a week or two of this sneaking sort of life, by watching and following the guards and taking what chances he could, he managed to find out where each dwarf was kept. He found all their twelve cells in different parts of the palace, and after a time he got to know his way about very well. What was his surprise one day to overhear some of the guards talking and to learn that there was another dwarf in prison too, in a specially deep dark place. He guessed at once, of course, that that was Thorin; and after a while he found that his guess was right. At last after many difficulties he managed to find the place when no-one was about, and to have a word with the chief of the dwarves.

Thorin was too wretched to be angry any longer at his misfortunes, and was even beginning to think of telling the king all about his treasure and his quest (which shows how low-spirited he had become), when he heard Bilbo's little voice at his keyhole. He could hardly believe his ears. Soon however he made up his mind that he could not be mistaken, and he came to the door and had a long whispered talk with the hobbit on the other side.

So it was that Bilbo was able to take secretly Thorin's message to each of the other imprisoned dwarves, telling them that Thorin their chief was also in prison close at hand, and that no-one was to reveal their errand to the king, not yet, nor before Thorin gave the word. For Thorin had taken heart again hearing how the hobbit had rescued his companions from the spiders, and was determined once more not to ransom himself with promises to the king of a share in the treasure, until all hope of escaping in any other way had disappeared; until in fact the remarkable Mr. Invisible Baggins (of whom he began to have a very high opinion indeed) had altogether failed to think of something clever.

The other dwarves quite agreed when they got the message. They all thought their own shares in the treasure (which they quite regarded as theirs, in spite of their plight and the still unconquered dragon) would suffer seriously if the Wood-elves claimed part of it, and they all trusted Bilbo. Just what Gandalf had said would happen, you see. Perhaps that was part of his reason for going off and leaving them.



Bilbo, however, did not feel nearly so hopeful as they did. He did not like being depended on by everyone, and he wished he had the wizard at hand. But that was no use: probably all the dark distance of Mirkwood lay between them. He sat and thought and thought, until his head nearly burst, but no bright idea would come. One invisible ring was a very fine thing, but it was not much good among fourteen. But of course, as you have guessed, he did rescue his friends in the end, and this is how it happened.

One day, nosing and wandering about, Bilbo discovered a very interesting thing: the great gates were *not* the only entrance to the caves. A stream flowed under part of the lowest regions of the palace, and joined the Forest River some way further to the east, beyond the steep slope out of which the main mouth opened. Where this underground watercourse came forth from the hillside there was a water-gate. There the rocky roof came down close to the surface of the stream, and from it a portcullis could be dropped right to the bed of the river to prevent anyone coming in or out that way. But the portcullis was often open, for a good deal of traffic went out and in by the water-gate. If anyone had come in that way, he would have found himself in a dark rough tunnel leading deep into the heart of the hill; but at one point where it passed under the caves the roof had been cut away and covered with great oaken trapdoors. These opened upwards into the king's cellars. There stood barrels, and barrels, and barrels; for the Wood-elves, and especially their king, were very fond of wine, though no vines grew in those parts. The wine, and other goods, were brought from far away, from their kinsfolk in the South, or from the vineyards of Men in distant lands.

Hiding behind one of the largest barrels Bilbo discovered the trapdoors and their use, and lurking there, listening to the talk of the king's servants, he learned how the wine and other goods came up the rivers, or over land, to the Long Lake. It seemed a town of Men still thrived there, built out on bridges far into the water as a protection against enemies of all sorts, and especially against the dragon of the Mountain. From Lake-town the barrels were brought up the Forest River. Often they were just tied together like big rafts and poled or rowed up the stream; sometimes they were loaded on to flat boats.

When the barrels were empty the elves cast them through the trapdoors, opened the water-gate, and out the barrels floated on the stream, bobbing along, until they were carried by the current to a place far down the river where the bank jutted out, near to the very eastern edge of Mirkwood. There they were collected and tied together and floated back to Lake-town, which stood close to the point where the Forest River flowed into the Long Lake.

For some time Bilbo sat and thought about this water-gate, and wondered if it could be used for the escape of his friends, and at last he had the desperate beginnings of a plan.

The evening meal had been taken to the prisoners. The guards were tramping away down the passages taking the torchlight with them and leaving everything in darkness. Then Bilbo heard the king's butler bidding the chief of the guards good-night.

"Now come with me," he said, "and taste the new wine that has just come in. I shall be hard at work tonight clearing the cellars of the empty wood, so let us have a drink first to help the labour."

"Very good," laughed the chief of the guards. "I'll taste with you, and see if it is fit for the king's table. There is a feast tonight and it would not do to send up poor stuff!"

When he heard this Bilbo was all in a flutter, for he saw that luck was with him and he had a chance at once to try his desperate plan. He followed the two elves, until they entered a small cellar and sat down at a table on which two large flagons were set. Soon they began to drink and laugh merrily. Luck of an unusual kind was with Bilbo then. It must be potent wine to make a wood-elf drowsy; but this wine, it would seem, was the heady vintage of the great gardens of Dorwinion, not meant for his soldiers or his servants, but for the king's feasts only, and for smaller bowls not for the butler's great flagons.

Very soon the chief guard nodded his head, then he laid it on the table and fell fast asleep. The butler went on talking and laughing to himself for a while without seeming to notice, but soon his head too nodded to the table, and he fell asleep and snored beside his friend. Then in crept the hobbit. Very soon the chief guard had no keys, but Bilbo was trotting as fast as he could along the passages towards the cells. The great bunch seemed very

heavy to his arms, and his heart was often in his mouth, in spite of his ring, for he could not prevent the keys from making every now and then a loud clink and clank, which put him all in a tremble.

First he unlocked Balin's door, and locked it again carefully as soon as the dwarf was outside. Balin was most surprised, as you can imagine; but glad as he was to get out of his wearisome little stone room, he wanted to stop and ask questions, and know what Bilbo was going to do, and all about it.

"No time now!" said the hobbit. "You just follow me! We must all keep together and not risk getting separated. All of us must escape or none, and this is our last chance. If this is found out, goodness knows where the king will put you next, with chains on your hands and feet too, I expect. Don't argue, there's a good fellow!"

Then off he went from door to door, until his following had grown to twelve—none of them any too nimble, what with the dark, and what with their long imprisonment. Bilbo's heart thumped every time one of them bumped into another, or grunted or whispered in the dark. "Drat this dwarvish racket!" he said to himself. But all went well, and they met no guards. As a matter of fact there was a great autumn feast in the woods that night, and in the halls above. Nearly all the king's folk were merrymaking.

At last after much blundering they came to Thorin's dungeon, far down in a deep place and fortunately not far from the cellars.

"Upon my word!" said Thorin, when Bilbo whispered to him to come out and join his friends, "Gandalf spoke true, as usual! A pretty fine burglar you make, it seems, when the time comes. I am sure we are all for ever at your service, whatever happens after this. But what comes next?"

Bilbo saw that the time had come to explain his idea, as far as he could; but he did not feel at all sure how the dwarves would take it. His fears were quite justified, for they did not like it a bit, and started grumbling loudly in spite of their danger.

"We shall be bruised and battered to pieces, and drowned too, for certain!" they muttered. "We thought you had got some sensible notion, when you managed to get hold of the keys. This is a mad idea!"

"Very well!" said Bilbo very downcast, and also rather annoyed. "Come along back to your nice cells, and I will lock you all in again, and you can sit there comfortably and think of a better plan—but I don't suppose I shall ever get hold of the keys again, even if I feel inclined to try."

That was too much for them, and they calmed down. In the end, of course, they had to do just what Bilbo suggested, because it was obviously impossible for them to try and find their way into the upper halls, or to fight their way out of gates that closed by magic; and it was no good grumbling in the passages until they were caught again. So following the hobbit, down into the lowest cellars they crept. They passed a door through which the chief guard and the butler could be seen still happily snoring with smiles upon their faces. The wine of Dorwinion brings deep and pleasant dreams. There would be a different expression on the face of the chief guard next day, even though Bilbo, before they went on, stole in and kindheartedly put the keys back on his belt.

"That will save him some of the trouble he is in for," said Mr. Baggins to himself. "He wasn't a bad fellow, and quite decent to the prisoners. It will puzzle them all too. They will think we had a very strong magic to pass through all those locked doors and disappear. Disappear! We have got to get busy very quick, if that is to happen!"

Balin was told off to watch the guard and the butler and give warning if they stirred. The rest went into the adjoining cellar with the trapdoors. There was little time to lose. Before long, as Bilbo knew, some elves were under orders to come down and help the butler get the empty barrels through the doors into the stream. These were in fact already standing in rows in the middle of the floor waiting to be pushed off. Some of them were wine-barrels, and these were not much use, as they could not easily be opened at the end without a deal of noise, nor could they easily be secured again. But among them were several others, which had been used for bringing other stuffs, butter, apples, and all sorts of things, to the king's palace.

They soon found thirteen with room enough for a dwarf in each. In fact some were too roomy, and as they climbed in the dwarves thought anxiously of the shaking and the bumping they would get inside, though Bilbo

did his best to find straw and other stuff to pack them in as cosily as could be managed in a short time. At last twelve dwarves were stowed. Thorin had given a lot of trouble, and turned and twisted in his tub and grumbled like a large dog in a small kennel; while Balin, who came last, made a great fuss about his air-holes and said he was stifling, even before his lid was on. Bilbo had done what he could to close holes in the sides of the barrels, and to fix on all the lids as safely as could be managed, and now he was left alone again, running round putting the finishing touches to the packing, and hoping against hope that his plan would come off.

It had not been done a bit too soon. Only a minute or two after Balin's lid had been fitted on there came the sound of voices and the flicker of lights. A number of elves came laughing and talking into the cellars and singing snatches of song. They had left a merry feast in one of the halls and were bent on returning as soon as they could.

"Where's old Galion, the butler?" said one. "I haven't seen him at the tables tonight. He ought to be here now to show us what is to be done."

"I shall be angry if the old slowcoach is late," said another. "I have no wish to waste time down here while the song is up!"

"Ha, ha!" came a cry. "Here's the old villain with his head on a jug! He's been having a little feast all to himself and his friend the captain."

"Shake him! Wake him!" shouted the others impatiently.

Galion was not at all pleased at being shaken or wakened, and still less at being laughed at. "You're all late," he grumbled. "Here am I waiting and waiting down here, while you fellows drink and make merry and forget your tasks. Small wonder if I fall asleep from weariness!"

"Small wonder," said they, "when the explanation stands close at hand in a jug! Come give us a taste of your sleeping-draught before we fall to! No need to wake the turnkey yonder. He has had his share by the looks of it."

Then they drank once round and became mighty merry all of a sudden. But they did not quite lose their wits. "Save us, Galion!" cried some, "you began your feasting early and muddled your wits! You have stacked some full casks here instead of the empty ones, if there is anything in weight."

"Get on with the work!" growled the butler. "There is nothing in the feeling of weight in an idle toss-pot's arms. These are the ones to go and no others. Do as I say!"

"Very well, very well," they answered rolling the barrels to the opening. "On your head be it, if the king's full buttertubs and his best wine is pushed into the river for the Lake-men to feast on for nothing!"

*Roll—roll—roll—roll,  
roll-roll-rolling down the hole!  
Heave ho! Splash plump!  
Down they go, down they bump!*

So they sang as first one barrel and then another rumbled to the dark opening and was pushed over into the cold water some feet below. Some were barrels really empty, some were tubs neatly packed with a dwarf each; but down they all went, one after another, with many a clash and a bump, thudding on top of ones below, smacking into the water, jostling against the walls of the tunnel, knocking into one another, and bobbing away down the current.

It was just at this moment that Bilbo suddenly discovered the weak point in his plan. Most likely you saw it some time ago and have been laughing at him; but I don't suppose you would have done half as well yourselves in his place. Of course he was not in a barrel himself, nor was there anyone to pack him in, even if there had been a chance! It looked as if he would certainly lose his friends this time (nearly all of them had already disappeared through the dark trapdoor), and get utterly left behind and have to stay lurking as a permanent burglar in the elf-caves for ever. For even if he could have escaped through the upper gates at once, he had precious small chance of ever finding the dwarves again. He did not know the way by land to the place where

the barrels were collected. He wondered what on earth would happen to them without him; for he had not had time to tell the dwarves all that he had learned, or what he had meant to do, once they were out of the wood.

While all these thoughts were passing through his mind, the elves being very merry began to sing a song round the river-door. Some had already gone to haul on the ropes which pulled up the portcullis at the water-gate so as to let out the barrels as soon as they were all afloat below.

*Down the swift dark stream you go  
Back to lands you once did know!  
Leave the halls and caverns deep,  
Leave the northern mountains steep,  
Where the forest wide and dim  
Stoops in shadow grey and grim!  
Float beyond the world of trees  
Out into the whispering breeze,  
Past the rushes, past the reeds,  
Past the marsh's waving weeds,  
Through the mist that riseth white  
Up from mere and pool at night!  
Follow, follow stars that leap  
Up the heavens cold and steep;  
Turn when dawn comes over land,  
Over rapid, over sand,  
South away! and South away!  
Seek the sunlight and the day,  
Back to pasture, back to mead,  
Where the kine and oxen feed!  
Back to gardens on the hills  
Where the berry swells and fills  
Under sunlight, under day!  
South away! and South away!  
Down the swift dark stream you go  
Back to lands you once did know!*

Now the very last barrel was being rolled to the doors! In despair and not knowing what else to do, poor little Bilbo caught hold of it and was pushed over the edge with it. Down into the water he fell, splash! into the cold dark water with the barrel on top of him.

He came up again spluttering and clinging to the wood like a rat, but for all his efforts he could not scramble on top. Every time he tried, the barrel rolled round and ducked him under again. It was really empty, and floated light as a cork. Though his ears were full of water, he could hear the elves still singing in the cellar above. Then suddenly the trapdoors fell to with a boom and their voices faded away. He was in the dark tunnel floating in icy water, all alone—for you cannot count friends that are all packed up in barrels.

Very soon a grey patch came in the darkness ahead. He heard the creak of the water-gate being hauled up, and he found that he was in the midst of a bobbing and bumping mass of casks and tubs all pressing together to pass under the arch and get out into the open stream. He had as much as he could do to prevent himself from being hustled and battered to bits; but at last the jostling crowd began to break up and swing off, one by one, under the stony arch and away. Then he saw that it would have been no good even if he had managed to get astride his barrel, for there was no room to spare, not even for a hobbit, between its top and the suddenly stooping roof where the gate was.

Out they went under the overhanging branches of the trees on either bank. Bilbo wondered what the dwarves were feeling and whether a lot of water was getting into their tubs. Some of those that bobbed along by him in the gloom seemed pretty low in the water, and he guessed that these had dwarves inside.

"I do hope I put the lids on tight enough!" he thought, but before long he was worrying too much about himself to remember the dwarves. He managed to keep his head above the water, but he was shivering with the cold, and he wondered if he would die of it before the luck turned, and how much longer he would be able to hang on, and whether he should risk the chance of letting go and trying to swim to the bank.

The luck turned all right before long: the eddying current carried several barrels close ashore at one point and there for a while they stuck against some hidden root. Then Bilbo took the opportunity of scrambling up the side of his barrel while it was held steady against another. Up he crawled like a drowned rat, and lay on the top spread out to keep the balance as best he could. The breeze was cold but better than the water, and he hoped he would not suddenly roll off again when they started off once more.

Before long the barrels broke free again and turned and twisted off down the stream, and out into the main current. Then he found it quite as difficult to stick on as he had feared; but he managed it somehow, though it was miserably uncomfortable. Luckily he was very light, and the barrel was a good big one and being rather leaky had now shipped a small amount of water. All the same it was like trying to ride, without bridle or stirrups, a round-bellied pony that was always thinking of rolling on the grass.

In this way at last Mr. Baggins came to a place where the trees on either hand grew thinner. He could see the paler sky between them. The dark river opened suddenly wide, and there it was joined to the main water of the Forest River flowing down in haste from the king's great doors. There was a dim sheet of water no longer overshadowed, and on its sliding surface there were dancing and broken reflections of clouds and of stars. Then the hurrying water of the Forest River swept all the company of casks and tubs away to the north bank, in which it had eaten out a wide bay. This had a shingly shore under hanging banks and was walled at the eastern end by a little jutting cape of hard rock. On the shallow shore most of the barrels ran aground, though a few went on to bump against the stony pier.

There were people on the look-out on the banks. They quickly poled and pushed all the barrels together into the shallows, and when they had counted them they roped them together and left them till the morning. Poor dwarves! Bilbo was not badly off now. He slipped from his barrel and waded ashore, and then sneaked along to some huts that he could see near the water's edge. He no longer thought twice about picking up a supper uninvited if he got the chance, he had been obliged to do it for so long, and he knew now only too well what it was to be really hungry, not merely politely interested in the dainties of a well-filled larder. Also he had caught a glimpse of a fire through the trees, and that appealed to him with his dripping and ragged clothes clinging to him cold and clammy.

There is no need to tell you much of his adventures that night, for now we are drawing near the end of the eastward journey and coming to the last and greatest adventure, so we must hurry on. Of course helped by his magic ring he got on very well at first, but he was given away in the end by his wet footsteps and the trail of drippings that he left wherever he went or sat; and also he began to snivel, and wherever he tried to hide he was found out by the terrific explosions of his suppressed sneezes. Very soon there was a fine commotion in the village by the riverside; but Bilbo escaped into the woods carrying a loaf and a leather bottle of wine and a pie that did not belong to him. The rest of the night he had to pass wet as he was and far from a fire, but the bottle helped him to do that, and he actually dozed a little on some dry leaves, even though the year was getting late and the air was chilly.

He woke again with a specially loud sneeze. It was already grey morning, and there was a merry racket down by the river. They were making up a raft of barrels, and the raft-elves would soon be steering it off down the stream to Lake-town. Bilbo sneezed again. He was no longer dripping but he felt cold all over. He scrambled down as fast as his stiff legs would take him and managed just in time to get on to the mass of casks without being noticed in the general bustle. Luckily there was no sun at the time to cast an awkward shadow, and for a mercy he did not sneeze again for a good while.

There was a mighty pushing of poles. The elves that were standing in the shallow water heaved and shoved. The barrels now all lashed together creaked and fretted.

“This is a heavy load!” some grumbled. “They float too deep—some of these are never empty. If they had come ashore in the daylight, we might have had a look inside,” they said.

“No time now!” cried the raftman. “Shove off!”

And off they went at last, slowly at first, until they had passed the point of rock where other elves stood to fend them off with poles, and then quicker and quicker as they caught the main stream and went sailing away down, down towards the Lake.

They had escaped the dungeons of the king and were through the wood, but whether alive or dead still remains to be seen.



## Chapter X: A Warm Welcome

The day grew lighter and warmer as they floated along. After a while the river rounded a steep shoulder of land that came down upon their left. Under its rocky feet like an inland cliff the deepest stream had flowed lapping and bubbling. Suddenly the cliff fell away. The shores sank. The trees ended. Then Bilbo saw a sight:

The lands opened wide about him, filled with the waters of the river which broke up and wandered in a hundred winding courses, or halted in marshes and pools dotted with isles on every side; but still a strong water flowed on steadily through the midst. And far away, its dark head in a torn cloud, there loomed the Mountain! Its nearest neighbours to the North-East and the tumbled land that joined it to them could not be seen. All alone it rose and looked across the marshes to the forest. The Lonely Mountain! Bilbo had come far and through many adventures to see it, and now he did not like the look of it in the least.





As he listened to the talk of the raftmen and pieced together the scraps of information they let fall, he soon realized that he was very fortunate ever to have seen it at all, even from this distance. Dreary as had been his imprisonment and unpleasant as was his position (to say nothing of the poor dwarves underneath him) still, he had been more lucky than he had guessed. The talk was all of the trade that came and went on the waterways and the growth of the traffic on the river, as the roads out of the East towards Mirkwood vanished or fell into disuse; and of the bickerings of the Lake-men and the Wood-elves about the upkeep of the Forest River and the care of the banks. Those lands had changed much since the days when dwarves dwelt in the Mountain, days which most people now remembered only as a very shadowy tradition. They had changed even in recent years, and since the last news that Gandalf had had of them. Great floods and rains had swollen the waters that flowed east; and there had been an earthquake or two (which some were inclined to attribute to the dragon—alluding to him chiefly with a curse and an ominous nod in the direction of the Mountain). The marshes and bogs had



spread wider and wider on either side. Paths had vanished, and many a rider and wanderer too, if they had tried to find the lost ways across. The elf-road through the wood which the dwarves had followed on the advice of Beorn now came to a doubtful and little used end at the eastern edge of the forest; only the river offered any longer a safe way from the skirts of Mirkwood in the North to the mountain-shadowed plains beyond, and the river was guarded by the Wood-elves' king.

So you see Bilbo had come in the end by the only road that was any good. It might have been some comfort to Mr. Baggins shivering on the barrels, if he had known that news of this had reached Gandalf far away and given him great anxiety, and that he was in fact finishing his other business (which does not come into this tale) and getting ready to come in search of Thorin's company. But Bilbo did not know it.

All he knew was that the river seemed to go on and on and on for ever, and he was hungry, and had a nasty cold in the nose, and did not like the way the Mountain seemed to frown at him and threaten him as it drew ever nearer. After a while, however, the river took a more southerly course and the Mountain receded again, and at last, late in the day the shores grew rocky, the river gathered all its wandering waters together into a deep and rapid flood, and they swept along at great speed.

The sun had set when turning with another sweep towards the East the forest-river rushed into the Long Lake. There it had a wide mouth with stony clifflike gates at either side whose feet were piled with shingles. The Long Lake! Bilbo had never imagined that any water that was not the sea could look so big. It was so wide that the opposite shores looked small and far, but it was so long that its northerly end, which pointed towards the Mountain, could not be seen at all. Only from the map did Bilbo know that away up there, where the stars of the Wain were already twinkling, the Running River came down into the lake from Dale and with the Forest River filled with deep waters what must once have been a great deep rocky valley. At the southern end the doubled waters poured out again over high waterfalls and ran away hurriedly to unknown lands. In the still evening air the noise of the falls could be heard like a distant roar.

Not far from the mouth of the Forest River was the strange town he heard the elves speak of in the king's cellars. It was not built on the shore, though there were a few huts and buildings there, but right out on the surface of the lake, protected from the swirl of the entering river by a promontory of rock which formed a calm bay. A great bridge made of wood ran out to where on huge piles made of forest trees was built a busy wooden town, not a town of elves but of Men, who still dared to dwell here under the shadow of the distant dragon-mountain. They still thrive on the trade that came up the great river from the South and was carted past the falls to their town; but in the great days of old, when Dale in the North was rich and prosperous, they had been wealthy and powerful, and there had been fleets of boats on the waters, and some were filled with gold and some with warriors in armour, and there had been wars and deeds which were now only a legend. The rotting piles of a greater town could still be seen along the shores when the waters sank in a drought.

But men remembered little of all that, though some still sang old songs of the dwarf-kings of the Mountain, Thrór and Thráin of the race of Durin, and of the coming of the Dragon, and the fall of the lords of Dale. Some sang too that Thrór and Thráin would come back one day and gold would flow in rivers, through the mountain-gates, and all that land would be filled with new song and new laughter. But this pleasant legend did not much affect their daily business.



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As soon as the raft of barrels came in sight boats rowed out from the piles of the town, and voices hailed the raft-steerers. Then ropes were cast and oars were pulled, and soon the raft was drawn out of the current of the Forest River and towed away round the high shoulder of rock into the little bay of Lake-town. There it was moored not far from the shoreward head of the great bridge. Soon men would come up from the South and take some of the casks away, and others they would fill with goods they had brought to be taken back up the stream to the Wood-elves' home. In the meanwhile the barrels were left afloat while the elves of the raft and the boatmen went to feast in Lake-town.

They would have been surprised, if they could have seen what happened down by the shore, after they had gone and the shades of night had fallen. First of all a barrel was cut loose by Bilbo and pushed to the shore and

opened. Groans came from inside, and out crept a most unhappy dwarf. Wet straw was in his dragged beard; he was so sore and stiff, so bruised and buffeted he could hardly stand or stumble through the shallow water to lie groaning on the shore. He had a famished and a savage look like a dog that has been chained and forgotten in a kennel for a week. It was Thorin, but you could only have told it by his golden chain, and by the colour of his now dirty and tattered sky-blue hood with its tarnished silver tassel. It was some time before he would be even polite to the hobbit.

“Well, are you alive or are you dead?” asked Bilbo quite crossly. Perhaps he had forgotten that he had had at least one good meal more than the dwarves, and also the use of his arms and legs, not to speak of a greater allowance of air. “Are you still in prison, or are you free? If you want food, and if you want to go on with this silly adventure—it’s yours after all and not mine—you had better slap your arms and rub your legs and try and help me get the others out while there is a chance!”

Thorin of course saw the sense of this, so after a few more groans he got up and helped the hobbit as well as he could. In the darkness floundering in the cold water they had a difficult and very nasty job finding which were the right barrels. Knocking outside and calling only discovered about six dwarves that could answer. These were unpacked and helped ashore where they sat or lay muttering and moaning; they were so soaked and bruised and cramped that they could hardly yet realize their release or be properly thankful for it.

Dwalin and Balin were two of the most unhappy, and it was no good asking them to help. Bifur and Bofur were less knocked about and drier, but they lay down and would do nothing. Fili and Kili, however, who were young (for dwarves) and had also been packed more neatly with plenty of straw into smaller casks, came out more or less smiling, with only a bruise or two and a stiffness that soon wore off.

“I hope I never smell the smell of apples again!” said Fili. “My tub was full of it. To smell apples everlastingly when you can scarcely move and are cold and sick with hunger is maddening. I could eat anything in the wide world now, for hours on end—but not an apple!”

With the willing help of Fili and Kili, Thorin and Bilbo at last discovered the remainder of the company and got them out. Poor fat Bombur was asleep or senseless; Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin and Gloin were waterlogged and seemed only half alive; they all had to be carried one by one and laid helpless on the shore.

“Well! Here we are!” said Thorin. “And I suppose we ought to thank our stars and Mr. Baggins. I am sure he has a right to expect it, though I wish he could have arranged a more comfortable journey. Still—all very much at your service once more, Mr. Baggins. No doubt we shall feel properly grateful, when we are fed and recovered. In the meanwhile what next?”

“I suggest Lake-town,” said Bilbo. “What else is there?”

Nothing else could, of course, be suggested; so leaving the others Thorin and Fili and Kili and the hobbit went along the shore to the great bridge. There were guards at the head of it, but they were not keeping very careful watch, for it was so long since there had been any real need. Except for occasional squabbles about river-tolls they were friends with the Wood-elves. Other folk were far away; and some of the younger people in the town openly doubted the existence of any dragon in the mountain, and laughed at the greybeards and gammers who said that they had seen him flying in the sky in their young days. That being so it is not surprising that the guards were drinking and laughing by a fire in their hut, and did not hear the noise of the unpacking of the dwarves or the footsteps of the four scouts. Their astonishment was enormous when Thorin Oakenshield stepped in through the door.

“Who are you and what do you want?” they shouted leaping to their feet and groping for weapons.

“Thorin son of Thrain son of Thror King under the Mountain!” said the dwarf in a loud voice, and he looked it, in spite of his torn clothes and dragged hood. The gold gleamed on his neck and waist; his eyes were dark and deep. “I have come back. I wish to see the Master of your town!”

Then there was tremendous excitement. Some of the more foolish ran out of the hut as if they expected the Mountain to go golden in the night and all the waters of the lake turn yellow right away. The captain of the guard came forward.

“And who are these?” he asked, pointing to Fili and Kili and Bilbo.

“The sons of my father’s daughter,” answered Thorin, “Fili and Kili of the race of Durin, and Mr. Baggins who has travelled with us out of the West.”

“If you come in peace lay down your arms!” said the captain.

“We have none,” said Thorin, and it was true enough: their knives had been taken from them by the wood-elves, and the great sword Orcrist too. Bilbo had his short sword, hidden as usual, but he said nothing about that. “We have no need of weapons, who return at last to our own as spoken of old. Nor could we fight against so many. Take us to your master!”

“He is at feast,” said the captain.

“Then all the more reason for taking us to him,” burst in Fili, who was getting impatient at these solemnities. “We are worn and famished after our long road and we have sick comrades. Now make haste and let us have no more words, or your master may have something to say to you.”

“Follow me then,” said the captain, and with six men about them he led them over the bridge through the gates and into the market-place of the town. This was a wide circle of quiet water surrounded by the tall piles on which were built the greater houses, and by long wooden quays with many steps and ladders going down to the surface of the lake. From one great hall shone many lights and there came the sound of many voices. They passed its doors and stood blinking in the light looking at long tables filled with folk.

“I am Thorin son of Thrain son of Thrór King under the Mountain! I return!” cried Thorin in a loud voice from the door, before the captain could say anything.

All leaped to their feet. The Master of the town sprang from his great chair. But none rose in greater surprise than the raft-men of the elves who were sitting at the lower end of the hall. Pressing forward before the Master’s table they cried:

“These are prisoners of our king that have escaped, wandering vagabond dwarves that could not give any good account of themselves, sneaking through the woods and molesting our people!”

“Is this true?” asked the Master. As a matter of fact he thought it far more likely than the return of the King under the Mountain, if any such person had ever existed.

“It is true that we were wrongfully waylaid by the Elvenking and imprisoned without cause as we journeyed back to our own land,” answered Thorin. “But lock nor bar may hinder the homecoming spoken of old. Nor is this town in the Wood-elves’ realm. I speak to the Master of the town of the Men of the Lake, not to the raft-men of the king.”

Then the Master hesitated and looked from one to the other. The Elvenking was very powerful in those parts and the Master wished for no enmity with him, nor did he think much of old songs, giving his mind to trade and tolls, to cargoes and gold, to which habit he owed his position. Others were of different mind, however, and quickly the matter was settled without him. The news had spread from the doors of the hall like fire through all the town. People were shouting inside the hall and outside it. The quays were thronged with hurrying feet. Some began to sing snatches of old songs concerning the return of the King under the Mountain; that it was Thrór’s grandson not Thrór himself that had come back did not bother them at all. Others took up the song and it rolled loud and high over the lake.

*The King beneath the mountains,  
The King of carven stone,  
The lord of silver fountains  
Shall come into his own!*

*His crown shall be upholden,  
His harp shall be restrung,  
His halls shall echo golden*

*To songs of yore re-sung.*

*The woods shall wave on mountains  
And grass beneath the sun;  
His wealth shall flow in fountains  
And the rivers golden run.*

*The streams shall run in gladness,  
The lakes shall shine and burn,  
All sorrow fail and sadness  
At the Mountain-king's return!*

So they sang, or very like that, only there was a great deal more of it, and there was much shouting as well as the music of harps and of fiddles mixed up with it. Indeed such excitement had not been known in the town in the memory of the oldest grandfather. The Wood-elves themselves began to wonder greatly and even to be afraid. They did not know of course how Thorin had escaped, and they began to think their king might have made a serious mistake. As for the Master he saw there was nothing else for it but to obey the general clamour, for the moment at any rate, and to pretend to believe that Thorin was what he said. So he gave up to him his own great chair and set Fili and Kili beside him in places of honour. Even Bilbo was given a seat at the high table, and no explanation of where he came in—no songs had alluded to him even in the obscurest way—was asked for in the general bustle.

Soon afterwards the other dwarves were brought into the town amid scenes of astonishing enthusiasm. They were all doctored and fed and housed and pampered in the most delightful and satisfactory fashion. A large house was given up to Thorin and his company; boats and rowers were put at their service; and crowds sat outside and sang songs all day, or cheered if any dwarf showed so much as his nose.

Some of the songs were old ones; but some of them were quite new and spoke confidently of the sudden death of the dragon and of cargoes of rich presents coming down the river to Lake-town. These were inspired largely by the Master and they did not particularly please the dwarves, but in the meantime they were well contented and they quickly grew fat and strong again. Indeed within a week they were quite recovered, fitted out in fine cloth of their proper colours, with beards combed and trimmed, and proud steps. Thorin looked and walked as if his kingdom was already regained and Smaug chopped up into little pieces.

Then, as he had said, the dwarves' good feeling towards the little hobbit grew stronger every day. There were no more groans or grumbles. They drank his health, and they patted him on the back, and they made a great fuss of him; which was just as well, for he was not feeling particularly cheerful. He had not forgotten the look of the Mountain, nor the thought of the dragon, and he had besides a shocking cold. For three days he sneezed and coughed, and he could not go out, and even after that his speeches at banquets were limited to "Thag you very buch."

In the meanwhile the Wood-elves had gone back up the Forest River with their cargoes, and there was great excitement in the king's palace. I have never heard what happened to the chief of the guards and the butler. Nothing of course was ever said about keys or barrels while the dwarves stayed in Lake-town, and Bilbo was careful never to become invisible. Still, I daresay, more was guessed than was known, though doubtless Mr. Baggins remained a bit of a mystery. In any case the king knew now the dwarves' errand, or thought he did, and he said to himself:

"Very well! We'll see! No treasure will come back through Mirkwood without my having something to say in the matter. But I expect they will all come to a bad end, and serve them right!" He at any rate did not believe in dwarves fighting and killing dragons like Smaug, and he strongly suspected attempted burglary or something like it—which shows he was a wise elf and wiser than the men of the town, though not quite right, as we shall see in the end. He sent out his spies about the shores of the lake and as far northward towards the Mountain as they would go, and waited.

At the end of a fortnight Thorin began to think of departure. While the enthusiasm still lasted in the town was the time to get help. It would not do to let everything cool down with delay. So he spoke to the Master and his councillors and said that soon he and his company must go on towards the Mountain.

Then for the first time the Master was surprised and a little frightened; and he wondered if Thorin was after all really a descendant of the old kings. He had never thought that the dwarves would actually dare to approach Smaug, but believed they were frauds who would sooner or later be discovered and be turned out. He was wrong. Thorin, of course, was really the grandson of the King under the Mountain, and there is no knowing what a dwarf will not dare and do for revenge or the recovery of his own.

But the Master was not sorry at all to let them go. They were expensive to keep, and their arrival had turned things into a long holiday in which business was at a standstill. "Let them go and bother Smaug, and see how he welcomes them!" he thought. "Certainly, O Thorin Thrain's son Thrór's son!" was what he said. "You must claim your own. The hour is at hand, spoken of old. What help we can offer shall be yours, and we trust to your gratitude when your kingdom is regained."

So one day, although autumn was now getting far on, and winds were cold, and leaves were falling fast, three large boats left Lake-town, laden with rowers, dwarves, Mr. Baggins, and many provisions. Horses and ponies had been sent round by circuitous paths to meet them at their appointed landing-place. The Master and his councillors bade them farewell from the great steps of the town-hall that went down to the lake. People sang on the quays and out of windows. The white oars dipped and splashed, and off they went north up the lake on the last stage of their long journey. The only person thoroughly unhappy was Bilbo.



## Chapter XI: On The Doorstep

In two days going they rowed right up the Long Lake and passed out into the River Running, and now they could all see the Lonely Mountain towering grim and tall before them. The stream was strong and their going slow. At the end of the third day, some miles up the river, they drew in to the left or western bank and disembarked. Here they were joined by the horses with other provisions and necessities and the ponies for their own use that had been sent to meet them. They packed what they could on the ponies and the rest was made into a store under a tent, but none of the men of the town would stay with them even for the night so near the shadow of the Mountain.

“Not at any rate until the songs have come true!” said they. It was easier to believe in the Dragon and less easy to believe in Thorin in these wild parts. Indeed their stores had no need of any guard, for all the land was desolate and empty. So their escort left them, making off swiftly down the river and the shoreward paths, although the night was already drawing on.

They spent a cold and lonely night and their spirits fell. The next day they set out again. Balin and Bilbo rode behind, each leading another pony heavily laden beside him; the others were some way ahead picking out a slow road, for there were no paths. They made north-west, slanting away from the River Running, and drawing ever nearer and nearer to a great spur of the Mountain that was flung out southwards towards them.

It was a weary journey, and a quiet and stealthy one. There was no laughter or song or sound of harps, and the pride and hopes which had stirred in their hearts at the singing of old songs by the lake died away to a plodding gloom. They knew that they were drawing near to the end of their journey, and that it might be a very horrible end. The land about them grew bleak and barren, though once, as Thorin told them, it had been green and fair. There was little grass, and before long there was neither bush nor tree, and only broken and blackened stumps to speak of ones long vanished. They were come to the Desolation of the Dragon, and they were come at the waning of the year.

They reached the skirts of the Mountain all the same without meeting any danger or any sign of the Dragon other than the wilderness he had made about his lair. The Mountain lay dark and silent before them and ever higher above them. They made their first camp on the western side of the great southern spur, which ended in a height called Ravenhill. On this there had been an old watch-post; but they dared not climb it yet, it was too exposed.

Before setting out to search the western spurs of the Mountain for the hidden door, on which all their hopes rested, Thorin sent out a scouting expedition to spy out the land to the South where the Front Gate stood. For this purpose he chose Balin and Fili and Kili, and with them went Bilbo. They marched under the grey and silent cliffs to the feet of Ravenhill. There the river, after winding a wide loop over the valley of Dale, turned from the Mountain on its road to the Lake, flowing swift and noisily. Its bank was bare and rocky, tall and steep above the stream; and gazing out from it over the narrow water, foaming and splashing among many boulders, they could see in the wide valley shadowed by the Mountain’s arms the grey ruins of ancient houses, towers, and walls.

“There lies all that is left of Dale,” said Balin. “The mountain’s sides were green with woods and all the sheltered valley rich and pleasant in the days when the bells rang in that town.” He looked both sad and grim as he said this: he had been one of Thorin’s companions on the day the Dragon came.

They did not dare to follow the river much further towards the Gate; but they went on beyond the end of the southern spur, until lying hidden behind a rock they could look out and see the dark cavernous opening in a great cliff-wall between the arms of the Mountain. Out of it the waters of the Running River sprang; and out of

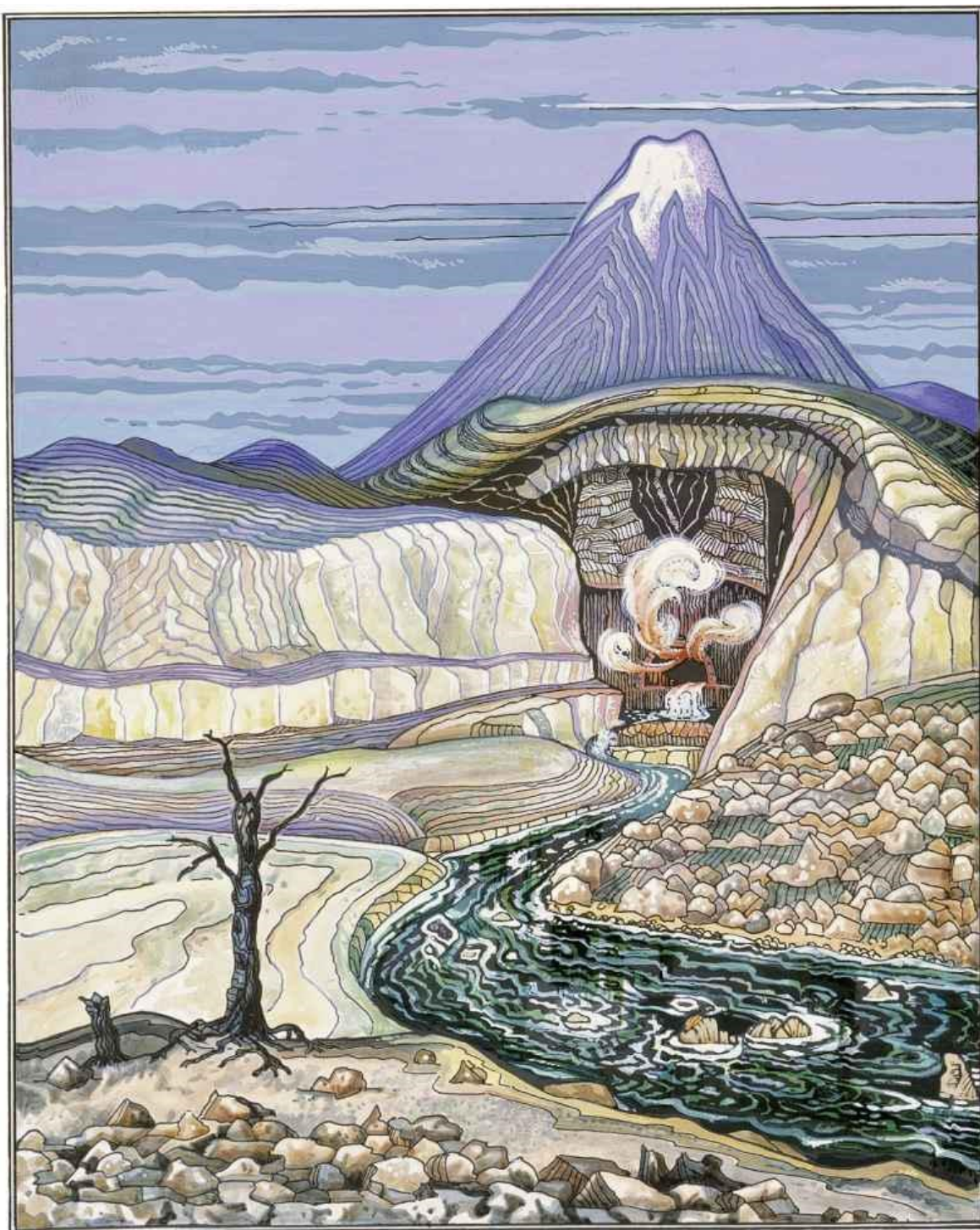


it too there came a steam and a dark smoke. Nothing moved in the waste, save the vapour and the water, and every now and again a black and ominous crow. The only sound was the sound of the stony water, and every now and again the harsh croak of a bird. Balin shuddered.

“Let us return!” he said. “We can do no good here! And I don’t like these dark birds, they look like spies of evil.”

“The dragon is still alive and in the halls under the Mountain then—or I imagine so from the smoke,” said the hobbit.

“That does not prove it,” said Balin, “though I don’t doubt you are right. But he might be gone away some time, or he might be lying out on the mountain-side keeping watch, and still I expect smokes and steams would come out of the gates: all the halls within must be filled with his foul reek.”



. The Front Gate .



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With such gloomy thoughts, followed ever by croaking crows above them, they made their weary way back to the camp. Only in June they had been guests in the fair house of Elrond, and though autumn was now crawling towards winter that pleasant time now seemed years ago. They were alone in the perilous waste without hope of further help. They were at the end of their journey, but as far as ever, it seemed, from the end of their quest. None of them had much spirit left.

Now strange to say Mr. Baggins had more than the others. He would often borrow Thorin's map and gaze at it, pondering over the runes and the message of the moon-letters Elrond had read. It was he that made the dwarves begin the dangerous search on the western slopes for the secret door. They moved their camp then to a long valley, narrower than the great dale in the South where the Gates of the river stood, and walled with lower spurs of the Mountain. Two of these here thrust forward west from the main mass in long steep-sided ridges that fell ever downwards towards the plain. On this western side there were fewer signs of the dragon's marauding feet, and there was some grass for their ponies. From this western camp, shadowed all day by cliff and wall until the sun began to sink towards the forest, day by day they toiled in parties searching for paths up the mountain-side. If the map was true, somewhere high above the cliff at the valley's head must stand the secret door. Day by day they came back to their camp without success.

But at last unexpectedly they found what they were seeking. Fili and Kili and the hobbit went back one day down the valley and scrambled among the tumbled rocks at its southern corner. About midday, creeping behind a great stone that stood alone like a pillar, Bilbo came on what looked like rough steps going upwards. Following these excitedly he and the dwarves found traces of a narrow track, often lost, often rediscovered, that wandered on to the top of the southern ridge and brought them at last to a still narrower ledge, which turned north across the face of the Mountain. Looking down they saw that they were at the top of the cliff at the valley's head and were gazing down on to their own camp below. Silently, clinging to the rocky wall on their right, they went in single file along the ledge, till the wall opened and they turned into a little steep-walled bay, grassy-floored, still and quiet. Its entrance which they had found could not be seen from below because of the overhang of the cliff, nor from further off because it was so small that it looked like a dark crack and no more. It was not a cave and was open to the sky above; but at its inner end a flat wall rose up that in the lower part, close to the ground, was as smooth and upright as masons' work, but without a joint or crevice to be seen. No sign was there of post or lintel or threshold, nor any sign of bar or bolt or key-hole; yet they did not doubt that they had found the door at last.

They beat on it, they thrust and pushed at it, they implored it to move, they spoke fragments of broken spells of opening, and nothing stirred. At last tired out they rested on the grass at its feet, and then at evening began their long climb down.

There was excitement in the camp that night. In the morning they prepared to move once more. Only Bofur and Bombur were left behind to guard the ponies and such stores as they had brought with them from the river. The others went down the valley and up the newly found path, and so to the narrow ledge. Along this they could carry no bundles or packs, so narrow and breathless was it, with a fall of a hundred and fifty feet beside them on to sharp rocks below; but each of them took a good coil of rope wound tight about his waist, and so at last without mishap they reached the little grassy bay.

There they made their third camp, hauling up what they needed from below with their ropes. Down the same way they were able occasionally to lower one of the more active dwarves, such as Kili, to exchange such news as there was, or to take a share in the guard below, while Bofur was hauled up to the higher camp. Bombur would not come up either the rope or the path.

"I am too fat for such fly-walks," he said. "I should turn dizzy and tread on my beard, and then you would be thirteen again. And the knotted ropes are too slender for my weight." Luckily for him that was not true, as you will see.

In the meanwhile some of them explored the ledge beyond the opening and found a path that led higher and higher on to the mountain; but they did not dare to venture very far that way, nor was there much use in it. Out up there a silence reigned, broken by no bird or sound except that of the wind in the crannies of stone. They

spoke low and never called or sang, for danger brooded in every rock. The others who were busy with the secret of the door had no more success. They were too eager to trouble about the runes or the moon-letters, but tried without resting to discover where exactly in the smooth face of the rock the door was hidden. They had brought picks and tools of many sorts from Lake-town, and at first they tried to use these. But when they struck the stone the handles splintered and jarred their arms cruelly, and the steel heads broke or bent like lead. Mining work, they saw clearly, was no good against the magic that had shut this door; and they grew terrified, too, of the echoing noise.

Bilbo found sitting on the doorstep lonesome and wearisome—there was not a doorstep, of course, really, but they used to call the little grassy space between the wall and the opening the “doorstep” in fun, remembering Bilbo’s words long ago at the unexpected party in his hobbit-hole, when he said they could sit on the doorstep till they thought of something. And sit and think they did, or wandered aimlessly about, and glummer and glummer they became.

Their spirits had risen a little at the discovery of the path, but now they sank into their boots; and yet they would not give it up and go away. The hobbit was no longer much brighter than the dwarves. He would do nothing but sit with his back to the rock-face and stare away west through the opening, over the cliff, over the wide lands to the black wall of Mirkwood, and to the distances beyond, in which he sometimes thought he could catch glimpses of the Misty Mountains small and far. If the dwarves asked him what he was doing he answered:

“You said sitting on the doorstep and thinking would be my job, not to mention getting inside, so I am sitting and thinking.” But I am afraid he was not thinking much of the job, but of what lay beyond the blue distance, the quiet Western Land and the Hill and his hobbit-hole under it.

A large grey stone lay in the centre of the grass and he stared moodily at it or watched the great snails. They seemed to love the little shut-in bay with its walls of cool rock, and there were many of them of huge size crawling slowly and stickily along its sides.

“Tomorrow begins the last week of autumn,” said Thorin one day.

“And winter comes after autumn,” said Bifur.

“And next year after that,” said Dwalin, “and our beards will grow till they hang down the cliff to the valley before anything happens here. What is our burglar doing for us? Since he has got an invisible ring, and ought to be a specially excellent performer now, I am beginning to think he might go through the Front Gate and spy things out a bit!”

Bilbo heard this—the dwarves were on the rocks just above the enclosure where he was sitting—and “Good Gracious!” he thought, “so that is what they are beginning to think, is it? It is always poor me that has to get them out of their difficulties, at least since the wizard left. Whatever am I going to do? I might have known that something dreadful would happen to me in the end. I don’t think I could bear to see the unhappy valley of Dale again, and as for that steaming gate!!!”

That night he was very miserable and hardly slept. Next day the dwarves all went wandering off in various directions; some were exercising the ponies down below, some were roving about the mountain-side. All day Bilbo sat gloomily in the grassy bay gazing at the stone, or out west through the narrow opening. He had a queer feeling that he was waiting for something. “Perhaps the wizard will suddenly come back today,” he thought.

If he lifted his head he could see a glimpse of the distant forest. As the sun turned west there was a gleam of yellow upon its far roof, as if the light caught the last pale leaves. Soon he saw the orange ball of the sun sinking towards the level of his eyes. He went to the opening and there pale and faint was a thin new moon above the rim of Earth.

At that very moment he heard a sharp crack behind him. There on the grey stone in the grass was an enormous thrush, nearly coal black, its pale yellow breast freckled with dark spots. Crack! It had caught a snail and was knocking it on the stone. Crack! Crack!

Suddenly Bilbo understood. Forgetting all danger he stood on the ledge and hailed the dwarves, shouting and waving. Those that were nearest came tumbling over the rocks and as fast as they could along the ledge to him, wondering what on earth was the matter; the others shouted to be hauled up the ropes (except Bombur, of course: he was asleep).

Quickly Bilbo explained. They all fell silent: the hobbit standing by the grey stone, and the dwarves with wagging beards watching impatiently. The sun sank lower and lower, and their hopes fell. It sank into a belt of reddened cloud and disappeared. The dwarves groaned, but still Bilbo stood almost without moving. The little moon was dipping to the horizon. Evening was coming on. Then suddenly when their hope was lowest a red ray of the sun escaped like a finger through a rent in the cloud. A gleam of light came straight through the opening into the bay and fell on the smooth rock-face. The old thrush, who had been watching from a high perch with beady eyes and head cocked on one side, gave a sudden trill. There was a loud crack. A flake of rock split from the wall and fell. A hole appeared suddenly about three feet from the ground.

Quickly, trembling lest the chance should fade, the dwarves rushed to the rock and pushed—in vain.

“The key! The key!” cried Bilbo. “Where is Thorin?”

Thorin hurried up.

“The key!” shouted Bilbo. “The key that went with the map! Try it now while there is still time!”

Then Thorin stepped up and drew the key on its chain from round his neck. He put it to the hole. It fitted and it turned! Snap! The gleam went out, the sun sank, the moon was gone, and evening sprang into the sky.

Now they all pushed together, and slowly a part of the rock-wall gave way. Long straight cracks appeared and widened. A door five feet high and three broad was outlined, and slowly without a sound swung inwards. It seemed as if darkness flowed out like a vapour from the hole in the mountain-side, and deep darkness in which nothing could be seen lay before their eyes, a yawning mouth leading in and down.



## Chapter XII: Inside Information

**F**or a long time the dwarves stood in the dark before the door and debated, until at last Thorin spoke:

“Now is the time for our esteemed Mr. Baggins, who has proved himself a good companion on our long road, and a hobbit full of courage and resource far exceeding his size, and if I may say so possessed of good luck far exceeding the usual allowance—now is the time for him to perform the service for which he was included in our Company; now is the time for him to earn his Reward.”

You are familiar with Thorin’s style on important occasions, so I will not give you any more of it, though he went on a good deal longer than this. It certainly was an important occasion, but Bilbo felt impatient. By now he was quite familiar with Thorin too, and he knew what he was driving at.

“If you mean you think it is my job to go into the secret passage first, O Thorin Thrain’s son Oakenshield, may your beard grow ever longer,” he said crossly, “say so at once and have done! I might refuse. I have got you out of two messes already, which were hardly in the original bargain, so that I am, I think, already owed some reward. But ‘third time pays for all’ as my father used to say, and somehow I don’t think I shall refuse. Perhaps I have begun to trust my luck more than I used to in the old days”—he meant last spring before he left his own house, but it seemed centuries ago—“but anyway I think I will go and have a peep at once and get it over. Now who is coming with me?”

He did not expect a chorus of volunteers, so he was not disappointed. Fili and Kili looked uncomfortable and stood on one leg, but the others made no pretence of offering—except old Balin, the look-out man, who was rather fond of the hobbit. He said he would come inside at least and perhaps a bit of the way too, ready to call for help if necessary.

The most that can be said for the dwarves is this: they intended to pay Bilbo really handsomely for his services; they had brought him to do a nasty job for them, and they did not mind the poor little fellow doing it if he would; but they would all have done their best to get him out of trouble, if he got into it, as they did in the case of the trolls at the beginning of their adventures before they had any particular reasons for being grateful to him. There it is: dwarves are not heroes, but calculating folk with a great idea of the value of money; some are tricky and treacherous and pretty bad lots; some are not, but are decent enough people like Thorin and Company, if you don’t expect too much.

The stars were coming out behind him in a pale sky barred with black when the hobbit crept through the enchanted door and stole into the Mountain. It was far easier going than he expected. This was no goblin entrance, or rough wood-elves’ cave. It was a passage made by dwarves, at the height of their wealth and skill: straight as a ruler, smooth-floored and smooth-sided, going with a gentle never-varying slope direct—to some distant end in the blackness below.

After a while Balin bade Bilbo “Good luck!” and stopped where he could still see the faint outline of the door, and by a trick of the echoes of the tunnel hear the rustle of the whispering voices of the others just outside. Then the hobbit slipped on his ring, and warned by the echoes to take more than hobbit’s care to make no sound, he crept noiselessly down, down, down into the dark. He was trembling with fear, but his little face was set and grim. Already he was a very different hobbit from the one that had run out without a pocket-handkerchief from Bag-End long ago. He had not had a pocket-handkerchief for ages. He loosened his dagger in its sheath, tightened his belt, and went on.

“Now you are in for it at last, Bilbo Baggins,” he said to himself. “You went and put your foot right in it that night of the party, and now you have got to pull it out and pay for it! Dear me, what a fool I was and am!” said

the least Tookish part of him. "I have absolutely no use for dragon-guarded treasures, and the whole lot could stay here for ever, if only I could wake up and find this beastly tunnel was my own front-hall at home!"

He did not wake up of course, but went still on and on, till all sign of the door behind had faded away. He was altogether alone. Soon he thought it was beginning to feel warm. "Is that a kind of a glow I seem to see coming right ahead down there?" he thought.

It was. As he went forward it grew and grew, till there was no doubt about it. It was a red light steadily getting redder and redder. Also it was now undoubtedly hot in the tunnel. Wisps of vapour floated up and past him and he began to sweat. A sound, too, began to throb in his ears, a sort of bubbling like the noise of a large pot galloping on the fire, mixed with a rumble as of a gigantic tom-cat purring. This grew to the unmistakable gurgling noise of some vast animal snoring in its sleep down there in the red glow in front of him.

It was at this point that Bilbo stopped. Going on from there was the bravest thing he ever did. The tremendous things that happened afterwards were as nothing compared to it. He fought the real battle in the tunnel alone, before he ever saw the vast danger that lay in wait. At any rate after a short halt go on he did; and you can picture him coming to the end of the tunnel, an opening of much the same size and shape as the door above. Through it peeps the hobbit's little head. Before him lies the great bottommost cellar or dungeon-hall of the ancient dwarves right at the Mountain's root. It is almost dark so that its vastness can only be dimly guessed, but rising from the near side of the rocky floor there is a great glow. The glow of Smaug!

There he lay, a vast red-golden dragon, fast asleep; a thrumming came from his jaws and nostrils, and wisps of smoke, but his fires were low in slumber. Beneath him, under all his limbs and his huge coiled tail, and about him on all sides stretching away across the unseen floors, lay countless piles of precious things, gold wrought and unwrought, gems and jewels, and silver red-stained in the ruddy light.

Smaug lay, with wings folded like an immeasurable bat, turned partly on one side, so that the hobbit could see his underparts and his long pale belly crusted with gems and fragments of gold from his long lying on his costly bed. Behind him where the walls were nearest could dimly be seen coats of mail, helms and axes, swords and spears hanging; and there in rows stood great jars and vessels filled with a wealth that could not be guessed.

To say that Bilbo's breath was taken away is no description at all. There are no words left to express his staggerment, since Men changed the language that they learned of elves in the days when all the world was wonderful. Bilbo had heard tell and sing of dragon-hoards before, but the splendour, the lust, the glory of such treasure had never yet come home to him. His heart was filled and pierced with enchantment and with the desire of dwarves; and he gazed motionless, almost forgetting the frightful guardian, at the gold beyond price and count.

He gazed for what seemed an age, before drawn almost against his will, he stole from the shadow of the doorway, across the floor to the nearest edge of the mounds of treasure. Above him the sleeping dragon lay, a dire menace even in his sleep. He grasped a great two-handled cup, as heavy as he could carry, and cast one fearful eye upwards. Smaug stirred a wing, opened a claw, the rumble of his snoring changed its note.

Then Bilbo fled. But the dragon did not wake—not yet—but shifted into other dreams of greed and violence, lying there in his stolen hall while the little hobbit toiled back up the long tunnel. His heart was beating and a more fevered shaking was in his legs than when he was going down, but still he clutched the cup, and his chief thought was: "I've done it! This will show them. 'More like a grocer than a burglar' indeed! Well, we'll hear no more of that."

Nor did he. Balin was overjoyed to see the hobbit again, and as delighted as he was surprised. He picked Bilbo up and carried him out into the open air. It was midnight and clouds had covered the stars, but Bilbo lay with his eyes shut, gasping and taking pleasure in the feel of the fresh air again, and hardly noticing the excitement of the dwarves, or how they praised him and patted him on the back and put themselves and all their families for generations to come at his service.

The dwarves were still passing the cup from hand to hand and talking delightedly of the recovery of their treasure, when suddenly a vast rumbling woke in the mountain underneath as if it was an old volcano that had made up its mind to start eruptions once again. The door behind them was pulled nearly to, and blocked from

closing with a stone, but up the long tunnel came the dreadful echoes, from far down in the depths, of a bellowing and a trampling that made the ground beneath them tremble.

Then the dwarves forgot their joy and their confident boasts of a moment before and cowered down in fright. Smaug was still to be reckoned with. It does not do to leave a live dragon out of your calculations, if you live near him. Dragons may not have much real use for all their wealth, but they know it to an ounce as a rule, especially after long possession; and Smaug was no exception. He had passed from an uneasy dream (in which a warrior, altogether insignificant in size but provided with a bitter sword and great courage, figured most unpleasantly) to a doze, and from a doze to wide waking. There was a breath of strange air in his cave. Could there be a draught from that little hole? He had never felt quite happy about it, though it was so small, and now he glared at it in suspicion and wondered why he had never blocked it up. Of late he had half fancied he had caught the dim echoes of a knocking sound from far above that came down through it to his lair. He stirred and stretched forth his neck to sniff. Then he missed the cup!

Thieves! Fire! Murder! Such a thing had not happened since first he came to the Mountain! His rage passes description—the sort of rage that is only seen when rich folk that have more than they can enjoy suddenly lose something that they have long had but have never before used or wanted. His fire belched forth, the hall smoked, he shook the mountain-roots. He thrust his head in vain at the little hole, and then coiling his length together, roaring like thunder underground, he sped from his deep lair through its great door, out into the huge passages of the mountain-palace and up towards the Front Gate.

To hunt the whole mountain till he had caught the thief and had torn and trampled him was his one thought. He issued from the Gate, the waters rose in fierce whistling steam, and up he soared blazing into the air and settled on the mountain-top in a spout of green and scarlet flame. The dwarves heard the awful rumour of his flight, and they crouched against the walls of the grassy terrace cringing under boulders, hoping somehow to escape the frightful eyes of the hunting dragon.

There they would have all been killed, if it had not been for Bilbo once again. “Quick! Quick!” he gasped. “The door! The tunnel! It’s no good here.”

Roused by these words they were just about to creep inside the tunnel when Bifur gave a cry: “My cousins! Bombur and Bofur—we have forgotten them, they are down in the valley!”

“They will be slain, and all our ponies too, and all our stores lost,” moaned the others. “We can do nothing.”

“Nonsense!” said Thorin, recovering his dignity. “We cannot leave them. Get inside Mr. Baggins and Balin, and you two Fili and Kili—the dragon shan’t have all of us. Now you others, where are the ropes? Be quick!”

Those were perhaps the worst moments they had been through yet. The horrible sounds of Smaug’s anger were echoing in the stony hollows far above; at any moment he might come blazing down or fly whirling round and find them there, near the perilous cliff’s edge hauling madly on the ropes. Up came Bofur, and still all was safe. Up came Bombur, puffing and blowing while the ropes creaked, and still all was safe. Up came some tools and bundles of stores, and then danger was upon them.

A whirring noise was heard. A red light touched the points of standing rocks. The dragon came.

They had barely time to fly back to the tunnel, pulling and dragging in their bundles, when Smaug came hurtling from the North, licking the mountain-sides with flame, beating his great wings with a noise like a roaring wind. His hot breath shrivelled the grass before the door, and drove in through the crack they had left and scorched them as they lay hid. Flickering fires leaped up and black rock-shadows danced. Then darkness fell as he passed again. The ponies screamed with terror, burst their ropes and galloped wildly off. The dragon swooped and turned to pursue them, and was gone.

“That’ll be the end of our poor beasts!” said Thorin. “Nothing can escape Smaug once he sees it. Here we are and here we shall have to stay, unless anyone fancies tramping the long open miles back to the river with Smaug on the watch!”

It was not a pleasant thought! They crept further down the tunnel, and there they lay and shivered though it was warm and stuffy, until dawn came pale through the crack of the door. Every now and again through the night

they could hear the roar of the flying dragon grow and then pass and fade, as he hunted round and round the mountain-sides.

He guessed from the ponies, and from the traces of the camps he had discovered, that men had come up from the river and the lake and had scaled the mountain-side from the valley where the ponies had been standing; but the door withstood his searching eye, and the little high-walled bay had kept out his fiercest flames. Long he had hunted in vain till the dawn chilled his wrath and he went back to his golden couch to sleep—and to gather new strength. He would not forget or forgive the theft, not if a thousand years turned him to smouldering stone, but he could afford to wait. Slow and silent he crept back to his lair and half closed his eyes.

When morning came the terror of the dwarves grew less. They realized that dangers of this kind were inevitable in dealing with such a guardian, and that it was no good giving up their quest yet. Nor could they get away just now, as Thorin had pointed out. Their ponies were lost or killed, and they would have to wait some time before Smaug relaxed his watch sufficiently for them to dare the long way on foot. Luckily they had saved enough of their stores to last them still for some time.

They debated long on what was to be done, but they could think of no way of getting rid of Smaug—which had always been a weak point in their plans, as Bilbo felt inclined to point out. Then as is the nature of folk that are thoroughly perplexed, they began to grumble at the hobbit, blaming him for what had at first so pleased them: for bringing away a cup and stirring up Smaug's wrath so soon.

"What else do you suppose a burglar is to do?" asked Bilbo angrily. "I was not engaged to kill dragons, that is warrior's work, but to steal treasure. I made the best beginning I could. Did you expect me to trot back with the whole hoard of Thrór on my back? If there is any grumbling to be done, I think I might have a say. You ought to have brought five hundred burglars not one. I am sure it reflects great credit on your grandfather, but you cannot pretend that you ever made the vast extent of his wealth clear to me. I should want hundreds of years to bring it all up, if I was fifty times as big, and Smaug as tame as a rabbit."

After that of course the dwarves begged his pardon. "What then do you propose we should do, Mr. Baggins?" asked Thorin politely.

"I have no idea at the moment—if you mean about removing the treasure. That obviously depends entirely on some new turn of luck and the getting rid of Smaug. Getting rid of dragons is not at all in my line, but I will do my best to think about it. Personally I have no hopes at all, and wish I was safe back at home."

"Never mind that for the moment! What are we to do now, to-day?"

"Well, if you really want my advice, I should say we can do nothing but stay where we are. By day we can no doubt creep out safely enough to take the air. Perhaps before long one or two could be chosen to go back to the store by the river and replenish our supplies. But in the meanwhile everyone ought to be well inside the tunnel by night.

"Now I will make you an offer. I have got my ring and will creep down this very noon—then if ever Smaug ought to be napping—and see what he is up to. Perhaps something will turn up. 'Every worm has his weak spot,' as my father used to say, though I am sure it was not from personal experience."

Naturally the dwarves accepted the offer eagerly. Already they had come to respect little Bilbo. Now he had become the real leader in their adventure. He had begun to have ideas and plans of his own. When midday came he got ready for another journey down into the Mountain. He did not like it of course, but it was not so bad now he knew, more or less, what was in front of him. Had he known more about dragons and their wily ways, he might have been more frightened and less hopeful of catching this one napping.

The sun was shining when he started, but it was as dark as night in the tunnel. The light from the door, almost closed, soon faded as he went down. So silent was his going that smoke on a gentle wind could hardly have surpassed it, and he was inclined to feel a bit proud of himself as he drew near the lower door. There was only the very faintest glow to be seen.

“Old Smaug is weary and asleep,” he thought. “He can’t see me and he won’t hear me. Cheer up Bilbo!” He had forgotten or had never heard about dragons’ sense of smell. It is also an awkward fact that they can keep half an eye open watching while they sleep, if they are suspicious.

Smaug certainly looked fast asleep, almost dead and dark, with scarcely a snore more than a whiff of unseen steam, when Bilbo peeped once more from the entrance. He was just about to step out on to the floor when he caught a sudden thin and piercing ray of red from under the drooping lid of Smaug’s left eye. He was only pretending to sleep! He was watching the tunnel entrance! Hurriedly Bilbo stepped back and blessed the luck of his ring. Then Smaug spoke.

“Well, thief! I smell you and I feel your air. I hear your breath. Come along! Help yourself again, there is plenty and to spare!”

But Bilbo was not quite so unlearned in dragon-lore as all that, and if Smaug hoped to get him to come nearer so easily he was disappointed. “No thank you, O Smaug the Tremendous!” he replied. “I did not come for presents. I only wished to have a look at you and see if you were truly as great as tales say. I did not believe them.”

“Do you now?” said the dragon somewhat flattered, even though he did not believe a word of it.

“Truly songs and tales fall utterly short of the reality, O Smaug the Chiefest and Greatest of Calamities,” replied Bilbo.

“You have nice manners for a thief and a liar,” said the dragon. “You seem familiar with my name, but I don’t seem to remember smelling you before. Who are you and where do you come from, may I ask?”

“You may indeed! I come from under the hill, and under the hills and over the hills my paths led. And through the air. I am he that walks unseen.”

“So I can well believe,” said Smaug, “but that is hardly your usual name.”

“I am the clue-finder, the web-cutter, the stinging fly. I was chosen for the lucky number.”

“Lovely titles!” sneered the dragon. “But lucky numbers don’t always come off.”

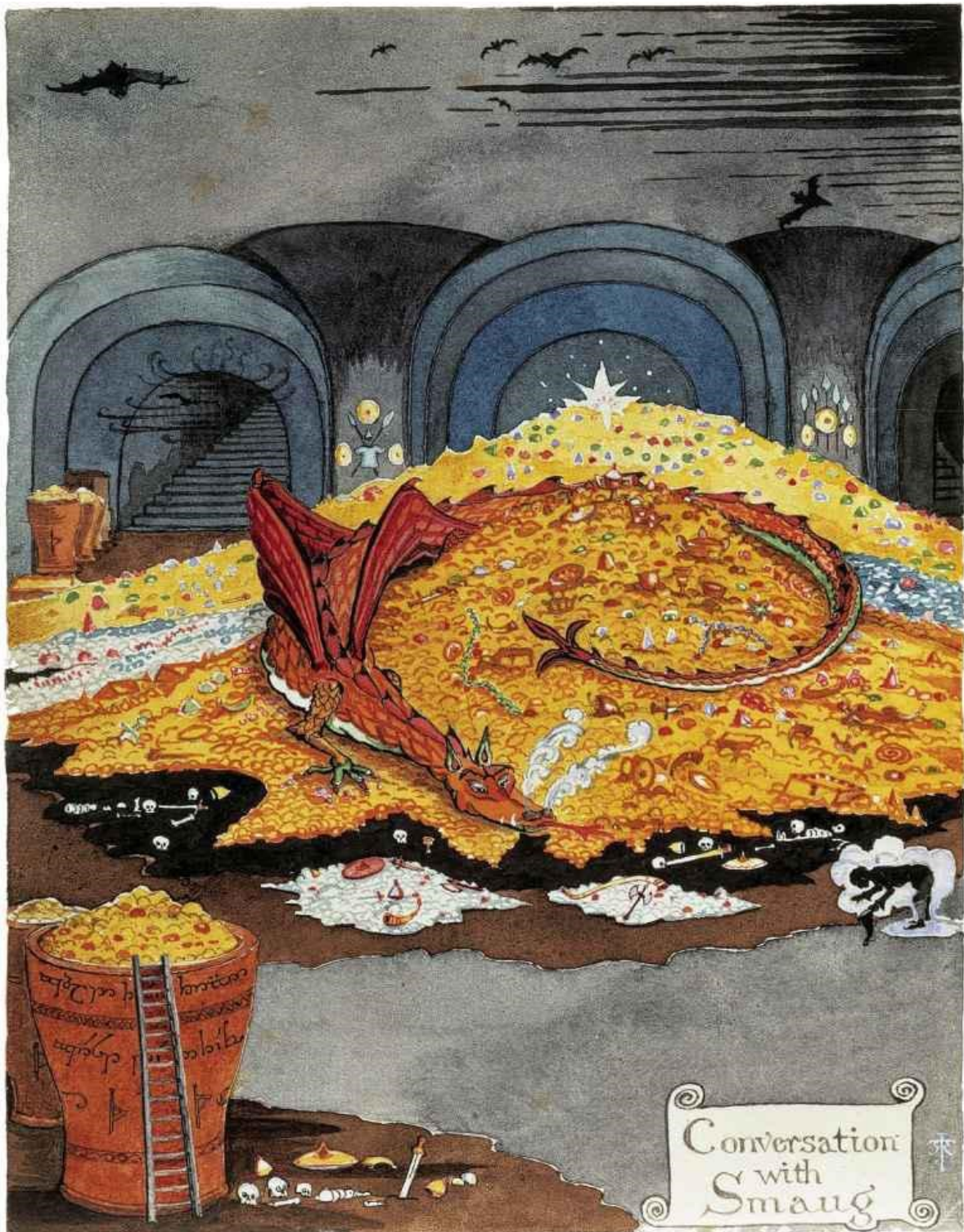
“I am he that buries his friends alive and drowns them and draws them alive again from the water. I came from the end of a bag, but no bag went over me.”

“These don’t sound so creditable,” scoffed Smaug.

“I am the friend of bears and the guest of eagles. I am Ringwinner and Luckwearer; and I am Barrel-rider,” went on Bilbo beginning to be pleased with his riddling.

“That’s better!” said Smaug. “But don’t let your imagination run away with you!”





This of course is the way to talk to dragons, if you don't want to reveal your proper name (which is wise), and don't want to infuriate them by a flat refusal (which is also very wise). No dragon can resist the fascination of riddling talk and of wasting time trying to understand it. There was a lot here which Smaug did not understand at all (though I expect you do, since you know all about Bilbo's adventures to which he was referring), but he thought he understood enough, and he chuckled in his wicked inside.

"I thought so last night," he smiled to himself. "Lake-men, some nasty scheme of those miserable tub-trading Lake-men, or I'm a lizard. I haven't been down that way for an age and an age; but I will soon alter that!"

"Very well, O Barrel-rider!" he said aloud. "Maybe Barrel was your pony's name; and maybe not, though it was fat enough. You may walk unseen, but you did not walk all the way. Let me tell you I ate six ponies last

night and I shall catch and eat all the others before long. In return for the excellent meal I will give you one piece of advice for your good: don't have more to do with dwarves than you can help!"

"Dwarves!" said Bilbo in pretended surprise.

"Don't talk to me!" said Smaug. "I know the smell (and taste) of dwarf—no-one better. Don't tell me that I can eat a dwarf-ridden pony and not know it! You'll come to a bad end, if you go with such friends, Thief Barrel-rider. I don't mind if you go back and tell them so from me." But he did not tell Bilbo that there was one smell he could not make out at all, hobbit-smell; it was quite outside his experience and puzzled him mightily.

"I suppose you got a fair price for that cup last night?" he went on. "Come now, did you? Nothing at all! Well, that's just like them. And I suppose they are skulking outside, and your job is to do all the dangerous work and get what you can when I'm not looking—for them? And you will get a fair share? Don't you believe it! If you get off alive, you will be lucky."

Bilbo was now beginning to feel really uncomfortable. Whenever Smaug's roving eye, seeking for him in the shadows, flashed across him, he trembled, and an unaccountable desire seized hold of him to rush out and reveal himself and tell all the truth to Smaug. In fact he was in grievous danger of coming under the dragon-spell. But plucking up courage he spoke again.

"You don't know everything, O Smaug the Mighty," said he. "Not gold alone brought us hither."

"Ha! Ha! You admit the 'us'" laughed Smaug. "Why not say 'us fourteen' and be done with it, Mr. Lucky Number? I am pleased to hear that you had other business in these parts besides my gold. In that case you may, perhaps, not altogether waste your time.

"I don't know if it has occurred to you that, even if you could steal the gold bit by bit—a matter of a hundred years or so—you could not get it very far? Not much use on the mountain-side? Not much use in the forest? Bless me! Had you never thought of the catch? A fourteenth share, I suppose, or something like it, those were the terms, eh? But what about delivery? What about cartage? What about armed guards and tolls?" And Smaug laughed aloud. He had a wicked and a wily heart, and he knew his guesses were not far out, though he suspected that the Lake-men were at the back of the plans, and that most of the plunder was meant to stop there in the town by the shore that in his young days had been called Esgaroth.

You will hardly believe it, but poor Bilbo was really very taken aback. So far all his thoughts and energies had been concentrated on getting to the Mountain and finding the entrance. He had never bothered to wonder how the treasure was to be removed, certainly never how any part of it that might fall to his share was to be brought back all the way to Bag-End Under-Hill.

Now a nasty suspicion began to grow in his mind—had the dwarves forgotten this important point too, or were they laughing in their sleeves at him all the time? That is the effect that dragon-talk has on the inexperienced. Bilbo of course ought to have been on his guard; but Smaug had rather an overwhelming personality.

"I tell you," he said, in an effort to remain loyal to his friends and to keep his end up, "that gold was only an afterthought with us. We came over hill and under hill, by wave and wind, for *Revenge*. Surely, O Smaug the unassessably wealthy, you must realize that your success has made you some bitter enemies?"

Then Smaug really did laugh—a devastating sound which shook Bilbo to the floor, while far up in the tunnel the dwarves huddled together and imagined that the hobbit had come to a sudden and a nasty end.

"Revenge!" he snorted, and the light of his eyes lit the hall from floor to ceiling like scarlet lightning. "Revenge! The King under the Mountain is dead and where are his kin that dare seek revenge? Girion Lord of Dale is dead, and I have eaten his people like a wolf among sheep, and where are his sons' sons that dare approach me? I kill where I wish and none dare resist. I laid low the warriors of old and their like is not in the world today. Then I was but young and tender. Now I am old and strong, strong, strong, Thief in the Shadows!" he gloated. "My armour is like tenfold shields, my teeth are swords, my claws spears, the shock of my tail a thunderbolt, my wings a hurricane, and my breath death!"

"I have always understood," said Bilbo in a frightened squeak, "that dragons were softer underneath, especially in the region of the—er—chest; but doubtless one so fortified has thought of that."

The dragon stopped short in his boasting. "Your information is antiquated," he snapped. "I am armoured above and below with iron scales and hard gems. No blade can pierce me."

"I might have guessed it," said Bilbo. "Truly there can no-where be found the equal of Lord Smaug the Impenetrable. What magnificence to possess a waistcoat of fine diamonds!"

"Yes, it is rare and wonderful, indeed," said Smaug absurdly pleased. He did not know that the hobbit had already caught a glimpse of his peculiar under-covering on his previous visit, and was itching for a closer view for reasons of his own. The dragon rolled over. "Look!" he said. "What do you say to that?"

"Dazzlingly marvellous! Perfect! Flawless! Staggering!" exclaimed Bilbo aloud, but what he thought inside was: "Old fool! Why, there is a large patch in the hollow of his left breast as bare as a snail out of its shell!"

After he had seen that Mr. Baggins' one idea was to get away. "Well, I really must not detain Your Magnificence any longer," he said, "or keep you from much needed rest. Ponies take some catching, I believe, after a long start. And so do burglars," he added as a parting shot, as he darted back and fled up the tunnel.

It was an unfortunate remark, for the dragon spouted terrific flames after him, and fast though he sped up the slope, he had not gone nearly far enough to be comfortable before the ghastly head of Smaug was thrust against the opening behind. Luckily the whole head and jaws could not squeeze in, but the nostrils sent forth fire and vapour to pursue him, and he was nearly overcome, and stumbled blindly on in great pain and fear. He had been feeling rather pleased with the cleverness of his conversation with Smaug, but his mistake at the end shook him into better sense.

"Never laugh at live dragons, Bilbo you fool!" he said to himself, and it became a favourite saying of his later, and passed into a proverb. "You aren't nearly through this adventure yet," he added, and that was pretty true as well.

The afternoon was turning into evening when he came out again and stumbled and fell in a faint on the 'doorstep'. The dwarves revived him, and doctored his scorchs as well as they could; but it was a long time before the hair on the back of his head and his heels grew properly again: it had all been singed and frizzled right down to the skin. In the meanwhile his friends did their best to cheer him up; and they were eager for his story, especially wanting to know why the dragon had made such an awful noise, and how Bilbo had escaped.

But the hobbit was worried and uncomfortable, and they had difficulty in getting anything out of him. On thinking things over he was now regretting some of the things he had said to the dragon, and was not eager to repeat them. The old thrush was sitting on a rock near by with his head cocked on one side, listening to all that was said. It shows what an ill temper Bilbo was in: he picked up a stone and threw it at the thrush, which merely fluttered aside and came back.

"Drat the bird!" said Bilbo crossly. "I believe he is listening, and I don't like the look of him."

"Leave him alone!" said Thorin. "The thrushes are good and friendly—this is a very old bird indeed, and is maybe the last left of the ancient breed that used to live about here, tame to the hands of my father and grandfather. They were a long-lived and magical race, and this might even be one of those that were alive then, a couple of hundreds of years or more ago. The Men of Dale used to have the trick of understanding their language, and used them for messengers to fly to the Men of the Lake and elsewhere."

"Well, he'll have news to take to Lake-town all right, if that is what he is after," said Bilbo; "though I don't suppose there are any people left there that trouble with thrush-language."

"Why what has happened?" cried the dwarves. "Do get on with your tale!"

So Bilbo told them all he could remember, and he confessed that he had a nasty feeling that the dragon guessed too much from his riddles added to the camps and the ponies. "I am sure he knows we came from Lake-town and had help from there; and I have a horrible feeling that his next move may be in that direction. I wish to goodness I had never said that about Barrel-rider; it would make even a blind rabbit in these parts think of the Lake-men."

“Well, well! It cannot be helped, and it is difficult not to slip in talking to a dragon, or so I have always heard,” said Balin anxious to comfort him. “I think you did very well, if you ask me—you found out one very useful thing at any rate, and got home alive, and that is more than most can say who have had words with the likes of Smaug. It may be a mercy and a blessing yet to know of the bare patch in the old Worm’s diamond waistcoat.”

That turned the conversation, and they all began discussing dragon-slayings historical, dubious, and mythical, and the various sorts of stabs and jabs and undercuts, and the different arts devices and stratagems by which they had been accomplished. The general opinion was that catching a dragon napping was not as easy as it sounded, and the attempt to stick one or prod one asleep was more likely to end in disaster than a bold frontal attack. All the while they talked the thrush listened, till at last when the stars began to peep forth, it silently spread its wings and flew away. And all the while they talked and the shadows lengthened Bilbo became more and more unhappy and his foreboding grew.

At last he interrupted them. “I am sure we are very unsafe here,” he said, “and I don’t see the point of sitting here. The dragon has withered all the pleasant green, and anyway the night has come and it is cold. But I feel it in my bones that this place will be attacked again. Smaug knows now how I came down to his hall, and you can trust him to guess where the other end of the tunnel is. He will break all this side of the Mountain to bits, if necessary, to stop up our entrance, and if we are smashed with it the better he will like it.”

“You are very gloomy, Mr. Baggins!” said Thorin. “Why has not Smaug blocked the lower end, then, if he is so eager to keep us out? He has not, or we should have heard him.”

“I don’t know, I don’t know—because at first he wanted to try and lure me in again, I suppose, and now perhaps because he is waiting till after tonight’s hunt, or because he does not want to damage his bedroom if he can help it—but I wish you would not argue. Smaug will be coming out at any minute now, and our only hope is to get well in the tunnel and shut the door.”

He seemed so much in earnest that the dwarves at last did as he said, though they delayed shutting the door—it seemed a desperate plan, for no-one knew whether or how they could get it open again from the inside, and the thought of being shut in a place from which the only way out led through the dragon’s lair was not one they liked. Also everything seemed quite quiet, both outside and down the tunnel. So for a longish while they sat inside not far down from the half-open door and went on talking.

The talk turned to the dragon’s wicked words about the dwarves. Bilbo wished he had never heard them, or at least that he could feel quite certain that the dwarves now were absolutely honest when they declared that they had never thought at all about what would happen after the treasure had been won. “We knew it would be a desperate venture,” said Thorin, “and we know that still; and I still think that when we have won it will be time enough to think what to do about it. As for your share, Mr. Baggins, I assure you we are more than grateful and you shall choose your own fourteenth, as soon as we have anything to divide. I am sorry if you are worried about transport, and I admit the difficulties are great—the lands have not become less wild with the passing of time, rather the reverse—but we will do whatever we can for you, and take our share of the cost when the time comes. Believe me or not as you like!”

From that the talk turned to the great hoard itself and to the things that Thorin and Balin remembered. They wondered if they were still lying there unharmed in the hall below: the spears that were made for the armies of the great King Bladorthin (long since dead), each had a thrice-forged head and their shafts were inlaid with cunning gold, but they were never delivered or paid for; shields made for warriors long dead; the great golden cup of Thrór, two-handed, hammered and carven with birds and flowers whose eyes and petals were of jewels; coats of mail gilded and silvered and impenetrable; the necklace of Girion, Lord of Dale, made of five hundred emeralds green as grass, which he gave for the arming of his eldest son in a coat of dwarf-linked rings the like of which had never been made before, for it was wrought of pure silver to the power and strength of triple steel. But fairest of all was the great white gem, which the dwarves had found beneath the roots of the Mountain, the Heart of the Mountain, the Arkenstone of Thrain.

“The Arkenstone! The Arkenstone!” murmured Thorin in the dark, half dreaming with his chin upon his knees. “It was like a globe with a thousand facets; it shone like silver in the firelight, like water in the sun, like snow under the stars, like rain upon the Moon!”

But the enchanted desire of the hoard had fallen from Bilbo. All through their talk he was only half listening to them. He sat nearest to the door with one ear cocked for any beginnings of a sound without, his other was alert for echoes beyond the murmurs of the dwarves, for any whisper of a movement from far below.

Darkness grew deeper and he grew ever more uneasy. "Shut the door!" he begged them, "I fear that dragon in my marrow. I like this silence far less than the uproar of last night. Shut the door before it is too late!"

Something in his voice gave the dwarves an uncomfortable feeling. Slowly Thorin shook off his dreams and getting up he kicked away the stone that wedged the door. Then they thrust upon it, and it closed with a snap and a clang. No trace of a keyhole was there left on the inside. They were shut in the Mountain!

And not a moment too soon. They had hardly gone any distance down the tunnel when a blow smote the side of the Mountain like the crash of battering-rams made of forest oaks and swung by giants. The rock boomed, the walls cracked and stones fell from the roof on their heads. What would have happened if the door had still been open I don't like to think. They fled further down the tunnel glad to be still alive, while behind them outside they heard the roar and rumble of Smaug's fury. He was breaking rocks to pieces, smashing wall and cliff with the lashings of his huge tail, till their little lofty camping ground, the scorched grass, the thrush's stone, the snail-covered walls, the narrow ledge, and all disappeared in a jumble of smithereens, and an avalanche of splintered stones fell over the cliff into the valley below.

Smaug had left his lair in silent stealth, quietly soared into the air, and then floated heavy and slow in the dark like a monstrous crow, down the wind towards the west of the Mountain, in the hopes of catching unawares something or somebody there, and of spying the outlet to the passage which the thief had used. This was the outburst of his wrath when he could find nobody and see nothing, even where he guessed the outlet must actually be.

After he had let off his rage in this way he felt better and he thought in his heart that he would not be troubled again from that direction. In the meanwhile he had further vengeance to take. "Barrel-rider!" he snorted. "Your feet came from the waterside and up the water you came without a doubt. I don't know your smell, but if you are not one of those men of the Lake, you had their help. They shall see me and remember who is the real King under the Mountain!"

He rose in fire and went away south towards the Running River.





## Chapter XIII: Not At Home

In the meanwhile, the dwarves sat in darkness, and utter silence fell about them. Little they ate and little they spoke. They could not count the passing of time; and they scarcely dared to move, for the whisper of their voices echoed and rustled in the tunnel. If they dozed, they woke still to darkness and to silence going on unbroken. At last after days and days of waiting, as it seemed, when they were becoming choked and dazed for want of air, they could bear it no longer. They would almost have welcomed sounds from below of the dragon's return. In the silence they feared some cunning devilry of his, but they could not sit there for ever.

Thorin spoke: "Let us try the door!" he said. "I must feel the wind on my face soon or die. I think I would rather be smashed by Smaug in the open than suffocate in here!" So several of the dwarves got up and groped back to where the door had been. But they found that the upper end of the tunnel had been shattered and blocked with broken rock. Neither key nor the magic it had once obeyed would ever open that door again.

"We are trapped!" they groaned. "This is the end. We shall die here."

But somehow, just when the dwarves were most despairing, Bilbo felt a strange lightening of the heart, as if a heavy weight had gone from under his waistcoat.

"Come, come!" he said. "'While there's life there's hope!' as my father used to say, and 'Third time pays for all.' I am going *down* the tunnel once again. I have been that way twice, when I knew there was a dragon at the other end, so I will risk a third visit when I am no longer sure. Anyway the only way out is down. And I think this time you had better all come with me."

In desperation they agreed, and Thorin was the first to go forward by Bilbo's side.

"Now do be careful!" whispered the hobbit, "and as quiet as you can be! There may be no Smaug at the bottom, but then again there may be. Don't let us take any unnecessary risks!"

Down, down they went. The dwarves could not, of course, compare with the hobbit in real stealth, and they made a deal of puffing and shuffling which echoes magnified alarmingly; but though every now and again Bilbo in fear stopped and listened, not a sound stirred below. Near the bottom, as well as he could judge, Bilbo slipped on his ring and went ahead. But he did not need it: the darkness was complete, and they were all invisible, ring or no ring. In fact so black was it that the hobbit came to the opening unexpectedly, put his hand on air, stumbled forward, and rolled headlong into the hall!

There he lay face downwards on the floor and did not dare to get up, or hardly even to breathe. But nothing moved. There was not a gleam of light—unless, as it seemed to him, when at last he slowly raised his head, there was a pale white glint, above him and far off in the gloom. But certainly it was not a spark of dragon-fire, though the worm-stench was heavy in the place, and the taste of vapour was on his tongue.

At length Mr. Baggins could bear it no longer. "Confound you, Smaug, you worm!" he squeaked aloud. "Stop playing hide-and-seek! Give me a light, and then eat me, if you can catch me!"

Faint echoes ran round the unseen hall, but there was no answer.

Bilbo got up, and found that he did not know in what direction to turn.

"Now I wonder what on earth Smaug is playing at," he said. "He is not at home today (or tonight, or whatever it is), I do believe. If Oin and Gloin have not lost their tinder-boxes, perhaps we can make a little light, and have a look round before the luck turns."

"Light!" he cried. "Can anybody make a light?"

The dwarves, of course, were very alarmed when Bilbo fell forward down the step with a bump into the hall, and they sat huddled just where he had left them at the end of the tunnel.

“Sh! sh!” they hissed, when they heard his voice; and though that helped the hobbit to find out where they were, it was some time before he could get anything else out of them. But in the end, when Bilbo actually began to stamp on the floor, and screamed out “light!” at the top of his shrill voice, Thorin gave way, and Oin and Gloin were sent back to their bundles at the top of the tunnel.

After a while a twinkling gleam showed them returning, Oin with a small pine-torch alight in his hand, and Gloin with a bundle of others under his arm. Quickly Bilbo trotted to the door and took the torch; but he could not persuade the dwarves to light the others or to come and join him yet. As Thorin carefully explained, Mr. Baggins was still officially their expert burglar and investigator. If he liked to risk a light, that was his affair. They would wait in the tunnel for his report. So they sat near the door and watched.

They saw the little dark shape of the hobbit start across the floor holding his tiny light aloft. Every now and again, while he was still near enough, they caught a glint and a tinkle as he stumbled on some golden thing. The light grew smaller as he wandered away into the vast hall; then it began to rise dancing into the air. Bilbo was climbing the great mound of treasure. Soon he stood upon the top, and still went on. Then they saw him halt and stoop for a moment; but they did not know the reason.

It was the Arkenstone, the Heart of the Mountain. So Bilbo guessed from Thorin’s description; but indeed there could not be two such gems, even in so marvellous a hoard, even in all the world. Ever as he climbed, the same white gleam had shone before him and drawn his feet towards it. Slowly it grew to a little globe of pallid light. Now as he came near, it was tinged with a flickering sparkle of many colours at the surface, reflected and splintered from the wavering light of his torch. At last he looked down upon it, and he caught his breath. The great jewel shone before his feet of its own inner light, and yet, cut and fashioned by the dwarves, who had dug it from the heart of the mountain long ago, it took all light that fell upon it and changed it into ten thousand sparks of white radiance shot with glints of the rainbow.

Suddenly Bilbo’s arm went towards it drawn by its enchantment. His small hand would not close about it, for it was a large and heavy gem; but he lifted it, shut his eyes, and put it in his deepest pocket.

“Now I am a burglar indeed!” thought he. “But I suppose I must tell the dwarves about it—some time. They did say I could pick and choose my own share; and I think I would choose this, if they took all the rest!” All the same he had an uncomfortable feeling that the picking and choosing had not really been meant to include this marvellous gem, and that trouble would yet come of it.

Now he went on again. Down the other side of the great mound he climbed, and the spark of his torch vanished from the sight of the watching dwarves. But soon they saw it far away in the distance again. Bilbo was crossing the floor of the hall.

He went on, until he came to the great doors at the further side, and there a draught of air refreshed him, but it almost puffed out his light. He peeped timidly through, and caught a glimpse of great passages and of the dim beginnings of wide stairs going up into the gloom. And still there was no sight nor sound of Smaug. He was just going to turn and go back, when a black shape swooped at him, and brushed his face. He squeaked and started, stumbled backwards and fell. His torch dropped head downwards and went out!

“Only a bat, I suppose and hope!” he said miserably. “But now what am I to do? Which is East, South, North, or West?”

“Thorin! Balin! Oin! Gloin! Fili! Kili!” he cried as loud as he could—it seemed a thin little noise in the wide blackness.

“The light’s gone out! Someone come and find me and help me!” For the moment his courage had failed altogether.

Faintly the dwarves heard his small cries, though the only word they could catch was “help!”

“Now what on earth or under it has happened?” said Thorin. “Certainly not the dragon, or he would not go on squeaking.”

They waited a moment or two, and still there were no dragon-noises, no sound at all in fact but Bilbo's distant voice. "Come, one of you, get another light or two!" Thorin ordered. "It seems we have got to go and help our burglar."

"It is about our turn to help," said Balin, "and I am quite willing to go. Anyway I expect it is safe for the moment."

Gloin lit several more torches, and then they all crept out, one by one, and went along the wall as hurriedly as they could. It was not long before they met Bilbo himself coming back towards them. His wits had quickly returned as soon as he saw the twinkle of their lights.

"Only a bat and a dropped torch, nothing worse!" he said in answer to their questions. Though they were much relieved, they were inclined to be grumpy at being frightened for nothing; but what they would have said, if he had told them at that moment about the Arkenstone, I don't know. The mere fleeting glimpses of treasure which they had caught as they went along had rekindled all the fire of their dwarvish hearts; and when the heart of a dwarf, even the most respectable, is wakened by gold and by jewels, he grows suddenly bold, and he may become fierce.

The dwarves indeed no longer needed any urging. All were now eager to explore the hall while they had the chance, and willing to believe that, for the present, Smaug was away from home. Each now gripped a lighted torch; and as they gazed, first on one side and then on another, they forgot fear and even caution. They spoke aloud, and cried out to one another, as they lifted old treasures from the mound or from the wall and held them in the light, caressing and fingering them.

Fili and Kili were almost in merry mood, and finding still hanging there many golden harps strung with silver they took them and struck them; and being magical (and also untouched by the dragon, who had small interest in music) they were still in tune. The dark hall was filled with a melody that had long been silent. But most of the dwarves were more practical: they gathered gems and stuffed their pockets, and let what they could not carry fall back through their fingers with a sigh. Thorin was not least among these; but always he searched from side to side for something which he could not find. It was the Arkenstone; but he spoke of it yet to no-one.

Now the dwarves took down mail and weapons from the walls, and armed themselves. Royal indeed did Thorin look, clad in a coat of gold-plated rings, with a silver-hafted axe in a belt crusted with scarlet stones.

"Mr. Baggins!" he cried. "Here is the first payment of your reward! Cast off your old coat and put on this!"

With that he put on Bilbo a small coat of mail, wrought for some young elf-prince long ago. It was of silver-steel, which the elves call *mithril*, and with it went a belt of pearls and crystals. A light helm of figured leather, strengthened beneath with hoops of steel, and studded about the brim with white gems, was set upon the hobbit's head.

"I feel magnificent," he thought; "but I expect I look rather absurd. How they would laugh on the Hill at home! Still I wish there was a looking-glass handy!"

All the same Mr. Baggins kept his head more clear of the bewitchment of the hoard than the dwarves did. Long before the dwarves were tired of examining the treasures, he became weary of it and sat down on the floor; and he began to wonder nervously what the end of it all would be. "I would give a good many of these precious goblets," he thought, "for a drink of something cheering out of one of Beorn's wooden bowls!"

"Thorin!" he cried aloud. "What next? We are armed, but what good has any armour ever been before against Smaug the Dreadful? This treasure is not yet won back. We are not looking for gold yet, but for a way of escape; and we have tempted luck too long!"

"You speak the truth!" answered Thorin, recovering his wits. "Let us go! I will guide you. Not in a thousand years should I forget the ways of this palace." Then he hailed the others, and they gathered together, and holding their torches above their heads they passed through the gaping doors, not without many a backward glance of longing.



Their glittering mail they had covered again with their old cloaks and their bright helms with their tattered hoods, and one by one they walked behind Thorin, a line of little lights in the darkness that halted often, listening in fear once more for any rumour of the dragon's coming.

Though all the old adornments were long mouldered or destroyed, and though all was befouled and blasted with the comings and goings of the monster, Thorin knew every passage and every turn. They climbed long stairs, and turned and went down wide echoing ways, and turned again and climbed yet more stairs, and yet more stairs again. These were smooth, cut out of the living rock broad and fair; and up, up, the dwarves went, and they met no sign of any living thing, only furtive shadows that fled from the approach of their torches fluttering in the draughts.

The steps were not made, all the same, for hobbit-legs, and Bilbo was just feeling that he could go on no longer, when suddenly the roof sprang high and far beyond the reach of their torch-light. A white glimmer could be seen coming through some opening far above, and the air smelt sweeter. Before them light came dimly through great doors, that hung twisted on their hinges and half burnt.

"This is the great chamber of Thrór," said Thorin; "the hall of feasting and of council. Not far off now is the Front Gate."

They passed through the ruined chamber. Tables were rotting there; chairs and benches were lying there overturned, charred and decaying. Skulls and bones were upon the floor among flagons and bowls and broken drinking-horns and dust. As they came through yet more doors at the further end, a sound of water fell upon their ears, and the grey light grew suddenly more full.

"There is the birth of the Running River," said Thorin. "From here it hastens to the Gate. Let us follow it!"

Out of a dark opening in a wall of rock there issued a boiling water, and it flowed swirling in a narrow channel, carved and made straight and deep by the cunning of ancient hands. Beside it ran a stone-paved road, wide enough for many men abreast. Swiftly along this they ran, and round a wide-sweeping turn—and behold! before them stood the broad light of day. In front there rose a tall arch, still showing the fragments of old carven work within, worn and splintered and blackened though it was. A misty sun sent its pale light between the arms of the Mountain, and beams of gold fell on the pavement at the threshold.

A whirl of bats frightened from slumber by their smoking torches flurried over them; as they sprang forward their feet slithered on stones rubbed smooth and slimed by the passing of the dragon. Now before them the water fell noisily outward and foamed down towards the valley. They flung their pale torches to the ground, and stood gazing out with dazzled eyes. They were come to the Front Gate, and were looking out upon Dale.

"Well!" said Bilbo, "I never expected to be looking out of this door. And I never expected to be so pleased to see the sun again, and to feel the wind on my face. But, ow! this wind is cold!"

It was. A bitter easterly breeze blew with a threat of oncoming winter. It swirled over and round the arms of the Mountain into the valley, and sighed among the rocks. After their long time in the stewing depths of the dragon-haunted caverns, they shivered in the sun.

Suddenly Bilbo realized that he was not only tired but also very hungry indeed. "It seems to be late morning," he said, "and so I suppose it is more or less breakfast-time—if there is any breakfast to have. But I don't feel that Smaug's front doorstep is the safest place for a meal. Do let's go somewhere where we can sit quiet for a bit!"

"Quite right!" said Balin. "And I think I know which way we should go: we ought to make for the old look-out post at the South-West corner of the Mountain."

"How far is that?" asked the hobbit.

"Five hours march, I should think. It will be rough going. The road from the Gate along the left edge of the stream seems all broken up. But look down there! The river loops suddenly east across Dale in front of the ruined town. At that point there was once a bridge, leading to steep stairs that climbed up the right bank, and so to a road running towards Ravenhill. There is (or was) a path that left the road and climbed up to the post. A hard climb, too, even if the old steps are still there."

“Dear me!” grumbled the hobbit. “More walking and more climbing without breakfast! I wonder how many breakfasts, and other meals, we have missed inside that nasty clockless, timeless hole?”

As a matter of fact two nights and the day between had gone by (and not altogether without food) since the dragon smashed the magic door, but Bilbo had quite lost count, and it might have been one night or a week of nights for all he could tell.

“Come, come!” said Thorin laughing—his spirits had begun to rise again, and he rattled the precious stones in his pockets. “Don’t call my palace a nasty hole! You wait till it has been cleaned and redecorated!”

“That won’t be till Smaug’s dead,” said Bilbo glumly. “In the meanwhile where is he? I would give a good breakfast to know. I hope he is not up on the Mountain looking down at us!”

That idea disturbed the dwarves mightily, and they quickly decided that Bilbo and Balin were right.

“We must move away from here,” said Dori. “I feel as if his eyes were on the back of my head.”

“It’s a cold lonesome place,” said Bombur. “There may be drink, but I see no sign of food. A dragon would always be hungry in such parts.”

“Come on! Come on!” cried the others. “Let us follow Balin’s path!”

Under the rocky wall to the right there was no path, so on they trudged among the stones on the left side of the river, and the emptiness and desolation soon sobered even Thorin again. The bridge that Balin had spoken of they found long fallen, and most of its stones were now only boulders in the shallow noisy stream; but they forded the water without much difficulty, and found the ancient steps, and climbed the high bank. After going a short way they struck the old road, and before long came to a deep dell sheltered among the rocks; there they rested for a while and had such a breakfast as they could, chiefly *cram* and water. (If you want to know what *cram* is, I can only say that I don’t know the recipe; but it is biscuitish, keeps good indefinitely, is supposed to be sustaining, and is certainly not entertaining, being in fact very uninteresting except as a chewing exercise. It was made by the Lake-men for long journeys.)

After that they went on again; and now the road struck westwards and left the river, and the great shoulder of the south-pointing mountain-spur drew ever nearer. At length they reached the hill path. It scrambled steeply up, and they plodded slowly one behind the other, till at last in the late afternoon they came to the top of the ridge and saw the wintry sun going downwards to the West.

Here they found a flat place without a wall on three sides, but backed to the North by a rocky face in which there was an opening like a door. From that door there was a wide view East and South and West.

“Here,” said Balin, “in the old days we used always to keep watchmen, and that door behind leads into a rockhewn chamber that was made here as a guardroom. There were several places like it round the Mountain. But there seemed small need for watching in the days of our prosperity, and the guards were made over comfortable, perhaps—otherwise we might have had longer warning of the coming of the dragon, and things might have been different. Still, here we can now lie hid and sheltered for a while, and can see much without being seen.”

“Not much use, if we have been seen coming here,” said Dori, who was always looking up towards the Mountain’s peak, as if he expected to see Smaug perched there like a bird on a steeple.

“We must take our chance of that,” said Thorin. “We can go no further to-day.”

“Hear, hear!” cried Bilbo, and flung himself on the ground.

In the rock-chamber there would have been room for a hundred, and there was a small chamber further in, more removed from the cold outside. It was quite deserted; not even wild animals seemed to have used it in all the days of Smaug’s dominion. There they laid their burdens; and some threw themselves down at once and slept, but the others sat near the outer door and discussed their plans. In all their talk they came perpetually back to one thing: where was Smaug? They looked West and there was nothing, and East there was nothing, and in the South there was no sign of the dragon, but there was a gathering of very many birds. At that they gazed and wondered; but they were no nearer understanding it, when the first cold stars came out.



## Chapter XIV: Fire And Water

Now if you wish, like the dwarves, to hear news of Smaug, you must go back again to the evening when he smashed the door and flew off in rage, two days before.

The men of the lake-town Esgaroth were mostly indoors, for the breeze was from the black East and chill, but a few were walking on the quays, and watching, as they were fond of doing, the stars shine out from the smooth patches of the lake as they opened in the sky. From their town the Lonely Mountain was mostly screened by the low hills at the far end of the lake, through a gap in which the Running River came down from the North. Only its high peak could they see in clear weather, and they looked seldom at it, for it was ominous and drear even in the light of morning. Now it was lost and gone, blotted in the dark.

Suddenly it flickered back to view; a brief glow touched it and faded.

“Look!” said one. “The lights again! Last night the watchmen saw them start and fade from midnight until dawn. Something is happening up there.”

“Perhaps the King under the Mountain is forging gold,” said another. “It is long since he went North. It is time the songs began to prove themselves again.”

“Which king?” said another with a grim voice. “As like as not it is the marauding fire of the Dragon, the only king under the Mountain we have ever known.”

“You are always foreboding gloomy things!” said the others. “Anything from floods to poisoned fish. Think of something cheerful!”

Then suddenly a great light appeared in the low place in the hills and the northern end of the lake turned golden. “The King beneath the Mountain!” they shouted. “His wealth is like the Sun, his silver like a fountain, his rivers golden run! The river is running gold from the Mountain!” they cried, and everywhere windows were opening and feet were hurrying.

There was once more a tremendous excitement and enthusiasm. But the grim-voiced fellow ran hotfoot to the Master. “The dragon is coming or I am a fool!” he cried. “Cut the bridges! To arms! To arms!”

Then warning trumpets were suddenly sounded, and echoed along the rocky shores. The cheering stopped and the joy was turned to dread. So it was that the dragon did not find them quite unprepared.

Before long, so great was his speed, they could see him as a spark of fire rushing towards them and growing ever huger and more bright, and not the most foolish doubted that the prophecies had gone rather wrong. Still they had a little time. Every vessel in the town was filled with water, every warrior was armed, every arrow and dart was ready, and the bridge to the land was thrown down and destroyed, before the roar of Smaug’s terrible approach grew loud, and the lake rippled red as fire beneath the awful beating of his wings.

Amid shrieks and wailing and the shouts of men he came over them, swept towards the bridges and was foiled! The bridge was gone, and his enemies were on an island in deep water—too deep and dark and cool for his liking. If he plunged into it, a vapour and a steam would arise enough to cover all the land with a mist for days; but the lake was mightier than he, it would quench him before he could pass through.

Roaring he swept back over the town. A hail of dark arrows leaped up and snapped and rattled on his scales and jewels, and their shafts fell back kindled by his breath burning and hissing into the lake. No fireworks you ever imagined equalled the sights that night. At the twanging of the bows and the shrilling of the trumpets the dragon’s wrath blazed to its height, till he was blind and mad with it. No-one had dared to give battle to him for

many an age; nor would they have dared now, if it had not been for the grim-voiced man (Bard was his name), who ran to and fro cheering on the archers and urging the Master to order them to fight to the last arrow.

Fire leaped from the dragon's jaws. He circled for a while high in the air above them lighting all the lake; the trees by the shores shone like copper and like blood with leaping shadows of dense black at their feet. Then down he swooped straight through the arrow-storm, reckless in his rage, taking no heed to turn his scaly sides towards his foes, seeking only to set their town ablaze.

Fire leaped from thatched roofs and wooden beam-ends as he hurtled down and past and round again, though all had been drenched with water before he came. Once more water was flung by a hundred hands wherever a spark appeared. Back swirled the dragon. A sweep of his tail and the roof of the Great House crumbled and smashed down. Flames unquenchable sprang high into the night. Another swoop and another, and another house and then another sprang afire and fell; and still no arrow hindered Smaug or hurt him more than a fly from the marshes.

Already men were jumping into the water on every side. Women and children were being huddled into laden boats in the market-pool. Weapons were flung down. There was mourning and weeping, where but a little time ago the old songs of mirth to come had been sung about the dwarves. Now men cursed their names. The Master himself was turning to his great gilded boat, hoping to row away in the confusion and save himself. Soon all the town would be deserted and burned down to the surface of the lake.

That was the dragon's hope. They could all get into boats for all he cared. There he could have fine sport hunting them, or they could stop till they starved. Let them try to get to land and he would be ready. Soon he would set all the shoreland woods ablaze and wither every field and pasture. Just now he was enjoying the sport of town-baiting more than he had enjoyed anything for years.

But there was still a company of archers that held their ground among the burning houses. Their captain was Bard, grim-voiced and grim-faced, whose friends had accused him of prophesying floods and poisoned fish, though they knew his worth and courage. He was a descendant in long line of Girion, Lord of Dale, whose wife and child had escaped down the Running River from the ruin long ago. Now he shot with a great yew bow, till all his arrows but one were spent. The flames were near him. His companions were leaving him. He bent his bow for the last time.

Suddenly out of the dark something fluttered to his shoulder. He started—but it was only an old thrush. Unafraid it perched by his ear and it brought him news. Marvelling he found he could understand its tongue, for he was of the race of Dale.

"Wait! Wait!" it said to him. "The moon is rising. Look for the hollow of the left breast as he flies and turns above you!" And while Bard paused in wonder it told him of tidings up in the Mountain and of all that it had heard.

Then Bard drew his bow-string to his ear. The dragon was circling back, flying low, and as he came the moon rose above the eastern shore and silvered his great wings.

"Arrow!" said the bowman. "Black arrow! I have saved you to the last. You have never failed me and always I have recovered you. I had you from my father and he from of old. If ever you came from the forges of the true king under the Mountain, go now and speed well!"

The dragon swooped once more lower than ever, and as he turned and dived down his belly glittered white with sparkling fires of gems in the moon—but not in one place. The great bow twanged. The black arrow sped straight from the string, straight for the hollow by the left breast where the foreleg was flung wide. In it smote and vanished, barb, shaft and feather, so fierce was its flight. With a shriek that deafened men, felled trees and split stone, Smaug shot spouting into the air, turned over and crashed down from on high in ruin.

Full on the town he fell. His last throes splintered it to sparks and gledes. The lake roared in. A vast steam leaped up, white in the sudden dark under the moon. There was a hiss, a gushing whirl, and then silence. And that was the end of Smaug and Esgaroth, but not of Bard.

The waxing moon rose higher and higher and the wind grew loud and cold. It twisted the white fog into bending pillars and hurrying clouds and drove it off to the West to scatter in tattered shreds over the marshes before Mirkwood. Then the many boats could be seen dotted dark on the surface of the lake, and down the wind came the voices of the people of Esgaroth lamenting their lost town and goods and ruined houses. But they had really much to be thankful for, had they thought of it, though it could hardly be expected that they should just then: three quarters of the people of the town had at least escaped alive; their woods and fields and pastures and cattle and most of their boats remained undamaged; and the dragon was dead. What that meant they had not yet realized.

They gathered in mournful crowds upon the western shores, shivering in the cold wind, and their first complaints and anger were against the Master, who had left the town so soon, while some were still willing to defend it.

“He may have a good head for business—especially his own business,” some murmured, “but he is no good when anything serious happens!” And they praised the courage of Bard and his last mighty shot. “If only he had not been killed,” they all said, “we would make him a king. Bard the Dragon-shooter of the line of Girion! Alas that he is lost!”

And in the very midst of their talk a tall figure stepped from the shadows. He was drenched with water, his black hair hung wet over his face and shoulders, and a fierce light was in his eyes.

“Bard is not lost!” he cried. “He dived from Esgaroth, when the enemy was slain. I am Bard, of the line of Girion; I am the slayer of the dragon!”

“King Bard! King Bard!” they shouted; but the Master ground his chattering teeth.

“Girion was lord of Dale, not king of Esgaroth,” he said. “In the Lake-town we have always elected masters from among the old and wise, and have not endured the rule of mere fighting men. Let ‘King Bard’ go back to his own kingdom—Dale is now freed by his valour, and nothing hinders his return. And any that wish can go with him, if they prefer the cold stones under the shadow of the Mountain to the green shores of the lake. The wise will stay here and hope to rebuild our town, and enjoy again in time its peace and riches.”

“We will have King Bard!” the people near at hand shouted in reply. “We have had enough of the old men and the money-counters!” And people further off took up the cry: “Up the Bowman, and down with Moneybags,” till the clamour echoed along the shore.

“I am the last man to undervalue Bard the Bowman,” said the Master warily (for Bard now stood close beside him). “He has tonight earned an eminent place in the roll of the benefactors of our town; and he is worthy of many imperishable songs. But, why O People?”—and here the Master rose to his feet and spoke very loud and clear—“Why do I get all your blame? For what fault am I to be deposed? Who aroused the dragon from his slumber, I might ask? Who obtained of us rich gifts and ample help, and led us to believe that old songs could come true? Who played on our soft hearts and our pleasant fancies? What sort of gold have they sent down the river to reward us? Dragon-fire and ruin! From whom should we claim the recompense of our damage, and aid for our widows and orphans?”

As you see, the Master had not got his position for nothing. The result of his words was that for the moment the people quite forgot their idea of a new king, and turned their angry thoughts towards Thorin and his company. Wild and bitter words were shouted from many sides; and some of those who had before sung the old songs loudest, were now heard as loudly crying that the dwarves had stirred the dragon up against them deliberately!

“Fools!” said Bard. “Why waste words and wrath on those unhappy creatures? Doubtless they perished first in fire, before Smaug came to us.” Then even as he was speaking, the thought came into his heart of the fabled treasure of the Mountain lying without guard or owner, and he fell suddenly silent. He thought of the Master’s words, and of Dale rebuilt, and filled with golden bells, if he could but find the men.

At length he spoke again: “This is no time for angry words, Master, or for considering weighty plans of change. There is work to do. I serve you still—though after a while I may think again of your words and go North with any that will follow me.”

Then he strode off to help in the ordering of the camps and in the care of the sick and the wounded. But the Master scowled at his back as he went, and remained sitting on the ground. He thought much but said little, unless it was to call loudly for men to bring him fire and food.

Now everywhere Bard went he found talk running like fire among the people concerning the vast treasure that was now unguarded. Men spoke of the recompense for all their harm that they would soon get from it, and wealth over and to spare with which to buy rich things from the South; and it cheered them greatly in their plight. That was as well, for the night was bitter and miserable. Shelters could be contrived for few (the Master had one) and there was little food (even the Master went short). Many took ill of wet and cold and sorrow that night, and afterwards died, who had escaped uninjured from the ruin of the town; and in the days that followed there was much sickness and great hunger.

Meanwhile Bard took the lead, and ordered things as he wished, though always in the Master's name, and he had a hard task to govern the people and direct the preparations for their protection and housing. Probably most of them would have perished in the winter that now hurried after autumn, if help had not been to hand. But help came swiftly; for Bard at once had speedy messengers sent up the river to the Forest to ask the aid of the King of the Elves of the Wood, and these messengers had found a host already on the move, although it was then only the third day after the fall of Smaug.

The Elvenking had received news from his own messengers and from the birds that loved his folk, and already knew much of what had happened. Very great indeed was the commotion among all things with wings that dwelt on the borders of the Desolation of the Dragon. The air was filled with circling flocks, and their swift-flying messengers flew here and there across the sky. Above the borders of the Forest there was whistling, crying and piping. Far over Mirkwood tidings spread: "Smaug is dead!" Leaves rustled and startled ears were lifted. Even before the Elvenking rode forth the news had passed west right to the pinewoods of the Misty Mountains; Beorn had heard it in his wooden house, and the goblins were at council in their caves.

"That will be the last we shall hear of Thorin Oakenshield, I fear," said the king. "He would have done better to have remained my guest. It is an ill wind, all the same," he added, "that blows no-one any good." For he too had not forgotten the legend of the wealth of Thrór. So it was that Bard's messengers found him now marching with many spearmen and bowmen; and crows were gathered thick above him, for they thought that war was awakening again, such as had not been in those parts for a long age.

But the king, when he received the prayers of Bard, had pity, for he was the lord of a good and kindly people; so turning his march, which had at first been direct towards the Mountain, he hastened now down the river to the Long Lake. He had not boats or rafts enough for his host, and they were forced to go the slower way by foot; but great store of goods he sent ahead by water. Still elves are lightfooted, and though they were not in these days much used to the marches and the treacherous lands between the Forest and the Lake, their going was swift. Only five days after the death of the dragon—they came upon the shores and looked on the ruins of the town. Their welcome was good, as may be expected, and the men and their Master were ready to make any bargain for the future in return for the Elvenking's aid.

Their plans were soon made. With the women and the children, the old and the unfit, the Master remained behind; and with him were some men of crafts and many skilled elves; and they busied themselves felling trees, and collecting the timber sent down from the Forest. Then they set about raising many huts by the shore against the oncoming winter; and also under the Master's direction they began the planning of a new town, designed more fair and large even than before, but not in the same place. They removed northward higher up the shore; for ever after they had a dread of the water where the dragon lay. He would never again return to his golden bed, but was stretched cold as stone, twisted upon the floor of the shallows. There for ages his huge bones could be seen in calm weather amid the ruined piles of the old town. But few dared to cross the cursed spot, and none dared to dive into the shivering water or recover the precious stones that fell from his rotting carcase.

But all the men of arms who were still able, and the most of the Elvenking's array, got ready to march north to the Mountain. It was thus that in eleven days from the ruin of the town the head of their host passed the rock-gates at the end of the lake and came into the desolate lands.



## Chapter XV: The Gathering Of The Clouds

Now we will return to Bilbo and the dwarves. All night one of them had watched, but when morning came they had not heard or seen any sign of danger. But ever more thickly the birds were gathering. Their companies came flying from the South; and the crows that still lived about the Mountain were wheeling and crying unceasingly above.

“Something strange is happening,” said Thorin. “The time has gone for the autumn wanderings; and these are birds that dwell always in the land; there are starlings and flocks of finches; and far off there are many carrion birds as if a battle were afoot!”

Suddenly Bilbo pointed: “There is that old thrush again!” he cried. “He seems to have escaped, when Smaug smashed the mountain-side, but I don’t suppose the snails have!”

Sure enough the old thrush was there, and as Bilbo pointed, he flew towards them and perched on a stone near by. Then he fluttered his wings and sang; then he cocked his head on one side, as if to listen; and again he sang, and again he listened.

“I believe he is trying to tell us something,” said Balin; “but I cannot follow the speech of such birds, it is very quick and difficult. Can you make it out Baggins?”

“Not very well,” said Bilbo (as a matter of fact, he could make nothing of it at all); “but the old fellow seems very excited.”

“I only wish he was a raven!” said Balin.

“I thought you did not like them! You seemed very shy of them, when we came this way before.”

“Those were crows! And nasty suspicious-looking creatures at that, and rude as well. You must have heard the ugly names they were calling after us. But the ravens are different. There used to be great friendship between them and the people of Thror; and they often brought us secret news, and were rewarded with such bright things as they coveted to hide in their dwellings.

“They live many a year, and their memories are long, and they hand on their wisdom to their children. I knew many among the ravens of the rocks when I was a dwarf-lad. This very height was once named Ravenhill, because there was a wise and famous pair, old Carc and his wife, that lived here above the guard-chamber. But I don’t suppose that any of that ancient breed linger here now.”

No sooner had he finished speaking than the old thrush gave a loud call, and immediately flew away.

“We may not understand him, but that old bird understands us, I am sure,” said Balin. “Keep watch now, and see what happens!”

Before long there was a fluttering of wings, and back came the thrush; and with him came a most decrepit old bird. He was getting blind, he could hardly fly, and the top of his head was bald. He was an aged raven of great size. He alighted stiffly on the ground before them, slowly flapped his wings, and bobbed towards Thorin.

“O Thorin son of Thrain, and Balin son of Fundin,” he croaked (and Bilbo could understand what he said, for he used ordinary language and not bird-speech). “I am Roäc son of Carc. Carc is dead, but he was well known to you once. It is a hundred years and three and fifty since I came out of the egg, but I do not forget what my father told me. Now I am the chief of the great ravens of the Mountain. We are few, but we remember still the king that was of old. Most of my people are abroad, for there are great tidings in the South—some are tidings of joy to you, and some you will not think so good.

“Behold! the birds are gathering back again to the Mountain and to Dale from South and East and West, for word has gone out that Smaug is dead!”

“Dead! Dead?” shouted the dwarves. “Dead! Then we have been in needless fear—and the treasure is ours!” They all sprang up and began to caper about for joy.

“Yes, dead,” said Roäc. “The thrush, may his feathers never fall, saw him die, and we may trust his words. He saw him fall in battle with the men of Esgaroth the third night back from now at the rising of the moon.”

It was some time before Thorin could bring the dwarves to be silent and listen to the raven’s news. At length when he had told all the tale of the battle he went on:

“So much for joy, Thorin Oakenshield. You may go back to your halls in safety; all the treasure is yours—for the moment. But many are gathering hither beside the birds. The news of the death of the guardian has already gone far and wide, and the legend of the wealth of Thrór has not lost in the telling during many years; many are eager for a share of the spoil. Already a host of the elves is on the way, and carrion birds are with them hoping for battle and slaughter. By the lake men murmur that their sorrows are due to the dwarves; for they are homeless and many have died, and Smaug has destroyed their town. They too think to find amends from your treasure, whether you are alive or dead.

“Your own wisdom must decide your course; but thirteen is small remnant of the great folk of Durin that once dwelt here, and now are scattered far. If you will listen to my counsel, you will not trust the Master of the Lake-men, but rather him that shot the dragon with his bow. Bard is he, of the race of Dale, of the line of Girion; he is a grim man but true. We would see peace once more among dwarves and men and elves after the long desolation; but it may cost you dear in gold. I have spoken.”

Then Thorin burst forth in anger: “Our thanks, Roäc Carc’s son. You and your people shall not be forgotten. But none of our gold shall thieves take or the violent carry off while we are alive. If you would earn our thanks still more, bring us news of any that draw near. Also I would beg of you, if any of you are still young and strong of wing, that you would send messengers to our kin in the mountains of the North, both west from here and east, and tell them of our plight. But go specially to my cousin Dain in the Iron Hills, for he has many people well-armed, and dwells nearest to this place. Bid him hasten!”

“I will not say if this counsel be good or bad,” croaked Roäc, “but I will do what can be done.” Then off he slowly flew.

“Back now to the Mountain!” cried Thorin. “We have little time to lose.”

“And little food to use!” cried Bilbo, always practical on such points. In any case he felt that the adventure was, properly speaking, over with the death of the dragon—in which he was much mistaken—and he would have given most of his share of the profits for the peaceful winding up of these affairs.

“Back to the Mountain!” cried the dwarves as if they had not heard him; so back he had to go with them.

As you have heard some of the events already, you will see that the dwarves still had some days before them. They explored the caverns once more, and found, as they expected, that only the Front Gate remained open; all the other gates (except, of course, the small secret door) had long ago been broken and blocked by Smaug, and no sign of them remained. So now they began to labour hard in fortifying the main entrance, and in making a new path that led from it. Tools were to be found in plenty that the miners and quarriers and builders of old had used; and at such work the dwarves were still very skilled.

As they worked the ravens brought them constant tidings. In this way they learned that the Elvenking had turned aside to the Lake, and they still had a breathing space. Better still, they heard that three of their ponies had escaped and were wandering wild far down the banks of the Running River, not far from where the rest of their stores had been left. So while the others went on with their work, Fili and Kili were sent, guided by a raven, to find the ponies and bring back all they could.

They were four days gone, and by that time they knew that the joined armies of the Lake-men and the Elves were hurrying toward the Mountain. But now their hopes were higher; for they had food for some weeks with care—chiefly *cram*, of course, and they were very tired of it; but *cram* is much better than nothing—and



already the gate was blocked with a wall of squared stones laid dry, but very thick and high, across the opening. There were holes in the wall through which they could see (or shoot), but no entrance. They climbed in or out with ladders, and hauled stuff up with ropes. For the issuing of the stream they had contrived a small low arch under the new wall; but near the entrance they had so altered the narrow bed that a wide pool stretched from the mountain-wall to the head of the fall over which the stream went towards Dale. Approach to the Gate was now only possible, without swimming, along a narrow ledge of the cliff, to the right as one looked outwards from the wall. The ponies they had brought only to the head of the steps above the old bridge, and unloading them there had bidden them return to their masters and sent them back riderless to the South.

There came a night when suddenly there were many lights as of fires and torches away south in Dale before them.

“They have come!” called Balin. “And their camp is very great. They must have come into the valley under the cover of dusk along both banks of the river.”

That night the dwarves slept little. The morning was still pale when they saw a company approaching. From behind their wall they watched them come up to the valley’s head and climb slowly up. Before long they could see that both men of the lake armed as if for war and elvish bowmen were among them. At length the foremost of these climbed the tumbled rocks and appeared at the top of the falls; and very great was their surprise to see the pool before them and the Gate blocked with a wall of new-hewn stone.

As they stood pointing and speaking to one another Thorin hailed them: “Who are you,” he called in a very loud voice, “that come as if in war to the gates of Thorin son of Thrain, King under the Mountain, and what do you desire?”

But they answered nothing. Some turned swiftly back, and the others after gazing for a while at the Gate and its defences soon followed them. That day the camp was moved to the east of the river, right between the arms of the Mountain. The rocks echoed then with voices and with song, as they had not done for many a day. There was the sound, too, of elven-harps and of sweet music; and as it echoed up towards them it seemed that the chill of the air was warmed, and they caught faintly the fragrance of woodland flowers blossoming in spring.

Then Bilbo longed to escape from the dark fortress and to go down and join in the mirth and feasting by the fires. Some of the younger dwarves were moved in their hearts, too, and they muttered that they wished things had fallen out otherwise and that they might welcome such folk as friends; but Thorin scowled.

Then the dwarves themselves brought forth harps and instruments regained from the hoard, and made music to soften his mood; but their song was not as elvish song, and was much like the song they had sung long before in Bilbo’s little hobbit-hole.

*Under the Mountain dark and tall  
The King has come unto his hall!  
His foe is dead, the Worm of Dread,  
And ever so his foes shall fall.*

*The sword is sharp, the spear is long,  
The arrow swift, the Gate is strong;  
The heart is bold that looks on gold;  
The dwarves no more shall suffer wrong.*

*The dwarves of yore made mighty spells,  
While hammers fell like ringing bells  
In places deep, where dark things sleep,  
In hollow halls beneath the fells.*

*On silver necklaces they strung  
The light of stars, on crowns they hung*

*The dragon-fire, from twisted wire  
The melody of harps they wrung.*

*The mountain throne once more is freed!  
O! wandering folk, the summons heed!  
Come haste! Come haste! across the waste!  
The king of friend and kin has need.*

*Now call we over mountains cold,  
'Come back unto the caverns old'!  
Here at the Gates the king awaits,  
His hands are rich with gems and gold.*

*The king is come unto his hall  
Under the Mountain dark and tall.  
The Worm of Dread is slain and dead,  
And ever so our foes shall fall!*

This song appeared to please Thorin, and he smiled again and grew merry; and he began reckoning the distance to the Iron Hills and how long it would be before Dain could reach the Lonely Mountain, if he had set out as soon as the message reached him. But Bilbo's heart fell, both at the song and the talk: they sounded much too warlike.

The next morning early a company of spearmen was seen crossing the river, and marching up the valley. They bore with them the green banner of the Elvenking and the blue banner of the Lake, and they advanced until they stood right before the wall at the Gate.

Again Thorin hailed them in a loud voice: "Who are you that come armed for war to the gates of Thorin son of Thrain, King under the Mountain?" This time he was answered.

A tall man stood forward, dark of hair and grim of face, and he cried: "Hail Thorin! Why do you fence yourself like a robber in his hold? We are not yet foes, and we rejoice that you are alive beyond our hope. We came expecting to find none living here; yet now that we are met there is matter for a parley and a council."

"Who are you, and of what would you parley?"

"I am Bard, and by my hand was the dragon slain and your treasure delivered. Is that not a matter that concerns you? Moreover I am by right descent the heir of Girion of Dale, and in your hoard is mingled much of the wealth of his halls and towns, which of old Smaug stole. Is not that a matter of which we may speak? Further in his last battle Smaug destroyed the dwellings of the men of Esgaroth, and I am yet the servant of their Master. I would speak for him and ask whether you have no thought for the sorrow and misery of his people. They aided you in your distress, and in recompense you have thus far brought ruin only, though doubtless undesigned."

Now these were fair words and true, if proudly and grimly spoken; and Bilbo thought that Thorin would at once admit what justice was in them. He did not, of course, expect that anyone would remember that it was he who discovered all by himself the dragon's weak spot; and that was just as well, for no-one ever did. But also he did not reckon with the power that gold has upon which a dragon has long brooded, nor with dwarvish hearts. Long hours in the past days Thorin had spent in the treasury, and the lust of it was heavy on him. Though he had hunted chiefly for the Arkenstone, yet he had an eye for many another wonderful thing that was lying there, about which were wound old memories of the labours and the sorrows of his race.

"You put your worst cause last and in the chief place," Thorin answered. "To the treasure of my people no man has a claim, because Smaug who stole it from us also robbed him of life or home. The treasure was not his that his evil deeds should be amended with a share of it. The price of the goods and the assistance that we received of the Lake-men we will fairly pay—in due time. But *nothing* will we give, not even a loaf's worth, under threat of force. While an armed host lies before our doors, we look on you as foes and thieves.

“It is in my mind to ask what share of their inheritance you would have paid to our kindred, had you found the hoard unguarded and us slain.”

“A just question,” replied Bard. “But you are not dead, and we are not robbers. Moreover the wealthy may have pity beyond right on the needy that befriended them when they were in want. And still my other claims remain unanswered.”

“I will not parley, as I have said, with armed men at my gate. Nor at all with the people of the Elvenking, whom I remember with small kindness. In this debate they have no place. Begone now ere our arrows fly! And if you would speak with me again, first dismiss the elvish host to the woods where it belongs, and then return, laying down your arms before you approach the threshold.”

“The Elvenking is my friend, and he has succoured the people of the Lake in their need, though they had no claim but friendship on him,” answered Bard. “We will give you time to repent your words. Gather your wisdom ere we return!” Then he departed and went back to the camp.

Ere many hours were past, the banner-bearers returned, and trumpeters stood forth and blew a blast:

“In the name of Esgaroth and the Forest,” one cried, “we speak unto Thorin Thrain’s son Oakenshield, calling himself the King under the Mountain, and we bid him consider well the claims that have been urged, or be declared our foe. At the least he shall deliver one twelfth portion of the treasure unto Bard, as the dragon-slayer, and as the heir of Girion. From that portion Bard will himself contribute to the aid of Esgaroth; but if Thorin would have the friendship and honour of the lands about, as his sires had of old, then he will give also somewhat of his own for the comfort of the men of the Lake.”

Then Thorin seized a bow of horn and shot an arrow at the speaker. It smote into his shield and stuck there quivering.

“Since such is your answer,” he called in return, “I declare the Mountain besieged. You shall not depart from it, until you call on your side for a truce and a parley. We will bear no weapons against you, but we leave you to your gold. You may eat that, if you will!”

With that the messengers departed swiftly, and the dwarves were left to consider their case. So grim had Thorin become, that even if they had wished, the others would not have dared to find fault with him; but indeed most of them seemed to share his mind—except perhaps old fat Bombur and Fili and Kili. Bilbo, of course, disapproved of the whole turn of affairs. He had by now had more than enough of the Mountain, and being besieged inside it was not at all to his taste.

“The whole place still stinks of dragon,” he grumbled to himself, “and it makes me sick. And *cram* is beginning simply to stick in my throat.”



## Chapter XVI: A Thief In The Night

Now the days passed slowly and wearily. Many of the dwarves spent their time piling and ordering the treasure; and now Thorin spoke of the Arkenstone of Thrain, and bade them eagerly to look for it in every corner.

“For the Arkenstone of my father,” he said, “is worth more than a river of gold in itself, and to me it is beyond price. That stone of all the treasure I name unto myself, and I will be avenged on anyone who finds it and withholds it.”

Bilbo heard these words and he grew afraid, wondering what would happen, if the stone was found—wrapped in an old bundle of tattered oddments that he used as a pillow. All the same he did not speak of it, for as the weariness of the days grew heavier, the beginnings of a plan had come into his little head.

Things had gone on like this for some time, when the ravens brought news that Dain and more than five hundred dwarves, hurrying from the Iron Hills, were now within about two days’ march of Dale, coming from the North-East.

“But they cannot reach the Mountain unmarked,” said Roäc, “and I fear lest there be battle in the valley. I do not call this counsel good. Though they are a grim folk, they are not likely to overcome the host that besets you; and even if they did so, what will you gain? Winter and snow is hastening behind them. How shall you be fed without the friendship and goodwill of the lands about you? The treasure is likely to be your death, though the dragon is no more!”

But Thorin was not moved. “Winter and snow will bite both men and elves,” he said, “and they may find their dwelling in the waste grievous to bear. With my friends behind them and winter upon them, they will perhaps be in softer mood to parley with.”

That night Bilbo made up his mind. The sky was black and moonless. As soon as it was full dark, he went to a corner of an inner chamber just within the gate and drew from his bundle a rope, and also the Arkenstone wrapped in a rag. Then he climbed to the top of the wall. Only Bombur was there, for it was his turn to watch, and the dwarves kept only one watchman at a time.

“It is mighty cold!” said Bombur. “I wish we could have a fire up here as they have in the camp!”

“It is warm enough inside,” said Bilbo.

“I daresay; but I am bound here till midnight,” grumbled the fat dwarf. “A sorry business altogether. Not that I venture to disagree with Thorin, may his beard grow ever longer; yet he was ever a dwarf with a stiff neck.”

“Not as stiff as my legs,” said Bilbo. “I am tired of stairs and stone passages. I would give a good deal for the feel of grass at my toes.”

“I would give a good deal for the feel of a strong drink in my throat, and for a soft bed after a good supper!”

“I can’t give you those, while the siege is going on. But it is long since I watched, and I will take your turn for you, if you like. There is no sleep in me tonight.”

“You are a good fellow, Mr. Baggins, and I will take your offer kindly. If there should be anything to note, rouse me first, mind you! I will lie in the inner chamber to the left, not far away.”

“Off you go!” said Bilbo. “I will wake you at midnight, and you can wake the next watchman.”

As soon as Bombur had gone, Bilbo put on his ring, fastened his rope, slipped down over the wall, and was gone. He had about five hours before him. Bombur would sleep (he could sleep at any time, and ever since the

adventure in the forest he was always trying to recapture the beautiful dreams he had then); and all the others were busy with Thorin. It was unlikely that any, even Fili or Kili, would come out on the wall until it was their turn.

It was very dark, and the road after a while, when he left the newly made path and climbed down towards the lower course of the stream, was strange to him. At last he came to the bend where he had to cross the water, if he was to make for the camp, as he wished. The bed of the stream was there shallow but already broad, and fording it in the dark was not easy for the little hobbit. He was nearly across when he missed his footing on a round stone and fell into the cold water with a splash. He had barely scrambled out on the far bank, shivering and spluttering, when up came elves in the gloom with bright lanterns and searched for the cause of the noise.

"That was no fish!" one said. "There is a spy about. Hide your lights! They will help him more than us, if it is that queer little creature that is said to be their servant."

"Servant, indeed!" snorted Bilbo; and in the middle of his snort he sneezed loudly, and the elves immediately gathered towards the sound.

"Let's have a light!" he said. "I am here, if you want me!" and he slipped off his ring, and popped from behind a rock.

They seized him quickly, in spite of their surprise. "Who are you? Are you the dwarves' hobbit? What are you doing? How did you get so far past our sentinels?" they asked one after another.

"I am Mr. Bilbo Baggins," he answered, "companion of Thorin, if you want to know. I know your king well by sight, though perhaps he doesn't know me to look at. But Bard will remember me, and it is Bard I particularly want to see."

"Indeed!" said they, "and what may be your business?"

"Whatever it is, it's my own, my good elves. But if you wish ever to get back to your own woods from this cold cheerless place," he answered shivering, "you will take me along quick to a fire, where I can dry—and then you will let me speak to your chiefs as quick as may be. I have only an hour or two to spare."

That is how it came about that some two hours after his escape from the Gate, Bilbo was sitting beside a warm fire in front of a large tent, and there sat too, gazing curiously at him, both the Elvenking and Bard. A hobbit in elvish armour, partly wrapped in an old blanket, was something new to them.

"Really you know," Bilbo was saying in his best business manner, "things are impossible. Personally I am tired of the whole affair. I wish I was back in the West in my own home, where folk are more reasonable. But I have an interest in this matter—one fourteenth share, to be precise, according to a letter, which fortunately I believe I have kept." He drew from a pocket in his old jacket (which he still wore over his mail), crumpled and much folded, Thorin's letter that had been put under the clock on his mantelpiece in May!

"A share in the *profits*, mind you," he went on. "I am aware of that. Personally I am only too ready to consider all your claims carefully, and deduct what is right from the total before putting in my own claim. However you don't know Thorin Oakenshield as well as I do now. I assure you, he is quite ready to sit on a heap of gold and starve, as long as you sit here."

"Well, let him!" said Bard. "Such a fool deserves to starve."

"Quite so," said Bilbo. "I see your point of view. At the same time winter is coming on fast. Before long you will be having snow and what not, and supplies will be difficult—even for elves I imagine. Also there will be other difficulties. You have not heard of Dain and the dwarves of the Iron Hills?"

"We have, a long time ago; but what has he got to do with us?" asked the king.

"I thought as much. I see I have some information you have not got. Dain, I may tell you, is now less than two days' march off, and has at least five hundred grim dwarves with him—a good many of them have had experience in the dreadful dwarf and goblin wars, of which you have no doubt heard. When they arrive there may be serious trouble."

“Why do you tell us this? Are you betraying your friends, or are you threatening us?” asked Bard grimly.

“My dear Bard!” squeaked Bilbo. “Don’t be so hasty! I never met such suspicious folk! I am merely trying to avoid trouble for all concerned. Now I will make you an offer!!”

“Let us hear it!” they said.

“You may see it!” said he. “It is this!” and he drew forth the Arkenstone, and threw away the wrapping.

The Elvenking himself, whose eyes were used to things of wonder and beauty, stood up in amazement. Even Bard gazed marvelling at it in silence. It was as if a globe had been filled with moonlight and hung before them in a net woven of the glint of frosty stars.

“This is the Arkenstone of Thrain,” said Bilbo, “the Heart of the Mountain; and it is also the heart of Thorin. He values it above a river of gold. I give it to you. It will aid you in your bargaining.” Then Bilbo, not without a shudder, not without a glance of longing, handed the marvellous stone to Bard, and he held it in his hand, as though dazed.

“But how is it yours to give?” he asked at last with an effort.

“O well!” said the hobbit uncomfortably. “It isn’t exactly; but, well, I am willing to let it stand against all my claim, don’t you know. I may be a burglar—or so they say: personally I never really felt like one—but I am an honest one, I hope, more or less. Anyway I am going back now, and the dwarves can do what they like to me. I hope you will find it useful.”

The Elvenking looked at Bilbo with a new wonder. “Bilbo Baggins!” he said. “You are more worthy to wear the armour of elf-princes than many that have looked more comely in it. But I wonder if Thorin Oakenshield will see it so. I have more knowledge of dwarves in general than you have perhaps. I advise you to remain with us, and here you shall be honoured and thrice welcome.”

“Thank you very much I am sure,” said Bilbo with a bow. “But I don’t think I ought to leave my friends like this, after all we have gone through together. And I promised to wake old Bombur at midnight, too! Really I must be going, and quickly.”

Nothing they could say would stop him; so an escort was provided for him, and as he went both the king and Bard saluted him with honour. As they passed through the camp an old man, wrapped in a dark cloak, rose from a tent door where he was sitting and came towards them.

“Well done! Mr. Baggins!” he said, clapping Bilbo on the back. “There is always more about you than anyone expects!” It was Gandalf.

For the first time for many a day Bilbo was really delighted. But there was no time for all the questions that he immediately wished to ask.

“All in good time!” said Gandalf. “Things are drawing towards the end now, unless I am mistaken. There is an unpleasant time just in front of you; but keep your heart up! You *may* come through all right. There is news brewing that even the ravens have not heard. Good night!”

Puzzled but cheered, Bilbo hurried on. He was guided to a safe ford and set across dry, and then he said farewell to the elves and climbed carefully back towards the Gate. Great weariness began to come over him; but it was well before midnight when he clambered up the rope again—it was still where he had left it. He untied it and hid it, and then he sat down on the wall and wondered anxiously what would happen next.

At midnight he woke up Bombur; and then in turn rolled himself up in his corner, without listening to the old dwarf’s thanks (which he felt he had hardly earned). He was soon fast asleep forgetting all his worries till the morning. As a matter of fact he was dreaming of eggs and bacon.



## Chapter XVII: The Clouds Burst

Next day the trumpets rang early in the camp. Soon a single runner was seen hurrying along the narrow path. At a distance he stood and hailed them, asking whether Thorin would now listen to another embassy, since new tidings had come to hand, and matters were changed.

“That will be Dain!” said Thorin when he heard. “They will have got wind of his coming. I thought that would alter their mood! Bid them come few in number and weaponless, and I will hear,” he called to the messenger.

About midday the banners of the Forest and the Lake were seen to be borne forth again. A company of twenty was approaching. At the beginning of the narrow way they laid aside sword and spear, and came on towards the Gate. Wondering, the dwarves saw that among them were both Bard and the Elvenking, before whom an old man wrapped in cloak and hood bore a strong casket of iron-bound wood.

“Hail Thorin!” said Bard. “Are you still of the same mind?”

“My mind does not change with the rising and setting of a few suns,” answered Thorin. “Did you come to ask me idle questions? Still the elf-host has not departed as I bade! Till then you come in vain to bargain with me.”

“Is there then nothing for which you would yield any of your gold?”

“Nothing that you or your friends have to offer.”

“What of the Arkenstone of Thrain?” said he, and at the same moment the old man opened the casket and held aloft the jewel. The light leapt from his hand, bright and white in the morning.

Then Thorin was stricken dumb with amazement and confusion. No-one spoke for a long while.

Thorin at length broke the silence, and his voice was thick with wrath. “That stone was my father’s, and is mine,” he said. “Why should I purchase my own?” But wonder overcame him and he added: “But how came you by the heirloom of my house—if there is need to ask such a question of thieves?”

“We are not thieves,” Bard answered. “Your own we will give back in return for our own.”

“How came you by it?” shouted Thorin in gathering rage.

“I gave it to them!” squeaked Bilbo, who was peering over the wall, by now in a dreadful fright.

“You! You!” cried Thorin, turning upon him and grasping him with both hands. “You miserable hobbit! You undersized—burglar!” he shouted at a loss for words, and he shook poor Bilbo like a rabbit.

“By the beard of Durin! I wish I had Gandalf here! Curse him for his choice of you! May his beard wither! As for you I will throw you to the rocks!” he cried and lifted Bilbo in his arms.

“Stay! Your wish is granted!” said a voice. The old man with the casket threw aside his hood and cloak. “Here is Gandalf! And none too soon it seems. If you don’t like my Burglar, please don’t damage him. Put him down, and listen first to what he has to say!”

“You all seem in league!” said Thorin dropping Bilbo on the top of the wall. “Never again will I have dealings with any wizard or his friends. What have you to say, you descendant of rats?”

“Dear me! Dear me!” said Bilbo. “I am sure this is all very uncomfortable. You may remember saying that I might choose my own fourteenth share? Perhaps I took it too literally—I have been told that dwarves are sometimes politer in word than in deed. The time was, all the same, when you seemed to think that I had been of some service. Descendant of rats, indeed! Is this all the service of you and your family that I was promised, Thorin? Take it that I have disposed of my share as I wished, and let it go at that!”

"I will," said Thorin grimly. "And I will let you go at that—and may we never meet again!" Then he turned and spoke over the wall. "I am betrayed," he said. "It was rightly guessed that I could not forbear to redeem the Arkenstone, the treasure of my house. For it I will give one fourteenth share of the hoard in silver and gold, setting aside the gems; but that shall be accounted the promised share of this traitor, and with that reward he shall depart, and you can divide it as you will. He will get little enough, I doubt not. Take him, if you wish him to live; and no friendship of mine goes with him.

"Get down now to your friends!" he said to Bilbo, "or I will throw you down."

"What about the gold and silver?" asked Bilbo.

"That shall follow after, as can be arranged," said he. "Get down!"

"Until then we keep the stone," cried Bard.

"You are not making a very splendid figure as King under the Mountain," said Gandalf. "But things may change yet."

"They may indeed," said Thorin. And already, so strong was the bewilderment of the treasure upon him, he was pondering whether by the help of Dain he might not recapture the Arkenstone and withhold the share of the reward.

And so Bilbo was swung down from the wall, and departed with nothing for all his trouble, except the armour which Thorin had given him already. More than one of the dwarves in their hearts felt shame and pity at his going.

"Farewell!" he cried to them. "We may meet again as friends."

"Be off!" called Thorin. "You have mail upon you, which was made by my folk, and is too good for you. It cannot be pierced by arrows; but if you do not hasten, I will sting your miserable feet. So be swift!"

"Not so hasty!" said Bard. "We will give you until tomorrow. At noon we will return, and see if you have brought from the hoard the portion that is to be set against the stone. If that is done without deceit, then we will depart, and the elf-host will go back to the Forest. In the meanwhile farewell!"

With that they went back to the camp; but Thorin sent messengers by Roäc telling Dain of what had passed, and bidding him come with wary speed.

That day passed and the night. The next day the wind shifted west, and the air was dark and gloomy. The morning was still early when a cry was heard in the camp. Runners came in to report that a host of dwarves had appeared round the eastern spur of the Mountain and was now hastening to Dale. Dain had come. He had hurried on through the night, and so had come upon them sooner than they had expected. Each one of his folk was clad in a hauberk of steel mail that hung to his knees, and his legs were covered with hose of a fine and flexible metal mesh, the secret of whose making was possessed by Dain's people. The dwarves are exceedingly strong for their height, but most of these were strong even for dwarves. In battle they wielded heavy two-handed mattocks; but each of them had also a short broad sword at his side and a roundshield slung at his back. Their beards were forked and plaited and thrust into their belts. Their caps were of iron and they were shod with iron, and their faces were grim.

Trumpets called men and elves to arms. Before long the dwarves could be seen coming up the valley at a great pace. They halted between the river and the eastern spur; but a few held on their way, and crossing the river drew near the camp; and there they laid down their weapons and held up their hands in sign of peace. Bard went out to meet them, and with him went Bilbo.

"We are sent from Dain son of Nain," they said when questioned. "We are hastening to our kinsmen in the Mountain, since we learn that the kingdom of old is renewed. But who are you that sit in the plain as foes before defended walls?" This, of course, in the polite and rather old-fashioned language of such occasions, meant simply: "You have no business here. We are going on, so make way or we shall fight you!" They meant to push on between the Mountain and the loop of the river; for the narrow land there did not seem to be strongly guarded.



Bard, of course, refused to allow the dwarves to go straight on to the Mountain. He was determined to wait until the gold and silver had been brought out in exchange for the Arkenstone; for he did not believe that this would be done, if once the fortress was manned with so large and warlike a company. They had brought with them a great store of supplies; for the dwarves can carry very heavy burdens, and nearly all of Dain's folk, in spite of their rapid march, bore huge packs on their backs in addition to their weapons. They would stand a siege for weeks, and by that time yet more dwarves might come, and yet more, for Thorin had many relatives. Also they would be able to reopen and guard some other gate, so that the besiegers would have to encircle the whole mountain; and for that they had not sufficient numbers.

These were, in fact, precisely their plans (for the raven-messengers had been busy between Thorin and Dain); but for the moment the way was barred, so after angry words the dwarf-messengers retired muttering in their beards. Bard then sent messengers at once to the Gate; but they found no gold or payment. Arrows came forth as soon as they were within shot, and they hastened back in dismay. In the camp all was now astir, as if for battle; for the dwarves of Dain were advancing along the eastern bank.

"Fools!" laughed Bard, "to come thus beneath the Mountain's arm! They do not understand war above ground, whatever they may know of battle in the mines. There are many of our archers and spearmen now hidden in the rocks upon their right flank. Dwarf-mail may be good, but they will soon be hard put to it. Let us set on them now from both sides, before they are fully rested!"

But the Elvenking said: "Long will I tarry, ere I begin this war for gold. The dwarves cannot pass us, unless we will, or do anything that we cannot mark. Let us hope still for something that will bring reconciliation. Our advantage in numbers will be enough, if in the end it must come to unhappy blows."

But he reckoned without the dwarves. The knowledge that the Arkenstone was in the hands of the besiegers burned in their thoughts; also they guessed the hesitation of Bard and his friends, and resolved to strike while they debated.

Suddenly without a signal they sprang silently forward to attack. Bows twanged and arrows whistled; battle was about to be joined.

Still more suddenly a darkness came on with dreadful swiftness! A black cloud hurried over the sky. Winter thunder on a wild wind rolled roaring up and rumbled in the Mountain, and lightning lit its peak. And beneath the thunder another blackness could be seen whirling forward; but it did not come with the wind, it came from the North, like a vast cloud of birds, so dense that no light could be seen between their wings.

"Halt!" cried Gandalf, who appeared suddenly, and stood alone, with arms uplifted, between the advancing dwarves and the ranks awaiting them. "Halt!" he called in a voice like thunder, and his staff blazed forth with a flash like the lightning. "Dread has come upon you all! Alas! it has come more swiftly than I guessed. The Goblins are upon you! Bolg<sup>16</sup> of the North is coming, O Dain! whose father you slew in Moria. Behold! the bats are above his army like a sea of locusts. They ride upon wolves and Wargs are in their train!"

Amazement and confusion fell upon them all. Even as Gandalf had been speaking the darkness grew. The dwarves halted and gazed at the sky. The elves cried out with many voices.

"Come!" called Gandalf. "There is yet time for council. Let Dain son of Nain come swiftly to us!"

So began a battle that none had expected; and it was called the Battle of Five Armies, and it was very terrible. Upon one side were the Goblins and the Wild Wolves, and upon the other were Elves and Men and Dwarves. This is how it fell out. Ever since the fall of the Great Goblin of the Misty Mountains the hatred of their race for the dwarves had been rekindled to fury. Messengers had passed to and fro between all their cities, colonies and strongholds; for they resolved now to win the dominion of the North. Tidings they had gathered in secret ways; and in all the mountains there was a forging and an arming. Then they marched and gathered by hill and valley, going ever by tunnel or under dark, until around and beneath the great mountain Gundabad of the North, where

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<sup>16</sup> Son of Azog. See [above](#).

was their capital, a vast host was assembled ready to sweep down in time of storm unawares upon the South. Then they learned of the death of Smaug, and joy was in their hearts; and they hastened night after night through the mountains, and came thus at last on a sudden from the North hard on the heels of Dain. Not even the ravens knew of their coming until they came out in the broken lands which divided the Lonely Mountain from the hills behind. How much Gandalf knew cannot be said, but it is plain that he had not expected this sudden assault.

This is the plan that he made in council with the Elvenking and with Bard; and with Dain, for the dwarf-lord now joined them: the Goblins were the foes of all, and at their coming all other quarrels were forgotten. Their only hope was to lure the goblins into the valley between the arms of the Mountain; and themselves to man the great spurs that struck south and east. Yet this would be perilous, if the goblins were in sufficient numbers to overrun the Mountain itself, and so attack them also from behind and above; but there was no time to make any other plan, or to summon any help.

Soon the thunder passed, rolling away to the South-East; but the bat-cloud came, flying lower, over the shoulder of the Mountain, and whirled above them shutting out the light and filling them with dread.

“To the Mountain!” called Bard. “To the Mountain! Let us take our places while there is yet time!”

On the Southern spur, in its lower slopes and in the rocks at its feet, the Elves were set; on the Eastern spur were men and dwarves. But Bard and some of the nimblest of men and elves climbed to the height of the Eastern shoulder to gain a view to the North. Soon they could see the lands before the Mountain’s feet black with a hurrying multitude. Ere long the vanguard swirled round the spur’s end and came rushing into Dale. These were the swiftest wolf-riders, and already their cries and howls rent the air afar. A few brave men were strung before them to make a feint of resistance, and many there fell before the rest drew back and fled to either side. As Gandalf had hoped, the goblin army had gathered behind the resisted vanguard, and poured now in rage into the valley, driving wildly up between the arms of the Mountain, seeking for the foe. Their banners were countless, black and red, and they came on like a tide in fury and disorder.

It was a terrible battle. The most dreadful of all Bilbo’s experiences, and the one which at the time he hated most—which is to say it was the one he was most proud of, and most fond of recalling long afterwards, although he was quite unimportant in it. Actually I may say he put on his ring early in the business, and vanished from sight, if not from all danger. A magic ring of that sort is not a complete protection in a goblin charge, nor does it stop flying arrows and wild spears; but it does help in getting out of the way, and it prevents your head from being specially chosen for a sweeping stroke by a goblin swordsman.

The elves were the first to charge. Their hatred for the goblins is cold and bitter. Their spears and swords shone in the gloom with a gleam of chill flame, so deadly was the wrath of the hands that held them. As soon as the host of their enemies was dense in the valley, they sent against it a shower of arrows, and each flickered as it fled as if with stinging fire. Behind the arrows a thousand of their spearmen leapt down and charged. The yells were deafening. The rocks were stained black with goblin blood.

Just as the goblins were recovering from the onslaught and the elf-charge was halted, there rose from across the valley a deep-throated roar. With cries of “Moria!” and “Dain, Dain!” the dwarves of the Iron Hills plunged in, wielding their mattocks, upon the other side; and beside them came the men of the Lake with long swords.

Panic came upon the Goblins; and even as they turned to meet this new attack, the elves charged again with renewed numbers. Already many of the goblins were flying back down the river to escape from the trap; and many of their own wolves were turning upon them and rending the dead and the wounded. Victory seemed at hand, when a cry rang out on the heights above.

Goblins had scaled the Mountain from the other side and already many were on the slopes above the Gate, and others were streaming down recklessly, heedless of those that fell screaming from cliff and precipice, to attack the spurs from above. Each of these could be reached by paths that ran down from the main mass of the Mountain in the centre; and the defenders had too few to bar the way for long. Victory now vanished from hope. They had only stemmed the first onslaught of the black tide.

Day drew on. The goblins gathered again in the valley. There a host of Wargs came ravening and with them came the bodyguard of Bolg, goblins of huge size with scimitars of steel. Soon actual darkness was coming into a stormy sky; while still the great bats swirled about the heads and ears of elves and men, or fastened vampire-like on the stricken. Now Bard was fighting to defend the Eastern spur, and yet giving slowly back; and the elf-lords were at bay about their king upon the southern arm, near to the watch-post on Ravenhill.

Suddenly there was a great shout, and from the Gate came a trumpet call. They had forgotten Thorin! Part of the wall, moved by levers, fell outward with a crash into the pool. Out leapt the King under the Mountain, and his companions followed him. Hood and cloak were gone; they were in shining armour, and red light leapt from their eyes. In the gloom the great dwarf gleamed like gold in a dying fire.

Rocks were hurled down from on high by the goblins above; but they held on, leapt down to the falls' foot, and rushed forward to battle. Wolf and rider fell or fled before them. Thorin wielded his axe with mighty strokes, and nothing seemed to harm him.

"To me! To me! Elves and Men! To me! O my kinsfolk!" he cried, and his voice shook like a horn in the valley.

Down, heedless of order, rushed all the dwarves of Dain to his help. Down too came many of the Lake-men, for Bard could not restrain them; and out upon the other side came many of the spearmen of the elves. Once again the goblins were stricken in the valley; and they were piled in heaps till Dale was dark and hideous with their corpses. The Wargs were scattered and Thorin drove right against the bodyguard of Bolg. But he could not pierce their ranks.

Already behind him among the goblin dead lay many men and many dwarves, and many a fair elf that should have lived yet long ages merrily in the wood. And as the valley widened his onset grew ever slower. His numbers were too few. His flanks were unguarded. Soon the attackers were attacked, and they were forced into a great ring, facing every way, hemmed all about with goblins and wolves returning to the assault. The bodyguard of Bolg came howling against them, and drove in upon their ranks like waves upon cliffs of sand. Their friends could not help them, for the assault from the Mountain was renewed with redoubled force, and upon either side men and elves were being slowly beaten down.

On all this Bilbo looked with misery. He had taken his stand on Ravenhill among the Elves—partly because there was more chance of escape from that point, and partly (with the more Tookish part of his mind) because if he was going to be in a last desperate stand, he preferred on the whole to defend the Elvenking. Gandalf, too, I may say, was there, sitting on the ground as if in deep thought, preparing, I suppose, some last blast of magic before the end.

That did not seem far off. "It will not be long now," thought Bilbo, "before the goblins win the Gate, and we are all slaughtered or driven down and captured. Really it is enough to make one weep, after all one has gone through. I would rather old Smaug had been left with all the wretched treasure, than that these vile creatures should get it, and poor old Bombur, and Balin and Fili and Kili and all the rest come to a bad end; and Bard too, and the Lake-men and the merry elves. Misery me! I have heard songs of many battles, and I have always understood that defeat may be glorious. It seems very uncomfortable, not to say distressing. I wish I was well out of it."

The clouds were torn by the wind, and a red sunset slashed the West. Seeing the sudden gleam in the gloom Bilbo looked round. He gave a great cry: he had seen a sight that made his heart leap, dark shapes small yet majestic against the distant glow.

"The Eagles! The Eagles!" he shouted. "The Eagles are coming!"

Bilbo's eyes were seldom wrong. The eagles were coming down the wind, line after line, in such a host as must have gathered from all the eyries of the North.

"The Eagles! the Eagles!" Bilbo cried, dancing and waving his arms. If the elves could not see him they could hear him. Soon they too took up the cry, and it echoed across the valley. Many wondering eyes looked up, though as yet nothing could be seen except from the southern shoulders of the Mountain.

“The Eagles!” cried Bilbo once more, but at that moment a stone hurtling from above smote heavily on his helm, and he fell with a crash and knew no more.



## Chapter XVIII: The Return Journey

When Bilbo came to himself, he was literally by himself. He was lying on the flat stones of Ravenhill, and no-one was near. A cloudless day, but cold, was broad above him. He was shaking, and as chilled as stone, but his head burned with fire.

“Now I wonder what has happened?” he said to himself. “At any rate I am not yet one of the fallen heroes; but I suppose there is still time enough for that!”

He sat up painfully. Looking into the valley he could see no living goblins. After a while as his head cleared a little, he thought he could see elves moving in the rocks below. He rubbed his eyes. Surely there was a camp still in the plain some distance off; and there was a coming and going about the Gate? Dwarves seemed to be busy removing the wall. But all was deadly still. There was no call and no echo of a song. Sorrow seemed to be in the air.

“Victory after all, I suppose!” he said, feeling his aching head. “Well, it seems a very gloomy business.”

Suddenly he was aware of a man climbing up and coming towards him.

“Hullo there!” he called with a shaky voice. “Hullo there! What news?”

“What voice is it that speaks among the stones?” said the man halting and peering about him not far from where Bilbo sat.

Then Bilbo remembered his ring! “Well I’m blessed!” said he. “This invisibility has its drawbacks after all. Otherwise I suppose I might have spent a warm and comfortable night in bed!”

“It’s me, Bilbo Baggins, companion of Thorin!” he cried, hurriedly taking off the ring.

“It is well that I have found you!” said the man striding forward. “You are needed and we have looked for you long. You would have been numbered among the dead, who are many, if Gandalf the wizard had not said that your voice was last heard in this place. I have been sent to look here for the last time. Are you much hurt?”

“A nasty knock on the head, I think,” said Bilbo. “But I have a helm and a hard skull. All the same I feel sick and my legs are like straws.”

“I will carry you down to the camp in the valley,” said the man, and picked him lightly up.

The man was swift and sure-footed. It was not long before Bilbo was set down before a tent in Dale; and there stood Gandalf, with his arm in a sling. Even the wizard had not escaped without a wound; and there were few unharmed in all the host.

When Gandalf saw Bilbo, he was delighted. “Baggins!” he exclaimed. “Well I never! Alive after all—I *am* glad! I began to wonder if even your luck would see you through! A terrible business, and it nearly was disastrous. But other news can wait. Come!” he said more gravely. “You are called for;” and leading the hobbit he took him within the tent.

“Hail! Thorin,” he said as he entered. “I have brought him.”

There indeed lay Thorin Oakenshield, wounded with many wounds, and his rent armour and notched axe were cast upon the floor. He looked up as Bilbo came beside him.

“Farewell, good thief,” he said. “I go now to the halls of waiting to sit beside my fathers, until the world is renewed. Since I leave now all gold and silver, and go where it is of little worth, I wish to part in friendship from you, and I would take back my words and deeds at the Gate.”

Bilbo knelt on one knee filled with sorrow. "Farewell, King under the Mountain!" he said. "This is a bitter adventure, if it must end so; and not a mountain of gold can amend it. Yet I am glad that I have shared in your perils—that has been more than any Baggins deserves."

"No!" said Thorin. "There is more in you of good than you know, child of the kindly West. Some courage and some wisdom, blended in measure. If more of us valued food and cheer and song above hoarded gold, it would be a merrier world. But sad or merry, I must leave it now. Farewell!"

Then Bilbo turned away, and he went by himself, and sat alone wrapped in a blanket, and, whether you believe it or not, he wept until his eyes were red and his voice was hoarse. He was a kindly little soul. Indeed it was long before he had the heart to make a joke again. "A mercy it is," he said at last to himself, "that I woke up when I did. I wish Thorin were living, but I am glad that we parted in kindness. You are a fool, Bilbo Baggins, and you made a great mess of that business with the stone; and there was a battle, in spite of all your efforts to buy peace and quiet, but I suppose you can hardly be blamed for that."

All that had happened after he was stunned, Bilbo learned later; but it gave him more sorrow than joy, and he was now weary of his adventure. He was aching in his bones for the homeward journey. That, however, was a little delayed, so in the meantime I will tell something of events. The Eagles had long had suspicion of the goblins' mustering; from their watchfulness the movements in the mountains could not be altogether hid. So they too had gathered in great numbers, under the great Eagle of the Misty Mountains; and at length smelling battle from afar they had come speeding down the gale in the nick of time. They it was who dislodged the goblins from the mountain-slopes, casting them over precipices, or driving them down shrieking and bewildered among their foes. It was not long before they had freed the Lonely Mountain, and elves and men on either side of the valley could come at last to the help of the battle below.

But even with the Eagles they were still outnumbered. In that last hour Beorn himself had appeared—no-one knew how or from where. He came alone, and in bear's shape; and he seemed to have grown almost to giant-size in his wrath.

The roar of his voice was like drums and guns; and he tossed wolves and goblins from his path like straws and feathers. He fell upon their rear, and broke like a clap of thunder through the ring. The dwarves were making a stand still about their lords upon a low rounded hill. Then Beorn stooped and lifted Thorin, who had fallen pierced with spears, and bore him out of the fray.

Swiftly he returned and his wrath was redoubled, so that nothing could withstand him, and no weapon seemed to bite upon him. He scattered the bodyguard, and pulled down Bolg himself and crushed him. Then dismay fell on the Goblins and they fled in all directions. But weariness left their enemies with the coming of new hope, and they pursued them closely, and prevented most of them from escaping where they could. They drove many of them into the Running River, and such as fled south or west they hunted into the marshes about the Forest River; and there the greater part of the last fugitives perished, while those that came hardly to the Wood-elves' realm were there slain, or drawn in to die deep in the trackless dark of Mirkwood. Songs have said that three parts of the goblin warriors of the North perished on that day, and the mountains had peace for many a year.

Victory had been assured before the fall of night; but the pursuit was still on foot, when Bilbo returned to the camp; and not many were in the valley save the more grievously wounded.

"Where are the Eagles?" he asked Gandalf that evening, as he lay wrapped in many warm blankets.

"Some are in the hunt," said the wizard, "but most have gone back to their eyries. They would not stay here, and departed with the first light of morning. Dain has crowned their chief with gold, and sworn friendship with them forever."

"I am sorry. I mean, I should have liked to see them again," said Bilbo sleepily; "perhaps I shall see them on the way home. I suppose I shall be going home soon?"

"As soon as you like," said the wizard.

Actually it was some days before Bilbo really set out. They buried Thorin deep beneath the Mountain, and Bard laid the Arkenstone upon his breast.

“There let it lie till the Mountain falls!” he said. “May it bring good fortune to all his folk that dwell here after!”

Upon his tomb the Elvenking then laid Orcrist, the elvish sword that had been taken from Thorin in captivity. It is said in songs that it gleamed ever in the dark if foes approached, and the fortress of the dwarves could not be taken by surprise. There now Dain son of Nain took up his abode, and he became King under the Mountain, and in time many other dwarves gathered to his throne in the ancient halls. Of the twelve companions of Thorin, ten remained. Fili and Kili had fallen defending him with shield and body, for he was their mother’s elder brother. The others remained with Dain; for Dain dealt his treasure well.

There was, of course, no longer any question of dividing the hoard in such shares as had been planned, to Balin and Dwalin, and Dori and Nori and Ori, and Oin and Gloin, and Bifur and Bofur and Bombur—or to Bilbo. Yet a fourteenth share of all the silver and gold, wrought and unwrought, was given up to Bard; for Dain said: “We will honour the agreement of the dead, and he has now the Arkenstone in his keeping.”

Even a fourteenth share was wealth exceedingly great, greater than that of many mortal kings. From that treasure Bard sent much gold to the Master of Lake-town; and he rewarded his followers and friends freely. To the Elvenking he gave the emeralds of Girion, such jewels as he most loved, which Dain had restored to him.

To Bilbo he said: “This treasure is as much yours as it is mine; though old agreements cannot stand, since so many have a claim in its winning and defence. Yet even though you were willing to lay aside all your claim, I should wish that the words of Thorin, of which he repented, should not prove true: that we should give you little. I would reward you most richly of all.”

“Very kind of you,” said Bilbo. “But really it is a relief to me. How on earth should I have got all that treasure home without war and murder all along the way, I don’t know. And I don’t know what I should have done with it when I got home. I am sure it is better in your hands.”

In the end he would only take two small chests, one filled with silver, and the other with gold, such as one strong pony could carry. “That will be quite as much as I can manage,” said he.

At last the time came for him to say good-bye to his friends. “Farewell, Balin!” he said; “and farewell, Dwalin; and farewell Dori, Nori, Ori, Oin, Gloin, Bifur, Bofur, and Bombur! May your beards never grow thin!” And turning towards the Mountain he added: “Farewell Thorin Oakenshield! And Fili and Kili! May your memory never fade!”

Then the dwarves bowed low before their Gate, but words stuck in their throats. “Good-bye and good luck, wherever you fare!” said Balin at last. “If ever you visit us again, when our halls are made fair once more, then the feast shall indeed be splendid!”

“If ever you are passing my way,” said Bilbo, “don’t wait to knock! Tea is at four; but any of you are welcome at any time!”

Then he turned away.

The elf-host was on the march; and if it was sadly lessened, yet many were glad, for now the northern world would be merrier for many a long day. The dragon was dead, and the goblins overthrown, and their hearts looked forward after winter to a spring of joy.

Gandalf and Bilbo rode behind the Elvenking, and beside them strode Beorn, once again in man’s shape, and he laughed and sang in a loud voice upon the road. So they went on until they drew near to the borders of Mirkwood, to the north of the place where the Forest River ran out. Then they halted, for the wizard and Bilbo would not enter the wood, even though the king bade them stay a while in his halls. They intended to go along the edge of the forest, and round its northern end in the waste that lay between it and the beginning of the Grey Mountains. It was a long and cheerless road, but now that the goblins were crushed, it seemed safer to them than the dreadful pathways under the trees. Moreover Beorn was going that way too.

“Farewell! O Elvenking!” said Gandalf. “Merry be the greenwood, while the world is yet young! And merry be all your folk!”

“Farewell! O Gandalf!” said the king. “May you ever appear where you are most needed and least expected! The oftener you appear in my halls the better shall I be pleased!”

“I beg of you,” said Bilbo stammering and standing on one foot, “to accept this gift!” and he brought out a necklace of silver and pearls that Dain had given him at their parting.

“In what way have I earned such a gift, O hobbit?” said the king.

“Well, er, I thought, don’t you know,” said Bilbo rather confused, “that, er, some little return should be made for your, er, hospitality. I mean even a burglar has his feelings. I have drunk much of your wine and eaten much of your bread.”

“I will take your gift, O Bilbo the Magnificent!” said the king gravely. “And I name you elf-friend and blessed. May your shadow never grow less (or stealing would be too easy)! Farewell!”

Then the elves turned towards the Forest, and Bilbo started on his long road home.

He had many hardships and adventures before he got back. The Wild was still the Wild, and there were many other things in it in those days beside goblins; but he was well guided and well guarded—the wizard was with him, and Beorn for much of the way—and he was never in great danger again. Anyway by mid-winter Gandalf and Bilbo had come all the way back, along both edges of the Forest, to the doors of Beorn’s house; and there for a while they both stayed. Yule-tide was warm and merry there; and men came from far and wide to feast at Beorn’s bidding. The goblins of the Misty Mountains were now few and terrified, and hidden in the deepest holes they could find; and the Wargs had vanished from the woods, so that men went abroad without fear. Beorn indeed became a great chief afterwards in those regions and ruled a wide land between the mountains and the wood; and it is said that for many generations the men of his line had the power of taking bear’s shape, and some were grim men and bad, but most were in heart like Beorn, if less in size and strength. In their day the last goblins were hunted from the Misty Mountains and a new peace came over the edge of the Wild.

It was spring, and a fair one with mild weathers and a bright sun, before Bilbo and Gandalf took their leave at last of Beorn, and though he longed for home, Bilbo left with regret, for the flowers of the gardens of Beorn were in springtime no less marvellous than in high summer.

At last they came up the long road, and reached the very pass where the goblins had captured them before. But they came to that high point at morning, and looking backward they saw a white sun shining over the outstretched lands. There behind lay Mirkwood, blue in the distance, and darkly green at the nearer edge even in the spring. There far away was the Lonely Mountain on the edge of eyesight. On its highest peak snow yet unmelted was gleaming pale.

“So comes snow after fire, and even dragons have their ending!” said Bilbo, and he turned his back on his adventure. The Tookish part was getting very tired, and the Baggins was daily getting stronger. “I wish now only to be in my own arm-chair!” he said.





## Chapter XIX: The Last Stage

It was on May the First that the two came back at last to the brink of the valley of Rivendell, where stood the Last (or the First) Homely House. Again it was evening, their ponies were tired, especially the one that carried the baggage; and they all felt in need of rest. As they rode down the steep path, Bilbo heard the elves still singing in the trees, as if they had not stopped since he left; and as soon as the riders came down into the lower glades of the wood they burst into a song of much the same kind as before. This is something like it:

*The dragon is withered,  
His bones are now crumbled;  
His armour is shivered,  
His splendour is humbled!  
Though sword shall be rusted,  
And throne and crown perish  
With strength that men trusted  
And wealth that they cherish,  
Here grass is still growing,  
And leaves are yet swinging,  
The white water flowing,  
And elves are yet singing  
Come! Tra-la-la-lally!  
Come back to the valley!*

*The stars are far brighter  
Than gems without measure,  
The moon is far whiter  
Than silver in treasure;  
The fire is more shining  
On hearth in the gloaming  
Than gold won by mining,  
So why go a-roaming?  
O! Tra-la-la-lally  
Come back to the Valley.*

*O! Where are you going,  
So late in returning?  
The river is flowing,  
The stars are all burning!  
O! Whither so laden,  
So sad and so dreary?  
Here elf and elf-maiden  
Now welcome the weary  
With Tra-la-la-lally  
Come back to the Valley,  
Tra-la-la-lally*

*Fa-la-la-lally*  
*Fa-la!*

Then the elves of the valley came out and greeted them and led them across the water to the house of Elrond. There a warm welcome was made them, and there were many eager ears that evening to hear the tale of their adventures. Gandalf it was who spoke, for Bilbo was fallen quiet and drowsy. Most of the tale he knew, for he had been in it, and had himself told much of it to the wizard on their homeward way or in the house of Beorn; but every now and again he would open one eye, and listen, when a part of the story which he did not yet know came in.

It was in this way that he learned where Gandalf had been to; for he overheard the words of the wizard to Elrond. It appeared that Gandalf had been to a great council of the white wizards, masters of lore and good magic; and that they had at last driven the Necromancer from his dark hold in the south of Mirkwood.

“Ere long now,” Gandalf was saying, “the Forest will grow somewhat more wholesome. The North will be freed from that horror for many long years, I hope. Yet I wish he were banished from the world!”

“It would be well indeed,” said Elrond; “but I fear that will not come about in this age of the world, or for many after.”

When the tale of their journeyings was told, there were other tales, and yet more tales, tales of long ago, and tales of new things, and tales of no time at all, till Bilbo’s head fell forward on his chest, and he snored comfortably in a corner.

He woke to find himself in a white bed, and the moon shining through an open window. Below it many elves were singing loud and clear on the banks of the stream.

*Sing all ye joyful, now sing all together!*  
*The wind’s in the tree-top, the wind’s in the heather;*  
*The stars are in blossom, the moon is in flower,*  
*And bright are the windows of Night in her tower.*

*Dance all ye joyful, now dance all together!*  
*Soft is the grass, and let foot be like feather!*  
*The river is silver, the shadows are fleeting;*  
*Merry is May-time, and merry our meeting.*

*Sing we now softly, and dreams let us weave him!*  
*Wind him in slumber and there let us leave him!*  
*The wanderer sleepeth. Now soft be his pillow!*  
*Lullaby! Lullaby! Alder and Willow!*

*Sigh no more Pine, till the wind of the morn!*  
*Fall Moon! Dark be the land!*  
*Hush! Hush! Oak, Ash, and Thorn!*  
*Hushed be all water, till dawn is at hand!*

“Well, Merry People!” said Bilbo looking out. “What time by the moon is this? Your lullaby would waken a drunken goblin! Yet I thank you.”

“And your snores would waken a stone dragon—yet we thank you,” they answered with laughter. “It is drawing towards dawn, and you have slept now since the night’s beginning. Tomorrow, perhaps, you will be cured of weariness.”

“A little sleep does a great cure in the house of Elrond,” said he; “but I will take all the cure I can get. A second good night, fair friends!” And with that he went back to bed and slept till late morning.

Weariness fell from him soon in that house, and he had many a merry jest and dance, early and late, with the elves of the valley. Yet even that place could not long delay him now, and he thought always of his own home. After a week, therefore, he said farewell to Elrond, and giving him such small gifts as he would accept, he rode away with Gandalf.

Even as they left the valley the sky darkened in the West before them, and wind and rain came up to meet them.

“Merry is May-time!” said Bilbo, as the rain beat into his face. “But our back is to legends and we are coming home. I suppose this is the first taste of it.”

“There is a long road yet,” said Gandalf.

“But it is the last road,” said Bilbo.

They came to the river that marked the very edge of the borderland of the Wild, and to the ford beneath the steep bank, which you may remember. The water was swollen both with the melting of the snows at the approach of summer, and with the daylong rain; but they crossed with some difficulty, and pressed forward, as evening fell, on the last stage of their journey.

This was much as it had been before, except that the company was smaller, and more silent; also this time there were no trolls. At each point on the road Bilbo recalled the happenings and the words of a year ago—it seemed to him more like ten—so that, of course, he quickly noted the place where the pony had fallen in the river, and they had turned aside for their nasty adventure with Tom and Bert and Bill.

Not far from the road they found the gold of the trolls, which they had buried, still hidden and untouched. “I have enough to last me my time,” said Bilbo, when they had dug it up. “You had better take this, Gandalf. I daresay you can find a use for it.”

“Indeed I can!” said the wizard. “But share and share alike! You may find you have more needs than you expect.”

So they put the gold in bags and slung them on the ponies, who were not at all pleased about it. After that their going was slower, for most of the time they walked. But the land was green and there was much grass through which the hobbit strolled along contentedly. He mopped his face with a red silk handkerchief—no! not a single one of his own had survived, he had borrowed this one from Elrond—for now June had brought summer, and the weather was bright and hot again.

As all things come to an end, even this story, a day came at last when they were in sight of the country where Bilbo had been born and bred, where the shapes of the land and of the trees were as well known to him as his hands and toes. Coming to a rise he could see his own Hill in the distance, and he stopped suddenly and said:

*Roads go ever ever on,  
Over rock and under tree,  
By caves where never sun has shone,  
By streams that never find the sea;  
Over snow by winter sown,  
And through the merry flowers of June,  
Over grass and over stone,  
And under mountains in the moon.*

*Roads go ever ever on  
Under cloud and under star,  
Yet feet that wandering have gone  
Turn at last to home afar.  
Eyes that fire and sword have seen  
And horror in the halls of stone  
Look at last on meadows green  
And trees and hills they long have known.*

Gandalf looked at him. “My dear Bilbo!” he said. “Something is the matter with you! You are not the hobbit that you were.”

And so they crossed the bridge and passed the mill by the river and came right back to Bilbo’s own door.

“Bless me! What’s going on?” he cried. There was a great commotion, and people of all sorts, respectable and unrespectable, were thick round the door, and many were going in and out—not even wiping their feet on the mat, as Bilbo noticed with annoyance.

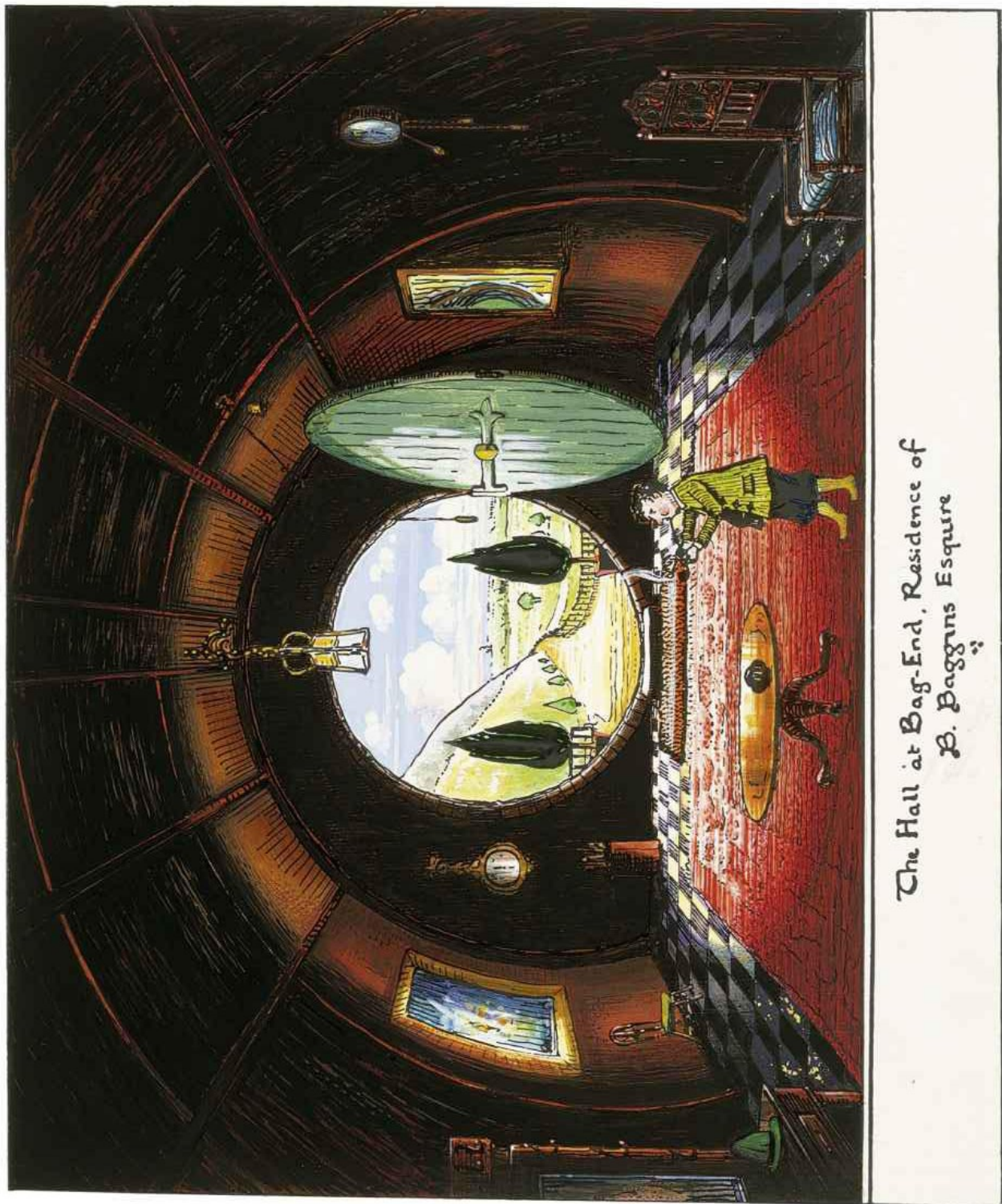
If he was surprised, they were more surprised still. He had arrived back in the middle of an auction! There was a large notice in black and red hung on the gate, stating that on June the Twenty-second Messrs Grubb, Grubb, and Burrowes would sell by auction the effects of the late Bilbo Baggins Esquire, of Bag-End, Underhill, Hobbiton. Sale to commence at ten o’clock sharp. It was now nearly lunchtime, and most of the things had already been sold, for various prices from next to nothing to old songs (as is not unusual at auctions). Bilbo’s cousins the Sackville-Bagginses were, in fact, busy measuring his rooms to see if their own furniture would fit. In short Bilbo was “Presumed Dead”, and not everybody that said so was sorry to find the presumption wrong.

The return of Mr. Bilbo Baggins created quite a disturbance, both under the Hill and over the Hill, and across the Water; it was a great deal more than a nine days’ wonder. The legal bother, indeed, lasted for years. It was quite a long time before Mr. Baggins was in fact admitted to be alive again. The people who had got specially good bargains at the Sale took a deal of convincing; and in the end to save time Bilbo had to buy back quite a lot of his own furniture. Many of his silver spoons mysteriously disappeared and were never accounted for. Personally he suspected the Sackville-Bagginses. On their side they never admitted that the returned Baggins was genuine, and they were not on friendly terms with Bilbo ever after. They really had wanted to live in his nice hobbit-hole so very much.

Indeed Bilbo found he had lost more than spoons—he had lost his reputation. It is true that for ever after he remained an elf-friend, and had the honour of dwarves, wizards, and all such folk as ever passed that way; but he was no longer quite respectable. He was in fact held by all the hobbits of the neighbourhood to be ‘queer’—except by his nephews and nieces on the Took side, but even they were not encouraged in their friendship by their elders.

I am sorry to say he did not mind. He was quite content; and the sound of the kettle on his hearth was ever after more musical than it had been even in the quiet days before the Unexpected Party. His sword he hung over the mantelpiece. His coat of mail was arranged on a stand in the hall (until he lent it to a Museum). His gold and silver was largely spent in presents, both useful and extravagant—which to a certain extent accounts for the affection of his nephews and his nieces. His magic ring he kept a great secret, for he chiefly used it when unpleasant callers came.

He took to writing poetry and visiting the elves; and though many shook their heads and touched their foreheads and said “Poor old Baggins!” and though few believed any of his tales, he remained very happy to the end of his days, and those were extraordinarily long.



Click [here](#) for alternative image.

One autumn evening some years afterwards Bilbo was sitting in his study writing his memoirs—he thought of calling them “There and Back Again, a Hobbit’s Holiday”—when there was a ring at the door. It was Gandalf and a dwarf; and the dwarf was actually Balin.

“Come in! Come in!” said Bilbo, and soon they were settled in chairs by the fire. If Balin noticed that Mr. Baggins’ waistcoat was more extensive (and had real gold buttons), Bilbo also noticed that Balin’s beard was several inches longer, and his jewelled belt was of great magnificence.

They fell to talking of their times together, of course, and Bilbo asked how things were going in the lands of the Mountain. It seemed they were going very well. Bard had rebuilt the town in Dale and men had gathered to him from the Lake and from South and West, and all the valley had become tilled again and rich, and the desolation

was now filled with birds and blossoms in spring and fruit and feasting in autumn. And Lake-town was refounded and was more prosperous than ever, and much wealth went up and down the Running River; and there was friendship in those parts between elves and dwarves and men.

The old Master had come to a bad end. Bard had given him much gold for the help of the Lake-people, but being of the kind that easily catches such disease he fell under the dragon-sickness, and took most of the gold and fled with it, and died of starvation in the Waste, deserted by his companions.

“The new Master is of wiser kind,” said Balin, “and very popular, for, of course, he gets most of the credit for the present prosperity. They are making songs which say that in his day the rivers run with gold.”

“Then the prophecies of the old songs have turned out to be true, after a fashion!” said Bilbo.

“Of course!” said Gandalf. “And why should not they prove true? Surely you don’t disbelieve the prophecies, because you had a hand in bringing them about yourself? You don’t really suppose, do you, that all your adventures and escapes were managed by mere luck, just for your sole benefit? You are a very fine person, Mr. Baggins, and I am very fond of you; but you are only quite a little fellow in a wide world after all!”

“Thank goodness!” said Bilbo laughing, and handed him the tobacco-jar.

# THE LORD OF THE RINGS

[illegible]



J.R.R. TOLKIEN  
**THE LORD OF THE RINGS**

 HarperCollins e-books

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*Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,  
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,  
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,  
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne  
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.  
One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,  
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them  
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.*



## Note On The Text

J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is often erroneously called a trilogy, when it is in fact a single novel, consisting of six books plus appendices, sometimes published in three volumes.

The first volume, *The Fellowship of the Ring*, was published in Great Britain by the London firm George Allen & Unwin on 29 July 1954; an American edition followed on 21 October of the same year, published by Houghton Mifflin Company of Boston. In the production of this first volume, Tolkien experienced what became for him a continual problem: printer's errors and compositor's mistakes, including well-intentioned 'corrections' of his sometimes idiosyncratic usage. These 'corrections' include the altering of *dwarves* to *dwarfs*, *elvish* to *elfish*, *further* to *farther*, *nasturtians* to *nasturtiums*, *try and say* to *try to say* and ('worst of all' to Tolkien) *elven* to *elfin*. In a work such as *The Lord of the Rings*, containing invented languages and delicately constructed nomenclatures, errors and inconsistencies impede both the understanding and the appreciation of serious readers—and Tolkien had many such readers from very early on. Even before the publication of the third volume, which contained much hitherto unrevealed information on the invented languages and writing systems, Tolkien received many letters from readers written in these systems, in addition to numerous enquiries on the finer points of their usage.

The second volume, *The Two Towers*, was published in England on 11 November 1954 and in the United States on 21 April 1955. Meanwhile Tolkien worked to keep a promise he had made in the foreword to volume one: that 'an index of names and strange words' would appear in the third volume. As originally planned, this index would contain much etymological information on the languages, particularly on the elven tongues, with a large vocabulary. It proved the chief cause of the delay in publishing volume three, which in the end contained no index at all, only an apology from the publisher for its absence. For Tolkien had abandoned work on it after indexing volumes one and two, believing its size and therefore its cost to be ruinous.

Volume three, *The Return of the King*, finally appeared in England on 20 October 1955 and in the United States on 5 January 1956. With the appearance of the third volume, *The Lord of the Rings* was published in its entirety, and its first edition text remained virtually unchanged for a decade. Tolkien had made a few small corrections, but further errors entered *The Fellowship of the Ring* in its December 1954 second impression when the printer, having distributed the type after the first printing, reset the book without informing the author or publisher. These include misrepresentations of the original printed text—that is, words and phrases that read acceptably in context, but which depart from Tolkien's wording as originally written and published.

In 1965, stemming from what then appeared to be copyright problems in the United States, an American paperback firm published an unauthorized and non-royalty-paying edition of *The Lord of the Rings*. For this new edition by Ace Books the text of the narrative was reset, thus introducing new typographical errors; the appendices, however, were reproduced photographically from the hardcover edition, and remain consistent with it.

Tolkien set to work on his first revision of the text so that a newly revised and authorized edition could successfully compete on the American market. This first revision of the text was published in America in paperback by Ballantine Books, under licence from Houghton Mifflin, in October 1965. In addition to revisions within the text itself, Tolkien replaced his original foreword with a new one. He was pleased to remove the original foreword; in his check copy, he wrote of it: 'confusing (as it does) real personal matters with the "machinery" of the Tale, is a serious mistake'. Tolkien also added an extension to the prologue and an index—not the detailed index of names promised in the first edition, but, rather, a bald index with only names and page references. Additionally, at this time the appendices were greatly revised.

Tolkien received his copies of the Ballantine edition in late January 1966, and in early February he recorded in his diary that he had ‘worked for some hours on the Appendices in Ballantine version & found more errors than I at first expected’. Soon after this he sent a small number of further revisions to Ballantine for the appendices, including the now well-known addition of ‘Estella Bolger’ as wife of Meriadoc in the family trees in [Appendix C](#). Most of these revisions, which entered variously in the third and fourth impressions (June and August 1966) of volume three, and which were not always inserted correctly (thereby causing further confusion in the text), somehow never made it into the main sequence of revision in the three-volume British hardcover edition, and for long remained anomalies. Tolkien once wrote, concerning the revising of *The Lord of the Rings*, that perhaps he had failed to keep his notes in order; this errant branch of revision seems likely to be an example of that disorder—either in his notes or in the ability of his publishers to follow them with utmost accuracy.

The revised text first appeared in Great Britain in a three-volume hardcover ‘Second Edition’ from Allen & Unwin on 27 October 1966. But again there were problems. Although the revisions Tolkien sent to America of the text itself were available to be utilized in the new British edition, his extensive revisions to the appendices were lost after being entered into the Ballantine edition. Allen & Unwin were forced to reset the appendices using the copy as published in the first Ballantine edition. This did not include Tolkien’s second, small set of revisions sent to Ballantine; but, more significantly, it did include a great number of errors and omissions, many of which were not discovered until long afterwards. Thus, in the appendices, a close scrutiny of the first edition text and of the much later corrected impressions of the second edition is necessary to discern whether any particular change in this edition is authorial or erroneous.

In America, the revised text appeared in hardcover in the three-volume edition published by Houghton Mifflin on 27 February 1967. This text was evidently photo-offset from the 1966 Allen & Unwin three-volume hardcover, and is thus consistent with it. Aside from the first printing of this second Houghton Mifflin edition, which has a 1967 date on the title page, none of the many reprintings is dated. After the initial printings of this edition, which bore a 1966 copyright notice, the date of copyright was changed in 1965 to match the statement in the Ballantine edition. This change has caused a great deal of confusion for librarians and other researchers who have tried to sort out the sequence of publication of these editions.

Meanwhile, Tolkien spent much of the summer of 1966 further revising the text. In June he learned that any more revisions were too late for inclusion in the 1966 Allen & Unwin second edition, and he recorded in his diary: ‘But I am attempting to complete my work [on the revisions]—I cannot leave it while it is all in my mind. So much time has been wasted in all my work by this constant breaking of threads.’ This was the last major set of revisions Tolkien himself made to the text during his lifetime. They were added to the second impression (1967) of the three-volume hardcover Allen & Unwin second edition. The revisions themselves mostly include corrections of nomenclature and attempts at consistency of usage throughout the three volumes. Some small alterations were made by Tolkien in the 1969 one-volume India paper edition.

J.R.R. Tolkien died in 1973. His third son and literary executor, Christopher Tolkien, sent a large number of further corrections of misprints, mainly in the appendices and index, to Allen & Unwin for use in their editions in 1974. Most of these corrections were typographical, and in line with his father’s expressed intent in his own check copies.

Since 1974, Christopher Tolkien has sent additional corrections, as errors have been discovered, to the British publishers of *The Lord of the Rings* (Allen & Unwin, later Unwin Hyman, and now HarperCollins), who have tried to be conscientious in the impossible task of maintaining a textual integrity in whichever editions of *The Lord of the Rings* they have published. However, every time the text has been reset for publication in a new format (e.g. the various paperback editions published in England in the 1970s and 1980s), huge numbers of new misprints have crept in, though at times some of these errors have been observed and corrected in later printings. Still, throughout these years the three-volume British hardcover edition has retained the highest textual integrity.

In the United States, the text of the Ballantine paperback has remained unchanged for more than three decades after Tolkien added his few revisions in 1966. The text in all of the Houghton Mifflin editions remained unchanged from 1967 until 1987, when Houghton Mifflin photo-offset the then current three-volume British hardcover edition in order to update the text used in their editions. In those new reprintings a number of further

corrections (overseen by Christopher Tolkien) were added, and the errant Ballantine branch of revision (including the 'Estella Bolger' addition) was integrated into the main branch of textual descent. This method of correction involved a cut-and-paste process with printed versions of the text. Beginning with the 1987 Houghton Mifflin edition, an earlier version of this 'Note on the Text' (dated October 1986) was added to *The Lord of the Rings*. This 'Note' has been reworked three times since then—the version dated April 1993 first appeared in 1994, and the version dated April 2002 came out later that year. The present 'Note' replaces and supersedes all previous versions.

For the 1994 British edition published by HarperCollins, the text of *The Lord of the Rings* was entered into word-processing files. This next stage of textual evolution came about to allow for a greater uniformity of the text in all future editions, but with it, inevitably, came new wrinkles. Some new misreadings entered into the text, while at the same time others were fixed. In the worst instance, one line of the ring inscription in the chapter 'The Shadow of the Past' of *The Fellowship of the Ring* was simply dropped. Unforeseeable glitches arose in other editions when the base computerized text was transferred into page-making or typesetting programs—e.g., in one edition of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, the closing two sentences of 'The Council of Elrond' simply and inexplicably disappeared. Such glitches have been very much the exception, not the rule, and the text has otherwise maintained a consistency and integrity throughout its computerized evolution.

The 1994 edition also contained a number of new corrections (again supervised by Christopher Tolkien), as well as a reconfigured index of names and page references. The 1994 text was first used in American editions published by Houghton Mifflin in 1999. A small number of further corrections were added into the 2002 three-volume edition illustrated by Alan Lee, published by HarperCollins in Great Britain and Houghton Mifflin in the United States.

The textual history of *The Lord of the Rings*, merely in its published form, is a vast and complex web. In this brief note I have given only a glimpse of the overall sequence and structure. Further details on the revisions and corrections made over the years to the published text of *The Lord of the Rings*, and a fuller account of its publishing history, may be found in *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Descriptive Bibliography*, by Wayne G. Hammond, with the assistance of Douglas A. Anderson (1993).

For those interested in observing the gradual evolving of *The Lord of the Rings* from its earliest drafts to its published form, I highly recommend Christopher Tolkien's account, which appears within five volumes of his twelve-volume series *The History of Middle-earth*. Volumes six through nine contain the major part of his study pertaining to *The Lord of the Rings*: *The Return of the Shadow* (1988); *The Treason of Isengard* (1989); *The War of the Ring* (1990); and *Sauron Defeated* (1992). Also, the final book of the series, *The Peoples of Middle-earth* (1996), covers the evolution of the prologue and appendices to *The Lord of the Rings*. These volumes contain an engrossing over-the-shoulder account of the growth and writing of Tolkien's masterpiece.

The process of studying Tolkien's manuscripts of *The Lord of the Rings* involved the deciphering of versions where Tolkien wrote first in pencil and then in ink atop the pencilled draft. Christopher Tolkien has described his father's method of composition in *The Return of the Shadow*: 'In the handwriting that he used for rapid drafts and sketches, not intended to endure long before he turned to them again and gave them a more workable form, letters are so loosely formed that a word which cannot be deduced or guessed at from the context or from later versions can prove perfectly opaque after long examination; and if, as he often did, he used a soft pencil much has now become blurred and faint.' The true difficulty of reading such double-drafts can be observed in the frontispiece to *The War of the Ring*, which reproduces in colour Tolkien's illustration of 'Shelob's Lair' from a page of Tolkien's manuscript. Looking very closely at the hasty ink draft alongside the illustration, one can see underneath it the earlier, hastier, pencilled draft. Also in *The War of the Ring*, Christopher Tolkien reproduces a page from the first manuscript of the chapter 'The Taming of Sméagol', and the printed text corresponding to this text is on the facing page (see pp. 90-91). One is astonished at anyone's ability to decipher such texts.

That difficulty aside, just what do these books signify to ordinary readers and to Tolkien scholars? And what is 'the history of the writing' of a book? Simply, these volumes show in great detail the development of the story of *The Lord of the Rings* from its very earliest drafts and hasty projections through its completion. We see in the earliest materials what is very much a children's book, a sequel to *The Hobbit*, and as the story grows through

various ‘phases’, there is an increase in seriousness and depth. We see alternate branches of development, the gradual blending and merging of certain characters, and the slow emergence of the nature of the rings and of the motivations of other characters. Some of these various ideas are abandoned altogether, while others are reworked into some variant form that may or may not survive into the final version.

One could make a whole catalogue of interesting tidbits from Christopher Tolkien’s study—such as the fact that Strider was called Trotter until a very late stage in the writing of the book; that Trotter was at one time a hobbit, so named because he wore wooden shoes; that Tolkien at one point considered a romance between Aragorn and Éowyn; that Tolkien wrote an epilogue to the book, tying up loose ends, but it was dropped before publication (and now appears in *Sauron Defeated*); and so on. But these developments are best appreciated when read within the context of Christopher Tolkien’s commentary rather than discussed separately.

The most significant achievement of these volumes is that they show us how Tolkien wrote and thought. Nowhere else do we see the authorial process itself at work in such detail. Tolkien’s hastiest comments about where the story might proceed, or why it can or can’t go such and such a way—these queries to himself were written out: Tolkien is literally thinking on paper. This gives an added dimension of understanding to Tolkien’s comment to Stanley Unwin in a 1963 letter that, when suffering from trouble with his shoulder and right arm, ‘I found not being able to use a pen or pencil as defeating as the loss of her beak would be to a hen.’ And we, as readers of these volumes, can share with Tolkien himself the wonder and bewilderment of new characters appearing as if from nowhere, or of some other sudden change or development, at the very moment of their emergence into the story.

I know of no other instance in literature where we have such a ‘history of the writing’ of a book, told mostly by the author himself, with all the hesitations and false paths laid out before us, sorted out, commented upon, and served up to a reader like a feast. We are shown innumerable instances in the minutest detail of the thought-process itself at work. We see the author fully absorbed in creation for its own sake. And this is all the more exceptional because this is a history not only of the unfolding of a story and its text, but of the evolution of a world. There is an additional wealth of material beyond simple narrative text. There are maps and illustrations. There are languages and writing systems, and the histories of the peoples who spoke and wrote in these systems. All of these additional materials add multiple dimensions of complexity to our appreciation of the invented world itself.

Fifty years into the published life of *The Lord of the Rings*, it seems extraordinary to me that we have not only such a masterful work of literature but also as a companion to it an unparalleled account of its writing. Our gratitude as readers goes to both of the Tolkiens, father and son.

—Douglas A. Anderson

May 2004



## Note On The 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition

In this edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, prepared for the fiftieth anniversary of its publication, between three and four hundred emendations have been made following an exhaustive review of past editions and printings. The present text is based on the setting of the HarperCollins three-volume hardcover edition of 2002, which in turn was a revision of the HarperCollins reset edition of 1994. As Douglas A. Anderson [comments](#) in the preceding ‘Note on the Text’, each of those editions was itself corrected, and each also introduced new errors. At the same time, other errors survived undetected, among them some five dozen which entered as long ago as 1954, in the resetting of *The Fellowship of the Ring* published as its ‘second impression’.

That the printer had quietly reset *The Fellowship of the Ring*, and that copies had been issued without proof having been read by the author, never became known to Tolkien; while his publisher, Rayner Unwin, learned of it only thirty-eight years after the fact. Tolkien found a few of the unauthorized changes introduced in the second printing when (probably while preparing the second edition in 1965) he read a copy of the twelfth impression (1962), but thought the errors newly made. These, among others, were corrected in the course of the reprinting. Then in 1992 Eric Thompson, a reader with a keen eye for typographic detail, noticed small differences between the first and second impressions of *The Fellowship of the Ring* and called them to the attention of the present editors. About one-sixth of the errors that entered in the second printing quickly came to light. Many more were revealed only recently, when Steven M. Frisby used ingenious optical aids to make a comparison of copies of *The Lord of the Rings* in greater detail than was previously accomplished. We have gladly made full use of Mr Frisby’s results, which he has generously shared and discussed.

In the course of its fifty-year history *The Lord of the Rings* has had many such readers who have recorded changes made between its various appearances in print, both to document what has gone before and to aid in the achievement of an authoritative text. Errors or possible errors were reported to the author himself or to his publishers, and information on the textual history of the work circulated among Tolkien enthusiasts at least as early as 1966, when Banks Mebane published his ‘Prolegomena to a Variorum Tolkien’ in the fanzine *Entmoot*. Most notably in later years, Douglas A. Anderson has been in the forefront of efforts to achieve an accurate text of *The Lord of the Rings* (and of *The Hobbit*); Christina Scull has published ‘A Preliminary Study of Variations in Editions of *The Lord of the Rings*’ in *Beyond Bree* (April and August 1985); Wayne G. Hammond has compiled extensive lists of textual changes in *J.R.R. Tolkien: A Descriptive Bibliography* (1993); and David Bratman has published an important article, ‘A Corrigenda to *The Lord of the Rings*’, in the March 1994 number of *The Tolkien Collector*. The observations of Dainis Bisenieks, Yuval Kfir, Charles Noad, and other readers, sent to us directly or posted in public forums, have also been of service.

Efforts such as these follow the example of the author of *The Lord of the Rings* during his lifetime. His concern for the textual accuracy and coherence of his work is evident from the many emendations he made in later printings, and from notes he made for other emendations which for one reason or another have not previously (or have only partly) been put into effect. Even late in life, when such labours wearied him, his feelings were clear. On 30 October 1967 he wrote to Joy Hill at George Allen & Unwin, concerning a reader’s query he had received about points in the Appendices to *The Lord of the Rings*: ‘Personally I have ceased to bother about these minor “discrepancies”, since if the genealogies and calendars etc. lack verisimilitude it is in their general excessive accuracy: as compared with real annals or genealogies! Anyway the slips were few, have now mostly been removed, and the discovery of what remain seems an amusing pastime! *But errors in the text are another matter*’ (italics ours). In fact Tolkien had not ‘ceased to bother’, and ‘slips’ were dealt with as opportunities arose. These, and the indulgence of his publisher, allowed Tolkien a luxury few authors enjoy: multiple chances not only to correct his text but to improve it, and to further develop the languages, geography, and peoples of Middle-earth.

The fiftieth anniversary of *The Lord of the Rings* seemed an ideal opportunity to consider the latest (2002) text in light of information we had gathered in the course of decades of work in Tolkien studies, with Steve Frisby's research at hand, and with an electronic copy of *The Lord of the Rings* (supplied by HarperCollins) searchable by keyword or phrase. The latter especially allowed us to develop lists of words that varied from one instance to another, and investigate variations in usage, as they stood in the copy-text and relative to earlier editions and printings. Of course Tolkien wrote *The Lord of the Rings* over so long a period of time, some eighteen years, that inconsistencies in its text were almost inevitable. Christopher Tolkien even observed to us that some apparent inconsistencies of form in his father's work may even have been deliberate: for instance, although Tolkien carefully distinguished *house* 'dwelling' from *House* 'noble family or dynasty', in two instances he used *house* in the latter sense but in lower case, perhaps because a capital letter would have detracted from the importance of the adjective with which the word was paired ('royal house', 'golden house'). There can be no doubt, however, that Tolkien attempted to correct inconsistency, no less than outright error, whenever it came to his attention, and it was our opinion, with the advice and agreement of Christopher Tolkien, that an attempt should be made to do so in the anniversary edition, insofar as we could carefully and conservatively distinguish what to emend.

Many of the emendations in the present text are to marks of punctuation, either to correct recent typographical errors or to repair surviving alterations introduced in the second printing of *The Fellowship of the Ring*. In the latter respect and in every case, Tolkien's original punctuation is always more felicitous—subtle points, when one is comparing commas and semi-colons, but no less a part of the author's intended expression. Distinctive words such as *chill* rather than *cold*, and *glistered* rather than *glistened*, changed by typesetters long ago without authorization, likewise have been restored. A controlled amount of regularization also seemed called for, such as *naught* rather than *nought*, a change instituted by Tolkien but not carried through in all instances; *Dark Power* rather than *dark power* when the reference is obviously to Sauron (or Morgoth); *Barrow-downs* by Tolkien's preference rather than *Barrowdowns*; likewise *Bree-hill* rather than *Bree Hill*; accented and more common *Drúedán* rather than *Druadan*; capitalized names of seasons when used as personification or metaphor, according to Tolkien's predominant practice and the internal logic of the text; and *Elvish* rather than *elvish* when used as a separate adjective, following a preference Tolkien marked in his copy of the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings*. In addition, we have added a second accent to *Númenórean(s)*, as Tolkien often wrote the name in manuscript and as it appears in *The Silmarillion* and other posthumous publications.

The result, nonetheless, still includes many variations in capitalization, punctuation, and other points of style. Not all of these are erroneous: they include words such as *Sun*, *Moon*, *Hobbit*, and *Man* (or *sun*, *moon*, *hobbit*, *man*), which may change form according to meaning or application, in relation to adjacent adjectives, or whether Tolkien intended personification, poetry, or emphasis. His intent cannot be divined with confidence in every case. But it is possible to discern Tolkien's preferences in many instances, from statements he wrote in his check copies of *The Lord of the Rings* or from a close analysis of its text in manuscript, typescript, proof, and print. Whenever there has been any doubt whatsoever as to the author's intentions, the text has been allowed to stand.

Most of the demonstrable errors noted by Christopher Tolkien in *The History of Middle-earth* also have been corrected, such as the distance from the Brandywine Bridge to the Ferry (*ten* miles rather than *twenty*) and the number of Merry's ponies (*five* rather than *six*), shadows of earlier drafts. But those inconsistencies of content, such as Gimli's famous (and erroneous) statement in Book III, Chapter 7, 'Till now I have hewn naught but wood since I left Moria', which would require rewriting to emend rather than simple correction, remain unchanged.

So many new emendations to *The Lord of the Rings*, and such an extensive review of its text, deserve to be fully documented. Although most readers will be content with the text alone, many will want to know more about the problems encountered in preparing this new edition, and their solutions (where solutions have been possible), especially where the text has been emended, but also where it has not. To this end, and to illuminate the work in other respects, we are preparing a volume of annotations to *The Lord of the Rings* for publication in 2005. This will allow us to discuss, at a length impossible in a prefatory note, the various textual cruxes of *The Lord of the Rings*, to identify changes that have been made to the present text, and to remark on significant alterations to the published work throughout its history. We will also explain archaic or unusual words and



names in *The Lord of the Rings*, explore literary and historical influences, note connections with Tolkien's other writings, and comment on differences between its drafts and published form, on questions of language, and on much else that we hope will interest readers and enhance their enjoyment of Tolkien's masterpiece.

—Wayne G. Hammond & Christina Scull

May 2004



## Foreword To The Second Edition

This tale grew in the telling, until it became a history of the Great War of the Ring and included many glimpses of the yet more ancient history that preceded it. It was begun soon after *The Hobbit* was written and before its publication in 1937; but I did not go on with this sequel, for I wished first to complete and set in order the mythology and legends of the Elder Days, which had then been taking shape for some years. I desired to do this for my own satisfaction, and I had little hope that other people would be interested in this work, especially since it was primarily linguistic in inspiration and was begun in order to provide the necessary background of 'history' for Elvish tongues.

When those whose advice and opinion I sought corrected *little hope* to *no hope*, I went back to the sequel, encouraged by requests from readers for more information concerning hobbits and their adventures. But the story was drawn irresistibly towards the older world, and became an account, as it were, of its end and passing away before its beginning and middle had been told. The process had begun in the writing of *The Hobbit*, in which there were already some references to the older matter: Elrond, Gondolin, the High-elves, and the orcs, as well as glimpses that had arisen unbidden of things higher or deeper or darker than its surface: Durin, Moria, Gandalf, the Necromancer, the Ring. The discovery of the significance of these glimpses and of their relation to the ancient histories revealed the Third Age and its culmination in the War of the Ring.

Those who had asked for more information about hobbits eventually got it, but they had to wait a long time; for the composition of *The Lord of the Rings* went on at intervals during the years 1936 to 1949, a period in which I had many duties that I did not neglect, and many other interests as a learner and teacher that often absorbed me. The delay was, of course, also increased by the outbreak of war in 1939, by the end of which year the tale had not yet reached the end of Book One. In spite of the darkness of the next five years I found that the story could not now be wholly abandoned, and I plodded on, mostly by night, till I stood by Balin's tomb in Moria. There I halted for a long while. It was almost a year later when I went on and so came to Lothlórien and the Great River late in 1941. In the next year I wrote the first drafts of the matter that now stands as Book Three, and the beginnings of chapters I and III of Book Five; and there as the beacons flared in Anórien and Théoden came to Harrowdale I stopped. Foresight had failed and there was no time for thought.

It was during 1944 that, leaving the loose ends and perplexities of a war which it was my task to conduct, or at least to report, I forced myself to tackle the journey of Frodo to Mordor. These chapters, eventually to become Book Four, were written and sent out as a serial to my son, Christopher, then in South Africa with the RAF. Nonetheless it took another five years before the tale was brought to its present end; in that time I changed my house, my chair, and my college, and the days though less dark were no less laborious. Then when the 'end' had at last been reached the whole story had to be revised, and indeed largely re-written backwards. And it had to be typed, and re-typed: by me; the cost of professional typing by the ten-fingered was beyond my means.

*The Lord of the Rings* has been read by many people since it finally appeared in print; and I should like to say something here with reference to the many opinions or guesses that I have received or have read concerning the motives and meaning of the tale. The prime motive was the desire of a tale-teller to try his hand at a really long story that would hold the attention of readers, amuse them, delight them, and at times maybe excite them or deeply move them. As a guide I had only my own feelings for what is appealing or moving, and for many the guide was inevitably often at fault. Some who have read the book, or at any rate have reviewed it, have found it boring, absurd, or contemptible; and I have no cause to complain, since I have similar opinions of their works, or of the kinds of writing that they evidently prefer. But even from the points of view of many who have enjoyed my story there is much that fails to please. It is perhaps not possible in a long tale to please everybody at all points, nor to displease everybody at the same points; for I find from the letters that I have received that

the passages or chapters that are to some a blemish are all by others specially approved. The most critical reader of all, myself, now finds many defects, minor and major, but being fortunately under no obligation either to review the book or to write it again, he will pass over these in silence, except one that has been noted by others: the book is too short.

As for any inner meaning or 'message', it has in the intention of the author none. It is neither allegorical nor topical. As the story grew it put down roots (into the past) and threw out unexpected branches: but its main theme was settled from the outset by the inevitable choice of the Ring as the link between it and *The Hobbit*. The crucial chapter, 'The Shadow of the Past', is one of the oldest parts of the tale. It was written long before the foreshadow of 1939 had yet become a threat of inevitable disaster, and from that point the story would have developed along essentially the same lines, if that disaster had been averted. Its sources are things long before in mind, or in some cases already written, and little or nothing in it was modified by the war that began in 1939 or its sequels.

The real war does not resemble the legendary war in its process or its conclusion. If it had inspired or directed the development of the legend, then certainly the Ring would have been seized and used against Sauron; he would not have been annihilated but enslaved, and Barad-dûr destroyed but occupied. Saruman, failing to get possession of the Ring, would in the confusion and treacheries of the time have found in Mordor the missing links in his own researches into Ring-lore, and before long he would have made a Great Ring of his own with which to challenge the self-styled Ruler of Middle-earth. In that conflict both sides would have held hobbits in hatred and contempt: they would not long have survived even as slaves.

Other arrangements could be devised according to the tastes or views of those who like allegory or topical reference. But I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much prefer history, true or feigned, with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse 'applicability' with 'allegory'; but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author.

An author cannot of course remain wholly unaffected by his experience, but the ways in which a story-germ uses the soil of experience are extremely complex, and attempts to define the process are at best guesses from evidence that is inadequate and ambiguous. It is also false, though naturally attractive, when the lives of an author and critic have overlapped, to suppose that the movements of thought or the events of times common to both were necessarily the most powerful influences. One has indeed personally to come under the shadow of war to feel fully its oppression; but as the years go by it seems now often forgotten that to be caught in youth by 1914 was no less hideous an experience than to be involved in 1939 and the following years. By 1918 all but one of my close friends were dead. Or to take a less grievous matter: it has been supposed by some that 'The Scouring of the Shire' reflects the situation in England at the time when I was finishing my tale. It does not. It is an essential part of the plot, foreseen from the outset, though in the event modified by the character of Saruman as developed in the story without, need I say, any allegorical significance or contemporary political reference whatsoever. It has indeed some basis in experience, though slender (for the economic situation was entirely different), and much further back. The country in which I lived in childhood was being shabbily destroyed before I was ten, in days when motor-cars were rare objects (I had never seen one) and men were still building suburban railways. Recently I saw in a paper a picture of the last decrepitude of the once thriving corn-mill beside its pool that long ago seemed to me so important. I never liked the looks of the Young miller, but his father, the Old miller, had a black beard, and he was not named Sandyman. *The Lord of the Rings* is now issued in a new edition, and the opportunity has been taken of revising it. A number of errors and inconsistencies that still remained in the text have been corrected, and an attempt has been made to provide information on a few points which attentive readers have raised. I have considered all their comments and enquiries, and if some seem to have been passed over that may be because I have failed to keep my notes in order; but many enquiries could only be answered by additional appendices, or indeed by the production of an accessory volume containing much of the material that I did not include in the original edition, in particular more detailed linguistic information. In the meantime this edition offers this Foreword, an addition to the Prologue, some notes, and an index of the names of persons and places. This index is in intention complete in items but not in references, since for the present purpose it has been necessary to reduce its bulk. A complete index, making full use of the material prepared for me by Mrs. N. Smith, belongs rather to the accessory volume.



## Prologue

### I. Concerning Hobbits

This book is largely concerned with Hobbits, and from its pages a reader may discover much of their character and a little of their history. Further information will also be found in the selection from the Red Book of Westmarch that has already been published, under the title of *The Hobbit*. That story was derived from the earlier chapters of the Red Book, composed by Bilbo himself, the first Hobbit to become famous in the world at large, and called by him *There and Back Again*, since they told of his journey into the East and his return: an adventure which later involved all the Hobbits in the great events of that Age that are here related.

Many, however, may wish to know more about this remarkable people from the outset, while some may not possess the earlier book. For such readers a few notes on the more important points are here collected from Hobbit-lore, and the first adventure is briefly recalled.

Hobbits are an unobtrusive but very ancient people, more numerous formerly than they are today; for they love peace and quiet and good tilled earth: a well-ordered and well-farmed countryside was their favourite haunt. They do not and did not understand or like machines more complicated than a forge-bellows, a water-mill, or a hand-loom, though they were skilful with tools. Even in ancient days they were, as a rule, shy of 'the Big Folk', as they call us, and now they avoid us with dismay and are becoming hard to find. They are quick of hearing and sharp-eyed, and though they are inclined to be fat and do not hurry unnecessarily, they are nonetheless nimble and deft in their movements. They possessed from the first the art of disappearing swiftly and silently, when large folk whom they do not wish to meet come blundering by; and this art they have developed until to Men it may seem magical. But Hobbits have never, in fact, studied magic of any kind, and their elusiveness is due solely to a professional skill that heredity and practice, and a close friendship with the earth, have rendered inimitable by bigger and clumsier races.

For they are a little people, smaller than Dwarves: less stout and stocky, that is, even when they are not actually much shorter. Their height is variable, ranging between two and four feet of our measure. They seldom now reach three feet; but they have dwindled, they say, and in ancient days they were taller. According to the Red Book, Bandobras Took (Bullroarer), son of Isumbras the Third, was four foot five and able to ride a horse. He was surpassed in all Hobbit records only by two famous characters of old; but that curious matter is dealt with in this book.

As for the Hobbits of the Shire, with whom these tales are concerned, in the days of their peace and prosperity they were a merry folk. They dressed in bright colours, being notably fond of yellow and green; but they seldom wore shoes, since their feet had tough leathery soles and were clad in a thick curling hair, much like the hair of their heads, which was commonly brown. Thus, the only craft little practised among them was shoe-making; but they had long and skilful fingers and could make many other useful and comely things. Their faces were as a rule good-natured rather than beautiful, broad, bright-eyed, red-cheeked, with mouths apt to laughter, and to eating and drinking. And laugh they did, and eat, and drink, often and heartily, being fond of simple jests at all times, and of six meals a day (when they could get them). They were hospitable and delighted in parties, and in presents, which they gave away freely and eagerly accepted.

It is plain indeed that in spite of later estrangement Hobbits are relatives of ours: far nearer to us than Elves, or even than Dwarves. Of old they spoke the languages of Men, after their own fashion, and liked and disliked much the same things as Men did. But what exactly our relationship is can no longer be discovered. The beginning of Hobbits lies far back in the Elder Days that are now lost and forgotten. Only the Elves still preserve any records of that vanished time, and their traditions are concerned almost entirely with their own

history, in which Men appear seldom and Hobbits are not mentioned at all. Yet it is clear that Hobbits had, in fact, lived quietly in Middle-earth for many long years before other folk became even aware of them. And the world being after all full of strange creatures beyond count, these little people seemed of very little importance. But in the days of Bilbo, and of Frodo his heir, they suddenly became, by no wish of their own, both important and renowned, and troubled the counsels of the Wise and the Great.

Those days, the Third Age of Middle-earth, are now long past, and the shape of all lands has been changed; but the regions in which Hobbits then lived were doubtless the same as those in which they still linger: the North-West of the Old World, east of the Sea. Of their original home the Hobbits in Bilbo's time preserved no knowledge. A love of learning (other than genealogical lore) was far from general among them, but there remained still a few in the older families who studied their own books, and even gathered reports of old times and distant lands from Elves, Dwarves, and Men. Their own records began only after the settlement of the Shire, and their most ancient legends hardly looked further back than their Wandering Days. It is clear, nonetheless, from these legends, and from the evidence of their peculiar words and customs, that like many other folk Hobbits had in the distant past moved westward. Their earliest tales seem to glimpse a time when they dwelt in the upper vales of Anduin, between the eaves of Greenwood the Great and the Misty Mountains. Why they later undertook the hard and perilous crossing of the mountains into Eriador is no longer certain. Their own accounts speak of the multiplying of Men in the land, and of a shadow that fell on the forest, so that it became darkened and its new name was Mirkwood.

Before the crossing of the mountains the Hobbits had already become divided into three somewhat different breeds: Harfoots, Stoors, and Fallohides. The Harfoots were browner of skin, smaller, and shorter, and they were beardless and bootless; their hands and feet were neat and nimble; and they preferred highlands and hillsides. The Stoors were broader, heavier in build; their feet and hands were larger; and they preferred flat lands and riversides. The Fallohides were fairer of skin and also of hair, and they were taller and slimmer than the others; they were lovers of trees and of woodlands.

The Harfoots had much to do with Dwarves in ancient times, and long lived in the foothills of the mountains. They moved westward early, and roamed over Eriador as far as Weathertop while the others were still in Wilderland. They were the most normal and representative variety of Hobbit, and far the most numerous. They were the most inclined to settle in one place, and longest preserved their ancestral habit of living in tunnels and holes.

The Stoors lingered long by the banks of the Great River Anduin, and were less shy of Men. They came west after the Harfoots and followed the course of the Loudwater southwards; and there many of them long dwelt between Tharbad and the borders of Dunland before they moved north again.

The Fallohides, the least numerous, were a northerly branch. They were more friendly with Elves than the other Hobbits were, and had more skill in language and song than in handicrafts; and of old they preferred hunting to tilling. They crossed the mountains north of Rivendell and came down the River Hoarwell. In Eriador they soon mingled with the other kinds that had preceded them, but being somewhat bolder and more adventurous, they were often found as leaders or chieftains among clans of Harfoots or Stoors. Even in Bilbo's time the strong Fallohidish strain could still be noted among the greater families, such as the Tookes and the Masters of Buckland.

In the westlands of Eriador, between the Misty Mountains and the Mountains of Lune, the Hobbits found both Men and Elves. Indeed, a remnant still dwelt there of the Dúnedain, the kings of Men that came over the Sea out of Westergesse; but they were dwindling fast and the lands of their North Kingdom were falling far and wide into waste. There was room and to spare for incomers, and ere long the Hobbits began to settle in ordered communities. Most of their earlier settlements had long disappeared and been forgotten in Bilbo's time; but one of the first to become important still endured, though reduced in size; this was at Bree and in the Chetwood that lay round about, some forty miles east of the Shire.

It was in these early days, doubtless, that the Hobbits learned their letters and began to write after the manner of the Dúnedain, who had in their turn long before learned the art from the Elves. And in those days also they forgot whatever languages they had used before, and spoke ever after the Common Speech, the Westron as it

was named, that was current through all the lands of the kings from Arnor to Gondor, and about all the coasts of the Sea from Belfalas to Lune. Yet they kept a few words of their own, as well as their own names of months and days, and a great store of personal names out of the past.

About this time legend among the Hobbits first becomes history with a reckoning of years. For it was in the one thousand six hundred and first year of the Third Age that the Fallohide brothers, Marcho and Blanco, set out from Bree; and having obtained permission from the high king at Fornost,<sup>17</sup> they crossed the brown river Baranduin with a great following of Hobbits. They passed over the Bridge of Stonebows, that had been built in the days of the power of the North Kingdom, and they took all the land beyond to dwell in, between the river and the Far Downs. All that was demanded of them was that they should keep the Great Bridge in repair, and all other bridges and roads, speed the king's messengers, and acknowledge his lordship.

Thus began the *Shire-reckoning*, for the year of the crossing of the Brandywine (as the Hobbits turned the name) became Year One of the Shire, and all later dates were reckoned from it.<sup>18</sup> At once the western Hobbits fell in love with their new land, and they remained there, and soon passed once more out of the history of Men and of Elves. While there was still a king they were in name his subjects, but they were, in fact, ruled by their own chieftains and meddled not at all with events in the world outside. To the last battle at Fornost with the Witch-lord of Angmar they sent some bowmen to the aid of the king, or so they maintained, though no tales of Men record it. But in that war the North Kingdom ended; and then the Hobbits took the land for their own, and they chose from their own chiefs a Thain to hold the authority of the king that was gone. There for a thousand years they were little troubled by wars, and they prospered and multiplied after the Dark Plague (S.R. 37) until the disaster of the Long Winter and the famine that followed it. Many thousands then perished, but the Days of Dearth (1158-60) were at the time of this tale long past and the Hobbits had again become accustomed to plenty. The land was rich and kindly, and though it had long been deserted when they entered it, it had before been well tilled, and there the king had once had many farms, cornlands, vineyards, and woods.

Forty leagues it stretched from the Far Downs to the Brandywine Bridge, and fifty from the northern moors to the marshes in the south. The Hobbits named it the Shire, as the region of the authority of their Thain, and a district of well-ordered business; and there in that pleasant corner of the world they plied their well-ordered business of living, and they heeded less and less the world outside where dark things moved, until they came to think that peace and plenty were the rule in Middle-earth and the right of all sensible folk. They forgot or ignored what little they had ever known of the Guardians, and of the labours of those that made possible the long peace of the Shire. They were, in fact, sheltered, but they had ceased to remember it.

At no time had Hobbits of any kind been warlike, and they had never fought among themselves. In olden days they had, of course, been often obliged to fight to maintain themselves in a hard world; but in Bilbo's time that was very ancient history. The last battle, before this story opens, and indeed the only one that had ever been fought within the borders of the Shire, was beyond living memory: the Battle of Greenfields, S.R. 1147, in which Bandobras Took<sup>384</sup> routed an invasion of Orcs. Even the weathers had grown milder, and the wolves that had once come ravening out of the North in bitter white winters were now only a grandfather's tale. So, though there was still some store of weapons in the Shire, these were used mostly as trophies, hanging above hearths or on walls, or gathered into the museum at Michel Delving. The Mathom-house it was called; for anything that Hobbits had no immediate use for, but were unwilling to throw away, they called a *mathom*. Their dwellings were apt to become rather crowded with mathoms, and many of the presents that passed from hand to hand were of that sort.

Nonetheless, ease and peace had left this people still curiously tough. They were, if it came to it, difficult to daunt or to kill; and they were, perhaps, so unwearyingly fond of good things not least because they could,

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<sup>17</sup> The records of Gondor relate this was Argeleb II, the twentieth of the Northern line, which came to an end with Arvedui three hundred years later.

<sup>18</sup> Thus, the years of the Third Age in the reckoning of the Elves and the Dúnedain by adding 1600 to the dates of Shire-reckoning.

when put to it, do without them, and could survive rough handling by grief, foe, or weather in a way that astonished those who did not know them well and looked no further than their bellies and their well-fed faces. Though slow to quarrel, and for sport killing nothing that lived, they were doughty at bay, and at need could still handle arms. They shot well with the bow, for they were keen-eyed and sure at the mark. Not only with bows and arrows. If any Hobbit stooped for a stone, it was well to get quickly under cover, as all trespassing beasts knew very well.

All Hobbits had originally lived in holes in the ground, or so they believed, and in such dwellings they still felt most at home; but in the course of time they had been obliged to adopt other forms of abode. Actually in the Shire in Bilbo's days it was, as a rule, only the richest and the poorest Hobbits that maintained the old custom. The poorest went on living in burrows of the most primitive kind, mere holes indeed, with only one window or none; while the well-to-do still constructed more luxurious versions of the simple diggings of old. But suitable sites for these large and ramifying tunnels (or *smials* as they called them) were not everywhere to be found; and in the flats and the low-lying districts the Hobbits, as they multiplied, began to build above ground. Indeed, even in the hilly regions and the older villages, such as Hobbiton or Tuckborough, or in the chief township of the Shire, Michel Delving on the White Downs, there were now many houses of wood, brick, or stone. These were specially favoured by millers, smiths, ropers, and cartwrights, and others of that sort; for even when they had holes to live in, Hobbits had long been accustomed to build sheds and workshops.

The habit of building farmhouses and barns was said to have begun among the inhabitants of the Marish down by the Brandywine. The Hobbits of that quarter, the Eastfarthing, were rather large and heavy-legged, and they wore dwarf-boots in muddy weather. But they were well known to be Stoors in a large part of their blood, as indeed was shown by the down that many grew on their chins. No Harfoot or Fallohide had any trace of a beard. Indeed, the folk of the Marish, and of Buckland, east of the River, which they afterwards occupied, came for the most part later into the Shire up from south-away; and they still had many peculiar names and strange words not found elsewhere in the Shire.

It is probable that the craft of building, as many other crafts beside, was derived from the Dúnedain. But the Hobbits may have learned it direct from the Elves, the teachers of Men in their youth. For the Elves of the High Kindred had not yet forsaken Middle-earth, and they dwelt still at that time at the Grey Havens away to the west, and in other places within reach of the Shire. Three Elf-towers<sup>416</sup> of immemorial age were still to be seen on the Tower Hills beyond the western marches. They shone far off in the moonlight. The tallest was furthest away, standing alone upon a green mound. The Hobbits of the Westfarthing said that one could see the Sea from the top of that tower; but no Hobbit had ever been known to climb it. Indeed, few Hobbits had ever seen or sailed upon the Sea, and fewer still had ever returned to report it. Most Hobbits regarded even rivers and small boats with deep misgivings, and not many of them could swim. And as the days of the Shire lengthened they spoke less and less with the Elves, and grew afraid of them, and distrustful of those that had dealings with them; and the Sea became a word of fear among them, and a token of death, and they turned their faces away from the hills in the west.

The craft of building may have come from Elves or Men, but the Hobbits used it in their own fashion. They did not go in for towers. Their houses were usually long, low, and comfortable. The oldest kind were, indeed, no more than built imitations of *smials*, thatched with dry grass or straw, or roofed with turves, and having walls somewhat bulged. That stage, however, belonged to the early days of the Shire, and hobbit-building had long since been altered, improved by devices, learned from Dwarves, or discovered by themselves. A preference for round windows, and even round doors, was the chief remaining peculiarity of hobbit-architecture.

The houses and the holes of Shire-hobbits were often large, and inhabited by large families. (Bilbo and Frodo Baggins were as bachelors very exceptional, as they were also in many other ways, such as their friendship with the Elves.) Sometimes, as in the case of the Took of Great Smials, or the Brandybucks of Brandy Hall, many generations of relatives lived in (comparative) peace together in one ancestral and many-tunnelled mansion. All Hobbits were, in any case, clannish and reckoned up their relationships with great care. They drew long and elaborate family-trees with innumerable branches. In dealing with Hobbits it is important to remember who is related to whom, and in what degree. It would be impossible in this book to set out a family-tree that included even the more important members of the more important families at the time which these tales tell of. The



genealogical trees at the end of the Red Book of Westmarch are a small book in themselves, and all but Hobbits would find them exceedingly dull. Hobbits delighted in such things, if they were accurate: they liked to have books filled with things that they already knew, set out fair and square with no contradictions.

## II. Concerning Pipe-Weed

There is another astonishing thing about Hobbits of old that must be mentioned, an astonishing habit: they imbibed or inhaled, through pipes of clay or wood, the smoke of the burning leaves of a herb, which they called *pipe-weed* or *leaf*, a variety probably of *Nicotiana*. A great deal of mystery surrounds the origin of this peculiar custom, or ‘art’ as the Hobbits preferred to call it. All that could be discovered about it in antiquity was put together by Meriadoc Brandybuck (later Master of Buckland), and since he and the tobacco of the Southfarthing play a part in the history that follows, his remarks in the introduction to his *Herblore of the Shire* may be quoted.

‘This,’ he says, ‘is the one art that we can certainly claim to be our own invention. When Hobbits first began to smoke is not known, all the legends and family histories take it for granted; for ages folk in the Shire smoked various herbs, some fouler, some sweeter. But all accounts agree that Tobold Hornblower of Longbottom in the Southfarthing first grew the true pipe-weed in his gardens in the days of Isengrim the Second, about the year 1070 of Shire-reckoning. The best home-grown still comes from that district, especially the varieties now known as Longbottom Leaf, Old Toby, and Southern Star.

‘How Old Toby came by the plant is not recorded, for to his dying day he would not tell. He knew much about herbs, but he was no traveller. It is said that in his youth he went often to Bree, though he certainly never went further from the Shire than that. It is thus quite possible that he learned of this plant in Bree, where now, at any rate, it grows well on the south slopes of the hill. The Bree-hobbits claim to have been the first actual smokers of the pipe-weed. They claim, of course, to have done everything before the people of the Shire, whom they refer to as “colonists”; but in this case their claim is, I think, likely to be true. And certainly it was from Bree that the art of smoking the genuine weed spread in the recent centuries among Dwarves and such other folk, Rangers, Wizards, or wanderers, as still passed to and fro through that ancient road-meeting. The home and centre of the art is thus to be found in the old inn of Bree, *The Prancing Pony*, that has been kept by the family of Butterbur from time beyond record.

‘All the same, observations that I have made on my own many journeys south have convinced me that the weed itself is not native to our parts of the world, but came northward from the lower Anduin, whither it was, I suspect, originally brought over Sea by the Men of Westnesse. It grows abundantly in Gondor, and there is richer and larger than in the North, where it is never found wild, and flourishes only in warm sheltered places like Longbottom. The Men of Gondor call it *sweet galenas*, and esteem it only for the fragrance of its flowers. From that land it must have been carried up the Greenway during the long centuries between the coming of Elendil and our own days. But even the Dúnedain of Gondor allow us this credit: Hobbits first put it into pipes. Not even the Wizards first thought of that before we did. Though one Wizard that I knew took up the art long ago, and became as skilful in it as in all other things that he put his mind to.’

## III. Of The Ordering Of The Shire

The Shire was divided into four quarters, the Farthings already referred to, North, South, East, and West; and these again each into a number of folklands, which still bore the names of some of the old leading families, although by the time of this history these names were no longer found only in their proper folklands. Nearly all Took still lived in the Tookland, but that was not true of many other families, such as the Bagginses or the Boffins. Outside the Farthings were the East and West Marches: the Buckland (p. 98); and the Westmarch added to the Shire in S.R. 1452.

The Shire at this time had hardly any ‘government’. Families for the most part managed their own affairs. Growing food and eating it occupied most of their time. In other matters they were, as a rule, generous and not greedy, but contented and moderate, so that estates, farms, workshops, and small trades tended to remain unchanged for generations.



There remained, of course, the ancient tradition concerning the high king at Fornost, or Norbury as they called it, away north of the Shire. But there had been no king for nearly a thousand years, and even the ruins of Kings' Norbury were covered with grass. Yet the Hobbits still said of wild folk and wicked things (such as trolls) that they had not heard of the king. For they attributed to the king of old all their essential laws; and usually they kept the laws of free will, because they were The Rules (as they said), both ancient and just.

It is true that the Took family had long been pre-eminent; for the office of Thain had passed to them (from the Oldbucks) some centuries before, and the chief Took had borne that title ever since. The Thain was the master of the Shire-moot, and captain of the Shire-muster and the Hobbitry-in-arms; but as muster and moot were only held in times of emergency, which no longer occurred, the Thainship had ceased to be more than a nominal dignity. The Took family was still, indeed, accorded a special respect, for it remained both numerous and exceedingly wealthy, and was liable to produce in every generation strong characters of peculiar habits and even adventurous temperament. The latter qualities, however, were now rather tolerated (in the rich) than generally approved. The custom endured, nonetheless, of referring to the head of the family as The Took, and of adding to his name, if required, a number: such as Isengrim the Second, for instance.

The only real official in the Shire at this date was the Mayor of Michel Delving (or of the Shire), who was elected every seven years at the Free Fair on the White Downs at the Lithe, that is at Midsummer. As mayor almost his only duty was to preside at banquets, given on the Shire-holidays, which occurred at frequent intervals. But the offices of Postmaster and First Shirriff were attached to the mayoralty, so that he managed both the Messenger Service and the Watch. These were the only Shire-services, and the Messengers were the most numerous, and much the busier of the two. By no means all Hobbits were lettered, but those who were wrote constantly to all their friends (and a selection of their relations) who lived further off than an afternoon's walk.

The Shirriffs was the name that the Hobbits gave to their police, or the nearest equivalent that they possessed. They had, of course, no uniforms (such things being quite unknown), only a feather in their caps; and they were in practice rather haywards than policemen, more concerned with the strayings of beasts than of people. There were in all the Shire only twelve of them, three in each Farthing, for Inside Work. A rather larger body, varying at need, was employed to 'beat the bounds', and to see that Outsiders of any kind, great or small, did not make themselves a nuisance.

At the time when this story begins the Bounders, as they were called, had been greatly increased. There were many reports and complaints of strange persons and creatures prowling about the borders, or over them: the first sign that all was not quite as it should be, and always had been except in tales and legends of long ago. Few heeded the sign, and not even Bilbo yet had any notion of what it portended. Sixty years had passed since he set out on his memorable journey, and he was old even for Hobbits, who reached a hundred as often as not; but much evidently still remained of the considerable wealth that he had brought back. How much or how little he revealed to no-one, not even to Frodo his favourite 'nephew'. And he still kept secret the ring that he had found.

## IV. Of The Finding Of The Ring

As is told in *The Hobbit*, there came one day to Bilbo's door the great Wizard, Gandalf the Grey, and thirteen dwarves with him: none other, indeed, than Thorin Oakenshield, descendant of kings, and his twelve companions in exile. With them he set out, to his own lasting astonishment, on a morning of April, it being then the year 1341 Shire-reckoning, on a quest of great treasure, the dwarf-hoards of the Kings under the Mountain, beneath Erebor in Dale, far off in the East. The quest was successful, and the Dragon that guarded the hoard was destroyed. Yet, though before all was won the Battle of Five Armies was fought, and Thorin was slain, and many deeds of renown were done, the matter would scarcely have concerned later history, or earned more than a note in the long annals of the Third Age, but for an 'accident' by the way. The party was assailed by Orcs in a high pass of the Misty Mountains as they went towards Wilderland; and so it happened that Bilbo was lost for a while in the black orc-mines deep under the mountains, and there, as he groped in vain in the dark, he put his hand on a ring, lying on the floor of a tunnel. He put it in his pocket. It seemed then like mere luck.

Trying to find his way out, Bilbo went on down to the roots of the mountains, until he could go no further. At the bottom of the tunnel lay a cold lake far from the light, and on an island of rock in the water lived Gollum. He was a loathsome little creature: he paddled a small boat with his large flat feet, peering with pale luminous eyes and catching blind fish with his long fingers, and eating them raw. He ate any living thing, even orc, if he could catch it and strangle it without a struggle. He possessed a secret treasure that had come to him long ages ago, when he still lived in the light: a ring of gold that made its wearer invisible. It was the one thing he loved, his 'Precious', and he talked to it, even when it was not with him. For he kept it hidden safe in a hole on his island, except when he was hunting or spying on the orcs of the mines.

Maybe he would have attacked Bilbo at once, if the ring had been on him when they met; but it was not, and the hobbit held in his hand an Elvish knife, which served him as a sword. So to gain time Gollum challenged Bilbo to the Riddle-game, saying that if he asked a riddle which Bilbo could not guess, then he would kill him and eat him; but if Bilbo defeated him, then he would do as Bilbo wished: he would lead him to a way out of the tunnels.

Since he was lost in the dark without hope, and could neither go on nor back, Bilbo accepted the challenge; and they asked one another many riddles. In the end Bilbo won the game, more by luck (as it seemed) than by wits; for he was stumped at last for a riddle to ask, and cried out, as his hand came upon the ring he had picked up and forgotten: *What have I got in my pocket?* This Gollum failed to answer, though he demanded three guesses.

The Authorities, it is true, differ whether this last question was a mere 'question' and not a 'riddle' according to the strict rules of the Game; but all agree that, after accepting it and trying to guess the answer, Gollum was bound by his promise. And Bilbo pressed him to keep his word; for the thought came to him that this slimy creature might prove false, even though such promises were held sacred, and of old all but the wickedest things feared to break them. But after ages alone in the dark Gollum's heart was black, and treachery was in it. He slipped away, and returned to his island, of which Bilbo knew nothing, not far off in the dark water. There, he thought, lay his ring. He was hungry now, and angry, and once his 'Precious' was with him he would not fear any weapon at all.

But the ring was not on the island; he had lost it, it was gone. His screech sent a shiver down Bilbo's back, though he did not yet understand what had happened. But Gollum had at last leaped to a guess, too late. *What has it got in its pocketses?* he cried. The light in his eyes was like a green flame as he sped back to murder the hobbit and recover his 'Precious'. Just in time Bilbo saw his peril, and he fled blindly up the passage away from the water; and once more he was saved by his luck. For as he ran he put his hand in his pocket, and the ring slipped quietly on to his finger. So it was that Gollum passed him without seeing him, and went to guard the way out, lest the 'thief' should escape. Warily Bilbo followed him, as he went along, cursing, and talking to himself about his 'Precious'; from which talk at last even Bilbo guessed the truth, and hope came to him in the darkness: he himself had found the marvellous ring and a chance of escape from the orcs and from Gollum.

At length they came to a halt before an unseen opening that led to the lower gates of the mines, on the eastward side of the mountains. There Gollum crouched at bay, smelling and listening; and Bilbo was tempted to slay him with his sword. But pity stayed him, and though he kept the ring, in which his only hope lay, he would not use it to help him kill the wretched creature at a disadvantage. In the end, gathering his courage, he leaped over Gollum in the dark, and fled away down the passage, pursued by his enemy's cries of hate and despair: *Thief, thief! Baggins! We hates it for ever!*

Now it is a curious fact that this is not the story as Bilbo first told it to his companions. To them his account was that Gollum had promised to give him a *present*, if he won the game; but when Gollum went to fetch it from his island he found the treasure was gone: a magic ring, which had been given to him long ago on his birthday. Bilbo guessed that this was the very ring that he had found, and as he had won the game, it was already his by right. But being in a tight place, he said nothing about it, and made Gollum show him the way out, as a reward instead of a present. This account Bilbo set down in his memoirs, and he seems never to have altered it himself, not even after the Council of Elrond. Evidently it still appeared in the original Red Book, as it did in several of the copies and abstracts. But many copies contain the true account (as an alternative), derived no doubt from notes by Frodo or Samwise, both of whom learned the truth, though they seem to have been unwilling to delete anything actually written by the old hobbit himself.

Gandalf, however, disbelieved Bilbo's first story, as soon as he heard it, and he continued to be very curious about the ring. Eventually he got the true tale out of Bilbo after much questioning, which for a while strained their friendship; but the wizard seemed to think the truth important. Though he did not say so to Bilbo, he also thought it important, and disturbing, to find that the good hobbit had not told the truth from the first: quite contrary to his habit. The idea of a 'present' was not mere hobbitlike invention, all the same. It was suggested to Bilbo, as he confessed, by Gollum's talk that he overheard; for Gollum did, in fact, call the ring his 'birthday-present', many times. That also Gandalf thought strange and suspicious; but he did not discover the truth in this point for many more years, as will be seen in this book.

Of Bilbo's later adventures little more need be said here. With the help of the ring he escaped from the orcs at the gate and rejoined his companions. He used the ring many times on his quest, chiefly for the help of his friends; but he kept it secret from them as long as he could. After his return to his home he never spoke of it again to anyone, save Gandalf and Frodo; and no-one else in the Shire knew of its existence, or so he believed. Only to Frodo did he show the account of his Journey that he was writing.

His sword, Sting, Bilbo hung over his fireplace, and his coat of marvellous mail, the gift of the Dwarves from the Dragon-hoard, he lent to a museum, to the Michel Delving Mathom-house in fact. But he kept in a drawer at Bag End the old cloak and hood that he had worn on his travels; and the ring, secured by a fine chain, remained in his pocket.

He returned to his home at Bag End on June the 22<sup>nd</sup> in his fifty-second year (S.R. 1342), and nothing very notable occurred in the Shire until Mr. Baggins began the preparations for the celebration of his hundred-and-eleventh birthday (S.R. 1401). At this point this History begins.

## Note On The Shire Records

At the end of the Third Age the part played by the Hobbits in the great events that led to the inclusion of the Shire in the Reunited Kingdom awakened among them a more widespread interest in their own history; and many of their traditions, up to that time still mainly oral, were collected and written down. The greater families were also concerned with events in the Kingdom at large, and many of their members studied its ancient histories and legends. By the end of the first century of the Fourth Age there were already to be found in the Shire several libraries that contained many historical books and records.

The largest of these collections were probably at Undertowers, at Great Smials, and at Brandy Hall. This account of the end of the Third Age is drawn mainly from the Red Book of Westmarch. That most important source for the history of the War of the Ring was so called because it was long preserved at Undertowers, the home of the Fairbairns, Wardens of the Westmarch.<sup>19</sup> It was in origin Bilbo's private diary, which he took with him to Rivendell. Frodo brought it back to the Shire, together with many loose leaves of notes, and during S.R. 1420-1 he nearly filled its pages with his account of the War. But annexed to it and preserved with it, probably in a single red case, were the three large volumes, bound in red leather, that Bilbo gave to him as a parting gift. To these four volumes there was added in Westmarch a fifth containing commentaries, genealogies, and various other matter concerning the hobbit members of the Fellowship.

The original Red Book has not been preserved, but many copies were made, especially of the first volume, for the use of the descendants of the children of Master Samwise. The most important copy, however, has a different history. It was kept at Great Smials, but it was written in Gondor, probably at the request of the great-grandson of Peregrin, and completed in S.R. 1592 (F.A. 172). Its southern scribe appended this note: Findegil, King's Writer, finished this work in IV 172. It is an exact copy in all details of the Thain's Book in Minas Tirith. That book was a copy, made at the request of King Elessar, of the Red Book of the Periannath, and was brought to him by the Thain Peregrin when he retired to Gondor in IV 64.

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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix B: annals [1451](#), [1462](#), [1482](#); and note in [Appendix C](#).

The Thain's Book was thus the first copy made of the Red Book and contained much that was later omitted or lost. In Minas Tirith it received much annotation, and many corrections, especially of names, words, and quotations in the Elvish languages; and there was added to it an abbreviated version of those parts of *The Tale of Aragorn and Arwen* which lie outside the account of the War. The full tale is stated to have been written by Barahir, grandson of the Steward Faramir, some time after the passing of the King. But the chief importance of Findegil's copy is that it alone contains the whole of Bilbo's 'Translations from the Elvish'. These three volumes were found to be a work of great skill and learning in which, between 1403 and 1418, he had used all the sources available to him in Rivendell, both living and written. But since they were little used by Frodo, being almost entirely concerned with the Elder Days, no more is said of them here.

Since Meriadoc and Peregrin became the heads of their great families, and at the same time kept up their connexions with Rohan and Gondor, the libraries at Bucklebury and Tuckborough contained much that did not appear in the Red Book. In Brandy Hall there were many works dealing with Eriador and the history of Rohan. Some of these were composed or begun by Meriadoc himself, though in the Shire he was chiefly remembered for his *Herblore of the Shire*, and for his *Reckoning of Years* in which he discussed the relation of the calendars of the Shire and Bree to those of Rivendell, Gondor, and Rohan. He also wrote a short treatise on *Old Words and Names in the Shire*, showing special interest in discovering the kinship with the language of the Rohirrim of such 'shire-words' as *mathom* and old elements in place names.

At Great Smials the books were of less interest to Shire-folk, though more important for larger history. None of them was written by Peregrin, but he and his successors collected many manuscripts written by scribes of Gondor: mainly copies or summaries of histories or legends relating to Elendil and his heirs. Only here in the Shire were to be found extensive materials for the history of Núng of Sauron. It was probably at Great Smials that *The Tale of Years*<sup>20</sup> was put together, with the assistance of material collected by Meriadoc. Though the dates given are often conjectural, especially for the Second Age, they deserve attention. It is probable that Meriadoc obtained assistance and information from Rivendell, which he visited more than once. There, though Elrond had departed, his sons long remained, together with some of the High-elven folk. It is said that Celeborn went to dwell there after the departure of Galadriel; but there is no record of the day when at last he sought the Grey Havens, and with him went the last living memory of the Elder Days in Middle-earth.

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<sup>20</sup> Represented in much reduced form in [Appendix B](#) as far as the end of the Third Age.

# THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

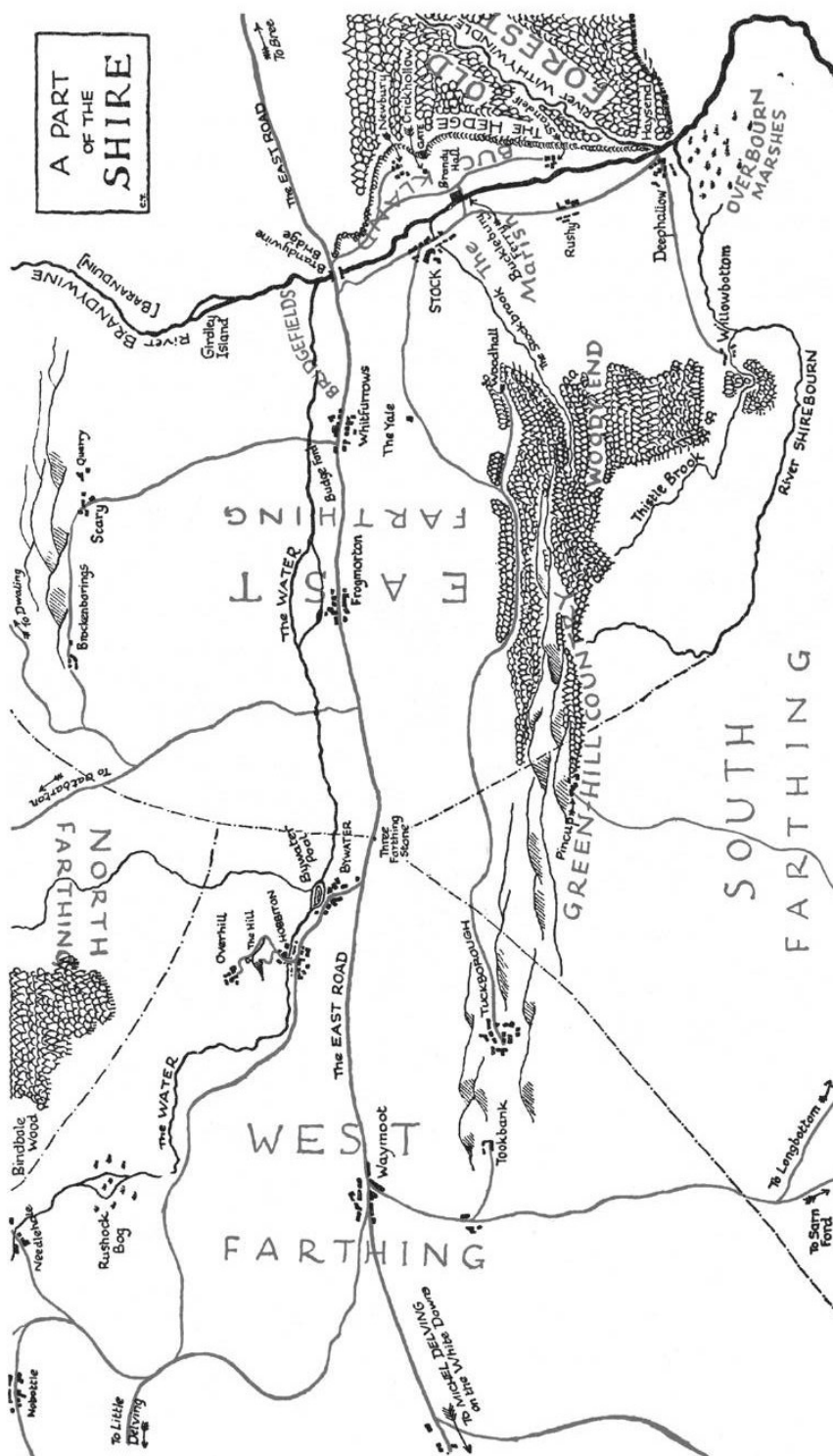


*Being the first part of*

# THE LORD OF THE RINGS

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## Chapter 1: A Long-Expected Party

When Mr. Bilbo Baggins of Bag End announced that he would shortly be celebrating his eleventy-first birthday with a party of special magnificence, there was much talk and excitement in Hobbiton.

Bilbo was very rich and very peculiar, and had been the wonder of the Shire for sixty years, ever since his remarkable disappearance and unexpected return. The riches he had brought back from his travels had now become a local legend, and it was popularly believed, whatever the old folk might say, that the Hill at Bag End was full of tunnels stuffed with treasure. And if that was not enough for fame, there was also his prolonged vigour to marvel at. Time wore on, but it seemed to have little effect on Mr. Baggins. At ninety he was much the same as at fifty. At ninety-nine they began to call him *well-preserved*; but *unchanged* would have been nearer the mark. There were some that shook their heads and thought this was too much of a good thing; it seemed unfair that anyone should possess (apparently) perpetual youth as well as (reputedly) inexhaustible wealth.

‘It will have to be paid for,’ they said. ‘It isn’t natural, and trouble will come of it!’

But so far trouble had not come; and as Mr. Baggins was generous with his money, most people were willing to forgive him his oddities and his good fortune. He remained on visiting terms with his relatives (except, of course, the Sackville-Bagginses), and he had many devoted admirers among the hobbits of poor and unimportant families. But he had no close friends, until some of his younger cousins began to grow up.

The eldest of these, and Bilbo’s favourite, was young Frodo Baggins. When Bilbo was ninety-nine he adopted Frodo as his heir, and brought him to live at Bag End; and the hopes of the Sackville-Bagginses were finally dashed. Bilbo and Frodo happened to have the same birthday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>. ‘You had better come and live here, Frodo my lad,’ said Bilbo one day; ‘and then we can celebrate our birthday-parties comfortably together.’ At that time Frodo was still in his *tweens*, as the hobbits called the irresponsible twenties between childhood and coming of age at thirty-three.

Twelve more years passed. Each year the Bagginses had given very lively combined birthday-parties at Bag End; but now it was understood that something quite exceptional was being planned for that autumn. Bilbo was going to be *eleventy-one*, 111, a rather curious number, and a very respectable age for a hobbit (the Old Took himself had only reached 130); and Frodo was going to be *thirty-three*, 33, an important number: the date of his ‘coming of age’.

Tongues began to wag in Hobbiton and Bywater; and rumour of the coming event travelled all over the Shire. The history and character of Mr. Bilbo Baggins became once again the chief topic of conversation; and the older folk suddenly found their reminiscences in welcome demand.

No-one had a more attentive audience than old Ham Gamgee, commonly known as the Gaffer. He held forth at *The Ivy Bush*, a small inn on the Bywater road; and he spoke with some authority, for he had tended the garden at Bag End for forty years, and had helped old Holman in the same job before that. Now that he was himself growing old and stiff in the joints, the job was mainly carried on by his youngest son, Sam Gamgee. Both father and son were on very friendly terms with Bilbo and Frodo. They lived on the Hill itself, in Number 3 Bagshot Row just below Bag End.

‘A very nice well-spoken gentlehobbit is Mr. Bilbo, as I’ve always said,’ the Gaffer declared. With perfect truth: for Bilbo was very polite to him, calling him ‘Master Hamfast’, and consulting him constantly upon the growing of vegetables—in the matter of ‘roots’, especially potatoes, the Gaffer was recognized as the leading authority by all in the neighbourhood (including himself).



‘But what about this Frodo that lives with him?’ asked Old Noakes of Bywater. ‘Baggins is his name, but he’s more than half a Brandybuck, they say. It beats me why any Baggins of Hobbiton should go looking for a wife away there in Buckland, where folks are so queer.’

‘And no wonder they’re queer,’ put in Daddy Twofoot (the Gaffer’s next-door neighbour), ‘if they live on the wrong side of the Brandywine River, and right agin the Old Forest. That’s a dark bad place, if half the tales be true.’

‘You’re right, Dad!’ said the Gaffer. ‘Not that the Brandybucks of Buckland live *in* the Old Forest; but they’re a queer breed, seemingly. They fool about with boats on that big river—and that isn’t natural. Small wonder that trouble came of it, I say. But be that as it may, Mr. Frodo is as nice a young hobbit as you could wish to meet. Very much like Mr. Bilbo, and in more than looks. After all his father was a Baggins. A decent respectable hobbit was Mr. Drogo Baggins; there was never much to tell of him, till he was drowned.’

‘Drowned?’ said several voices. They had heard this and other darker rumours before, of course; but hobbits have a passion for family history, and they were ready to hear it again.

‘Well, so they say,’ said the Gaffer. ‘You see: Mr. Drogo, he married poor Miss Primula Brandybuck. She was our Mr. Bilbo’s first cousin on the mother’s side (her mother being the youngest of the Old Took’s daughters); and Mr. Drogo was his second cousin. So Mr. Frodo is his first *and* second cousin, once removed either way, as the saying is, if you follow me. And Mr. Drogo was staying at Brandy Hall with his father-in-law, old Master Gorbodoc, as he often did after his marriage (him being partial to his vittles, and old Gorbodoc keeping a mighty generous table); and he went out *boating* on the Brandywine River; and he and his wife were drowned, and poor Mr. Frodo only a child and all.’

‘I’ve heard they went on the water after dinner in the moonlight,’ said Old Noakes; ‘and it was Drogo’s weight as sunk the boat.’

‘And *I* heard she pushed him in, and he pulled her in after him,’ said Sandyman, the Hobbiton miller.

‘You shouldn’t listen to all you hear, Sandyman,’ said the Gaffer, who did not much like the miller. ‘There isn’t no call to go talking of pushing and pulling. Boats are quite tricky enough for those that sit still without looking further for the cause of trouble. Anyway: there was this Mr. Frodo left an orphan and stranded, as you might say, among those queer Bucklanders, being brought up anyhow in Brandy Hall. A regular warren, by all accounts. Old Master Gorbodoc never had fewer than a couple of hundred relations in the place. Mr. Bilbo never did a kinder deed than when he brought the lad back to live among decent folk.

‘But I reckon it was a nasty knock for those Sackville-Bagginses. They thought they were going to get Bag End, that time when he went off and was thought to be dead. And then he comes back and orders them off; and he goes on living and living, and never looking a day older, bless him! And suddenly he produces an heir, and has all the papers made out proper. The Sackville-Bagginses won’t never see the inside of Bag End now, or it is to be hoped not.’

‘There’s a tidy bit of money tucked away up there, I hear tell,’ said a stranger, a visitor on business from Michel Delving in the Westfarthing. ‘All the top of your hill is full of tunnels packed with chests of gold and silver, *and* jools, by what I’ve heard.’

‘Then you’ve heard more than I can speak to,’ answered the Gaffer. ‘I know nothing about *jools*. Mr. Bilbo is free with his money, and there seems no lack of it; but I know of no tunnel-making. I saw Mr. Bilbo when he came back, a matter of sixty years ago, when I was a lad. I’d not long come prentice to old Holman (him being my dad’s cousin), but he had me up at Bag End helping him to keep folks from trampling and trapesing all over the garden while the sale was on. And in the middle of it all Mr. Bilbo comes up the Hill with a pony and some mighty big bags and a couple of chests. I don’t doubt they were mostly full of treasure he had picked up in foreign parts, where there be mountains of gold, they say; but there wasn’t enough to fill tunnels. But my lad Sam will know more about that. He’s in and out of Bag End. Crazy about stories of the old days, he is, and he listens to all Mr. Bilbo’s tales. Mr. Bilbo has learned him his letters—meaning no harm, mark you, and I hope no harm will come of it.



*‘Elves and Dragons!’* I says to him. *Cabbages and potatoes are better for me and you. Don’t go getting mixed up in the business of your betters, or you’ll land in trouble too big for you,* I says to him. And I might say it to others,’ he added with a look at the stranger and the miller.

But the Gaffer did not convince his audience. The legend of Bilbo’s wealth was now too firmly fixed in the minds of the younger generation of hobbits.

‘Ah, but he has likely enough been adding to what he brought at first,’ argued the miller, voicing common opinion. ‘He’s often away from home. And look at the outlandish folk that visit him: dwarves coming at night, and that old wandering conjuror, Gandalf, and all. You can say what you like, Gaffer, but Bag End’s a queer place, and its folk are queerer.’

‘And you can say what *you* like, about what you know no more of than you do of boating, Mr. Sandyman,’ retorted the Gaffer, disliking the miller even more than usual. ‘If that’s being queer, then we could do with a bit more queerness in these parts. There’s some not far away that wouldn’t offer a pint of beer to a friend, if they lived in a hole with golden walls. But they do things proper at Bag End. Our Sam says that *everyone*’s going to be invited to the party, and there’s going to be presents, mark you, presents for all—this very month as is.’

That very month was September, and as fine as you could ask. A day or two later a rumour (probably started by the knowledgeable Sam) was spread about that there were going to be fireworks—fireworks, what is more, such as had not been seen in the Shire for nigh on a century, not indeed since the Old Took died.

Days passed and The Day drew nearer. An odd-looking waggon laden with odd-looking packages rolled into Hobbiton one evening and toiled up the Hill to Bag End. The startled hobbits peered out of lamplit doors to gape at it. It was driven by outlandish folk, singing strange songs: dwarves with long beards and deep hoods. A few of them remained at Bag End. At the end of the second week in September a cart came in through Bywater from the direction of Brandywine Bridge in broad daylight. An old man was driving it all alone. He wore a tall pointed blue hat, a long grey cloak, and a silver scarf. He had a long white beard and bushy eyebrows that stuck out beyond the brim of his hat. Small hobbit-children ran after the cart all through Hobbiton and right up the hill. It had a cargo of fireworks, as they rightly guessed. At Bilbo’s front door the old man began to unload: there were great bundles of fireworks of all sorts and shapes, each labelled with a large red G  and the elf-rune, .

That was Gandalf’s mark, of course, and the old man was Gandalf the Wizard, whose fame in the Shire was due mainly to his skill with fires, smokes, and lights. His real business was far more difficult and dangerous, but the Shire-folk knew nothing about it. To them he was just one of the ‘attractions’ at the Party. Hence the excitement of the hobbit-children. ‘G for Grand!’ they shouted, and the old man smiled. They knew him by sight, though he only appeared in Hobbiton occasionally and never stopped long; but neither they nor any but the oldest of their elders had seen one of his firework displays—they now belonged to a legendary past.

When the old man, helped by Bilbo and some dwarves, had finished unloading, Bilbo gave a few pennies away; but not a single squib or cracker was forthcoming, to the disappointment of the onlookers.

‘Run away now!’ said Gandalf. ‘You will get plenty when the time comes.’ Then he disappeared inside with Bilbo, and the door was shut. The young hobbits stared at the door in vain for a while, and then made off, feeling that the day of the party would never come.

Inside Bag End, Bilbo and Gandalf were sitting at the open window of a small room looking out west on to the garden. The late afternoon was bright and peaceful. The flowers glowed red and golden: snapdragons and sunflowers, and nasturtians trailing all over the turf walls and peeping in at the round windows.

‘How bright your garden looks!’ said Gandalf.

‘Yes,’ said Bilbo. ‘I am very fond indeed of it, and of all the dear old Shire; but I think I need a holiday.’

‘You mean to go on with your plan then?’

‘I do. I made up my mind months ago, and I haven’t changed it.’

‘Very well. It is no good saying any more. Stick to your plan—your whole plan, mind—and I hope it will turn out for the best, for you, and for all of us.’

‘I hope so. Anyway I mean to enjoy myself on Thursday, and have my little joke.’

‘Who will laugh, I wonder?’ said Gandalf, shaking his head.

‘We shall see,’ said Bilbo.

The next day more carts rolled up the Hill, and still more carts. There might have been some grumbling about ‘dealing locally’, but that very week orders began to pour out of Bag End for every kind of provision, commodity, or luxury that could be obtained in Hobbiton or Bywater or anywhere in the neighbourhood. People became enthusiastic; and they began to tick off the days on the calendar; and they watched eagerly for the postman, hoping for invitations.

Before long the invitations began pouring out, and the Hobbiton post-office was blocked, and the Bywater post-office was snowed under, and voluntary assistant postmen were called for. There was a constant stream of them going up the Hill, carrying hundreds of polite variations on *Thank you, I shall certainly come*.

A notice appeared on the gate at Bag End: NO ADMITTANCE EXCEPT ON PARTY BUSINESS. Even those who had, or pretended to have Party Business were seldom allowed inside. Bilbo was busy: writing invitations, ticking off answers, packing up presents, and making some private preparations of his own. From the time of Gandalf’s arrival he remained hidden from view.

One morning the hobbits woke to find the large field, south of Bilbo’s front door, covered with ropes and poles for tents and pavilions. A special entrance was cut into the bank leading to the road, and wide steps and a large white gate were built there. The three hobbit-families of Bagshot Row, adjoining the field, were intensely interested and generally envied. Old Gaffer Gamgee stopped even pretending to work in his garden.

The tents began to go up. There was a specially large pavilion, so big that the tree that grew in the field was right inside it, and stood proudly near one end, at the head of the chief table. Lanterns were hung on all its branches. More promising still (to the hobbits’ mind): an enormous open-air kitchen was erected in the north corner of the field. A draught of cooks, from every inn and eating-house for miles around, arrived to supplement the dwarves and other odd folk that were quartered at Bag End. Excitement rose to its height.

Then the weather clouded over. That was on Wednesday the eve of the Party. Anxiety was intense. Then Thursday, September the 22<sup>nd</sup>, actually dawned. The sun got up, the clouds vanished, flags were unfurled and the fun began.

Bilbo Baggins called it a *party*, but it was really a variety of entertainments rolled into one. Practically everybody living near was invited. A very few were overlooked by accident, but as they turned up all the same, that did not matter. Many people from other parts of the Shire were also asked; and there were even a few from outside the borders. Bilbo met the guests (and additions) at the new white gate in person. He gave away presents to all and sundry—the latter were those who went out again by a back way and came in again by the gate. Hobbits give presents to other people on their own birthdays. Not very expensive ones, as a rule, and not so lavishly as on this occasion; but it was not a bad system. Actually in Hobbiton and Bywater every day in the year was somebody’s birthday, so that every hobbit in those parts had a fair chance of at least one present at least once a week. But they never got tired of them.

On this occasion the presents were unusually good. The hobbit-children were so excited that for a while they almost forgot about eating. There were toys the like of which they had never seen before, all beautiful and some obviously magical. Many of them had indeed been ordered a year before, and had come all the way from the Mountain and from Dale, and were of real dwarf-make.

When every guest had been welcomed and was finally inside the gate, there were songs, dances, music, games, and, of course, food and drink. There were three official meals: lunch, tea, and dinner (or supper). But lunch and tea were marked chiefly by the fact that at those times all the guests were sitting down and eating together. At other times there were merely lots of people eating and drinking—continuously from elevenses until six-thirty, when the fireworks started.

The fireworks were by Gandalf: they were not only brought by him, but designed and made by him; and the special effects, set pieces, and flights of rockets were let off by him. But there was also a generous distribution of squibs, crackers, backarappers, sparklers, torches, dwarf-candles, elf-fountains, goblin-barkers and thunderclaps. They were all superb. The art of Gandalf improved with age.

There were rockets like a flight of scintillating birds singing with sweet voices. There were green trees with trunks of dark smoke: their leaves opened like a whole spring unfolding in a moment, and their shining branches dropped glowing flowers down upon the astonished hobbits, disappearing with a sweet scent just before they touched their upturned faces. There were fountains of butterflies that flew glittering into the trees; there were pillars of coloured fires that rose and turned into eagles, or sailing ships, or a phalanx of flying swans; there was a red thunderstorm and a shower of yellow rain; there was a forest of silver spears that sprang suddenly into the air with a yell like an embattled army, and came down again into the Water with a hiss like a hundred hot snakes. And there was also one last surprise, in honour of Bilbo, and it startled the hobbits exceedingly, as Gandalf intended. The lights went out. A great smoke went up. It shaped itself like a mountain seen in the distance, and began to glow at the summit. It spouted green and scarlet flames. Out flew a red-golden dragon—not life-size, but terribly life-like: fire came from his jaws, his eyes glared down; there was a roar, and he whizzed three times over the heads of the crowd. They all ducked, and many fell flat on their faces. The dragon passed like an express train, turned a somersault, and burst over Bywater with a deafening explosion.

‘That is the signal for supper!’ said Bilbo. The pain and alarm vanished at once, and the prostrate hobbits leaped to their feet. There was a splendid supper for everyone; for everyone, that is, except those invited to the special family dinner-party. This was held in the great pavilion with the tree. The invitations were limited to twelve dozen (a number also called by the hobbits one Gross, though the word was not considered proper to use of people); and the guests were selected from all the families to which Bilbo and Frodo were related, with the addition of a few special unrelated friends (such as Gandalf). Many young hobbits were included, and present by parental permission; for hobbits were easy-going with their children in the matter of sitting up late, especially when there was a chance of getting them a free meal. Bringing up young hobbits took a lot of provender.

There were many Bagginses and Boffins, and also many Took and Brandybucks; there were various Grubbs (relations of Bilbo Baggins’ grandmother), and various Chubbs (connexions of his Took grandfather); and a selection of Burrowses, Bolgers, Bracegirdles, Brockhouses, Goodbodies, Hornblowers and Proudfoots. Some of these were only very distantly connected with Bilbo, and some had hardly ever been in Hobbiton before, as they lived in remote corners of the Shire. The Sackville-Bagginses were not forgotten. Otho and his wife Lobelia were present. They disliked Bilbo and detested Frodo, but so magnificent was the invitation card, written in golden ink, that they had felt it was impossible to refuse. Besides, their cousin, Bilbo, had been specializing in food for many years and his table had a high reputation.

All the one hundred and forty-four guests expected a pleasant feast; though they rather dreaded the after-dinner speech of their host (an inevitable item). He was liable to drag in bits of what he called poetry; and sometimes, after a glass or two, would allude to the absurd adventures of his mysterious journey. The guests were not disappointed: they had a *very* pleasant feast, in fact an engrossing entertainment: rich, abundant, varied, and prolonged. The purchase of provisions fell almost to nothing throughout the district in the ensuing weeks; but as Bilbo’s catering had depleted the stocks of most of the stores, cellars and warehouses for miles around, that did not matter much.

After the feast (more or less) came the Speech. Most of the company were, however, now in a tolerant mood, at that delightful stage which they called ‘filling up the corners’. They were sipping their favourite drinks, and nibbling at their favourite dainties, and their fears were forgotten. They were prepared to listen to anything, and to cheer at every full stop.

*My dear People*, began Bilbo, rising in his place. ‘Hear! Hear! Hear!’ they shouted, and kept on repeating it in chorus, seeming reluctant to follow their own advice. Bilbo left his place and went and stood on a chair under the illuminated tree. The light of the lanterns fell on his beaming face; the golden buttons shone on his

embroidered silk waistcoat. They could all see him standing, waving one hand in the air, the other was in his trouser-pocket.

*My dear Bagginses and Boffins, he began again; and my dear Took and Brandybucks, and Grubbs, and Chubbs, and Burrowses, and Hornblowers, and Bolgers, Bracegirdles, Goodbodies, Brockhouses and Proudfoots. 'ProudFEET!' shouted an elderly hobbit from the back of the pavilion. His name, of course, was Proudfoot, and well merited; his feet were large, exceptionally furry, and both were on the table.*

*Proudfoots, repeated Bilbo. Also my good Sackville-Bagginses that I welcome back at last to Bag End. Today is my one hundred and eleventh birthday: I am eleventy-one today! 'Hurray! Hurray! Many Happy Returns!' they shouted, and they hammered joyously on the tables. Bilbo was doing splendidly. This was the sort of stuff they liked: short and obvious.*

*I hope you are all enjoying yourselves as much as I am. Deafening cheers. Cries of Yes (and No). Noises of trumpets and horns, pipes and flutes, and other musical instruments. There were, as has been said, many young hobbits present. Hundreds of musical crackers had been pulled. Most of them bore the mark DALE on them; which did not convey much to most of the hobbits, but they all agreed they were marvellous crackers. They contained instruments, small, but of perfect make and enchanting tones. Indeed, in one corner some of the young Took and Brandybucks, supposing Uncle Bilbo to have finished (since he had plainly said all that was necessary), now got up an impromptu orchestra, and began a merry dance-tune. Master Everard Took and Miss Melilot Brandybuck got on a table and with bells in their hands began to dance the Springle-ring: a pretty dance, but rather vigorous.*

But Bilbo had not finished. Seizing a horn from a youngster nearby, he blew three loud hoots. The noise subsided. *I shall not keep you long, he cried. Cheers from all the assembly. I have called you all together for a Purpose.* Something in the way that he said this made an impression. There was almost silence, and one or two of the Took pricked up their ears.

*Indeed, for Three Purposes! First of all, to tell you that I am immensely fond of you all, and that eleventy-one years is too short a time to live among such excellent and admirable hobbits.* Tremendous outburst of approval.

*I don't know half of you half as well as I should like; and I like less than half of you half as well as you deserve.* This was unexpected and rather difficult. There was some scattered clapping, but most of them were trying to work it out and see if it came to a compliment.

*Secondly, to celebrate my birthday.* Cheers again. *I should say: OUR birthday. For it is, of course, also the birthday of my heir and nephew, Frodo. He comes of age and into his inheritance today.* Some perfunctory clapping by the elders; and some loud shouts of 'Frodo! Frodo! Jolly old Frodo,' from the juniors. The Sackville-Bagginses scowled, and wondered what was meant by 'coming into his inheritance'.

*Together we score one hundred and forty-four. Your numbers were chosen to fit this remarkable total: One Gross, if I may use the expression.* No cheers. This was ridiculous. Many of the guests, and especially the Sackville-Bagginses, were insulted, feeling sure they had only been asked to fill up the required number, like goods in a package. 'One Gross, indeed! Vulgar expression.'

*It is also, if I may be allowed to refer to ancient history, the anniversary of my arrival by barrel at Esgaroth on the Long Lake; though the fact that it was my birthday slipped my memory on that occasion. I was only fifty-one then, and birthdays did not seem so important. The banquet was very splendid, however, though I had a bad cold at the time, I remember, and could only say 'thag you very buch'. I now repeat it more correctly: Thank you very much for coming to my little party.* Obstinate silence. They all feared that a song or some poetry was now imminent; and they were getting bored. Why couldn't he stop talking and let them drink his health? But Bilbo did not sing or recite. He paused for a moment.

*Thirdly and finally, he said, I wish to make an ANNOUNCEMENT.* He spoke this last word so loudly and suddenly that everyone sat up who still could. *I regret to announce that—though, as I said, eleventy-one years is far too short a time to spend among you—this is the END. I am going. I am leaving NOW. GOOD-BYE!*

He stepped down and vanished. There was a blinding flash of light, and the guests all blinked. When they opened their eyes Bilbo was nowhere to be seen. One hundred and forty-four flabbergasted hobbits sat back

speechless. Old Odo Proudfoot removed his feet from the table and stamped. Then there was a dead silence, until suddenly, after several deep breaths, every Baggins, Boffin, Took, Brandybuck, Grubb, Chubb, Burrows, Bolger, Bracegirdle, Brockhouse, Goodbody, Hornblower, and Proudfoot began to talk at once.

It was generally agreed that the joke was in very bad taste, and more food and drink were needed to cure the guests of shock and annoyance. 'He's mad. I always said so,' was probably the most popular comment. Even the Tookes (with a few exceptions) thought Bilbo's behaviour was absurd. For the moment most of them took it for granted that his disappearance was nothing more than a ridiculous prank.

But old Rory Brandybuck was not so sure. Neither age nor an enormous dinner had clouded his wits, and he said to his daughter-in-law, Esmeralda: 'There's something fishy in this, my dear! I believe that mad Baggins is off again. Silly old fool. But why worry? He hasn't taken the vittles with him.' He called loudly to Frodo to send the wine round again.

Frodo was the only one present who had said nothing. For some time he had sat silent beside Bilbo's empty chair, and ignored all remarks and questions. He had enjoyed the joke, of course, even though he had been in the know. He had difficulty in keeping from laughter at the indignant surprise of the guests. But at the same time he felt deeply troubled: he realized suddenly that he loved the old hobbit dearly. Most of the guests went on eating and drinking and discussing Bilbo Baggins' oddities, past and present; but the Sackville-Bagginses had already departed in wrath. Frodo did not want to have any more to do with the party. He gave orders for more wine to be served; then he got up and drained his own glass silently to the health of Bilbo, and slipped out of the pavilion.

As for Bilbo Baggins, even while he was making his speech, he had been fingering the golden ring in his pocket: his magic ring that he had kept secret for so many years. As he stepped down he slipped it on his finger, and he was never seen by any hobbit in Hobbiton again.

He walked briskly back to his hole, and stood for a moment listening with a smile to the din in the pavilion, and to the sounds of merrymaking in other parts of the field. Then he went in. He took off his party clothes, folded up and wrapped in tissue-paper his embroidered silk waistcoat, and put it away. Then he put on quickly some old untidy garments, and fastened round his waist a worn leather belt. On it he hung a short sword in a battered black-leather scabbard. From a locked drawer, smelling of moth-balls, he took out an old cloak and hood. They had been locked up as if they were very precious, but they were so patched and weatherstained that their original colour could hardly be guessed: it might have been dark green. They were rather too large for him. He then went into his study, and from a large strong-box took out a bundle wrapped in old cloths, and a leather-bound manuscript; and also a large bulky envelope. The book and bundle he stuffed into the top of a heavy bag that was standing there, already nearly full. Into the envelope he slipped his golden ring, and its fine chain, and then sealed it, and addressed it to Frodo. At first he put it on the mantelpiece, but suddenly he removed it and stuck it in his pocket. At that moment the door opened and Gandalf came quickly in.

'Hullo!' said Bilbo. 'I wondered if you would turn up.'

'I am glad to find you visible,' replied the wizard, sitting down in a chair, 'I wanted to catch you and have a few final words. I suppose you feel that everything has gone off splendidly and according to plan?'

'Yes, I do,' said Bilbo. 'Though that flash was surprising: it quite startled me, let alone the others. A little addition of your own, I suppose?'

'It was. You have wisely kept that ring secret all these years, and it seemed to me necessary to give your guests something else that would seem to explain your sudden vanishment.'

'And would spoil my joke. You are an interfering old busybody,' laughed Bilbo, 'but I expect you know best, as usual.'

'I do—when I know anything. But I don't feel too sure about this whole affair. It has now come to the final point. You have had your joke, and alarmed or offended most of your relations, and given the whole Shire something to talk about for nine days, or ninety-nine more likely. Are you going any further?'

‘Yes, I am. I feel I need a holiday, a very long holiday, as I have told you before. Probably a permanent holiday: I don’t expect I shall return. In fact, I don’t mean to, and I have made all arrangements.

‘I am old, Gandalf. I don’t look it, but I am beginning to feel it in my heart of hearts. *Well-preserved* indeed!’ he snorted. ‘Why, I feel all thin, sort of *stretched*, if you know what I mean: like butter that has been scraped over too much bread. That can’t be right. I need a change, or something.’

Gandalf looked curiously and closely at him. ‘No, it does not seem right,’ he said thoughtfully. ‘No, after all I believe your plan is probably the best.’

‘Well, I’ve made up my mind, anyway. I want to see mountains again, Gandalf—*mountains*; and then find somewhere where I can *rest*. In peace and quiet, without a lot of relatives prying around, and a string of confounded visitors hanging on the bell. I might find somewhere where I can finish my book. I have thought of a nice ending for it: *and he lived happily ever after to the end of his days*.’

Gandalf laughed. ‘I hope he will. But nobody will read the book, however it ends.’

‘Oh, they may, in years to come. Frodo has read some already, as far as it has gone. You’ll keep an eye on Frodo, won’t you?’

‘Yes, I will—two eyes, as often as I can spare them.’

‘He would come with me, of course, if I asked him. In fact he offered to once, just before the party. But he does not really want to, yet. I want to see the wild country again before I die, and the Mountains; but he is still in love with the Shire, with woods and fields and little rivers. He ought to be comfortable here. I am leaving everything to him, of course, except a few oddments. I hope he will be happy, when he gets used to being on his own. It’s time he was his own master now.’

‘Everything?’ said Gandalf. ‘The ring as well? You agreed to that, you remember.’

‘Well, er, yes, I suppose so,’ stammered Bilbo.

‘Where is it?’

‘In an envelope, if you must know,’ said Bilbo impatiently. ‘There on the mantelpiece. Well, no! Here it is in my pocket!’ He hesitated. ‘Isn’t that odd now?’ he said softly to himself. ‘Yet after all, why not? Why shouldn’t it stay there?’

Gandalf looked again very hard at Bilbo, and there was a gleam in his eyes. ‘I think, Bilbo,’ he said quietly, ‘I should leave it behind. Don’t you want to?’

‘Well yes—and no. Now it comes to it, I don’t like parting with it at all, I may say. And I don’t really see why I should. Why do you want me to?’ he asked, and a curious change came over his voice. It was sharp with suspicion and annoyance. ‘You are always badgering me about my ring; but you have never bothered me about the other things that I got on my journey.’

‘No, but I had to badger you,’ said Gandalf. ‘I wanted the truth. It was important. Magic rings are—well, magical; and they are rare and curious. I was professionally interested in your ring, you may say; and I still am. I should like to know where it is, if you go wandering again. Also I think *you* have had it quite long enough. You won’t need it any more, Bilbo, unless I am quite mistaken.’

Bilbo flushed, and there was an angry light in his eyes. His kindly face grew hard. ‘Why not?’ he cried. ‘And what business is it of yours, anyway, to know what I do with my own things? It is my own. I found it. It came to me.’

‘Yes, yes,’ said Gandalf. ‘But there is no need to get angry.’

‘If I am it is your fault,’ said Bilbo. ‘It is mine, I tell you. My own. My Precious. Yes, my Precious.’

The wizard’s face remained grave and attentive, and only a flicker in his deep eyes showed that he was startled and indeed alarmed. ‘It has been called that before,’ he said, ‘but not by you.’

‘But I say it now. And why not? Even if Gollum said the same once. It’s not his now, but mine. And I shall keep it, I say.’

Gandalf stood up. He spoke sternly. ‘You will be a fool if you do, Bilbo,’ he said. ‘You make that clearer with every word you say. It has got far too much hold on you. Let it go! And then you can go yourself, and be free.’

‘I’ll do as I choose and go as I please,’ said Bilbo obstinately.

‘Now, now, my dear hobbit!’ said Gandalf. ‘All your long life we have been friends, and you owe me something. Come! Do as you promised: give it up!’

‘Well, if you want my ring yourself, say so!’ cried Bilbo. ‘But you won’t get it. I won’t give my Precious away, I tell you.’ His hand strayed to the hilt of his small sword.

Gandalf’s eyes flashed. ‘It will be my turn to get angry soon,’ he said. ‘If you say that again, I shall. Then you will see Gandalf the Grey uncloaked.’ He took a step towards the hobbit, and he seemed to grow tall and menacing; his shadow filled the little room.

Bilbo backed away to the wall, breathing hard, his hand clutching at his pocket. They stood for a while facing one another, and the air of the room tingled. Gandalf’s eyes remained bent on the hobbit. Slowly his hands relaxed, and he began to tremble.

‘I don’t know what has come over you, Gandalf,’ he said. ‘You have never been like this before. What is it all about? It is mine isn’t it? I found it, and Gollum would have killed me, if I hadn’t kept it. I’m not a thief, whatever he said.’

‘I have never called you one,’ Gandalf answered. ‘And I am not one either. I am not trying to rob you, but to help you. I wish you would trust me, as you used.’ He turned away, and the shadow passed. He seemed to dwindle again to an old grey man, bent and troubled.

Bilbo drew his hand over his eyes. ‘I am sorry,’ he said. ‘But I felt so queer. And yet it would be a relief in a way not to be bothered with it any more. It has been so growing on my mind lately. Sometimes I have felt it was like an eye looking at me. And I am always wanting to put it on and disappear, don’t you know; or wondering if it is safe, and pulling it out to make sure. I tried locking it up, but I found I couldn’t rest without it in my pocket. I don’t know why. And I don’t seem able to make up my mind.’

‘Then trust mine,’ said Gandalf. ‘It is quite made up. Go away and leave it behind. Stop possessing it. Give it to Frodo, and I will look after him.’

Bilbo stood for a moment tense and undecided. Presently he sighed. ‘All right,’ he said with an effort. ‘I will.’ Then he shrugged his shoulders, and smiled rather ruefully. ‘After all that’s what this party business was all about, really: to give away lots of birthday-presents, and somehow make it easier to give it away at the same time. It hasn’t made it any easier in the end, but it would be a pity to waste all my preparations. It would quite spoil the joke.’

‘Indeed it would take away the only point I ever saw in the affair,’ said Gandalf.

‘Very well,’ said Bilbo, ‘it goes to Frodo with all the rest.’ He drew a deep breath. ‘And now I really must be starting, or somebody else will catch me. I have said good-bye, and I couldn’t bear to do it all over again.’ He picked up his bag and moved to the door.

‘You have still got the ring in your pocket,’ said the wizard.

‘Well, so I have!’ cried Bilbo. ‘And my will and all the other documents too. You had better take it and deliver it for me. That will be safest.’

‘No, don’t give the ring to me,’ said Gandalf. ‘Put it on the mantelpiece. It will be safe enough there, till Frodo comes. I shall wait for him.’

Bilbo took out the envelope, but just as he was about to set it by the clock, his hand jerked back, and the packet fell on the floor. Before he could pick it up, the wizard stooped and seized it and set it in its place. A spasm of anger passed swiftly over the hobbit’s face again. Suddenly it gave way to a look of relief and a laugh.



‘Well, that’s that,’ he said. ‘Now I’m off!’

They went out into the hall. Bilbo chose his favourite stick from the stand; then he whistled. Three dwarves came out of different rooms where they had been busy.

‘Is everything ready?’ asked Bilbo. ‘Everything packed and labelled?’

‘Everything,’ they answered.

‘Well, let’s start then!’ He stepped out of the front-door.

It was a fine night, and the black sky was dotted with stars. He looked up, sniffing the air. ‘What fun! What fun to be off again, off on the Road with dwarves! This is what I have really been longing for, for years! Good-bye!’ he said, looking at his old home and bowing to the door. ‘Good-bye, Gandalf!’

‘Good-bye, for the present, Bilbo. Take care of yourself! You are old enough, and perhaps wise enough.’

‘Take care! I don’t care. Don’t you worry about me! I am as happy now as I have ever been, and that is saying a great deal. But the time has come. I am being swept off my feet at last,’ he added, and then in a low voice, as if to himself, he sang softly in the dark:

*The Road goes ever on and on  
Down from the door where it began.  
Now far ahead the Road has gone,  
And I must follow, if I can,  
Pursuing it with eager feet,  
Until it joins some larger way  
Where many paths and errands meet.  
And whither then? I cannot say.*

He paused, silent for a moment. Then without another word he turned away from the lights and voices in the field and tents, and followed by his three companions went round into his garden, and trotted down the long sloping path. He jumped over a low place in the hedge at the bottom, and took to the meadows, passing into the night like a rustle of wind in the grass.

Gandalf remained for a while staring after him into the darkness. ‘Good-bye, my dear Bilbo—until our next meeting!’ he said softly and went back indoors.

Frodo came in soon afterwards, and found him sitting in the dark, deep in thought. ‘Has he gone?’ he asked.

‘Yes,’ answered Gandalf, ‘he has gone at last.’

‘I wish—I mean, I hoped until this evening that it was only a joke,’ said Frodo. ‘But I knew in my heart that he really meant to go. He always used to joke about serious things. I wish I had come back sooner, just to see him off.’

‘I think really he preferred slipping off quietly in the end,’ said Gandalf. ‘Don’t be too troubled. He’ll be all right—now. He left a packet for you. There it is!’

Frodo took the envelope from the mantelpiece, and glanced at it, but did not open it.

‘You’ll find his will and all the other documents in there, I think,’ said the wizard. ‘You are the master of Bag End now. And also, I fancy, you’ll find a golden ring.’

‘The ring!’ exclaimed Frodo. ‘Has he left me that? I wonder why. Still, it may be useful.’

‘It may, and it may not,’ said Gandalf. ‘I should not make use of it, if I were you. But keep it secret, and keep it safe! Now I am going to bed.’

As master of Bag End Frodo felt it his painful duty to say good-bye to the guests. Rumours of strange events had by now spread all over the field, but Frodo would only say *no doubt everything will be cleared up in the morning*. About midnight carriages came for the important folk. One by one they rolled away, filled with full

but very unsatisfied hobbits. Gardeners came by arrangement, and removed in wheelbarrows those that had inadvertently remained behind.

Night slowly passed. The sun rose. The hobbits rose rather later. Morning went on. People came and began (by orders) to clear away the pavilions and the tables and the chairs, and the spoons and knives and bottles and plates, and the lanterns, and the flowering shrubs in boxes, and the crumbs and cracker-paper, the forgotten bags and gloves and handkerchiefs, and the uneaten food (a very small item). Then a number of other people came (without orders): Bagginses, and Boffins, and Bolgers, and Tookes, and other guests that lived or were staying near. By mid-day, when even the best-fed were out and about again, there was a large crowd at Bag End, uninvited but not unexpected.

Frodo was waiting on the step, smiling, but looking rather tired and worried. He welcomed all the callers, but he had not much more to say than before. His reply to all inquiries was simply this: 'Mr. Bilbo Baggins has gone away; as far as I know, for good.' Some of the visitors he invited to come inside, as Bilbo had left 'messages' for them.

Inside in the hall there was piled a large assortment of packages and parcels and small articles of furniture. On every item there was a label tied. There were several labels of this sort:

*For ADELARD TOOK, for his VERY OWN, from Bilbo;* on an umbrella. Adelard had carried off many unlabelled ones.

*For DORA BAGGINS in memory of a LONG correspondence, with love from Bilbo;* on a large waste-paper basket. Dora was Drogo's sister and the eldest surviving female relative of Bilbo and Frodo; she was ninety-nine, and had written reams of good advice for more than half a century.

*For MILO BURROWS, hoping it will be useful, from B.B.;* on a gold pen and ink-bottle. Milo never answered letters.

*For ANGELICA'S use, from Uncle Bilbo;* on a round convex mirror. She was a young Baggins, and too obviously considered her face shapely.

*For the collection of HUGO BRACEGIRDLE, from a contributor;* on an (empty) book-case. Hugo was a great borrower of books, and worse than usual at returning them.

*For LOBELIA SACKVILLE-BAGGINS, as a PRESENT;* on a case of silver spoons. Bilbo believed that she had acquired a good many of his spoons, while he was away on his former journey. Lobelia knew that quite well. When she arrived later in the day, she took the point at once, but she also took the spoons.

This is only a small selection of the assembled presents. Bilbo's residence had got rather cluttered up with things in the course of his long life. It was a tendency of hobbit-holes to get cluttered up: for which the custom of giving so many birthday-presents was largely responsible. Not, of course, that the birthday-presents were always *new*; there were one or two old *mathoms* of forgotten uses that had circulated all around the district; but Bilbo had usually given new presents, and kept those that he received. The old hole was now being cleared a little.

Every one of the various parting gifts had labels, written out personally by Bilbo, and several had some point, or some joke. But, of course, most of the things were given where they would be wanted and welcome. The poorer hobbits, and especially those of Bagshot Row, did very well. Old Gaffer Gamgee got two sacks of potatoes, a new spade, a woollen waistcoat, and a bottle of ointment for creaking joints. Old Rory Brandybuck, in return for much hospitality, got a dozen bottles of Old Winyards: a strong red wine from the Southfarthing, and now quite mature, as it had been laid down by Bilbo's father. Rory quite forgave Bilbo, and voted him a capital fellow after the first bottle.

There was plenty of everything left for Frodo. And, of course, all the chief treasures, as well as the books, pictures, and more than enough furniture, were left in his possession. There was, however, no sign nor mention of money or jewellery: not a penny-piece or a glass bead was given away.

Frodo had a very trying time that afternoon. A false rumour that the whole household was being distributed free spread like wildfire; and before long the place was packed with people who had no business there, but could not

be kept out. Labels got torn off and mixed, and quarrels broke out. Some people tried to do swaps and deals in the hall; and others tried to make off with minor items not addressed to them, or with anything that seemed unwanted or unwatched. The road to the gate was blocked with barrows and handcarts.

In the middle of the commotion the Sackville-Bagginses arrived. Frodo had retired for a while and left his friend Merry Brandybuck to keep an eye on things. When Otho loudly demanded to see Frodo, Merry bowed politely.

‘He is indisposed,’ he said. ‘He is resting.’

‘Hiding, you mean,’ said Lobelia. ‘Anyway we want to see him and we mean to see him. Just go and tell him so!’

Merry left them a long while in the hall, and they had time to discover their parting gift of spoons. It did not improve their tempers. Eventually they were shown into the study. Frodo was sitting at a table with a lot of papers in front of him. He looked indisposed—to see Sackville-Bagginses at any rate; and he stood up, fidgeting with something in his pocket. But he spoke quite politely.

The Sackville-Bagginses were rather offensive. They began by offering him bad bargain-prices (as between friends) for various valuable and unlabelled things. When Frodo replied that only the things specially directed by Bilbo were being given away, they said the whole affair was very fishy.

‘Only one thing is clear to me,’ said Otho, ‘and that is that you are doing exceedingly well out of it. I insist on seeing the will.’

Otho would have been Bilbo’s heir, but for the adoption of Frodo. He read the will carefully and snorted. It was, unfortunately, very clear and correct (according to the legal customs of hobbits, which demand among other things seven signatures of witnesses in red ink).

‘Foiled again!’ he said to his wife. ‘And after waiting *sixty* years. Spoons? Fiddlesticks!’ He snapped his fingers under Frodo’s nose and stumped off. But Lobelia was not so easily got rid of. A little later Frodo came out of the study to see how things were going on, and found her still about the place, investigating nooks and corners, and tapping the floors. He escorted her firmly off the premises, after he had relieved her of several small (but rather valuable) articles that had somehow fallen inside her umbrella. Her face looked as if she was in the throes of thinking out a really crushing parting remark; but all she found to say, turning round on the step, was:

‘You’ll live to regret it, young fellow! Why didn’t you go too? You don’t belong here; you’re no Baggins—you—you’re a Brandybuck!’

‘Did you hear that, Merry? That was an insult, if you like,’ said Frodo as he shut the door on her.

‘It was a compliment,’ said Merry Brandybuck, ‘and so, of course, not true.’

Then they went round the hole, and evicted three young hobbits (two Boffins and a Bolger) who were knocking holes in the walls of one of the cellars. Frodo also had a tussle with young Sancho Proudfoot (old Odo Proudfoot’s grandson), who had begun an excavation in the larger pantry, where he thought there was an echo. The legend of Bilbo’s gold excited both curiosity and hope; for legendary gold (mysteriously obtained, if not positively ill-gotten), is, as everyone knows, anyone’s for the finding—unless the search is interrupted.

When he had overcome Sancho and pushed him out, Frodo collapsed on a chair in the hall. ‘It’s time to close the shop, Merry,’ he said. ‘Lock the door, and don’t open it to anyone today, not even if they bring a battering ram.’ Then he went to revive himself with a belated cup of tea.

He had hardly sat down, when there came a soft knock at the front-door. ‘Lobelia again most likely,’ he thought. ‘She must have thought of something really nasty, and have come back again to say it. It can wait.’

He went on with his tea. The knock was repeated, much louder, but he took no notice. Suddenly the wizard’s head appeared at the window.

‘If you don’t let me in, Frodo, I shall blow your door right down your hole and out through the hill,’ he said.

‘My dear Gandalf! Half a minute!’ cried Frodo, running out of the room to the door. ‘Come in! Come in! I thought it was Lobelia.’

‘Then I forgive you. But I saw her some time ago, driving a pony-trap towards Bywater with a face that would have curdled new milk.’

‘She had already nearly curdled me. Honestly, I nearly tried on Bilbo’s ring. I longed to disappear.’

‘Don’t do that!’ said Gandalf, sitting down. ‘Do be careful of that ring, Frodo! In fact, it is partly about that that I have come to say a last word.’

‘Well, what about it?’

‘What do you know already?’

‘Only what Bilbo told me. I have heard his story: how he found it, and how he used it: on his journey, I mean.’

‘Which story, I wonder,’ said Gandalf.

‘Oh, not what he told the dwarves and put in his book,’ said Frodo. ‘He told me the true story soon after I came to live here. He said you had pestered him till he told you, so I had better know too. “No secrets between us, Frodo,” he said; “but they are not to go any further. It’s mine anyway.”’

‘That’s interesting,’ said Gandalf. ‘Well, what did you think of it all?’

‘If you mean, inventing all that about a “present”, well, I thought the true story much more likely, and I couldn’t see the point of altering it at all. It was very unlike Bilbo to do so, anyway; and I thought it rather odd.’

‘So did I. But odd things may happen to people that have such treasures—if they use them. Let it be a warning to you to be very careful with it. It may have other powers than just making you vanish when you wish to.’

‘I don’t understand,’ said Frodo.

‘Neither do I,’ answered the wizard. ‘I have merely begun to wonder about the ring, especially since last night. No need to worry. But if you take my advice you will use it very seldom, or not at all. At least I beg you not to use it in any way that will cause talk or rouse suspicion. I say again: keep it safe, and keep it secret!’

‘You are very mysterious! What are you afraid of?’

‘I am not certain, so I will say no more. I may be able to tell you something when I come back. I am going off at once: so this is good-bye for the present.’ He got up.

‘At once!’ cried Frodo. ‘Why, I thought you were staying on for at least a week. I was looking forward to your help.’

‘I did mean to—but I have had to change my mind. I may be away for a good while; but I’ll come and see you again, as soon as I can. Expect me when you see me! I shall slip in quietly. I shan’t often be visiting the Shire openly again. I find that I have become rather unpopular. They say I am a nuisance and a disturber of the peace. Some people are actually accusing me of spiriting Bilbo away, or worse. If you want to know, there is supposed to be a plot between you and me to get hold of his wealth.’

‘Some people!’ exclaimed Frodo. ‘You mean Otho and Lobelia. How abominable! I would give them Bag End and everything else, if I could get Bilbo back and go off tramping in the country with him. I love the Shire. But I begin to wish, somehow, that I had gone too. I wonder if I shall ever see him again.’

‘So do I,’ said Gandalf. ‘And I wonder many other things. Goodbye now! Take care of yourself! Look out for me, especially at unlikely times! Good-bye!’

Frodo saw him to the door. He gave a final wave of his hand, and walked off at a surprising pace; but Frodo thought the old wizard looked unusually bent, almost as if he was carrying a great weight. The evening was closing in, and his cloaked figure quickly vanished into the twilight. Frodo did not see him again for a long time.



## Chapter 2: The Shadow Of The Past

The talk did not die down in nine or even ninety-nine days. The second disappearance of Mr. Bilbo Baggins was discussed in Hobbiton, and indeed all over the Shire, for a year and a day, and was remembered much longer than that. It became a fireside-story for young hobbits; and eventually Mad Baggins, who used to vanish with a bang and a flash and reappear with bags of jewels and gold, became a favourite character of legend and lived on long after all the true events were forgotten.

But in the meantime, the general opinion in the neighbourhood was that Bilbo, who had always been rather cracked, had at last gone quite mad, and had run off into the Blue. There he had undoubtedly fallen into a pool or a river and come to a tragic, but hardly an untimely, end. The blame was mostly laid on Gandalf.

‘If only that dratted wizard will leave young Frodo alone, perhaps he’ll settle down and grow some hobbit-sense,’ they said. And to all appearance the wizard did leave Frodo alone, and he did settle down, but the growth of hobbit-sense was not very noticeable. Indeed, he at once began to carry on Bilbo’s reputation for oddity. He refused to go into mourning; and the next year he gave a party in honour of Bilbo’s hundred-and-twelfth birthday, which he called a Hundredweight Feast. But that was short of the mark, for twenty guests were invited and there were several meals at which it snowed food and rained drink, as hobbits say.

Some people were rather shocked; but Frodo kept up the custom of giving Bilbo’s Birthday Party year after year until they got used to it. He said that he did not think Bilbo was dead. When they asked: ‘Where is he then?’ he shrugged his shoulders.

He lived alone, as Bilbo had done; but he had a good many friends, especially among the younger hobbits (mostly descendants of the Old Took) who had as children been fond of Bilbo and often in and out of Bag End. Folco Boffin and Fredegard Bolger were two of these; but his closest friends were Peregrin Took (usually called Pippin), and Merry Brandybuck (his real name was Meriadoc, but that was seldom remembered). Frodo went tramping over the Shire with them; but more often he wandered by himself, and to the amazement of sensible folk he was sometimes seen far from home walking in the hills and woods under the starlight. Merry and Pippin suspected that he visited the Elves at times, as Bilbo had done.

As time went on, people began to notice that Frodo also showed signs of good ‘preservation’: outwardly he retained the appearance of a robust and energetic hobbit just out of his tweens. ‘Some folk have all the luck,’ they said; but it was not until Frodo approached the usually more sober age of fifty that they began to think it queer.

Frodo himself, after the first shock, found that being his own master and *the* Mr. Baggins of Bag End was rather pleasant. For some years he was quite happy and did not worry much about the future. But half unknown to himself the regret that he had not gone with Bilbo was steadily growing. He found himself wondering at times, especially in the autumn, about the wild lands, and strange visions of mountains that he had never seen came into his dreams. He began to say to himself: ‘Perhaps I shall cross the River myself one day.’ To which the other half of his mind always replied: ‘Not yet.’

So it went on, until his forties were running out, and his fiftieth birthday was drawing near: fifty was a number that he felt was somehow significant (or ominous); it was at any rate at that age that adventure had suddenly befallen Bilbo. Frodo began to feel restless, and the old paths seemed too well-trodden. He looked at maps, and wondered what lay beyond their edges: maps made in the Shire showed mostly white spaces beyond its borders. He took to wandering further afield and more often by himself; and Merry and his other friends watched him anxiously. Often he was seen walking and talking with the strange wayfarers that began at this time to appear in the Shire.

There were rumours of strange things happening in the world outside; and as Gandalf had not at that time appeared or sent any message for several years, Frodo gathered all the news he could. Elves, who seldom walked in the Shire, could now be seen passing westward through the woods in the evening, passing and not returning; but they were leaving Middle-earth and were no longer concerned with its troubles. There were, however, dwarves on the road in unusual numbers. The ancient East-West Road ran through the Shire to its end at the Grey Havens, and dwarves had always used it on their way to their mines in the Blue Mountains. They were the hobbits' chief source of news from distant parts—if they wanted any: as a rule dwarves said little and hobbits asked no more. But now Frodo often met strange dwarves of far countries, seeking refuge in the West. They were troubled, and some spoke in whispers of the Enemy and of the Land of Mordor.

That name the hobbits only knew in legends of the dark past, like a shadow in the background of their memories; but it was ominous and disquieting. It seemed that the evil power in Mirkwood had been driven out by the White Council only to reappear in greater strength in the old strongholds of Mordor. The Dark Tower had been rebuilt, it was said. From there the power was spreading far and wide, and away far east and south there were wars and growing fear. Orcs were multiplying again in the mountains. Trolls were abroad, no longer dull-witted, but cunning and armed with dreadful weapons. And there were murmured hints of creatures more terrible than all these, but they had no name.

Little of all this, of course, reached the ears of ordinary hobbits. But even the deafest and most stay-at-home began to hear queer tales; and those whose business took them to the borders saw strange things. The conversation in *The Green Dragon* at Bywater, one evening in the spring of Frodo's fiftieth year, showed that even in the comfortable heart of the Shire rumours had been heard, though most hobbits still laughed at them.

Sam Gamgee was sitting in one corner near the fire, and opposite him was Ted Sandyman, the miller's son; and there were various other rustic hobbits listening to their talk.

'Queer things you do hear these days, to be sure,' said Sam.

'Ah,' said Ted, 'you do, if you listen. But I can hear fireside-tales and children's stories at home, if I want to.'

'No doubt you can,' retorted Sam, 'and I daresay there's more truth in some of them than you reckon. Who invented the stories anyway? Take dragons now.'

'No thank'ee,' said Ted, 'I won't. I heard tell of them when I was a youngster, but there's no call to believe in them now. There's only one Dragon in Bywater, and that's Green,' he said, getting a general laugh.

'All right,' said Sam, laughing with the rest. 'But what about these Tree-men, these giants, as you might call them? They do say that one bigger than a tree was seen up away beyond the North Moors not long back.'

'Who's *they*?'

'My cousin Hal for one. He works for Mr. Boffin at Overhill and goes up to the Northfarthing for the hunting. He *saw* one.'

'Says he did, perhaps. Your Hal's always saying he's seen things; and maybe he sees things that ain't there.'

'But this one was as big as an elm tree, and walking—walking seven yards to a stride, if it was an inch.'

'Then I bet it wasn't an inch. What he saw *was* an elm tree, as like as not.'

'But this one was *walking*, I tell you; and there ain't no elm tree on the North Moors.'

'Then Hal can't have seen one,' said Ted. There was some laughing and clapping: the audience seemed to think that Ted had scored a point.

'All the same,' said Sam, 'you can't deny that others besides our Halfast have seen queer folk crossing the Shire—crossing it, mind you: there are more that are turned back at the borders. The Bounders have never been so busy before.'

'And I've heard tell that Elves are moving west. They do say they are going to the harbours, out away beyond the White Towers.' Sam waved his arm vaguely: neither he nor any of them knew how far it was to the Sea,

past the old towers beyond the western borders of the Shire. But it was an old tradition that away over there stood the Grey Havens<sup>381</sup>, from which at times elven-ships set sail, never to return.

‘They are sailing, sailing, sailing over the Sea, they are going into the West and leaving us,’ said Sam, half chanting the words, shaking his head sadly and solemnly. But Ted laughed.

‘Well, that isn’t anything new, if you believe the old tales. And I don’t see what it matters to me or you. Let them sail! But I warrant you haven’t seen them doing it; nor anyone else in the Shire.’

‘Well, I don’t know,’ said Sam thoughtfully. He believed he had once seen an Elf in the woods, and still hoped to see more one day. Of all the legends that he had heard in his early years such fragments of tales and half-remembered stories about the Elves as the hobbits knew, had always moved him most deeply. ‘There are some, even in these parts, as know the Fair Folk and get news of them,’ he said. ‘There’s Mr. Baggins now, that I work for. He told me that they were sailing and he knows a bit about Elves. And old Mr. Bilbo knew more: many’s the talk I had with him when I was a little lad.’

‘Oh, they’re both cracked,’ said Ted. ‘Leastways old Bilbo was cracked, and Frodo’s cracking. If that’s where you get your news from, you’ll never want for moonshine. Well, friends, I’m off home. Your good health!’ He drained his mug and went out noisily.

Sam sat silent and said no more. He had a good deal to think about. For one thing, there was a lot to do up in the Bag End garden, and he would have a busy day tomorrow, if the weather cleared. The grass was growing fast. But Sam had more on his mind than gardening. After a while he sighed, and got up and went out.

It was early April and the sky was now clearing after heavy rain. The sun was down, and a cool pale evening was quietly fading into night. He walked home under the early stars through Hobbiton and up the Hill, whistling softly and thoughtfully.

It was just at this time that Gandalf reappeared after his long absence. For three years after the Party he had been away. Then he paid Frodo a brief visit, and after taking a good look at him he went off again. During the next year or two he had turned up fairly often, coming unexpectedly after dusk, and going off without warning before sunrise. He would not discuss his own business and journeys, and seemed chiefly interested in small news about Frodo’s health and doings.

Then suddenly his visits had ceased. It was over nine years since Frodo had seen or heard of him, and he had begun to think that the wizard would never return and had given up all interest in hobbits. But that evening, as Sam was walking home and twilight was fading, there came the once familiar tap on the study window.

Frodo welcomed his old friend with surprise and great delight. They looked hard at one another.

‘All well eh?’ said Gandalf. ‘You look the same as ever, Frodo!’

‘So do you,’ Frodo replied; but secretly he thought that Gandalf looked older and more careworn. He pressed him for news of himself and of the wide world, and soon they were deep in talk, and they stayed up far into the night.

Next morning after a late breakfast, the wizard was sitting with Frodo by the open window of the study. A bright fire was on the hearth, but the sun was warm, and the wind was in the South. Everything looked fresh, and the new green of spring was shimmering in the fields and on the tips of the trees’ fingers.

Gandalf was thinking of a spring, nearly eighty years before, when Bilbo had run out of Bag End without a handkerchief. His hair was perhaps whiter than it had been then, and his beard and eyebrows were perhaps longer, and his face more lined with care and wisdom; but his eyes were as bright as ever, and he smoked and blew smoke-rings with the same vigour and delight.

He was smoking now in silence, for Frodo was sitting still, deep in thought. Even in the light of morning he felt the dark shadow of the tidings that Gandalf had brought. At last he broke the silence.

‘Last night you began to tell me strange things about my ring, Gandalf,’ he said. ‘And then you stopped, because you said that such matters were best left until daylight. Don’t you think you had better finish now? You say the ring is dangerous, far more dangerous than I guess. In what way?’

‘In many ways,’ answered the wizard. ‘It is far more powerful than I ever dared to think at first, so powerful that in the end it would utterly overcome anyone of mortal race who possessed it. It would possess him.’

‘In Eregion long ago many Elven-rings were made, magic rings as you call them, and they were, of course, of various kinds: some more potent and some less. The lesser rings were only essays in the craft before it was full-grown, and to the Elven-smiths they were but trifles—yet still to my mind dangerous for mortals. But the Great Rings, the Rings of Power, they were perilous.’

‘A mortal, Frodo, who keeps one of the Great Rings, does not die, but he does not grow or obtain more life, he merely continues, until at last every minute is a weariness. And if he often uses the Ring to make himself invisible, he *fades*: he becomes in the end invisible permanently, and walks in the twilight under the eye of the Dark Power that rules the Rings. Yes, sooner or later—later, if he is strong or well-meaning to begin with, but neither strength nor good purpose will last—sooner or later the Dark Power will devour him.’

‘How terrifying!’ said Frodo. There was another long silence. The sound of Sam Gamgee cutting the lawn came in from the garden.

‘How long have you known this?’ asked Frodo at length. ‘And how much did Bilbo know?’

‘Bilbo knew no more than he told you, I am sure,’ said Gandalf. ‘He would certainly never have passed on to you anything that he thought would be a danger, even though I promised to look after you. He thought the ring was very beautiful, and very useful at need; and if anything was wrong or queer, it was himself. He said that it was “growing on his mind”, and he was always worrying about it; but he did not suspect that the ring itself was to blame. Though he had found out that the thing needed looking after; it did not seem always of the same size or weight; it shrank or expanded in an odd way, and might suddenly slip off a finger where it had been tight.’

‘Yes, he warned me of that in his last letter,’ said Frodo, ‘so I have always kept it on its chain.’

‘Very wise,’ said Gandalf. ‘But as for his long life, Bilbo never connected it with the ring at all. He took all the credit for that to himself, and he was very proud of it. Though he was getting restless and uneasy. *Thin and stretched* he said. A sign that the ring was getting control.’

‘How long have you known all this?’ asked Frodo again.

‘Known?’ said Gandalf. ‘I have known much that only the Wise know, Frodo. But if you mean “known about *this* ring”, well, I still do not *know*, one might say. There is a last test to make. But I no longer doubt my guess.’

‘When did I first begin to guess?’ he mused, searching back in memory. ‘Let me see—it was in the year that the White Council drove the Dark Power from Mirkwood, just before the Battle of Five Armies, that Bilbo found his ring. A shadow fell on my heart then, though I did not know yet what I feared. I wondered often how Gollum came by a Great Ring, as plainly it was—that at least was clear from the first. Then I heard Bilbo’s strange story of how he had “won” it, and I could not believe it. When I at last got the truth out of him, I saw at once that he had been trying to put his claim to the ring beyond doubt. Much like Gollum with his “birthday-present”. The lies were too much alike for my comfort. Clearly the ring had an unwholesome power that set to work on its keeper at once. That was the first real warning I had that all was not well. I told Bilbo often that such rings were better left unused; but he resented it, and soon got angry. There was little else that I could do. I could not take it from him without doing greater harm; and I had no right to do so anyway. I could only watch and wait. I might perhaps have consulted Saruman the White, but something always held me back.’

‘Who is he?’ asked Frodo. ‘I have never heard of him before.’

‘Maybe not,’ answered Gandalf. ‘Hobbits are, or were, no concern of his. Yet he is great among the Wise. He is the chief of my order and the head of the Council. His knowledge is deep, but his pride has grown with it, and he takes ill any meddling. The lore of the Elven-rings, great and small, is his province. He has long studied it, seeking the lost secrets of their making; but when the Rings were debated in the Council, all that he would reveal to us of his ring-lore told against my fears. So my doubt slept—but uneasily. Still I watched and I waited.’

‘And all seemed well with Bilbo. And the years passed. Yes, they passed, and they seemed not to touch him. He showed no signs of age. The shadow fell on me again. But I said to myself: “After all he comes of a long-lived family on his mother’s side. There is time yet. Wait!”’



‘And I waited. Until that night when he left this house. He said and did things then that filled me with a fear that no words of Saruman could allay. I knew at last that something dark and deadly was at work. And I have spent most of the years since then in finding out the truth of it.’

‘There wasn’t any permanent harm done, was there?’ asked Frodo anxiously. ‘He would get all right in time, wouldn’t he? Be able to rest in peace, I mean?’

‘He felt better at once,’ said Gandalf. ‘But there is only one Power in this world that knows all about the Rings and their effects; and as far as I know there is no Power in the world that knows all about hobbits. Among the Wise I am the only one that goes in for hobbit-lore: an obscure branch of knowledge, but full of surprises. Soft as butter they can be, and yet sometimes as tough as old tree-roots. I think it likely that some would resist the Rings far longer than most of the Wise would believe. I don’t think you need worry about Bilbo.’

‘Of course, he possessed the ring for many years, and used it, so it might take a long while for the influence to wear off—before it was safe for him to see it again, for instance. Otherwise, he might live on for years, quite happily: just stop as he was when he parted with it. For he gave it up in the end of his own accord: an important point. No, I was not troubled about dear Bilbo any more, once he had let the thing go. It is for *you* that I feel responsible.’

‘Ever since Bilbo left I have been deeply concerned about you, and about all these charming, absurd, helpless hobbits. It would be a grievous blow to the world, if the Dark Power overcame the Shire; if all your kind, jolly, stupid Bolgers, Hornblowers, Boffins, Bracegirdles, and the rest, not to mention the ridiculous Bagginses, became enslaved.’

Frodo shuddered. ‘But why should we be?’ he asked. ‘And why should he want such slaves?’

‘To tell you the truth,’ replied Gandalf, ‘I believe that hitherto—*hitherto*, mark you—he has entirely overlooked the existence of hobbits. You should be thankful. But your safety has passed. He does not need you—he has many more useful servants—but he won’t forget you again. And hobbits as miserable slaves would please him far more than hobbits happy and free. There is such a thing as malice and revenge.’

‘Revenge?’ said Frodo. ‘Revenge for what? I still don’t understand what all this has to do with Bilbo and myself, and our ring.’

‘It has everything to do with it,’ said Gandalf. ‘You do not know the real peril yet; but you shall. I was not sure of it myself when I was last here; but the time has come to speak. Give me the ring for a moment.’

Frodo took it from his breeches-pocket, where it was clasped to a chain that hung from his belt. He unfastened it and handed it slowly to the wizard. It felt suddenly very heavy, as if either it or Frodo himself was in some way reluctant for Gandalf to touch it.

Gandalf held it up. It looked to be made of pure and solid gold. ‘Can you see any markings on it?’ he asked.

‘No,’ said Frodo. ‘There are none. It is quite plain, and it never shows a scratch or sign of wear.’

‘Well then, look!’ To Frodo’s astonishment and distress the wizard threw it suddenly into the middle of a glowing corner of the fire. Frodo gave a cry and groped for the tongs; but Gandalf held him back.

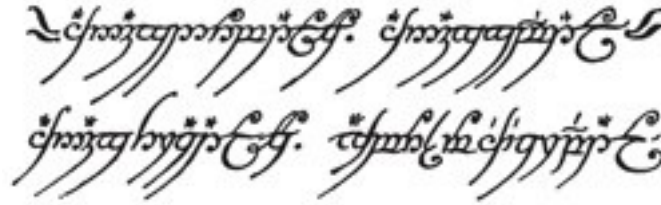
‘Wait!’ he said in a commanding voice, giving Frodo a quick look from under his bristling brows.

No apparent change came over the ring. After a while Gandalf got up, closed the shutters outside the window, and drew the curtains. The room became dark and silent, though the clack of Sam’s shears, now nearer to the windows, could still be heard faintly from the garden. For a moment the wizard stood looking at the fire; then he stooped and removed the ring to the hearth with the tongs, and at once picked it up. Frodo gasped.

‘It is quite cool,’ said Gandalf. ‘Take it!’ Frodo received it on his shrinking palm: it seemed to have become thicker and heavier than ever.

‘Hold it up!’ said Gandalf. ‘And look closely!’

As Frodo did so, he now saw fine lines, finer than the finest pen-strokes, running along the ring, outside and inside: lines of fire that seemed to form the letters of a flowing script<sup>432</sup>. They shone piercingly bright, and yet remote, as if out of a great depth.



‘I cannot read the fiery letters,’ said Frodo in a quavering voice.

‘No,’ said Gandalf, ‘but I can. The letters are Elvish, of an ancient mode, but the language is that of Mordor, which I will not utter here. But this in the Common Tongue is what is said, close enough:

*One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,  
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them.*

It is only two lines of a verse long known in Elven-lore:

*Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky,  
Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,  
Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,  
One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne  
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.  
One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,  
One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them  
In the Land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.’*

He paused, and then said slowly in a deep voice: ‘This is the Master-ring, the One Ring to rule them all. This is the One Ring that he lost many ages ago, to the great weakening of his power. He greatly desires it—but he must *not* get it.’

Frodo sat silent and motionless. Fear seemed to stretch out a vast hand, like a dark cloud rising in the East and looming up to engulf him. ‘This ring!’ he stammered. ‘How, how on earth did it come to me?’

‘Ah!’ said Gandalf. ‘That is a very long story. The beginnings lie back in the Black Years, which only the lore-masters now remember. If I were to tell you all that tale, we should still be sitting here when Spring had passed into Winter.

‘But last night I told you of Sauron the Great, the Dark Lord. The rumours that you have heard are true: he has indeed arisen again and left his hold in Mirkwood and returned to his ancient fastness in the Dark Tower of Mordor. That name even you hobbits have heard of, like a shadow on the borders of old stories. Always after a defeat and a respite, the Shadow takes another shape and grows again.’

‘I wish it need not have happened in my time,’ said Frodo.

‘So do I,’ said Gandalf, ‘and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us. And already, Frodo, our time is beginning to look black. The Enemy is fast becoming very strong. His plans are far from ripe, I think, but they are ripening. We shall be hard put to it. We should be very hard put to it, even if it were not for this dreadful chance.

‘The Enemy still lacks one thing to give him strength and knowledge to beat down all resistance, break the last defences, and cover all the lands in a second darkness. He lacks the One Ring.

‘The Three, fairest of all, the Elf-lords hid from him, and his hand never touched them or sullied them. Seven the Dwarf-kings possessed, but three he has recovered, and the others the dragons have consumed. Nine he gave to Mortal Men, proud and great, and so ensnared them. Long ago they fell under the dominion of the One, and they became Ringwraiths, shadows under his great Shadow, his most terrible servants. Long ago. It is many

a year since the Nine walked abroad. Yet who knows? As the Shadow grows once more, they too may walk again. But come! We will not speak of such things even in the morning of the Shire.

‘So it is now: the Nine he has gathered to himself; the Seven also, or else they are destroyed. The Three are hidden still. But that no longer troubles him. He only needs the One; for he made that Ring himself, it is his, and he let a great part of his own former power pass into it, so that he could rule all the others. If he recovers it, then he will command them all again, wherever they be, even the Three, and all that has been wrought with them will be laid bare, and he will be stronger than ever.

‘And this is the dreadful chance, Frodo. He believed that the One had perished; that the Elves had destroyed it, as should have been done. But he knows now that it has *not* perished, that it has been found. So he is seeking it, seeking it, and all his thought is bent on it. It is his great hope and our great fear.’

‘Why, why wasn’t it destroyed?’ cried Frodo. ‘And how did the Enemy ever come to lose it, if he was so strong, and it was so precious to him?’ He clutched the Ring in his hand, as if he saw already dark fingers stretching out to seize it.

‘It was taken from him,’ said Gandalf. ‘The strength of the Elves to resist him was greater long ago; and not all Men were estranged from them. The Men of Westeros came to their aid. That is a chapter of ancient history which it might be good to recall; for there was sorrow then too, and gathering dark, but great valour, and great deeds that were not wholly vain. One day, perhaps, I will tell you all the tale, or you shall hear it told in full by one who knows it best.

‘But for the moment, since most of all you need to know how this thing came to you, and that will be tale enough, this is all that I will say. It was Gil-galad<sup>366</sup>, Elven-king and Elendil of Westeros who overthrew Sauron, though they themselves perished in the deed; and Isildur Elendil’s son cut the Ring from Sauron’s hand and took it for his own. Then Sauron was vanquished and his spirit fled and was hidden for long years, until his shadow took shape again in Mirkwood.

‘But the Ring was lost. It fell into the Great River, Anduin, and vanished. For Isildur was marching north along the east banks of the River, and near the Gladden Fields he was waylaid by the Orcs of the Mountains, and almost all his folk were slain. He leaped into the waters, but the Ring slipped from his finger as he swam, and then the Orcs saw him and killed him with arrows.’

Gandalf paused. ‘And there in the dark pools amid the Gladden Fields,’ he said, ‘the Ring passed out of knowledge and legend; and even so much of its history is known now only to a few, and the Council of the Wise could discover no more. But at last I can carry on the story, I think.

‘Long after, but still very long ago, there lived by the banks of the Great River on the edge of Wilderland a clever-handed and quiet-footed little people. I guess they were of hobbit-kind; akin to the fathers of the fathers of the Stoors, for they loved the River, and often swam in it, or made little boats of reeds. There was among them a family of high repute, for it was large and wealthier than most, and it was ruled by a grandmother of the folk, stern and wise in old lore, such as they had. The most inquisitive and curious-minded of that family was called Sméagol. He was interested in roots and beginnings; he dived into deep pools; he burrowed under trees and growing plants; he tunnelled into green mounds; and he ceased to look up at the hill-tops, or the leaves on trees, or the flowers opening in the air: his head and his eyes were downward.

‘He had a friend called Déagol, of similar sort, sharper-eyed but not so quick and strong. On a time they took a boat and went down to the Gladden Fields, where there were great beds of iris and flowering reeds. There Sméagol got out and went nosing about the banks but Déagol sat in the boat and fished. Suddenly a great fish took his hook, and before he knew where he was, he was dragged out and down into the water, to the bottom. Then he let go of his line, for he thought he saw something shining in the river-bed; and holding his breath he grabbed at it.

‘Then up he came spluttering, with weeds in his hair and a handful of mud; and he swam to the bank. And behold! when he washed the mud away, there in his hand lay a beautiful golden ring; and it shone and glittered in the sun, so that his heart was glad. But Sméagol had been watching him from behind a tree, and as Déagol gloated over the ring, Sméagol came softly up behind.

“Give us that, Déagol, my love,” said Sméagol, over his friend’s shoulder.

“Why?” said Déagol.

“Because it’s my birthday, my love, and I want it,” said Sméagol.

“I don’t care,” said Déagol. “I have given you a present already, more than I could afford. I found this, and I’m going to keep it.”

“Oh, are you indeed, my love,” said Sméagol; and he caught Déagol by the throat and strangled him, because the gold looked so bright and beautiful. Then he put the ring on his finger.

‘No-one ever found out what had become of Déagol; he was murdered far from home, and his body was cunningly hidden. But Sméagol returned alone; and he found that none of his family could see him, when he was wearing the ring. He was very pleased with his discovery and he concealed it; and he used it to find out secrets, and he put his knowledge to crooked and malicious uses. He became sharp-eyed and keen-eared for all that was hurtful. The ring had given him power according to his stature. It is not to be wondered at that he became very unpopular and was shunned (when visible) by all his relations. They kicked him, and he bit their feet. He took to thieving, and going about muttering to himself, and gurgling in his throat. So they called him *Gollum*, and cursed him, and told him to go far away; and his grandmother, desiring peace, expelled him from the family and turned him out of her hole.

‘He wandered in loneliness, weeping a little for the hardness of the world, and he journeyed up the River, till he came to a stream that flowed down from the mountains, and he went that way. He caught fish in deep pools with invisible fingers and ate them raw. One day it was very hot, and as he was bending over a pool, he felt a burning on the back of his head, and a dazzling light from the water pained his wet eyes. He wondered at it, for he had almost forgotten about the Sun. Then for the last time he looked up and shook his fist at her.

‘But as he lowered his eyes, he saw far ahead the tops of the Misty Mountains, out of which the stream came. And he thought suddenly: “It would be cool and shady under those mountains. The Sun could not watch me there. The roots of those mountains must be roots indeed; there must be great secrets buried there which have not been discovered since the beginning.”

‘So he journeyed by night up into the highlands, and he found a little cave out of which the dark stream ran; and he wormed his way like a maggot into the heart of the hills, and vanished out of all knowledge. The Ring went into the shadows with him, and even the maker, when his power had begun to grow again, could learn nothing of it.’

‘Gollum!’ cried Frodo. ‘Gollum? Do you mean that this is the very Gollum-creature that Bilbo met? How loathsome!’

‘I think it is a sad story,’ said the wizard, ‘and it might have happened to others, even to some hobbits that I have known.’

‘I can’t believe that Gollum was connected with hobbits, however distantly,’ said Frodo with some heat. ‘What an abominable notion!’

‘It is true all the same,’ replied Gandalf. ‘About their origins, at any rate, I know more than hobbits do themselves. And even Bilbo’s story suggests the kinship. There was a great deal in the background of their minds and memories that was very similar. They understood one another remarkably well, very much better than a hobbit would understand, say, a Dwarf, or an Orc, or even an Elf. Think of the riddles they both knew, for one thing.’

‘Yes,’ said Frodo. ‘Though other folks besides hobbits ask riddles, and of much the same sort. And hobbits don’t cheat. Gollum meant to cheat all the time. He was just trying to put poor Bilbo off his guard. And I daresay it amused his wickedness to start a game which might end in providing him with an easy victim, but if he lost would not hurt him.’

‘Only too true, I fear,’ said Gandalf. ‘But there was something else in it, I think, which you don’t see yet. Even Gollum was not wholly ruined. He had proved tougher than even one of the Wise would have guessed—as a

hobbit might. There was a little corner of his mind that was still his own, and light came through it, as through a chink in the dark: light out of the past. It was actually pleasant, I think, to hear a kindly voice again, bringing up memories of wind, and trees, and sun on the grass, and such forgotten things.

‘But that, of course, would only make the evil part of him angrier in the end—unless it could be conquered. Unless it could be cured.’ Gandalf sighed. ‘Alas! there is little hope of that for him. Yet not no hope. No, not though he possessed the Ring so long, almost as far back as he can remember. For it was long since he had worn it much: in the black darkness it was seldom needed. Certainly he had never “faded”. He is thin and tough still. But the thing was eating up his mind, of course, and the torment had become almost unbearable.’

‘All the “great secrets” under the mountains had turned out to be just empty night: there was nothing more to find out, nothing worth doing, only nasty furtive eating and resentful remembering. He was altogether wretched. He hated the dark, and he hated light more: he hated everything, and the Ring most of all.’

‘What do you mean?’ said Frodo. ‘Surely the Ring was his Precious and the only thing he cared for? But if he hated it, why didn’t he get rid of it, or go away and leave it?’

‘You ought to begin to understand, Frodo, after all you have heard,’ said Gandalf. ‘He hated it and loved it, as he hated and loved himself. He could not get rid of it. He had no will left in the matter.’

‘A Ring of Power looks after itself, Frodo. *It* may slip off treacherously, but its keeper never abandons it. At most he plays with the idea of handing it on to someone else’s care—and that only at an early stage, when it first begins to grip. But as far as I know Bilbo alone in history has ever gone beyond playing, and really done it. He needed all my help, too. And even so he would never have just forsaken it, or cast it aside. It was not Gollum, Frodo, but the Ring itself that decided things. The Ring left *him*.’

‘What, just in time to meet Bilbo?’ said Frodo. ‘Wouldn’t an Orc have suited it better?’

‘It is no laughing matter,’ said Gandalf. ‘Not for you. It was the strangest event in the whole history of the Ring so far: Bilbo’s arrival just at that time, and putting his hand on it, blindly, in the dark.’

‘There was more than one power at work, Frodo. The Ring was trying to get back to its master. It had slipped from Isildur’s hand and betrayed him; then when a chance came it caught poor Déagol, and he was murdered; and after that Gollum, and it had devoured him. It could make no further use of him: he was too small and mean; and as long as it stayed with him he would never leave his deep pool again. So now, when its master was awake once more and sending out his dark thought from Mirkwood, it abandoned Gollum. Only to be picked up by the most unlikely person imaginable: Bilbo from the Shire!’

‘Behind that there was something else at work, beyond any design of the Ring-maker. I can put it no plainer than by saying that Bilbo was *meant* to find the Ring, and *not* by its maker. In which case you also were *meant* to have it. And that may be an encouraging thought.’

‘It is not,’ said Frodo. ‘Though I am not sure that I understand you. But how have you learned all this about the Ring, and about Gollum? Do you really know it all, or are you just guessing still?’

Gandalf looked at Frodo, and his eyes glinted. ‘I knew much and I have learned much,’ he answered. ‘But I am not going to give an account of all my doings to *you*. The history of Elendil and Isildur and the One Ring is known to all the Wise. Your ring is shown to be that One Ring by the fire-writing alone, apart from any other evidence.’

‘And when did you discover that?’ asked Frodo, interrupting.

‘Just now in this room, of course,’ answered the wizard sharply. ‘But I expected to find it. I have come back from dark journeys and long search to make that final test. It is the last proof, and all is now only too clear. Making out Gollum’s part, and fitting it into the gap in the history, required some thought. I may have started with guesses about Gollum, but I am not guessing now. I know. I have seen him.’

‘You have seen Gollum?’ exclaimed Frodo in amazement.

‘Yes. The obvious thing to do, of course, if one could. I tried long ago; but I have managed it at last.’

‘Then what happened after Bilbo escaped from him? Do you know that?’

‘Not so clearly. What I have told you is what Gollum was willing to tell—though not, of course, in the way I have reported it. Gollum is a liar, and you have to sift his words. For instance, he called the Ring his “birthday-present”, and he stuck to that. He said it came from his grandmother, who had lots of beautiful things of that kind. A ridiculous story. I have no doubt that Sméagol’s grandmother was a matriarch, a great person in her way, but to talk of her possessing many Elven-rings was absurd, and as for giving them away, it was a lie. But a lie with a grain of truth.

‘The murder of Déagol haunted Gollum, and he had made up a defence, repeating it to his “Precious” over and over again, as he gnawed bones in the dark, until he almost believed it. It *was* his birthday. Déagol ought to have given the ring to him. It had obviously turned up just so as to be a present. It *was* his birthday-present, and so on, and on.

‘I endured him as long as I could, but the truth was desperately important, and in the end I had to be harsh. I put the fear of fire on him, and wrung the true story out of him, bit by bit, together with much snivelling and snarling. He thought he was misunderstood and ill-used. But when he had at last told me his history, as far as the end of the Riddle-game and Bilbo’s escape, he would not say any more, except in dark hints. Some other fear was on him greater than mine. He muttered that he was going to get his own back. People would see if he would stand being kicked, and driven into a hole and then *robbed*. Gollum had good friends now, good friends and very strong. They would help him. Baggins would pay for it. That was his chief thought. He hated Bilbo and cursed his name. What is more, he knew where he came from.’

‘But how did he find that out?’ asked Frodo.

‘Well, as for the name, Bilbo very foolishly told Gollum himself; and after that it would not be difficult to discover his country, once Gollum came out. Oh yes, he came out. His longing for the Ring proved stronger than his fear of the Orcs, or even of the light. After a year or two he left the mountains. You see, though still bound by desire of it, the Ring was no longer devouring him; he began to revive a little. He felt old, terribly old, yet less timid, and he was mortally hungry.

‘Light, light of Sun and Moon, he still feared and hated, and he always will, I think; but he was cunning. He found he could hide from daylight and moonshine, and make his way swiftly and softly by dead of night with his pale cold eyes, and catch small frightened or unwary things. He grew stronger and bolder with new food and new air. He found his way into Mirkwood, as one would expect.’

‘Is that where you found him?’ asked Frodo.

‘I saw him there,’ answered Gandalf, ‘but before that he had wandered far, following Bilbo’s trail. It was difficult to learn anything from him for certain, for his talk was constantly interrupted by curses and threats. “What had it got in its pockets?” he said. “It wouldn’t say, no precious. Little cheat. Not a fair question. It cheated first, it did. It broke the rules. We ought to have squeezed it, yes precious. And we will, precious!”

‘That is a sample of his talk. I don’t suppose you want any more. I had weary days of it. But from hints dropped among the snarls I gathered that his padding feet had taken him at last to Esgaroth, and even to the streets of Dale, listening secretly and peering. Well, the news of the great events went far and wide in Wilderland, and many had heard Bilbo’s name and knew where he came from. We had made no secret of our return journey to his home in the West. Gollum’s sharp ears would soon learn what he wanted.’

‘Then why didn’t he track Bilbo further?’ asked Frodo. ‘Why didn’t he come to the Shire?’

‘Ah,’ said Gandalf, ‘now we come to it. I think Gollum tried to. He set out and came back westward, as far as the Great River. But then he turned aside. He was not daunted by the distance, I am sure. No, something else drew him away. So my friends think, those that hunted him for me.

‘The Wood-elves tracked him first, an easy task for them, for his trail was still fresh then. Through Mirkwood and back again it led them, though they never caught him. The wood was full of the rumour of him, dreadful tales even among beasts and birds. The Woodmen said that there was some new terror abroad, a ghost that

drank blood. It climbed trees to find nests; it crept into holes to find the young; it slipped through windows to find cradles.

‘But at the western edge of Mirkwood the trail turned away. It wandered off southwards and passed out of the Wood-elves’ ken, and was lost. And then I made a great mistake. Yes, Frodo, and not the first; though I fear it may prove the worst. I let the matter be. I let him go; for I had much else to think of at that time, and I still trusted the lore of Saruman.

‘Well, that was years ago. I have paid for it since with many dark and dangerous days. The trail was long cold when I took it up again, after Bilbo left here. And my search would have been in vain, but for the help that I had from a friend: Aragorn, the greatest traveller and huntsman of this age of the world. Together we sought for Gollum down the whole length of Wilderland, without hope, and without success. But at last, when I had given up the chase and turned to other paths, Gollum was found. My friend returned out of great perils bringing the miserable creature with him.

‘What he had been doing he would not say. He only wept and called us cruel, with many a *gollum* in his throat; and when we pressed him he whined and cringed, and rubbed his long hands, licking his fingers as if they pained him, as if he remembered some old torture. But I am afraid there is no possible doubt: he had made his slow, sneaking way, step by step, mile by mile, south, down at last to the Land of Mordor.’

A heavy silence fell in the room. Frodo could hear his heart beating. Even outside everything seemed still. No sound of Sam’s shears could now be heard.

‘Yes, to Mordor,’ said Gandalf. ‘Alas! Mordor draws all wicked things, and the Dark Power was bending all its will to gather them there. The Ring of the Enemy would leave its mark, too, leave him open to the summons. And all folk were whispering then of the new Shadow in the South, and its hatred of the West. There were his fine new friends, who would help him in his revenge!

‘Wretched fool! In that land he would learn much, too much for his comfort. And sooner or later as he lurked and pried on the borders he would be caught, and taken—for examination. That was the way of it, I fear. When he was found he had already been there long, and was on his way back. On some errand of mischief. But that does not matter much now. His worst mischief was done.

‘Yes, alas! through him the Enemy has learned that the One has been found again. He knows where Isildur fell. He knows where Gollum found his ring. He knows that it is a Great Ring, for it gave long life. He knows that it is not one of the Three, for they have never been lost, and they endure no evil. He knows that it is not one of the Seven, or the Nine, for they are accounted for. He knows that it is the One. And he has at last heard, I think, of *hobbits* and the *Shire*.

‘The Shire—he may be seeking for it now, if he has not already found out where it lies. Indeed, Frodo, I fear that he may even think that the long-unnoticed name of *Baggins* has become important.’

‘But this is terrible!’ cried Frodo. ‘Far worse than the worst that I imagined from your hints and warnings. O Gandalf, best of friends, what am I to do? For now I am really afraid. What am I to do? What a pity that Bilbo did not stab that vile creature, when he had a chance!’

‘Pity? It was Pity that stayed his hand. Pity, and Mercy: not to strike without need. And he has been well rewarded, Frodo. Be sure that he took so little hurt from the evil, and escaped in the end, because he began his ownership of the Ring so. With Pity.’

‘I am sorry,’ said Frodo. ‘But I am frightened; and I do not feel any pity for Gollum.’

‘You have not seen him,’ Gandalf broke in.

‘No, and I don’t want to,’ said Frodo. ‘I can’t understand you. Do you mean to say that you, and the Elves, have let him live on after all those horrible deeds? Now at any rate he is as bad as an Orc, and just an enemy. He deserves death.’

‘Deserves it! I daresay he does. Many that live deserve death. And some that die deserve life. Can you give it to them? Then do not be too eager to deal out death in judgement. For even the very wise cannot see all ends. I

have not much hope that Gollum can be cured before he dies, but there is a chance of it. And he is bound up with the fate of the Ring. My heart tells me that he has some part to play yet, for good or ill, before the end; and when that comes, the pity of Bilbo may rule the fate of many—yours not least. In any case we did not kill him: he is very old and very wretched. The Wood-elves have him in prison, but they treat him with such kindness as they can find in their wise hearts.’

‘All the same,’ said Frodo, ‘even if Bilbo could not kill Gollum, I wish he had not kept the Ring. I wish he had never found it, and that I had not got it! Why did you let me keep it? Why didn’t you make me throw it away, or, or destroy it?’

‘Let you? Make you?’ said the wizard. ‘Haven’t you been listening to all that I have said? You are not thinking of what you are saying. But as for throwing it away, that was obviously wrong. These Rings have a way of being found. In evil hands it might have done great evil. Worst of all, it might have fallen into the hands of the Enemy. Indeed it certainly would; for this is the One, and he is exerting all his power to find it or draw it to himself.

‘Of course, my dear Frodo, it was dangerous for you; and that has troubled me deeply. But there was so much at stake that I had to take some risk—though even when I was far away there has never been a day when the Shire has not been guarded by watchful eyes. As long as you never used it, I did not think that the Ring would have any lasting effect on you, not for evil, not at any rate for a very long time. And you must remember that nine years ago, when I last saw you, I still knew little for certain.’

‘But why not destroy it, as you say should have been done long ago?’ cried Frodo again. ‘If you had warned me, or even sent me a message, I would have done away with it.’

‘Would you? How would you do that? Have you ever tried?’

‘No. But I suppose one could hammer it or melt it.’

‘Try!’ said Gandalf. ‘Try now!’

Frodo drew the Ring out of his pocket again and looked at it. It now appeared plain and smooth, without mark or device that he could see. The gold looked very fair and pure, and Frodo thought how rich and beautiful was its colour, how perfect was its roundness. It was an admirable thing and altogether precious. When he took it out he had intended to fling it from him into the very hottest part of the fire. But he found now that he could not do so, not without a great struggle. He weighed the Ring in his hand, hesitating, and forcing himself to remember all that Gandalf had told him; and then with an effort of will he made a movement, as if to cast it away—but he found that he had put it back in his pocket.

Gandalf laughed grimly. ‘You see? Already you too, Frodo, cannot easily let it go, nor will to damage it. And I could not “make” you—except by force, which would break your mind. But as for breaking the Ring, force is useless. Even if you took it and struck it with a heavy sledge-hammer, it would make no dint in it. It cannot be unmade by your hands, or by mine.

‘Your small fire, of course, would not melt even ordinary gold. This Ring has already passed through it unscathed, and even unheated. But there is no smith’s forge in this Shire that could change it at all. Not even the anvils and furnaces of the Dwarves could do that. It has been said that dragon-fire could melt and consume the Rings of Power, but there is not now any dragon left on earth in which the old fire is hot enough; nor was there ever any dragon, not even Ancalagon the Black, who could have harmed the One Ring, the Ruling Ring, for that was made by Sauron himself.

‘There is only one way: to find the Cracks of Doom in the depths of Orodruin, the Fire-mountain, and cast the Ring in there, if you really wish to destroy it, to put it beyond the grasp of the Enemy for ever.’

‘I do really wish to destroy it!’ cried Frodo. ‘Or, well, to have it destroyed. I am not made for perilous quests. I wish I had never seen the Ring! Why did it come to me? Why was I chosen?’

‘Such questions cannot be answered,’ said Gandalf. ‘You may be sure that it was not for any merit that others do not possess: not for power or wisdom, at any rate. But you have been chosen, and you must therefore use such strength and heart and wits as you have.’



‘But I have so little of any of these things! You are wise and powerful. Will you not take the Ring?’

‘No!’ cried Gandalf, springing to his feet. ‘With that power I should have power too great and terrible. And over me the Ring would gain a power still greater and more deadly.’ His eyes flashed and his face was lit as by a fire within. ‘Do not tempt me! For I do not wish to become like the Dark Lord himself. Yet the way of the Ring to my heart is by pity, pity for weakness and the desire of strength to do good. Do not tempt me! I dare not take it, not even to keep it safe, unused. The wish to wield it would be too great for my strength. I shall have such need of it. Great perils lie before me.’

He went to the window and drew aside the curtains and the shutters. Sunlight streamed back again into the room. Sam passed along the path outside whistling. ‘And now,’ said the wizard, turning back to Frodo, ‘the decision lies with you. But I will always help you.’ He laid his hand on Frodo’s shoulder. ‘I will help you bear this burden, as long as it is yours to bear. But we must do something, soon. The Enemy is moving.’

There was a long silence. Gandalf sat down again and puffed at his pipe, as if lost in thought. His eyes seemed closed, but under the lids he was watching Frodo intently. Frodo gazed fixedly at the red embers on the hearth, until they filled all his vision, and he seemed to be looking down into profound wells of fire. He was thinking of the fabled Cracks of Doom and the terror of the Fiery Mountain.

‘Well!’ said Gandalf at last. ‘What are you thinking about? Have you decided what to do?’

‘No!’ answered Frodo, coming back to himself out of darkness, and finding to his surprise that it was not dark, and that out of the window he could see the sunlit garden. ‘Or perhaps, yes. As far as I understand what you have said, I suppose I must keep the Ring and guard it, at least for the present, whatever it may do to me.’

‘Whatever it may do, it will be slow, slow to evil, if you keep it with that purpose,’ said Gandalf.

‘I hope so,’ said Frodo. ‘But I hope that you may find some other better keeper soon. But in the meanwhile it seems that I am a danger, a danger to all that live near me. I cannot keep the Ring and stay here. I ought to leave Bag End, leave the Shire, leave everything and go away.’ He sighed.

‘I should like to save the Shire, if I could—though there have been times when I thought the inhabitants too stupid and dull for words, and have felt that an earthquake or an invasion of dragons might be good for them. But I don’t feel like that now. I feel that as long as the Shire lies behind, safe and comfortable, I shall find wandering more bearable: I shall know that somewhere there is a firm foothold, even if my feet cannot stand there again.

‘Of course, I have sometimes thought of going away, but I imagined that as a kind of holiday, a series of adventures like Bilbo’s or better, ending in peace. But this would mean exile, a flight from danger into danger, drawing it after me. And I suppose I must go alone, if I am to do that and save the Shire. But I feel very small, and very uprooted, and well—desperate. The Enemy is so strong and terrible.’

He did not tell Gandalf, but as he was speaking a great desire to follow Bilbo flamed up in his heart—to follow Bilbo, and even perhaps to find him again. It was so strong that it overcame his fear: he could almost have run out there and then down the road without his hat, as Bilbo had done on a similar morning long ago.

‘My dear Frodo!’ exclaimed Gandalf. ‘Hobbits really are amazing creatures, as I have said before. You can learn all that there is to know about their ways in a month, and yet after a hundred years they can still surprise you at a pinch. I hardly expected to get such an answer, not even from you. But Bilbo made no mistake in choosing his heir, though he little thought how important it would prove. I am afraid you are right. The Ring will not be able to stay hidden in the Shire much longer; and for your own sake, as well as for others, you will have to go, and leave the name of Baggins behind you. That name will not be safe to have, outside the Shire or in the Wild. I will give you a travelling name now. When you go, go as Mr. Underhill.

‘But I don’t think you need go alone. Not if you know of anyone you can trust, and who would be willing to go by your side—and that you would be willing to take into unknown perils. But if you look for a companion, be careful in choosing! And be careful of what you say, even to your closest friends! The enemy has many spies and many ways of hearing.’

Suddenly he stopped as if listening. Frodo became aware that all was very quiet, inside and outside. Gandalf crept to one side of the window. Then with a dart he sprang to the sill, and thrust a long arm out and downwards. There was a squawk, and up came Sam Gamgee's curly head hauled by one ear.

'Well, well, bless my beard!' said Gandalf. 'Sam Gamgee is it? Now what may you be doing?'

'Lor bless you, Mr. Gandalf, sir!' said Sam. 'Nothing! Leastways I was just trimming the grass-border under the window, if you follow me.' He picked up his shears and exhibited them as evidence.

'I don't,' said Gandalf grimly. 'It is some time since I last heard the sound of your shears. How long have you been eavesdropping?'

'Eavesdropping, sir? I don't follow you, begging your pardon. There ain't no eaves at Bag End, and that's a fact.'

'Don't be a fool! What have you heard, and why did you listen?' Gandalf's eyes flashed and his brows stuck out like bristles.

'Mr. Frodo, sir!' cried Sam quaking. 'Don't let him hurt me, sir! Don't let him turn me into anything unnatural! My old dad would take on so. I meant no harm, on my honour, sir!'

'He won't hurt you,' said Frodo, hardly able to keep from laughing, although he was himself startled and rather puzzled. 'He knows, as well as I do, that you mean no harm. But just you up and answer his questions straight away!'

'Well, sir,' said Sam dithering a little. 'I heard a deal that I didn't rightly understand, about an enemy, and rings, and Mr. Bilbo, sir, and dragons, and a fiery mountain, and—and Elves, sir. I listened because I couldn't help myself, if you know what I mean. Lor bless me, sir, but I do love tales of that sort. And I believe them too, whatever Ted may say. Elves, sir! I would dearly love to see *them*. Couldn't you take me to see Elves, sir, when you go?'

Suddenly Gandalf laughed. 'Come inside!' he shouted, and putting out both his arms he lifted the astonished Sam, shears, grass-clippings and all, right through the window and stood him on the floor. 'Take you to see Elves, eh?' he said, eyeing Sam closely, but with a smile flickering on his face. 'So you heard that Mr. Frodo is going away?'

'I did, sir. And that's why I choked: which you heard seemingly. I tried not to, sir, but it burst out of me: I was so upset.'

'It can't be helped, Sam,' said Frodo sadly. He had suddenly realized that flying from the Shire would mean more painful partings than merely saying farewell to the familiar comforts of Bag End. 'I shall have to go. But'—and here he looked hard at Sam—'if you really care about me, you will keep that *dead* secret. See? If you don't, if you even breathe a word of what you've heard here, then I hope Gandalf will turn you into a spotted toad and fill the garden full of grass-snakes.'

Sam fell on his knees, trembling. 'Get up, Sam!' said Gandalf. 'I have thought of something better than that. Something to shut your mouth, and punish you properly for listening. You shall go away with Mr. Frodo!'

'Me, sir!' cried Sam, springing up like a dog invited for a walk. 'Me go and see Elves and all! Hooray!' he shouted, and then burst into tears.



## Chapter 3: Three Is Company

‘You ought to go quietly, and you ought to go soon,’ said Gandalf. Two or three weeks had passed, and still Frodo made no sign of getting ready to go.

‘I know. But it is difficult to do both,’ he objected. ‘If I just vanish like Bilbo, the tale will be all over the Shire in no time.’

‘Of course you mustn’t vanish!’ said Gandalf. ‘That wouldn’t do at all! I said *soon*, not *instantly*. If you can think of any way of slipping out of the Shire without its being generally known, it will be worth a little delay. But you must not delay too long.’

‘What about the autumn, on or after Our Birthday?’ asked Frodo. ‘I think I could probably make some arrangements by then.’

To tell the truth, he was very reluctant to start, now that it had come to the point: Bag End seemed a more desirable residence than it had for years, and he wanted to savour as much as he could of his last summer in the Shire. When autumn came, he knew that part at least of his heart would think more kindly of journeying, as it always did at that season. He had indeed privately made up his mind to leave on his fiftieth birthday: Bilbo’s one hundred and twenty-eighth. It seemed somehow the proper day on which to set out and follow him. Following Bilbo was uppermost in his mind, and the one thing that made the thought of leaving bearable. He thought as little as possible about the Ring, and where it might lead him in the end. But he did not tell all his thoughts to Gandalf. What the wizard guessed was always difficult to tell.

He looked at Frodo and smiled. ‘Very well,’ he said. ‘I think that will do—but it must not be any later. I am getting very anxious. In the meanwhile, do take care, and don’t let out any hint of where you are going! And see that Sam Gamgee does not talk. If he does, I really shall turn him into a toad.’

‘As for *where* I am going,’ said Frodo, ‘it would be difficult to give that away, for I have no clear idea myself, yet.’

‘Don’t be absurd!’ said Gandalf. ‘I am not warning you against leaving an address at the post-office! But you are leaving the Shire—and that should not be known, until you are far away. And you must go, or at least set out, either North, South, West or East—and the direction should certainly not be known.’

‘I have been so taken up with the thoughts of leaving Bag End, and of saying farewell, that I have never even considered the direction,’ said Frodo. ‘For where am I to go? And by what shall I steer? What is to be my quest? Bilbo went to find a treasure, there and back again; but I go to lose one, and not return, as far as I can see.’

‘But you cannot see very far,’ said Gandalf. ‘Neither can I. It may be your task to find the Cracks of Doom; but that quest may be for others: I do not know. At any rate you are not ready for that long road yet.’

‘No indeed!’ said Frodo. ‘But in the meantime what course am I to take?’

‘Towards danger; but not too rashly, nor too straight,’ answered the wizard. ‘If you want my advice, make for Rivendell. That journey should not prove too perilous, though the Road is less easy than it was, and it will grow worse as the year fails.’

‘Rivendell!’ said Frodo. ‘Very good: I will go east, and I will make for Rivendell. I will take Sam to visit the Elves; he will be delighted.’ He spoke lightly; but his heart was moved suddenly with a desire to see the house of Elrond Halfelven, and breathe the air of that deep valley where many of the Fair Folk still dwelt in peace.

One summer's evening an astonishing piece of news reached the *Ivy Bush* and *Green Dragon*. Giants and other portents on the borders of the Shire were forgotten for more important matters: Mr. Frodo was selling Bag End, indeed he had already sold it—to the Sackville-Bagginses!

'For a nice bit, too,' said some. 'At a bargain price,' said others, 'and that's more likely when Mistress Lobelia's the buyer.' (Otho had died some years before, at the ripe but disappointed age of 102.)

Just why Mr. Frodo was selling his beautiful hole was even more debatable than the price. A few held the theory—supported by the nods and hints of Mr. Baggins himself—that Frodo's money was running out: he was going to leave Hobbiton and live in a quiet way on the proceeds of the sale down in Buckland among his Brandybuck relations. 'As far from the Sackville-Bagginses as may be,' some added. But so firmly fixed had the notion of the immeasurable wealth of the Bagginses of Bag End become that most found this hard to believe, harder than any other reason or unreason that their fancy could suggest: to most it suggested a dark and yet unrevealed plot by Gandalf. Though he kept himself very quiet and did not go about by day, it was well known that he was 'hiding up in the Bag End'. But however a removal might fit in with the designs of his wizardry, there was no doubt about the fact: Frodo Baggins was going back to Buckland.

'Yes, I shall be moving this autumn,' he said. 'Merry Brandybuck is looking out for a nice little hole for me, or perhaps a small house.'

As a matter of fact with Merry's help he had already chosen and bought a little house at Crickhollow in the country beyond Bucklebury. To all but Sam he pretended he was going to settle down there permanently. The decision to set out eastwards had suggested the idea to him; for Buckland was on the eastern borders of the Shire, and as he had lived there in childhood his going back would at least seem credible.

Gandalf stayed in the Shire for over two months. Then one evening, at the end of June, soon after Frodo's plan had been finally arranged, he suddenly announced that he was going off again next morning. 'Only for a short while, I hope,' he said. 'But I am going down beyond the southern borders to get some news, if I can. I have been idle longer than I should.'

He spoke lightly, but it seemed to Frodo that he looked rather worried. 'Has anything happened?' he asked.

'Well no; but I have heard something that has made me anxious and needs looking into. If I think it necessary after all for you to get off at once, I shall come back immediately, or at least send word. In the meanwhile stick to your plan; but be more careful than ever, especially of the Ring. Let me impress on you once more: *don't use it!*'

He went off at dawn. 'I may be back any day,' he said. 'At the very latest I shall come back for the farewell party. I think after all you may need my company on the Road.'

At first Frodo was a good deal disturbed, and wondered often what Gandalf could have heard; but his uneasiness wore off, and in the fine weather he forgot his troubles for a while. The Shire had seldom seen so fair a summer, or so rich an autumn: the trees were laden with apples, honey was dripping in the combs, and the corn was tall and full.

Autumn was well under way before Frodo began to worry about Gandalf again. September was passing and there was still no news of him. The Birthday, and the removal, drew nearer, and still he did not come, or send word. Bag End began to be busy. Some of Frodo's friends came to stay and help him with the packing: there was Fredegar Bolger and Folco Boffin, and of course his special friends Pippin Took and Merry Brandybuck. Between them they turned the whole place upside-down.

On September 20<sup>th</sup> two covered carts went off laden to Buckland, conveying the furniture and goods that Frodo had not sold to his new home, by way of the Brandywine Bridge. The next day Frodo became really anxious, and kept a constant look-out for Gandalf. Thursday, his birthday morning, dawned as fair and clear as it had long ago for Bilbo's great party. Still Gandalf did not appear. In the evening Frodo gave his farewell feast: it was quite small, just a dinner for himself and his four helpers; but he was troubled and felt in no mood for it. The thought that he would so soon have to part with his young friends weighed on his heart. He wondered how he would break it to them.

The four younger hobbits were, however, in high spirits, and the party soon became very cheerful in spite of Gandalf's absence. The dining-room was bare except for a table and chairs, but the food was good, and there was good wine: Frodo's wine had not been included in the sale to the Sackville-Bagginses.

'Whatever happens to the rest of my stuff, when the S.-B.s get their claws on it, at any rate I have found a good home for this!' said Frodo, as he drained his glass. It was the last drop of Old Winyards.

When they had sung many songs, and talked of many things they had done together, they toasted Bilbo's birthday, and they drank his health and Frodo's together according to Frodo's custom. Then they went out for a sniff of air, and glimpse of the stars, and then they went to bed. Frodo's party was over, and Gandalf had not come.

The next morning they were busy packing another cart with the remainder of the luggage. Merry took charge of this, and drove off with Fatty (that is Fredegar Bolger). 'Someone must get there and warm the house before you arrive,' said Merry. 'Well, see you later—the day after tomorrow, if you don't go to sleep on the way!'

Folco went home after lunch, but Pippin remained behind. Frodo was restless and anxious, listening in vain for a sound of Gandalf. He decided to wait until nightfall. After that, if Gandalf wanted him urgently, he would go to Crickhollow, and might even get there first. For Frodo was going on foot. His plan—for pleasure and a last look at the Shire as much as any other reason—was to walk from Hobbiton to Bucklebury Ferry, taking it fairly easy.

'I shall get myself a bit into training, too,' he said, looking at himself in a dusty mirror in the half-empty hall. He had not done any strenuous walking for a long time, and the reflection looked rather flabby, he thought.

After lunch, the Sackville-Bagginses, Lobelia and her sandy-haired son, Lotho, turned up, much to Frodo's annoyance. 'Ours at last!' said Lobelia, as she stepped inside. It was not polite; nor strictly true, for the sale of Bag End did not take effect until midnight. But Lobelia can perhaps be forgiven: she had been obliged to wait about seventy-seven years longer for Bag End than she once hoped, and she was now a hundred years old. Anyway, she had come to see that nothing she had paid for had been carried off; and she wanted the keys. It took a long while to satisfy her, as she had brought a complete inventory with her and went right through it. In the end she departed with Lotho and the spare key and the promise that the other key would be left at the Gamgees' in Bagshot Row. She snorted, and showed plainly that she thought the Gamgees capable of plundering the hole during the night. Frodo did not offer her any tea.

He took his own tea with Pippin and Sam Gamgee in the kitchen. It had been officially announced that Sam was coming to Buckland 'to do for Mr. Frodo and look after his bit of garden'; an arrangement that was approved by the Gaffer, though it did not console him for the prospect of having Lobelia as a neighbour.

'Our last meal at Bag End!' said Frodo, pushing back his chair. They left the washing up for Lobelia. Pippin and Sam strapped up their three packs and piled them in the porch. Pippin went out for a last stroll in the garden. Sam disappeared.

The sun went down. Bag End seemed sad and gloomy and dishevelled. Frodo wandered round the familiar rooms, and saw the light of the sunset fade on the walls, and shadows creep out of the corners. It grew slowly dark indoors. He went out and walked down to the gate at the bottom of the path, and then on a short way down the Hill Road. He half expected to see Gandalf come striding up through the dusk.

The sky was clear and the stars were growing bright. 'It's going to be a fine night,' he said aloud. 'That's good for a beginning. I feel like walking. I can't bear any more hanging about. I am going to start, and Gandalf must follow me.' He turned to go back, and then stopped, for he heard voices, just round the corner by the end of Bagshot Row. One voice was certainly the old Gaffer's; the other was strange, and somehow unpleasant. He could not make out what it said, but he heard the Gaffer's answers, which were rather shrill. The old man seemed put out.

'No, Mr. Baggins has gone away. Went this morning, and my Sam went with him: anyway all his stuff went. Yes, sold out and gone, I tell'ee. Why? Why's none of my business, or yours. Where to? That ain't no secret. He's moved to Bucklebury or some such place, away down yonder. Yes it is—a tidy way. I've never been so far myself; they're queer folks in Buckland. No, I can't give no message. Good night to you!'

Footsteps went away down the Hill. Frodo wondered vaguely why the fact that they did not come on up the Hill seemed a great relief. 'I am sick of questions and curiosity about my doings, I suppose,' he thought. 'What an inquisitive lot they all are!' He had half a mind to go and ask the Gaffer who the inquirer was; but he thought better (or worse) of it, and turned and walked quickly back to Bag End.

Pippin was sitting on his pack in the porch. Sam was not there. Frodo stepped inside the dark door. 'Sam!' he called. 'Sam! Time!'

'Coming, sir!' came the answer from far within, followed soon by Sam himself, wiping his mouth. He had been saying farewell to the beer-barrel in the cellar.

'All aboard, Sam?' said Frodo.

'Yes, sir. I'll last for a bit now, sir.'

Frodo shut and locked the round door, and gave the key to Sam. 'Run down with this to your home, Sam!' he said. 'Then cut along the Row and meet us as quick as you can at the gate in the lane beyond the meadows. We are not going through the village tonight. Too many ears pricking and eyes prying.' Sam ran off at full speed.

'Well, now we're off at last!' said Frodo. They shouldered their packs and took up their sticks, and walked round the corner to the west side of Bag End. 'Good-bye!' said Frodo, looking at the dark blank windows. He waved his hand, and then turned and (following Bilbo, if he had known it) hurried after Peregrin down the garden-path. They jumped over the low place in the hedge at the bottom and took to the fields, passing into the darkness like a rustle in the grasses.

At the bottom of the Hill on its western side they came to the gate opening on to a narrow lane. There they halted and adjusted the straps of their packs. Presently Sam appeared, trotting quickly and breathing hard; his heavy pack was hoisted high on his shoulders, and he had put on his head a tall shapeless felt bag, which he called a hat. In the gloom he looked very much like a dwarf.

'I am sure you have given me all the heaviest stuff,' said Frodo. 'I pity snails, and all that carry their homes on their backs.'

'I could take a lot more yet, sir. My packet is quite light,' said Sam stoutly and untruthfully.

'No you don't, Sam!' said Pippin. 'It is good for him. He's got nothing except what he ordered us to pack. He's been slack lately, and he'll feel the weight less when he's walked off some of his own.'

'Be kind to a poor old hobbit!' laughed Frodo. 'I shall be as thin as a willow-wand, I'm sure, before I get to Buckland. But I was talking nonsense. I suspect you have taken more than your share, Sam, and I shall look into it at our next packing.' He picked up his stick again. 'Well, we all like walking in the dark,' he said, 'so let's put some miles behind us before bed.'

For a short way they followed the lane westwards. Then leaving it they turned left and took quietly to the fields again. They went in single file along hedgerows and the borders of coppices, and night fell dark about them. In their dark cloaks they were as invisible as if they all had magic rings. Since they were all hobbits, and were trying to be silent, they made no noise that even hobbits would hear. Even the wild things in the fields and woods hardly noticed their passing.

After some time they crossed the Water, west of Hobbiton, by a narrow plank-bridge. The stream was there no more than a winding black ribbon, bordered with leaning alder-trees. A mile or two further south they hastily crossed the great road from the Brandywine Bridge; they were now in the Tookland and bending south-eastwards they made for the Green Hill Country. As they began to climb its first slopes they looked back and saw the lamps in Hobbiton far off twinkling in the gentle valley of the Water. Soon it disappeared in the folds of the darkened land, and was followed by Bywater beside its grey pool. When the light of the last farm was far behind, peeping among the trees, Frodo turned and waved a hand in farewell.

'I wonder if I shall ever look down into that valley again,' he said quietly.

When they had walked for about three hours they rested. The night was clear, cool, and starry, but smoke-like wisps of mist were creeping up the hill-sides from the streams and deep meadows. Thin-clad birches, swaying

in a light wind above their heads, made a black net against the pale sky. They ate a very frugal supper (for hobbits), and then went on again. Soon they struck a narrow road, that went rolling up and down, fading grey into the darkness ahead: the road to Woodhall, and Stock, and the Bucklebury Ferry. It climbed away from the main road in the Water-valley, and wound over the skirts of the Green Hills towards Woody End, a wild corner of the Eastfarthing.

After a while they plunged into a deeply cloven track between tall trees that rustled their dry leaves in the night. It was very dark. At first they talked, or hummed a tune softly together, being now far away from inquisitive ears. Then they marched on in silence, and Pippin began to lag behind. At last, as they began to climb a steep slope, he stopped and yawned.

‘I am so sleepy,’ he said, ‘that soon I shall fall down on the road. Are you going to sleep on your legs? It is nearly midnight.’

‘I thought you liked walking in the dark,’ said Frodo. ‘But there is no great hurry. Merry expects us some time the day after tomorrow; but that leaves us nearly two days more. We’ll halt at the first likely spot.’

‘The wind’s in the West,’ said Sam. ‘If we get to the other side of this hill, we shall find a spot that is sheltered and snug enough, sir. There is a dry fir-wood just ahead, if I remember rightly.’ Sam knew the land well within twenty miles of Hobbiton, but that was the limit of his geography.

Just over the top of the hill they came on the patch of fir-wood. Leaving the road they went into the deep resin-scented darkness of the trees, and gathered dead sticks and cones to make a fire. Soon they had a merry crackle of flame at the foot of a large fir-tree and they sat round it for a while, until they began to nod. Then, each in an angle of the great tree’s roots, they curled up in their cloaks and blankets, and were soon fast asleep. They set no watch; even Frodo feared no danger yet, for they were still in the heart of the Shire. A few creatures came and looked at them when the fire had died away. A fox passing through the wood on business of his own stopped several minutes and sniffed.

‘Hobbits!’ he thought. ‘Well, what next? I have heard of strange doings in this land, but I have seldom heard of a hobbit sleeping out of doors under a tree. Three of them! There’s something mighty queer behind this.’ He was quite right, but he never found out any more about it.

The morning came, pale and clammy. Frodo woke up first, and found that a tree-root had made a hole in his back, and that his neck was stiff. ‘Walking for pleasure! Why didn’t I drive?’ he thought, as he usually did at the beginning of an expedition. ‘And all my beautiful feather beds are sold to the Sackville-Bagginses! These tree-roots would do them good.’ He stretched. ‘Wake up, hobbits!’ he cried. ‘It’s a beautiful morning.’

‘What’s beautiful about it?’ said Pippin, peering over the edge of his blanket with one eye. ‘Sam! Get breakfast ready for half-past nine! Have you got the bath-water hot?’

Sam jumped up, looking rather bleary. ‘No, sir, I haven’t, sir!’ he said.

Frodo stripped the blankets from Pippin and rolled him over, and then walked off to the edge of the wood. Away eastward the sun was rising red out of the mists that lay thick on the world. Touched with gold and red the autumn trees seemed to be sailing rootless in a shadowy sea. A little below him to the left the road ran down steeply into a hollow and disappeared.

When he returned Sam and Pippin had got a good fire going. ‘Water!’ shouted Pippin. ‘Where’s the water?’

‘I don’t keep water in my pockets,’ said Frodo.

‘We thought you had gone to find some,’ said Pippin, busy setting out the food, and cups. ‘You had better go now.’

‘You can come too,’ said Frodo, ‘and bring all the water-bottles.’ There was a stream at the foot of the hill. They filled their bottles and the small camping kettle at a little fall where the water fell a few feet over an outcrop of grey stone. It was icy cold; and they spluttered and puffed as they bathed their faces and hands.

When their breakfast was over, and their packs all trussed up again, it was after ten o’clock, and the day was beginning to turn fine and hot. They went down the slope, and across the stream where it dived under the road,

and up the next slope, and up and down another shoulder of the hills; and by that time their cloaks, blankets, water, food, and other gear already seemed a heavy burden.

The day's march promised to be warm and tiring work. After some miles, however, the road ceased to roll up and down: it climbed to the top of a steep bank in a weary zig-zagging sort of way, and then prepared to go down for the last time. In front of them they saw the lower lands dotted with small clumps of trees that melted away in the distance to a brown woodland haze. They were looking across the Woody End towards the Brandywine River. The road wound away before them like a piece of string.

'The road goes on for ever,' said Pippin; 'but I can't without a rest. It is high time for lunch.' He sat down on the bank at the side of the road and looked away east into the haze, beyond which lay the River, and the end of the Shire in which he had spent all his life. Sam stood by him. His round eyes were wide open—for he was looking across lands he had never seen to a new horizon.

'Do Elves live in those woods?' he asked.

'Not that I ever heard,' said Pippin. Frodo was silent. He too was gazing eastward along the road, as if he had never seen it before. Suddenly he spoke, aloud but as if to himself, saying slowly:

*The Road goes ever on and on  
Down from the door where it began.  
Now far ahead the Road has gone,  
And I must follow, if I can,  
Pursuing it with weary feet,  
Until it joins some larger way,  
Where many paths and errands meet.  
And whither then? I cannot say.*

'That sounds like a bit of old Bilbo's rhyming,' said Pippin. 'Or is it one of your imitations? It does not sound altogether encouraging.'

'I don't know,' said Frodo. 'It came to me then, as if I was making it up; but I may have heard it long ago. Certainly it reminds me very much of Bilbo in the last years, before he went away. He used often to say there was only one Road; that it was like a great river: its springs were at every doorstep, and every path was its tributary. "It's a dangerous business, Frodo, going out of your door," he used to say. "You step into the Road, and if you don't keep your feet, there is no knowing where you might be swept off to. Do you realize that this is the very path that goes through Mirkwood, and that if you let it, it might take you to the Lonely Mountain or even further and to worse places?" He used to say that on the path outside the front door at Bag End, especially after he had been out for a long walk.'

'Well, the Road won't sweep me anywhere for an hour at least,' said Pippin, unslinging his pack. The others followed his example, putting their packs against the bank and their legs out into the road. After a rest they had a good lunch, and then more rest.

The sun was beginning to get low and the light of afternoon was on the land as they went down the hill. So far they had not met a soul on the road. This way was not much used, being hardly fit for carts, and there was little traffic to the Woody End. They had been jogging along again for an hour or more when Sam stopped a moment as if listening. They were now on level ground, and the road after much winding lay straight ahead through grass-land sprinkled with tall trees, outliers of the approaching woods.

'I can hear a pony or a horse coming along the road behind,' said Sam.

They looked back, but the turn of the road prevented them from seeing far. 'I wonder if that is Gandalf coming after us,' said Frodo; but even as he said it, he had a feeling that it was not so, and a sudden desire to hide from the view of the rider came over him.

'It may not matter much,' he said apologetically, 'but I would rather not be seen on the road—by anyone. I am sick of my doings being noticed and discussed. And if it is Gandalf,' he added as an afterthought, 'we can give him a little surprise, to pay him out for being so late. Let's get out of sight!'



The other two ran quickly to the left and down into a little hollow not far from the road. There they lay flat. Frodo hesitated for a second: curiosity or some other feeling was struggling with his desire to hide. The sound of hoofs drew nearer. Just in time he threw himself down in a patch of long grass behind a tree that overshadowed the road. Then he lifted his head and peered cautiously above one of the great roots.

Round the corner came a black horse, no hobbit-pony but a full-sized horse; and on it sat a large man, who seemed to crouch in the saddle, wrapped in a great black cloak and hood, so that only his boots in the high stirrups showed below; his face was shadowed and invisible.

When it reached the tree and was level with Frodo the horse stopped. The riding figure sat quite still with its head bowed, as if listening. From inside the hood came a noise as of someone sniffing to catch an elusive scent; the head turned from side to side of the road.

A sudden unreasoning fear of discovery laid hold of Frodo, and he thought of his Ring. He hardly dared to breathe, and yet the desire to get it out of his pocket became so strong that he began slowly to move his hand. He felt that he had only to slip it on, and then he would be safe. The advice of Gandalf seemed absurd. Bilbo had used the Ring. 'And I am still in the Shire,' he thought, as his hand touched the chain on which it hung. At that moment the rider sat up, and shook the reins. The horse stepped forward, walking slowly at first, and then breaking into a quick trot.

Frodo crawled to the edge of the road and watched the rider, until he dwindled into the distance. He could not be quite sure, but it seemed to him that suddenly, before it passed out of sight, the horse turned aside and went into the trees on the right.

'Well, I call that very queer, and indeed disturbing,' said Frodo to himself, as he walked towards his companions. Pippin and Sam had remained flat in the grass, and had seen nothing; so Frodo described the rider and his strange behaviour.

'I can't say why, but I felt certain he was looking or *smelling* for me; and also I felt certain that I did not want him to discover me. I've never seen or felt anything like it in the Shire before.'

'But what has one of the Big People got to do with us?' said Pippin. 'And what is he doing in this part of the world?'

'There are some Men about,' said Frodo. 'Down in the Southfarthing they have had trouble with Big People, I believe. But I have never heard of anything like this rider. I wonder where he comes from.'

'Begging your pardon,' put in Sam suddenly, 'I know where he comes from. It's from Hobbiton that this here black rider comes, unless there's more than one. And I know where he's going to.'

'What do you mean?' said Frodo sharply, looking at him in astonishment. 'Why didn't you speak up before?'

'I have only just remembered, sir. It was like this: when I got back to our hole yesterday evening with the key, my dad, he says to me: *Hallo, Sam! he says. I thought you were away with Mr. Frodo this morning. There's been a strange customer asking for Mr. Baggins of Bag End, and he's only just gone. I've sent him on to Bucklebury. Not that I liked the sound of him. He seemed mighty put out, when I told him Mr. Baggins had left his old home for good. Hissed at me, he did. It gave me quite a shudder. What sort of a fellow was he?* says I to the Gaffer. *I don't know,* says he; *but he wasn't a hobbit. He was tall and black-like, and he stooped over me. I reckon it was one of the Big Folk from foreign parts. He spoke funny.*

'I couldn't stay to hear more, sir, since you were waiting; and I didn't give much heed to it myself. The Gaffer is getting old, and more than a bit blind, and it must have been near dark when this fellow come up the Hill and found him taking the air at the end of our Row. I hope he hasn't done no harm, sir, nor me.'

'The Gaffer can't be blamed anyway,' said Frodo. 'As a matter of fact I heard him talking to a stranger, who seemed to be inquiring for me, and I nearly went and asked him who it was. I wish I had, or you had told me about it before. I might have been more careful on the road.'

'Still, there may be no connexion between this rider and the Gaffer's stranger,' said Pippin. 'We left Hobbiton secretly enough, and I don't see how he could have followed us.'

‘What about the *smelling*, sir?’ said Sam. ‘And the Gaffer said he was a black chap.’

‘I wish I had waited for Gandalf,’ Frodo muttered. ‘But perhaps it would only have made matters worse.’

‘Then you know or guess something about this rider?’ said Pippin, who had caught the muttered words.

‘I don’t know, and I would rather not guess,’ said Frodo.

‘All right, cousin Frodo! You can keep your secret for the present, if you want to be mysterious. In the meanwhile what are we to do? I should like a bite and a sup, but somehow I think we had better move on from here. Your talk of sniffing riders with invisible noses has unsettled me.’

‘Yes, I think we will move on now,’ said Frodo; ‘but not on the road—in case that rider comes back, or another follows him. We ought to do a good step more today. Buckland is still miles away.’

The shadows of the trees were long and thin on the grass, as they started off again. They now kept a stone’s throw to the left of the road, and kept out of sight of it as much as they could. But this hindered them; for the grass was thick and tussocky, and the ground uneven, and the trees began to draw together into thickets.

The sun had gone down red behind the hills at their backs, and evening was coming on before they came back to the road at the end of the long level over which it had run straight for some miles. At that point it bent left and went down into the lowlands of the Yale making for Stock; but a lane branched right, winding through a wood of ancient oak-trees on its way to Woodhall. ‘That is the way for us,’ said Frodo.

Not far from the road-meeting they came on the huge hulk of a tree: it was still alive and had leaves on the small branches that it had put out round the broken stumps of its long-fallen limbs; but it was hollow, and could be entered by a great crack on the side away from the road. The hobbits crept inside, and sat there upon a floor of old leaves and decayed wood. They rested and had a light meal, talking quietly and listening from time to time.

Twilight was about them as they crept back to the lane. The West wind was sighing in the branches. Leaves were whispering. Soon the road began to fall gently but steadily into the dusk. A star came out above the trees in the darkening East before them. They went abreast and in step, to keep up their spirits. After a time, as the stars grew thicker and brighter, the feeling of disquiet left them, and they no longer listened for the sound of hoofs. They began to hum softly, as hobbits have a way of doing as they walk along, especially when they are drawing near to home at night. With most hobbits it is a supper-song or a bed-song; but these hobbits hummed a walking-song (though not, of course, without any mention of supper and bed). Bilbo Baggins had made the words, to a tune that was as old as the hills, and taught it to Frodo as they walked in the lanes of the Water-valley and talked about Adventure.

*Upon the hearth the fire is red,  
Beneath the roof there is a bed;  
But not yet weary are our feet,  
Still round the corner we may meet  
A sudden tree or standing stone  
That none have seen but we alone.  
Tree and flower and leaf and grass,  
Let them pass! Let them pass!  
Hill and water under sky,  
Pass them by! Pass them by!*

*Still round the corner there may wait  
A new road or a secret gate,  
And though we pass them by today,  
Tomorrow we may come this way  
And take the hidden paths that run  
Towards the Moon or to the Sun.*

*Apple, thorn, and nut and sloe,  
Let them go! Let them go!  
Sand and stone and pool and dell,  
Fare you well! Fare you well!*

*Home is behind, the world ahead,  
And there are many paths to tread  
Through shadows to the edge of night,  
Until the stars are all alight.  
Then world behind and home ahead,  
We'll wander back to home and bed.  
Mist and twilight, cloud and shade,  
Away shall fade! Away shall fade!  
Fire and lamp, and meat and bread,  
And then to bed! And then to bed!*

The song ended. 'And *now* to bed! And *now* to bed!' sang Pippin in a high voice.

'Hush!' said Frodo. 'I think I hear hoofs again.'

They stopped suddenly and stood as silent as tree-shadows, listening. There was a sound of hoofs in the lane, some way behind, but coming slow and clear down the wind. Quickly and quietly they slipped off the path, and ran into the deeper shade under the oak-trees.

'Don't let us go too far!' said Frodo. 'I don't want to be seen, but I want to see if it is another Black Rider.'

'Very well!' said Pippin. 'But don't forget the sniffing!'

The hoofs drew nearer. They had no time to find any hiding-place better than the general darkness under the trees; Sam and Pippin crouched behind a large tree-bole, while Frodo crept back a few yards towards the lane. It showed grey and pale, a line of fading light through the wood. Above it the stars were thick in the dim sky, but there was no moon.

The sound of hoofs stopped. As Frodo watched he saw something dark pass across the lighter space between two trees, and then halt. It looked like the black shade of a horse led by a smaller black shadow. The black shadow stood close to the point where they had left the path, and it swayed from side to side. Frodo thought he heard the sound of snuffling. The shadow bent to the ground, and then began to crawl towards him.

Once more the desire to slip on the Ring came over Frodo; but this time it was stronger than before. So strong that, almost before he realized what he was doing, his hand was groping in his pocket. But at that moment there came a sound like mingled song and laughter. Clear voices rose and fell in the starlit air. The black shadow straightened up and retreated. It climbed on to the shadowy horse and seemed to vanish across the lane into the darkness on the other side. Frodo breathed again.

'Elves!' exclaimed Sam in a hoarse whisper. 'Elves, sir!' He would have burst out of the trees and dashed off towards the voices, if they had not pulled him back.

'Yes, it is Elves,' said Frodo. 'One can meet them sometimes in the Woody End. They don't live in the Shire, but they wander into it in spring and autumn, out of their own lands away beyond the Tower Hills. I am thankful that they do! You did not see, but that Black Rider stopped just here and was actually crawling towards us when the song began. As soon as he heard the voices he slipped away.'

'What about the Elves?' said Sam, too excited to trouble about the rider. 'Can't we go and see them?'

'Listen! They are coming this way,' said Frodo. 'We have only to wait.'

The singing drew nearer. One clear voice rose now above the others. It was singing in the fair elven-tongue, of which Frodo knew only a little, and the others knew nothing. Yet the sound blending with the melody seemed

to shape itself in their thought into words which they only partly understood. This was the song as Frodo heard it:

*Snow-white! Snow-white! O Lady clear!  
O Queen beyond the Western Seas!  
O Light to us that wander here  
Amid the world of woven trees!*

*Gilthoniel! O Elbereth!  
Clear are thy eyes and bright thy breath!  
Snow-white! Snow-white! We sing to thee  
In a far land beyond the Sea.*

*O stars that in the Sunless Year  
With shining hand by her were sown,  
In windy fields now bright and clear  
We see your silver blossom blown!*

*O Elbereth! Gilthoniel!  
We still remember, we who dwell  
In this far land beneath the trees,  
Thy starlight on the Western Seas.*

The song ended. 'These are High Elves! They spoke the name of Elbereth!' said Frodo in amazement. 'Few of that fairest folk are ever seen in the Shire. Not many now remain in Middle-earth, east of the Great Sea. This is indeed a strange chance!'

The hobbits sat in shadow by the wayside. Before long the Elves came down the lane towards the valley. They passed slowly, and the hobbits could see the starlight glimmering on their hair and in their eyes. They bore no lights, yet as they walked a shimmer, like the light of the moon above the rim of the hills before it rises, seemed to fall about their feet. They were now silent, and as the last Elf passed he turned and looked towards the hobbits and laughed.

'Hail, Frodo!' he cried. 'You are abroad late. Or are you perhaps lost?' Then he called aloud to the others, and all the company stopped and gathered round.

'This is indeed wonderful!' they said. 'Three hobbits in a wood at night! We have not seen such a thing since Bilbo went away. What is the meaning of it?'

'The meaning of it, fair people,' said Frodo, 'is simply that we seem to be going the same way as you are. I like walking under the stars. But I would welcome your company.'

'But we have no need of other company, and hobbits are so dull,' they laughed. 'And how do you know that we go the same way as you, for you do not know whither we are going?'

'And how do you know my name?' asked Frodo in return.

'We know many things,' they said. 'We have seen you often before with Bilbo, though you may not have seen us.'

'Who are you, and who is your lord?' asked Frodo.

'I am Gildor,' answered their leader, the Elf who had first hailed him. 'Gildor Inglorion of the House of Finrod. We are Exiles, and most of our kindred have long ago departed and we too are now only tarrying here a while, ere we return over the Great Sea. But some of our kinsfolk dwell still in peace in Rivendell. Come now, Frodo, tell us what you are doing? For we see that there is some shadow of fear upon you.'

'O Wise People!' interrupted Pippin eagerly. 'Tell us about the Black Riders!'

‘Black Riders?’ they said in low voices. ‘Why do you ask about Black Riders?’

‘Because two Black Riders have overtaken us today, or one has done so twice,’ said Pippin; ‘only a little while ago he slipped away as you drew near.’

The Elves did not answer at once, but spoke together softly in their own tongue. At length Gildor turned to the hobbits. ‘We will not speak of this here,’ he said. ‘We think you had best come now with us. It is not our custom, but for this time we will take you on our road, and you shall lodge with us tonight, if you will.’

‘O Fair Folk! This is good fortune beyond my hope,’ said Pippin. Sam was speechless. ‘I thank you indeed, Gildor Inglorion,’ said Frodo bowing. ‘*Elen sila lumenn’ omentielvo*, a star shines on the hour of our meeting,’ he added in the High-elven speech.

‘Be careful, friends!’ cried Gildor laughing. ‘Speak no secrets! Here is a scholar in the Ancient Tongue. Bilbo was a good master. Hail, Elf-friend!’ he said, bowing to Frodo. ‘Come now with your friends and join our company! You had best walk in the middle so that you may not stray. You may be weary before we halt.’

‘Why? Where are you going?’ asked Frodo.

‘For tonight we go to the woods on the hills above Woodhall. It is some miles, but you shall have rest at the end of it, and it will shorten your journey tomorrow.’

They now marched on again in silence, and passed like shadows and faint lights: for Elves (even more than hobbits) could walk when they wished without sound or footfall. Pippin soon began to feel sleepy, and staggered once or twice; but each time a tall Elf at his side put out his arm and saved him from a fall. Sam walked along at Frodo’s side, as if in a dream, with an expression on his face half of fear and half of astonished joy.

The woods on either side became denser; the trees were now younger and thicker; and as the lane went lower, running down into a fold of the hills, there were many deep brakes of hazel on the rising slopes at either hand. At last the Elves turned aside from the path. A green ride lay almost unseen through the thickets on the right; and this they followed as it wound away back up the wooded slopes on to the top of a shoulder of the hills that stood out into the lower land of the river-valley. Suddenly they came out of the shadow of the trees, and before them lay a wide space of grass, grey under the night. On three sides the woods pressed upon it; but eastward the ground fell steeply and the tops of the dark trees, growing at the bottom of the slope, were below their feet. Beyond, the low lands lay dim and flat under the stars. Nearer at hand a few lights twinkled in the village of Woodhall.

The Elves sat on the grass and spoke together in soft voices; they seemed to take no further notice of the hobbits. Frodo and his companions wrapped themselves in cloaks and blankets, and drowsiness stole over them. The night grew on, and the lights in the valley went out. Pippin fell asleep, pillowed on a green hillock.

Away high in the East swung Remmirath<sup>427</sup>, the Netted Stars, and slowly above the mists red Borgil rose, glowing like a jewel of fire. Then by some shift of airs all the mist was drawn away like a veil, and there leaned up, as he climbed over the rim of the world, the Swordsman of the Sky, Menelvagor<sup>426</sup> with his shining belt. The Elves all burst into song. Suddenly under the trees a fire sprang up with a red light.

‘Come!’ the Elves called to the hobbits. ‘Come! Now is the time for speech and merriment!’

Pippin sat up and rubbed his eyes. He shivered. ‘There is a fire in the hall, and food for hungry guests,’ said an Elf standing before him.

At the south end of the greensward there was an opening. There the green floor ran on into the wood, and formed a wide space like a hall, roofed by the boughs of trees. Their great trunks ran like pillars down each side. In the middle there was a wood-fire blazing, and upon the tree-pillars torches with lights of gold and silver were burning steadily. The Elves sat round the fire upon the grass or upon the sawn rings of old trunks. Some went to and fro bearing cups and pouring drink; others brought food on heaped plates and dishes.

‘This is poor fare,’ they said to the hobbits; ‘for we are lodging in the greenwood far from our halls. If ever you are our guests at home, we will treat you better.’

‘It seems to me good enough for a birthday-party,’ said Frodo.

Pippin afterwards recalled little of either food or drink, for his mind was filled with the light upon the elf-faces, and the sound of voices so various and so beautiful that he felt in a waking dream. But he remembered that there was bread, surpassing the savour of a fair white loaf to one who is starving; and fruits sweet as wildberries and richer than the tended fruits of gardens; he drained a cup that was filled with a fragrant draught, cool as a clear fountain, golden as a summer afternoon.

Sam could never describe in words, nor picture clearly to himself, what he felt or thought that night, though it remained in his memory as one of the chief events of his life. The nearest he ever got was to say: ‘Well, sir, if I could grow apples like that, I would call myself a gardener. But it was the singing that went to my heart, if you know what I mean.’

Frodo sat, eating, drinking, and talking with delight; but his mind was chiefly on the words spoken. He knew a little of the elf-speech and listened eagerly. Now and again he spoke to those that served him and thanked them in their own language. They smiled at him and said laughing: ‘Here is a jewel among hobbits!’

After a while Pippin fell fast asleep, and was lifted up and borne away to a bower under the trees; there he was laid upon a soft bed and slept the rest of the night away. Sam refused to leave his master. When Pippin had gone, he came and sat curled up at Frodo’s feet, where at last he nodded and closed his eyes. Frodo remained long awake, talking with Gildor.

They spoke of many things, old and new, and Frodo questioned Gildor much about happenings in the wide world outside the Shire. The tidings were mostly sad and ominous: of gathering darkness, the wars of Men, and the flight of the Elves. At last Frodo asked the question that was nearest to his heart:

‘Tell me, Gildor, have you ever seen Bilbo since he left us?’

Gildor smiled. ‘Yes,’ he answered. ‘Twice. He said farewell to us on this very spot. But I saw him once again, far from here.’ He would say no more about Bilbo, and Frodo fell silent.

‘You do not ask me or tell me much that concerns yourself, Frodo,’ said Gildor. ‘But I already know a little, and I can read more in your face and in the thought behind your questions. You are leaving the Shire, and yet you doubt that you will find what you seek, or accomplish what you intend, or that you will ever return. Is not that so?’

‘It is,’ said Frodo; ‘but I thought my going was a secret known only to Gandalf and my faithful Sam.’ He looked down at Sam, who was snoring gently.

‘The secret will not reach the Enemy from us,’ said Gildor.

‘The Enemy?’ said Frodo. ‘Then you know why I am leaving the Shire?’

‘I do not know for what reason the Enemy is pursuing you,’ answered Gildor; ‘but I perceive that he is—strange indeed though that seems to me. And I warn you that peril is now both before you and behind you, and upon either side.’

‘You mean the Riders? I feared that they were servants of the Enemy. What *are* the Black Riders?’

‘Has Gandalf told you nothing?’

‘Nothing about such creatures.’

‘Then I think it is not for me to say more—lest terror should keep you from your journey. For it seems to me that you have set out only just in time, if indeed you are in time. You must now make haste, and neither stay nor turn back; for the Shire is no longer any protection to you.’

‘I cannot imagine what information could be more terrifying than your hints and warnings,’ exclaimed Frodo. ‘I knew that danger lay ahead, of course; but I did not expect to meet it in our own Shire. Can’t a hobbit walk from the Water to the River in peace?’

‘But it is not your own Shire,’ said Gildor. ‘Others dwelt here before hobbits were; and others will dwell here again when hobbits are no more. The wide world is all about you: you can fence yourselves in, but you cannot for ever fence it out.’

‘I know—and yet it has always seemed so safe and familiar. What can I do now? My plan was to leave the Shire secretly, and make my way to Rivendell; but now my footsteps are dogged, before ever I get to Buckland.’

‘I think you should still follow that plan,’ said Gildor. ‘I do not think the Road will prove too hard for your courage. But if you desire clearer counsel, you should ask Gandalf. I do not know the reason for your flight, and therefore I do not know by what means your pursuers will assail you. These things Gandalf must know. I suppose that you will see him before you leave the Shire?’

‘I hope so. But that is another thing that makes me anxious. I have been expecting Gandalf for many days. He was to have come to Hobbiton at the latest two nights ago; but he has never appeared. Now I am wondering what can have happened. Should I wait for him?’

Gildor was silent for a moment. ‘I do not like this news,’ he said at last. ‘That Gandalf should be late, does not bode well. But it is said: *Do not meddle in the affairs of Wizards, for they are subtle and quick to anger.* The choice is yours: to go or wait.’

‘And it is also said,’ answered Frodo: ‘*Go not to the Elves for counsel, for they will say both no and yes.*’

‘Is it indeed?’ laughed Gildor. ‘Elves seldom give unguarded advice, for advice is a dangerous gift, even from the wise to the wise, and all courses may run ill. But what would you? You have not told me all concerning yourself; and how then shall I choose better than you? But if you demand advice, I will for friendship’s sake give it. I think you should now go at once, without delay; and if Gandalf does not come before you set out, then I also advise this: do not go alone. Take such friends as are trusty and willing. Now you should be grateful, for I do not give this counsel gladly. The Elves have their own labours and their own sorrows, and they are little concerned with the ways of hobbits, or of any other creatures upon earth. Our paths cross theirs seldom, by chance or purpose. In this meeting there may be more than chance; but the purpose is not clear to me, and I fear to say too much.’

‘I am deeply grateful,’ said Frodo; ‘but I wish you would tell me plainly what the Black Riders are. If I take your advice I may not see Gandalf for a long while, and I ought to know what is the danger that pursues me.’

‘Is it not enough to know that they are servants of the Enemy?’ answered Gildor. ‘Flee them! Speak no words to them! They are deadly. Ask no more of me! But my heart forbodes that, ere all is ended, you, Frodo son of Drogo, will know more of these fell things than Gildor Inglorion. May Elbereth protect you!’

‘But where shall I find courage?’ asked Frodo. ‘That is what I chiefly need.’

‘Courage is found in unlikely places,’ said Gildor. ‘Be of good hope! Sleep now! In the morning we shall have gone; but we will send our messages through the lands. The Wandering Companies shall know of your journey, and those that have power for good shall be on the watch. I name you Elf-friend; and may the stars shine upon the end of your road! Seldom have we had such delight in strangers, and it is fair to hear words of the Ancient Speech from the lips of other wanderers in the world.’

Frodo felt sleep coming upon him, even as Gildor finished speaking. ‘I will sleep now,’ he said; and the Elf led him to a bower beside Pippin, and he threw himself upon a bed and fell at once into a dreamless slumber.



## Chapter 4: A Short Cut To Mushrooms

In the morning Frodo woke refreshed. He was lying in a bower made by a living tree with branches laced and drooping to the ground; his bed was of fern and grass, deep and soft and strangely fragrant. The sun was shining through the fluttering leaves, which were still green upon the tree. He jumped up and went out.

Sam was sitting on the grass near the edge of the wood. Pippin was standing studying the sky and weather. There was no sign of the Elves.

‘They have left us fruit and drink, and bread,’ said Pippin. ‘Come and have your breakfast. The bread tastes almost as good as it did last night. I did not want to leave you any, but Sam insisted.’

Frodo sat down beside Sam and began to eat. ‘What is the plan for today?’ asked Pippin.

‘To walk to Bucklebury as quickly as possible,’ answered Frodo, and gave his attention to the food.

‘Do you think we shall see anything of those Riders?’ asked Pippin cheerfully. Under the morning sun the prospect of seeing a whole troop of them did not seem very alarming to him.

‘Yes, probably,’ said Frodo, not liking the reminder. ‘But I hope to get across the river without their seeing us.’

‘Did you find out anything about them from Gildor?’

‘Not much—only hints and riddles,’ said Frodo evasively.

‘Did you ask about the sniffing?’

‘We didn’t discuss it,’ said Frodo with his mouth full.

‘You should have. I am sure it is very important.’

‘In that case I am sure Gildor would have refused to explain it,’ said Frodo sharply. ‘And now leave me in peace for a bit! I don’t want to answer a string of questions while I am eating. I want to think!’

‘Good heavens!’ said Pippin. ‘At breakfast?’ He walked away towards the edge of the green.

From Frodo’s mind the bright morning—treacherously bright, he thought—had not banished the fear of pursuit; and he pondered the words of Gildor. The merry voice of Pippin came to him. He was running on the green turf and singing.

‘No! I could not!’ he said to himself. ‘It is one thing to take my young friends walking over the Shire with me, until we are hungry and weary, and food and bed are sweet. To take them into exile, where hunger and weariness may have no cure, is quite another—even if they are willing to come. The inheritance is mine alone. I don’t think I ought even to take Sam.’ He looked at Sam Gamgee, and discovered that Sam was watching him.

‘Well, Sam!’ he said. ‘What about it? I am leaving the Shire as soon as ever I can—in fact I have made up my mind now not even to wait a day at Crickhollow, if it can be helped.’

‘Very good, sir!’

‘You still mean to come with me?’

‘I do.’

‘It is going to be very dangerous, Sam. It is already dangerous. Most likely neither of us will come back.’



‘If you don’t come back, sir, then I shan’t, that’s certain,’ said Sam. ‘*Don’t you leave him!* they said to me. *Leave him!* I said. *I never mean to. I am going with him, if he climbs to the Moon; and if any of those Black Riders try to stop him, they’ll have Sam Gamgee to reckon with,* I said. They laughed.’

‘Who are *they*, and what are you talking about?’

‘The Elves, sir. We had some talk last night; and they seemed to know you were going away, so I didn’t see the use of denying it. Wonderful folk, Elves, sir! Wonderful!’

‘They are,’ said Frodo. ‘Do you like them still, now you have had a closer view?’

‘They seem a bit above my likes and dislikes, so to speak,’ answered Sam slowly. ‘It don’t seem to matter what I think about them. They are quite different from what I expected—so old and young, and so gay and sad, as it were.’

Frodo looked at Sam rather startled, half expecting to see some outward sign of the odd change that seemed to have come over him. It did not sound like the voice of the old Sam Gamgee that he thought he knew. But it looked like the old Sam Gamgee sitting there, except that his face was unusually thoughtful.

‘Do you feel any need to leave the Shire now—now that your wish to see them has come true already?’ he asked.

‘Yes, sir. I don’t know how to say it, but after last night I feel different. I seem to see ahead, in a kind of way. I know we are going to take a very long road, into darkness; but I know I can’t turn back. It isn’t to see Elves now, nor dragons, nor mountains, that I want—I don’t rightly know what I want: but I have something to do before the end, and it lies ahead, not in the Shire. I must see it through, sir, if you understand me.’

‘I don’t altogether. But I understand that Gandalf chose me a good companion. I am content. We will go together.’

Frodo finished his breakfast in silence. Then standing up he looked over the land ahead, and called to Pippin.

‘All ready to start?’ he said as Pippin ran up. ‘We must be getting off at once. We slept late; and there are a good many miles to go.’

‘*You* slept late, you mean,’ said Pippin. ‘I was up long before; and we are only waiting for you to finish eating and thinking.’

‘I have finished both now. And I am going to make for Bucklebury Ferry as quickly as possible. I am not going out of the way, back to the road we left last night: I am going to cut straight across country from here.’

‘Then you are going to fly,’ said Pippin. ‘You won’t cut straight on foot anywhere in this country.’

‘We can cut straighter than the road anyway,’ answered Frodo. ‘The Ferry is east from Woodhall; but the hard road curves away to the left—you can see a bend of it away north over there. It goes round the north end of the Marish so as to strike the causeway from the Bridge above Stock. But that is miles out of the way. We could save a quarter of the distance if we made a line for the Ferry from where we stand.’

‘*Short cuts make long delays,*’ argued Pippin. ‘The country is rough round here, and there are bogs and all kinds of difficulties down in the Marish—I know the land in these parts. And if you are worrying about Black Riders, I can’t see that it is any worse meeting them on a road than in a wood or a field.’

‘It is less easy to find people in the woods and fields,’ answered Frodo. ‘And if you are supposed to be on the road, there is some chance that you will be looked for on the road and not off it.’

‘All right!’ said Pippin. ‘I will follow you into every bog and ditch. But it is hard! I had counted on passing the *Golden Perch* at Stock before sundown. The best beer in the Eastfarthing, or used to be: it is a long time since I tasted it.’

‘That settles it!’ said Frodo. ‘Short cuts make delays, but inns make longer ones. At all costs we must keep you away from the *Golden Perch*. We want to get to Bucklebury before dark. What do you say, Sam?’

‘I will go along with you, Mr. Frodo,’ said Sam (in spite of private misgivings and a deep regret for the best beer in the Eastfarthing).

‘Then if we are going to toil through bog and briar, let’s go now!’ said Pippin.

It was already nearly as hot as it had been the day before; but clouds were beginning to come up from the West. It looked likely to turn to rain. The hobbits scrambled down a steep green bank and plunged into the thick trees below. Their course had been chosen to leave Woodhall to their left, and to cut slanting through the woods that clustered along the eastern side of the hills, until they reached the flats beyond. Then they could make straight for the Ferry over country that was open, except for a few ditches and fences. Frodo reckoned they had eighteen miles to go in a straight line.

He soon found that the thicket was closer and more tangled than it had appeared. There were no paths in the undergrowth, and they did not get on very fast. When they had struggled to the bottom of the bank, they found a stream running down from the hills behind in a deeply dug bed with steep slippery sides overhung with brambles. Most inconveniently it cut across the line they had chosen. They could not jump over it, nor indeed get across it at all without getting wet, scratched, and muddy. They halted, wondering what to do. ‘First check!’ said Pippin, smiling grimly.

Sam Gamgee looked back. Through an opening in the trees he caught a glimpse of the top of the green bank from which they had climbed down.

‘Look!’ he said, clutching Frodo by the arm. They all looked, and on the edge high above them they saw against the sky a horse standing. Beside it stooped a black figure.

They at once gave up any idea of going back. Frodo led the way, and plunged quickly into the thick bushes beside the stream. ‘Whew!’ he said to Pippin. ‘We were both right! The short cut has gone crooked already; but we got under cover only just in time. You’ve got sharp ears, Sam: can you hear anything coming?’

They stood still, almost holding their breath as they listened; but there was no sound of pursuit. ‘I don’t fancy he would try bringing his horse down that bank,’ said Sam. ‘But I guess he knows we came down it. We had better be going on.’

Going on was not altogether easy. They had packs to carry, and the bushes and brambles were reluctant to let them through. They were cut off from the wind by the ridge behind, and the air was still and stuffy. When they forced their way at last into more open ground, they were hot and tired and very scratched, and they were also no longer certain of the direction in which they were going. The banks of the stream sank, as it reached the levels and became broader and shallower, wandering off towards the Marish and the River.

‘Why, this is the Stock-brook!’ said Pippin. ‘If we are going to try and get back on to our course, we must cross at once and bear right.’

They waded the stream, and hurried over a wide open space, rush-grown and treeless, on the further side. Beyond that they came again to a belt of trees: tall oaks, for the most part, with here and there an elm tree or an ash. The ground was fairly level, and there was little undergrowth; but the trees were too close for them to see far ahead. The leaves blew upwards in sudden gusts of wind, and spots of rain began to fall from the overcast sky. Then the wind died away and the rain came streaming down. They trudged along as fast as they could, over patches of grass, and through thick drifts of old leaves; and all about them the rain pattered and trickled. They did not talk, but kept glancing back, and from side to side.

After half an hour Pippin said: ‘I hope we have not turned too much towards the south, and are not walking longwise through this wood! It is not a very broad belt—I should have said no more than a mile at the widest—and we ought to have been through it by now.’

‘It is no good our starting to go in zig-zags,’ said Frodo. ‘That won’t mend matters. Let us keep on as we are going! I am not sure that I want to come out into the open yet.’

They went on for perhaps another couple of miles. Then the sun gleamed out of ragged clouds again and the rain lessened. It was now past mid-day, and they felt it was high time for lunch. They halted under an elm tree: its leaves though fast turning yellow were still thick, and the ground at its feet was fairly dry and sheltered.

When they came to make their meal, they found that the Elves had filled their bottles with a clear drink, pale golden in colour: it had the scent of a honey made of many flowers, and was wonderfully refreshing. Very soon they were laughing, and snapping their fingers at rain, and at Black Riders. The last few miles, they felt, would soon be behind them.

Frodo propped his back against the tree-trunk, and closed his eyes. Sam and Pippin sat near, and they began to hum, and then to sing softly:

*Ho! Ho! Ho! to the bottle I go  
To heal my heart and drown my woe.  
Rain may fall and wind may blow,  
And many miles be still to go,  
But under a tall tree I will lie,  
And let the clouds go sailing by.*

*Ho! Ho! Ho!* they began again louder. They stopped short suddenly. Frodo sprang to his feet. A long-drawn wail came down the wind, like the cry of some evil and lonely creature. It rose and fell, and ended on a high piercing note. Even as they sat and stood, as if suddenly frozen, it was answered by another cry, fainter and further off, but no less chilling to the blood. There was then a silence, broken only by the sound of the wind in the leaves.

‘And what do you think that was?’ Pippin asked at last, trying to speak lightly, but quavering a little. ‘If it was a bird, it was one that I never heard in the Shire before.’

‘It was not bird or beast,’ said Frodo. ‘It was a call, or a signal—there were words in that cry, though I could not catch them. But no hobbit has such a voice.’

No more was said about it. They were all thinking of the Riders, but no-one spoke of them. They were now reluctant either to stay or go on; but sooner or later they had got to get across the open country to the Ferry, and it was best to go sooner and in daylight. In a few moments they had shouldered their packs again and were off.

Before long the wood came to a sudden end. Wide grass-lands stretched before them. They now saw that they had, in fact, turned too much to the south. Away over the flats they could glimpse the low hill of Bucklebury across the River, but it was now to their left. Creeping cautiously out from the edge of the trees, they set off across the open as quickly as they could.

At first they felt afraid, away from the shelter of the wood. Far back behind them stood the high place where they had breakfasted. Frodo half expected to see the small distant figure of a horseman on the ridge dark against the sky; but there was no sign of one. The sun escaping from the breaking clouds, as it sank towards the hills they had left, was now shining brightly again. Their fear left them, though they still felt uneasy. But the land became steadily more tame and well-ordered. Soon they came into well-tended fields and meadows: there were hedges and gates and dikes for drainage. Everything seemed quiet and peaceful, just an ordinary corner of the Shire. Their spirits rose with every step. The line of the River grew nearer; and the Black Riders began to seem like phantoms of the woods now left far behind.

They passed along the edge of a huge turnip-field, and came to a stout gate. Beyond it a rutted lane ran between low well-laid hedges towards a distant clump of trees. Pippin stopped.

‘I know these fields and this gate!’ he said. ‘This is Bamfurlong, old Farmer Maggot’s land. That’s his farm away there in the trees.’

‘One trouble after another!’ said Frodo, looking nearly as much alarmed as if Pippin had declared the lane was the slot leading to a dragon’s den. The others looked at him in surprise.

‘What’s wrong with old Maggot?’ asked Pippin. ‘He’s a good friend to all the Brandybucks. Of course he’s a terror to trespassers, and keeps ferocious dogs—but after all, folk down here are near the border and have to be more on their guard.’

‘I know,’ said Frodo. ‘But all the same,’ he added with a shamefaced laugh, ‘I am terrified of him and his dogs. I have avoided his farm for years and years. He caught me several times trespassing after mushrooms, when I

was a youngster at Brandy Hall. On the last occasion he beat me, and then took me and showed me to his dogs. "See, lads," he said, "next time this young varmint sets foot on my land, you can eat him. Now see him off!" They chased me all the way to the Ferry. I have never got over the fright—though I daresay the beasts knew their business and would not really have touched me.'

Pippin laughed. 'Well, it's time you made it up. Especially if you are coming back to live in Buckland. Old Maggot is really a stout fellow—if you leave his mushrooms alone. Let's get into the lane and then we shan't be trespassing. If we meet him, I'll do the talking. He is a friend of Merry's, and I used to come here with him a good deal at one time.'

They went along the lane, until they saw the thatched roofs of a large house and farm-buildings peeping out among the trees ahead. The Maggots, and the Puddifoots of Stock, and most of the inhabitants of the Marish, were house-dwellers; and this farm was stoutly built of brick and had a high wall all round it. There was a wide wooden gate opening out of the wall into the lane.

Suddenly as they drew nearer a terrific baying and barking broke out, and a loud voice was heard shouting: 'Grip! Fang! Wolf! Come on, lads!'

Frodo and Sam stopped dead, but Pippin walked on a few paces. The gate opened and three huge dogs came pelting out into the lane, and dashed towards the travellers, barking fiercely. They took no notice of Pippin; but Sam shrank against the wall, while two wolvis-looking dogs sniffed at him suspiciously, and snarled if he moved. The largest and most ferocious of the three halted in front of Frodo, bristling and growling.

Through the gate there now appeared a broad thick-set hobbit with a round red face. 'Hallo! Hallo! And who may you be, and what may you be wanting?' he asked.

'Good afternoon, Mr. Maggot!' said Pippin.

The farmer looked at him closely. 'Well, if it isn't Master Pippin—Mr. Peregrin Took, I should say!' he cried, changing from a scowl to a grin. 'It's a long time since I saw you round here. It's lucky for you that I know you. I was just going out to set my dogs on any strangers. There are some funny things going on today. Of course, we do get queer folk wandering in these parts at times. Too near the River,' he said, shaking his head. 'But this fellow was the most outlandish I have ever set eyes on. He won't cross my land without leave a second time, not if I can stop it.'

'What fellow do you mean?' asked Pippin.

'Then you haven't seen him?' said the farmer. 'He went up the lane towards the causeway not a long while back. He was a funny customer and asking funny questions. But perhaps you'll come along inside, and we'll pass the news more comfortable. I've a drop of good ale on tap, if you and your friends are willing, Mr. Took.'

It seemed plain that the farmer would tell them more, if allowed to do it in his own time and fashion, so they all accepted the invitation. 'What about the dogs?' asked Frodo anxiously.

The farmer laughed. 'They won't harm you—not unless I tell 'em to. Here, Grip! Fang! Heel!' he cried. 'Heel, Wolf!' To the relief of Frodo and Sam, the dogs walked away and let them go free.

Pippin introduced the other two to the farmer. 'Mr. Frodo Baggins,' he said. 'You may not remember him, but he used to live at Brandy Hall.' At the name Baggins the farmer started, and gave Frodo a sharp glance. For a moment Frodo thought that the memory of stolen mushrooms had been aroused, and that the dogs would be told to see him off. But Farmer Maggot took him by the arm.

'Well, if that isn't queerer than ever!' he exclaimed. 'Mr. Baggins is it? Come inside! We must have a talk.'

They went into the farmer's kitchen, and sat by the wide fire-place. Mrs. Maggot brought out beer in a huge jug, and filled four large mugs. It was a good brew, and Pippin found himself more than compensated for missing the *Golden Perch*. Sam sipped his beer suspiciously. He had a natural mistrust of the inhabitants of other parts of the Shire; and also he was not disposed to be quick friends with anyone who had beaten his master, however long ago.

After a few remarks about the weather and the agricultural prospects (which were no worse than usual), Farmer Maggot put down his mug and looked at them all in turn.

‘Now, Mr. Peregrin,’ he said, ‘where might you be coming from, and where might you be going to? Were you coming to visit me? For, if so, you had gone past my gate without my seeing you.’

‘Well, no,’ answered Pippin. ‘To tell you the truth, since you have guessed it, we got into the lane from the other end: we had come over your fields. But that was quite by accident. We lost our way in the woods, back near Woodhall, trying to take a short cut to the Ferry.’

‘If you were in a hurry, the road would have served you better,’ said the farmer. ‘But I wasn’t worrying about that. You have leave to walk over my land, if you have a mind, Mr. Peregrin. And you, Mr. Baggins—though I daresay you still like mushrooms.’ He laughed. ‘Ah yes, I recognized the name. I recollect the time when young Frodo Baggins was one of the worst young rascals of Buckland. But it wasn’t mushrooms I was thinking of. I had just heard the name Baggins before you turned up. What do you think that funny customer asked me?’

They waited anxiously for him to go on. ‘Well,’ the farmer continued, approaching his point with slow relish, ‘he came riding on a big black horse in at the gate, which happened to be open, and right up to my door. All black he was himself, too, and cloaked and hooded up, as if he did not want to be known. “Now what in the Shire can he want?” I thought to myself. We don’t see many of the Big Folk over the border; and anyway I had never heard of any like this black fellow.

“Good-day to you!” I says, going out to him. “This lane don’t lead anywhere, and wherever you may be going, your quickest way will be back to the road.” I didn’t like the looks of him; and when Grip came out, he took one sniff and let out a yelp as if he had been stung: he put down his tail and bolted off howling. The black fellow sat quite still.

“I come from yonder,” he said, slow and stiff-like, pointing back west, over *my* fields, if you please. “Have you seen *Baggins*?” he asked in a queer voice, and bent down towards me. I could not see any face, for his hood fell down so low; and I felt a sort of shiver down my back. But I did not see why he should come riding over my land so bold.

“Be off!” I said. “There are no Bagginses here. You’re in the wrong part of the Shire. You had better go back west to Hobbiton—but you can go by road this time.”

“Baggins has left,” he answered in a whisper. “He is coming. He is not far away. I wish to find him. If he passes will you tell me? I will come back with gold.”

“No you won’t,” I said. “You’ll go back where you belong, double quick. I give you one minute before I call all my dogs.”

‘He gave a sort of hiss. It might have been laughing, and it might not. Then he spurred his great horse right at me, and I jumped out of the way only just in time. I called the dogs, but he swung off, and rode through the gate and up the lane towards the causeway like a bolt of thunder. What do you think of that?’

Frodo sat for a moment looking at the fire, but his only thought was how on earth would they reach the Ferry. ‘I don’t know what to think,’ he said at last.

‘Then I’ll tell you what to think,’ said Maggot. ‘You should never have gone mixing yourself up with Hobbiton folk, Mr. Frodo. Folk are queer up there.’ Sam stirred in his chair, and looked at the farmer with an unfriendly eye. ‘But you were always a reckless lad. When I heard you had left the Brandybucks and gone off to that old Mr. Bilbo, I said that you were going to find trouble. Mark my words, this all comes of those strange doings of Mr. Bilbo’s. His money was got in some strange fashion in foreign parts, they say. Maybe there is some that want to know what has become of the gold and jewels that he buried in the hill of Hobbiton, as I hear?’

Frodo said nothing: the shrewd guesses of the farmer were rather disconcerting.

‘Well, Mr. Frodo,’ Maggot went on, ‘I’m glad that you’ve had the sense to come back to Buckland. My advice is: stay there! And don’t get mixed up with these outlandish folk. You’ll have friends in these parts. If any of

these black fellows come after you again, I'll deal with them. I'll say you're dead, or have left the Shire, or anything you like. And that might be true enough; for as like as not it is old Mr. Bilbo they want news of.'

'Maybe you're right,' said Frodo, avoiding the farmer's eye and staring at the fire.

Maggot looked at him thoughtfully. 'Well, I see you have ideas of your own,' he said. 'It is as plain as my nose that no accident brought you and that rider here on the same afternoon; and maybe my news was no great news to you, after all. I am not asking you to tell me anything you have a mind to keep to yourself; but I see you are in some kind of trouble. Perhaps you are thinking it won't be too easy to get to the Ferry without being caught?'

'I was thinking so,' said Frodo. 'But we have got to try and get there; and it won't be done by sitting and thinking. So I am afraid we must be going. Thank you very much indeed for your kindness! I've been in terror of you and your dogs for over thirty years, Farmer Maggot, though you may laugh to hear it. It's a pity: for I've missed a good friend. And now I'm sorry to leave so soon. But I'll come back, perhaps, one day—if I get a chance.'

'You'll be welcome when you come,' said Maggot. 'But now I've a notion. It's near sundown already, and we are going to have our supper; for we mostly go to bed soon after the Sun. If you and Mr. Peregrin and all could stay and have a bite with us, we would be pleased!'

'And so should we!' said Frodo. 'But we must be going at once, I'm afraid. Even now it will be dark before we can reach the Ferry.'

'Ah! but wait a minute! I was going to say: after a bit of supper, I'll get out a small waggon, and I'll drive you all to the Ferry. That will save you a good step, and it might also save you trouble of another sort.'

Frodo now accepted the invitation gratefully, to the relief of Pippin and Sam. The sun was already behind the western hills, and the light was failing. Two of Maggot's sons and his three daughters came in, and a generous supper was laid on the large table. The kitchen was lit with candles and the fire was mended. Mrs. Maggot bustled in and out. One or two other hobbits belonging to the farm-household came in. In a short while fourteen sat down to eat. There was beer in plenty, and a mighty dish of mushrooms and bacon, besides much other solid farmhouse fare. The dogs lay by the fire and gnawed rinds and cracked bones.

When they had finished, the farmer and his sons went out with a lantern and got the waggon ready. It was dark in the yard, when the guests came out. They threw their packs on board and climbed in. The farmer sat in the driving-seat, and whipped up his two stout ponies. His wife stood in the light of the open door.

'You be careful of yourself, Maggot!' she called. 'Don't go arguing with any foreigners, and come straight back!'

'I will!' said he, and drove out of the gate. There was now no breath of wind stirring; the night was still and quiet, and a chill was in the air. They went without lights and took it slowly. After a mile or two the lane came to an end, crossing a deep dike, and climbing a short slope up on to the high-banked causeway.

Maggot got down and took a good look either way, north and south, but nothing could be seen in the darkness, and there was not a sound in the still air. Thin strands of river-mist were hanging above the dikes, and crawling over the fields.

'It's going to be thick,' said Maggot; 'but I'll not light my lanterns till I turn for home. We'll hear anything on the road long before we meet it tonight.'

It was five miles or more from Maggot's lane to the Ferry. The hobbits wrapped themselves up, but their ears were strained for any sound above the creak of the wheels and the slow *clop* of the ponies' hoofs. The waggon seemed slower than a snail to Frodo. Beside him Pippin was nodding towards sleep; but Sam was staring forwards into the rising fog.

They reached the entrance to the Ferry lane at last. It was marked by two tall white posts that suddenly loomed up on their right. Farmer Maggot drew in his ponies and the waggon creaked to a halt. They were just beginning to scramble out, when suddenly they heard what they had all been dreading: hoofs on the road ahead. The sound was coming towards them.

Maggot jumped down and stood holding the ponies' heads, and peering forward into the gloom. *Clip-clop, clip-clop* came the approaching rider. The fall of the hoofs sounded loud in the still, foggy air.

'You'd better be hidden, Mr. Frodo,' said Sam anxiously. 'You get down in the waggon and cover up with blankets, and we'll send this rider to the rightabouts!' He climbed out and went to the farmer's side. Black Riders would have to ride over him to get near the waggon.

*Clop-clop, clop-clop.* The rider was nearly on them.

'Hallo there!' called Farmer Maggot. The advancing hoofs stopped short. They thought they could dimly guess a dark cloaked shape in the mist, a yard or two ahead.

'Now then!' said the farmer, throwing the reins to Sam and striding forward. 'Don't you come a step nearer! What do you want, and where are you going?'

'I want Mr. Baggins. Have you seen him?' said a muffled voice—but the voice was the voice of Merry Brandybuck. A dark lantern was uncovered, and its light fell on the astonished face of the farmer.

'Mr. Merry!' he cried.

'Yes, of course! Who did you think it was?' said Merry coming forward. As he came out of the mist and their fears subsided, he seemed suddenly to diminish to ordinary hobbit-size. He was riding a pony, and a scarf was swathed round his neck and over his chin to keep out the fog.

Frodo sprang out of the waggon to greet him. 'So there you are at last!' said Merry. 'I was beginning to wonder if you would turn up at all today, and I was just going back to supper. When it grew foggy I came across and rode up towards Stock to see if you had fallen in any ditches. But I'm blest if I know which way you have come. Where did you find them, Mr. Maggot? In your duck-pond?'

'No, I caught 'em trespassing,' said the farmer, 'and nearly set my dogs on 'em; but they'll tell you all the story, I've no doubt. Now, if you'll excuse me, Mr. Merry and Mr. Frodo and all, I'd best be turning for home. Mrs. Maggot will be worriting with the night getting thick.'

He backed the waggon into the lane and turned it. 'Well, good night to you all,' he said. 'It's been a queer day, and no mistake. But all's well as ends well; though perhaps we should not say that until we reach our own doors. I'll not deny that I'll be glad now when I do.' He lit his lanterns, and got up. Suddenly he produced a large basket from under the seat. 'I was nearly forgetting,' he said. 'Mrs. Maggot put this up for Mr. Baggins, with her compliments.' He handed it down and moved off, followed by a chorus of thanks and good-nights.

They watched the pale rings of light round his lanterns as they dwindled into the foggy night. Suddenly Frodo laughed: from the covered basket he held, the scent of mushrooms was rising.



## Chapter 5: A Conspiracy Unmasked

‘Now we had better get home ourselves,’ said Merry. ‘There’s something funny about all this, I see; but it must wait till we get in.’

They turned down the Ferry lane, which was straight and well-kept and edged with large white-washed stones. In a hundred yards or so it brought them to the river-bank, where there was a broad wooden landing-stage. A large flat ferry-boat was moored beside it. The white bollards near the water’s edge glimmered in the light of two lamps on high posts. Behind them the mists in the flat fields were now above the hedges; but the water before them was dark, with only a few curling wisps like steam among the reeds by the bank. There seemed to be less fog on the further side.

Merry led the pony over a gangway on to the ferry, and the others followed. Merry then pushed slowly off with a long pole. The Brandywine flowed slow and broad before them. On the other side the bank was steep, and up it a winding path climbed from the further landing. Lamps were twinkling there. Behind loomed up the Buck Hill; and out of it, through stray shrouds of mist, shone many round windows, yellow and red. They were the windows of Brandy Hall, the ancient home of the Brandybucks.

Long ago Gorhendad Oldbuck, head of the Oldbuck family, one of the oldest in the Marish or indeed in the Shire, had crossed the river, which was the original boundary of the land eastwards. He built (and excavated) Brandy Hall, changed his name to Brandybuck, and settled down to become master of what was virtually a small independent country. His family grew and grew, and after his days continued to grow, until Brandy Hall occupied the whole of the low hill, and had three large front-doors, many side-doors, and about a hundred windows. The Brandybucks and their numerous dependants then began to burrow, and later to build, all round about. That was the origin of Buckland, a thickly inhabited strip between the river and the Old Forest, a sort of colony from the Shire. Its chief village was Bucklebury, clustering in the banks and slopes behind Brandy Hall.

The people in the Marish were friendly with the Bucklanders, and the authority of the Master of the Hall (as the head of the Brandybuck family was called) was still acknowledged by the farmers between Stock and Rushey. But most of the folk of the old Shire regarded the Bucklanders as peculiar, half foreigners as it were. Though, as a matter of fact, they were not very different from the other hobbits of the Four Farthings. Except in one point: they were fond of boats, and some of them could swim.

Their land was originally unprotected from the East; but on that side they had built a hedge: the High Hay. It had been planted many generations ago, and was now thick and tall, for it was constantly tended. It ran all the way from Brandywine Bridge, in a big loop curving away from the river, to Haysend (where the Withywindle flowed out of the Forest into the Brandywine): well over twenty miles from end to end. But, of course, it was not a complete protection. The Forest drew close to the hedge in many places. The Bucklanders kept their doors locked after dark, and that also was not usual in the Shire.

The ferry-boat moved slowly across the water. The Buckland shore drew nearer. Sam was the only member of the party who had not been over the river before. He had a strange feeling as the slow gurgling stream slipped by: his old life lay behind in the mists, dark adventure lay in front. He scratched his head, and for a moment had a passing wish that Mr. Frodo could have gone on living quietly at Bag End.

The four hobbits stepped off the ferry. Merry was tying it up, and Pippin was already leading the pony up the path, when Sam (who had been looking back, as if to take farewell of the Shire) said in a hoarse whisper:

‘Look back, Mr. Frodo! Do you see anything?’



On the far stage, under the distant lamps, they could just make out a figure: it looked like a dark black bundle left behind. But as they looked it seemed to move and sway this way and that, as if searching the ground. It then crawled, or went crouching, back into the gloom beyond the lamps.

‘What in the Shire is that?’ exclaimed Merry.

‘Something that is following us,’ said Frodo. ‘But don’t ask any more now! Let’s get away at once!’ They hurried up the path to the top of the bank, but when they looked back the far shore was shrouded in mist, and nothing could be seen.

‘Thank goodness you don’t keep any boats on the west-bank!’ said Frodo. ‘Can horses cross the river?’

‘They can go ten miles north to Brandywine Bridge—or they might swim,’ answered Merry. ‘Though I never heard of any horse swimming the Brandywine. But what have horses to do with it?’

‘I’ll tell you later. Let’s get indoors and then we can talk.’

‘All right! You and Pippin know your way; so I’ll just ride on and tell Fatty Bolger that you are coming. We’ll see about supper and things.’

‘We had our supper early with Farmer Maggot,’ said Frodo; ‘but we could do with another.’

‘You shall have it! Give me that basket!’ said Merry, and rode ahead into the darkness.

It was some distance from the Brandywine to Frodo’s new house at Crickhollow. They passed Buck Hill and Brandy Hall on their left, and on the outskirts of Bucklebury struck the main road of Buckland that ran south from the Bridge. Half a mile northward along this they came to a lane opening on their right. This they followed for a couple of miles as it climbed up and down into the country.

At last they came to a narrow gate in a thick hedge. Nothing could be seen of the house in the dark: it stood back from the lane in the middle of a wide circle of lawn surrounded by a belt of low trees inside the outer hedge. Frodo had chosen it, because it stood in an out-of-the-way corner of the country, and there were no other dwellings close by. You could get in and out without being noticed. It had been built a long while before by the Brandybucks, for the use of guests, or members of the family that wished to escape from the crowded life of Brandy Hall for a time. It was an old-fashioned countrified house, as much like a hobbit-hole as possible: it was long and low, with no upper storey; and it had a roof of turf, round windows, and a large round door.

As they walked up the green path from the gate no light was visible; the windows were dark and shuttered. Frodo knocked on the door, and Fatty Bolger opened it. A friendly light streamed out. They slipped in quickly and shut themselves and the light inside. They were in a wide hall with doors on either side; in front of them a passage ran back down the middle of the house.

‘Well, what do you think of it?’ asked Merry coming up the passage. ‘We have done our best in a short time to make it look like home. After all Fatty and I only got here with the last cart-load yesterday.’

Frodo looked round. It did look like home. Many of his own favourite things—or Bilbo’s things (they reminded him sharply of him in their new setting)—were arranged as nearly as possible as they had been at Bag End. It was a pleasant, comfortable, welcoming place; and he found himself wishing that he was really coming here to settle down in quiet retirement. It seemed unfair to have put his friends to all this trouble; and he wondered again how he was going to break the news to them that he must leave them so soon, indeed at once. Yet that would have to be done that very night, before they all went to bed.

‘It’s delightful!’ he said with an effort. ‘I hardly feel that I have moved at all.’

The travellers hung up their cloaks, and piled their packs on the floor. Merry led them down the passage and threw open a door at the far end. Firelight came out, and a puff of steam.

‘A bath!’ cried Pippin. ‘O blessed Meriadoc!’

‘Which order shall we go in?’ said Frodo. ‘Eldest first, or quickest first? You’ll be last either way, Master Peregrin.’

‘Trust me to arrange things better than that!’ said Merry. ‘We can’t begin life at Crickhollow with a quarrel over baths. In that room there are *three* tubs, and a copper full of boiling water. There are also towels, mats and soap. Get inside, and be quick!’

Merry and Fatty went into the kitchen on the other side of the passage, and busied themselves with the final preparations for a late supper. Snatches of competing songs came from the bathroom mixed with the sound of splashing and wallowing. The voice of Pippin was suddenly lifted up above the others in one of Bilbo’s favourite bath-songs.

*Sing hey! for the bath at close of day  
that washes the weary mud away!  
A loon is he that will not sing:  
O! Water Hot is a noble thing!*

*O! Sweet is the sound of falling rain,  
and the brook that leaps from hill to plain;  
but better than rain or rippling streams  
is Water Hot that smokes and steams.*

*O! Water cold we may pour at need  
down a thirsty throat and be glad indeed;  
but better is Beer, if drink we lack,  
and Water Hot poured down the back.*

*O! Water is fair that leaps on high  
in a fountain white beneath the sky;  
but never did fountain sound so sweet  
as splashing Hot Water with my feet!*

There was a terrific splash, and a shout of *Whoa!* from Frodo. It appeared that a lot of Pippin’s bath had imitated a fountain and leaped on high.

Merry went to the door: ‘What about supper and beer in the throat?’ he called. Frodo came out drying his hair.

‘There’s so much water in the air that I’m coming into the kitchen to finish,’ he said.

‘Lawks!’ said Merry, looking in. The stone floor was swimming. ‘You ought to mop all that up before you get anything to eat, Peregrin,’ he said. ‘Hurry up, or we shan’t wait for you.’

They had supper in the kitchen on a table near the fire. ‘I suppose you three won’t want mushrooms again?’ said Fredegar without much hope.

‘Yes we shall!’ cried Pippin.

‘They’re mine!’ said Frodo. ‘Given to *me* by Mrs. Maggot, a queen among farmers’ wives. Take your greedy hands away, and I’ll serve them.’

Hobbits have a passion for mushrooms, surpassing even the greediest likings of Big People. A fact which partly explains young Frodo’s long expeditions to the renowned fields of the Marish, and the wrath of the injured Maggot. On this occasion there was plenty for all, even according to hobbit standards. There were also many other things to follow, and when they had finished even Fatty Bolger heaved a sigh of content. They pushed back the table, and drew chairs round the fire.

‘We’ll clear up later,’ said Merry. ‘Now tell me all about it! I guess that you have been having adventures, which was not quite fair without me. I want a full account; and most of all I want to know what was the matter with old Maggot, and why he spoke to me like that. He sounded almost as if he was *scared*, if that is possible.’

‘We have all been scared,’ said Pippin after a pause, in which Frodo stared at the fire and did not speak. ‘You would have been, too, if you had been chased for two days by Black Riders.’

‘And what are they?’

‘Black figures riding on black horses,’ answered Pippin. ‘If Frodo won’t talk, I will tell you the whole tale from the beginning.’ He then gave a full account of their journey from the time when they left Hobbiton. Sam gave various supporting nods and exclamations. Frodo remained silent.

‘I should think you were making it all up,’ said Merry, ‘if I had not seen that black shape on the landing-stage—and heard the queer sound in Maggot’s voice. What do you make of it all, Frodo?’

‘Cousin Frodo has been very close,’ said Pippin. ‘But the time has come for him to open out. So far we have been given nothing more to go on than Farmer Maggot’s guess that it has something to do with old Bilbo’s treasure.’

‘That was only a guess,’ said Frodo hastily. ‘Maggot does not *know* anything.’

‘Old Maggot is a shrewd fellow,’ said Merry. ‘A lot goes on behind his round face that does not come out in his talk. I’ve heard that he used to go into the Old Forest at one time, and he has the reputation of knowing a good many strange things. But you can at least tell us, Frodo, whether you think his guess good or bad.’

‘I *think*,’ answered Frodo slowly, ‘that it was a good guess, as far as it goes. There *is* a connexion with Bilbo’s old adventures, and the Riders are looking, or perhaps one ought to say *searching*, for him or for me. I also fear, if you want to know, that it is no joke at all; and that I am not safe here or anywhere else.’ He looked round at the windows and walls, as if he was afraid they would suddenly give way. The others looked at him in silence, and exchanged meaning glances among themselves.

‘It’s coming out in a minute,’ whispered Pippin to Merry. Merry nodded.

‘Well!’ said Frodo at last, sitting up and straightening his back, as if he had made a decision. ‘I can’t keep it dark any longer. I have got something to tell you all. But I don’t know quite how to begin.’

‘I think I could help you,’ said Merry quietly, ‘by telling you some of it myself.’

‘What do you mean?’ said Frodo, looking at him anxiously.

‘Just this, my dear old Frodo: you are miserable, because you don’t know how to say good-bye. You meant to leave the Shire, of course. But danger has come on you sooner than you expected, and now you are making up your mind to go at once. And you don’t want to. We are very sorry for you.’

Frodo opened his mouth and shut it again. His look of surprise was so comical that they laughed. ‘Dear old Frodo!’ said Pippin. ‘Did you really think you had thrown dust in all our eyes? You have not been nearly careful or clever enough for that! You have obviously been planning to go and saying farewell to all your haunts all this year since April. We have constantly heard you muttering: “Shall I ever look down into that valley again, I wonder”, and things like that. And pretending that you had come to the end of your money, and actually selling your beloved Bag End to those Sackville-Bagginses! And all those close talks with Gandalf.’

‘Good heavens!’ said Frodo. ‘I thought I had been both careful and clever. I don’t know what Gandalf would say. Is all the Shire discussing my departure then?’

‘Oh no!’ said Merry. ‘Don’t worry about that! The secret won’t keep for long, of course; but at present it is, I think, only known to us conspirators. After all, you must remember that we know you well, and are often with you. We can usually guess what you are thinking. I knew Bilbo, too. To tell you the truth, I have been watching you rather closely ever since he left. I thought you would go after him sooner or later; indeed I expected you to go sooner, and lately we have been very anxious. We have been terrified that you might give us the slip, and go off suddenly, all on your own like he did. Ever since this spring we have kept our eyes open, and done a good deal of planning on our own account. You are not going to escape so easily!’

‘But I must go,’ said Frodo. ‘It cannot be helped, dear friends. It is wretched for us all, but it is no use your trying to keep me. Since you have guessed so much, please help me and do not hinder me!’

‘You do not understand!’ said Pippin. ‘You must go—and therefore we must, too. Merry and I are coming with you. Sam is an excellent fellow, and would jump down a dragon’s throat to save you, if he did not trip over his own feet; but you will need more than one companion in your dangerous adventure.’

‘My dear and most beloved hobbits!’ said Frodo deeply moved. ‘But I could not allow it. I decided that long ago, too. You speak of danger, but you do not understand. This is no treasure-hunt, no there-and-back journey. I am flying from deadly peril into deadly peril.’

‘Of course we understand,’ said Merry firmly. ‘That is why we have decided to come. We know the Ring is no laughing-matter; but we are going to do our best to help you against the Enemy.’

‘The Ring!’ said Frodo, now completely amazed.

‘Yes, the Ring,’ said Merry. ‘My dear old hobbit, you don’t allow for the inquisitiveness of friends. I have known about the existence of the Ring for years—before Bilbo went away, in fact; but since he obviously regarded it as secret, I kept the knowledge in my head, until we formed our conspiracy. I did not know Bilbo, of course, as well as I know you; I was too young, and he was also more careful—but he was not careful enough. If you want to know how I first found out, I will tell you.’

‘Go on!’ said Frodo faintly.

‘It was the Sackville-Bagginses that were his downfall, as you might expect. One day, a year before the Party, I happened to be walking along the road, when I saw Bilbo ahead. Suddenly in the distance the S.-B.s appeared, coming towards us. Bilbo slowed down, and then hey presto! he vanished. I was so startled that I hardly had the wits to hide myself in a more ordinary fashion; but I got through the hedge and walked along the field inside. I was peeping through into the road, after the S.-B.s had passed, and was looking straight at Bilbo when he suddenly reappeared. I caught a glint of gold as he put something back in his trouser-pocket.

‘After that I kept my eyes open. In fact, I confess that I spied. But you must admit that it was very intriguing, and I was only in my teens. I must be the only one in the Shire, besides you Frodo, that has ever seen the old fellow’s secret book.’

‘You have read his book!’ cried Frodo. ‘Good heavens above! Is nothing safe?’

‘Not too safe, I should say,’ said Merry. ‘But I have only had one rapid glance, and that was difficult to get. He never left the book about. I wonder what became of it. I should like another look. Have you got it, Frodo?’

‘No. It was not at Bag End. He must have taken it away.’

‘Well, as I was saying,’ Merry proceeded, ‘I kept my knowledge to myself, till this spring when things got serious. Then we formed our conspiracy; and as we were serious, too, and meant business, we have not been too scrupulous. You are not a very easy nut to crack, and Gandalf is worse. But if you want to be introduced to our chief investigator, I can produce him.’

‘Where is he?’ said Frodo, looking round, as if he expected a masked and sinister figure to come out of a cupboard.

‘Step forward, Sam!’ said Merry; and Sam stood up with a face scarlet up to the ears. ‘Here’s our collector of information! And he collected a lot, I can tell you, before he was finally caught. After which, I may say, he seemed to regard himself as on parole, and dried up.’

‘Sam!’ cried Frodo, feeling that amazement could go no further, and quite unable to decide whether he felt angry, amused, relieved, or merely foolish.

‘Yes, sir!’ said Sam. ‘Begging your pardon, sir! But I meant no wrong to you, Mr. Frodo, nor to Mr. Gandalf for that matter. *He* has some sense, mind you; and when you said *go alone*, he said *no! take someone as you can trust.*’

‘But it does not seem that I can trust anyone,’ said Frodo.

Sam looked at him unhappily. ‘It all depends on what you want,’ put in Merry. ‘You can trust us to stick to you through thick and thin—to the bitter end. And you can trust us to keep any secret of yours—closer than you

keep it yourself. But you cannot trust us to let you face trouble alone, and go off without a word. We are your friends, Frodo. Anyway: there it is. We know most of what Gandalf has told you. We know a good deal about the Ring. We are horribly afraid—but we are coming with you; or following you like hounds.’

‘And after all, sir,’ added Sam, ‘you did ought to take the Elves’ advice. Gildor said you should take them as was willing, and you can’t deny it.’

‘I don’t deny it,’ said Frodo, looking at Sam, who was now grinning. ‘I don’t deny it, but I’ll never believe you are sleeping again, whether you snore or not. I shall kick you hard to make sure.’

‘You are a set of deceitful scoundrels!’ he said, turning to the others. ‘But bless you!’ he laughed, getting up and waving his arms, ‘I give in. I will take Gildor’s advice. If the danger were not so dark, I should dance for joy. Even so, I cannot help feeling happy; happier than I have felt for a long time. I had dreaded this evening.’

‘Good! That’s settled. Three cheers for Captain Frodo and company!’ they shouted; and they danced round him. Merry and Pippin began a song, which they had apparently got ready for the occasion.

It was made on the model of the dwarf-song that started Bilbo on his adventure long ago, and went to the same tune:

*Farewell we call to hearth and hall!  
Though wind may blow and rain may fall,  
We must away ere break of day  
Far over wood and mountain tall.*

*To Rivendell, where Elves yet dwell  
In glades beneath the misty fell,  
Through moor and waste we ride in haste,  
And whither then we cannot tell.*

*With foes ahead, behind us dread,  
Beneath the sky shall be our bed,  
Until at last our toil be passed,  
Our journey done, our errand sped.*

*We must away! We must away!  
We ride before the break of day!*

‘Very good!’ said Frodo. ‘But in that case there are a lot of things to do before we go to bed—under a roof, for tonight at any rate.’

‘Oh! That was poetry!’ said Pippin. ‘Do you really mean to start before the break of day?’

‘I don’t know,’ answered Frodo. ‘I fear those Black Riders, and I am sure it is unsafe to stay in one place long, especially in a place to which it is known I was going. Also Gildor advised me not to wait. But I should very much like to see Gandalf. I could see that even Gildor was disturbed when he heard that Gandalf had never appeared. It really depends on two things. How soon could the Riders get to Bucklebury? And how soon could we get off? It will take a good deal of preparation.’

‘The answer to the second question,’ said Merry, ‘is that we could get off in an hour. I have prepared practically everything. There are five ponies in a stable across the fields; stores and tackle are all packed, except for a few extra clothes, and the perishable food.’

‘It seems to have been a very efficient conspiracy,’ said Frodo. ‘But what about the Black Riders? Would it be safe to wait one day for Gandalf?’

‘That all depends on what you think the Riders would do, if they found you here,’ answered Merry. ‘They *could* have reached here by now, of course, if they were not stopped at the North-gate, where the Hedge runs down to the river-bank, just this side of the Bridge. The gate-guards would not let them through by night, though they

might break through. Even in the daylight they would try to keep them out, I think, at any rate until they got a message through to the Master of the Hall—for they would not like the look of the Riders, and would certainly be frightened by them. But, of course, Buckland cannot resist a determined attack for long. And it is possible that in the morning even a Black Rider that rode up and asked for Mr. Baggins would be let through. It is pretty generally known that you are coming back to live at Crickhollow.'

Frodo sat for a while in thought. 'I have made up my mind,' he said finally. 'I am starting tomorrow, as soon as it is light. But I am not going by road: it would be safer to wait here than that. If I go through the North-gate my departure from Buckland will be known at once, instead of being secret for several days at least, as it might be. And what is more, the Bridge and the East Road near the borders will certainly be watched, whether any Rider gets into Buckland or not. We don't know how many there are; but there are at least two, and possibly more. The only thing to do is to go off in a quite unexpected direction.'

'But that can only mean going into the Old Forest!' said Fredegar horrified. 'You can't be thinking of doing that. It is quite as dangerous as Black Riders.'

'Not quite,' said Merry. 'It sounds very desperate, but I believe Frodo is right. It is the only way of getting off without being followed at once. With luck we might get a considerable start.'

'But you won't have any luck in the Old Forest,' objected Fredegar. 'No-one ever has luck in there. You'll get lost. People don't go in there.'

'Oh yes they do!' said Merry. 'The Brandybucks go in—occasionally when the fit takes them. We have a private entrance. Frodo went in once, long ago. I have been in several times: usually in daylight, of course, when the trees are sleepy and fairly quiet.'

'Well, do as you think best!' said Fredegar. 'I am more afraid of the Old Forest than of anything I know about: the stories about it are a nightmare; but my vote hardly counts, as I am not going on the journey. Still, I am very glad someone is stopping behind, who can tell Gandalf what you have done, when he turns up, as I am sure he will before long.'

Fond as he was of Frodo, Fatty Bolger had no desire to leave the Shire, nor to see what lay outside it. His family came from the Eastfarthing, from Budgeford in Bridgefields in fact, but he had never been over the Brandywine Bridge. His task, according to the original plans of the conspirators, was to stay behind and deal with inquisitive folk, and to keep up as long as possible the pretence that Mr. Baggins was still living at Crickhollow. He had even brought along some old clothes of Frodo's to help him in playing the part. They little thought how dangerous that part might prove.

'Excellent!' said Frodo, when he understood the plan. 'We could not have left any message behind for Gandalf otherwise. I don't know whether these Riders can read or not, of course, but I should not have dared to risk a written message, in case they got in and searched the house. But if Fatty is willing to hold the fort, and I can be sure of Gandalf knowing the way we have gone, that decides me. I am going into the Old Forest first thing tomorrow.'

'Well, that's that,' said Pippin. 'On the whole I would rather have our job than Fatty's—waiting here till Black Riders come.'

'You wait till you are well inside the Forest,' said Fredegar. 'You'll wish you were back here with me before this time tomorrow.'

'It's no good arguing about it any more,' said Merry. 'We have still got to tidy up and put the finishing touches to the packing, before we get to bed. I shall call you all before the break of day.'

When at last he had got to bed, Frodo could not sleep for some time. His legs ached. He was glad that he was riding in the morning. Eventually he fell into a vague dream, in which he seemed to be looking out of a high window over a dark sea of tangled trees. Down below among the roots there was the sound of creatures crawling and snuffling. He felt sure they would smell him out sooner or later.

Then he heard a noise in the distance. At first he thought it was a great wind coming over the leaves of the forest. Then he knew that it was not leaves, but the sound of the Sea far-off; a sound he had never heard in

waking life, though it had often troubled his dreams. Suddenly he found he was out in the open. There were no trees after all. He was on a dark heath, and there was a strange salt smell in the air. Looking up he saw before him a tall white tower<sup>381</sup>, standing alone on a high ridge. A great desire came over him to climb the tower and see the Sea. He started to struggle up the ridge towards the tower: but suddenly a light came in the sky, and there was a noise of thunder.



## Chapter 6: The Old Forest

Frodo woke suddenly. It was still dark in the room. Merry was standing there with a candle in one hand, and banging on the door with the other. ‘All right! What is it?’ said Frodo, still shaken and bewildered.

‘What is it!’ cried Merry. ‘It is time to get up. It is half past four and very foggy. Come on! Sam is already getting breakfast ready. Even Pippin is up. I am just going to saddle the ponies, and fetch the one that is to be the baggage-carrier. Wake that sluggard Fatty! At least he must get up and see us off.’

Soon after six o’clock the five hobbits were ready to start. Fatty Bolger was still yawning. They stole quietly out of the house. Merry went in front leading a laden pony, and took his way along a path that went through a spinney behind the house, and then cut across several fields. The leaves of trees were glistening, and every twig was dripping; the grass was grey with cold dew. Everything was still, and far-away noises seemed near and clear: fowls chattering in a yard, someone closing a door of a distant house.

In their shed they found the ponies: sturdy little beasts of the kind loved by hobbits, not speedy, but good for a long day’s work. They mounted, and soon they were riding off into the mist, which seemed to open reluctantly before them and close forbiddingly behind them. After riding for about an hour, slowly and without talking, they saw the Hedge looming suddenly ahead. It was tall and netted over with silver cobwebs.

‘How are you going to get through this?’ asked Fredegar.

‘Follow me!’ said Merry, ‘and you will see.’ He turned to the left along the Hedge, and soon they came to a point where it bent inwards, running along the lip of a hollow. A cutting had been made, at some distance from the Hedge, and went sloping gently down into the ground. It had walls of brick at the sides, which rose steadily, until suddenly they arched over and formed a tunnel that dived deep under the Hedge and came out in the hollow on the other side.

Here Fatty Bolger halted. ‘Good-bye, Frodo!’ he said. ‘I wish you were not going into the Forest. I only hope you will not need rescuing before the day is out. But good luck to you—today and every day!’

‘If there are no worse things ahead than the Old Forest, I shall be lucky,’ said Frodo. ‘Tell Gandalf to hurry along the East Road: we shall soon be back on it and going as fast as we can.’ ‘Good-bye!’ they cried, and rode down the slope and disappeared from Fredegar’s sight into the tunnel.

It was dark and damp. At the far end it was closed by a gate of thick-set iron bars. Merry got down and unlocked the gate, and when they had all passed through he pushed it to again. It shut with a clang, and the lock clicked. The sound was ominous.

‘There!’ said Merry. ‘You have left the Shire, and are now outside, and on the edge of the Old Forest.’

‘Are the stories about it true?’ asked Pippin.

‘I don’t know what stories you mean,’ Merry answered. ‘If you mean the old bogey-stories Fatty’s nurses used to tell him, about goblins and wolves and things of that sort, I should say no. At any rate I don’t believe them. But the Forest *is* queer. Everything in it is very much more alive, more aware of what is going on, so to speak, than things are in the Shire. And the trees do not like strangers. They watch you. They are usually content merely to watch you, as long as daylight lasts, and don’t do much. Occasionally the most unfriendly ones may drop a branch, or stick a root out, or grasp at you with a long trailer. But at night things can be most alarming, or so I am told. I have only once or twice been in here after dark, and then only near the hedge. I thought all the trees were whispering to each other, passing news and plots along in an unintelligible language; and the branches swayed and groped without any wind. They do say the trees do actually move, and can surround



strangers and hem them in. In fact long ago they attacked the Hedge: they came and planted themselves right by it, and leaned over it. But the hobbits came and cut down hundreds of trees, and made a great bonfire in the Forest, and burned all the ground in a long strip east of the Hedge. After that the trees gave up the attack, but they became very unfriendly. There is still a wide bare space not far inside where the bonfire was made.'

'Is it only the trees that are dangerous?' asked Pippin.

'There are various queer things living deep in the Forest, and on the far side,' said Merry, 'or at least I have heard so; but I have never seen any of them. But something makes paths. Whenever one comes inside one finds open tracks; but they seem to shift and change from time to time in a queer fashion. Not far from this tunnel there is, or was for a long time, the beginning of quite a broad path leading to the Bonfire Glade, and then on more or less in our direction, east and a little north. That is the path I am going to try and find.'

The hobbits now left the tunnel-gate and rode across the wide hollow. On the far side was a faint path leading up on to the floor of the Forest, a hundred yards and more beyond the Hedge; but it vanished as soon as it brought them under the trees. Looking back they could see the dark line of the Hedge through the stems of trees that were already thick about them. Looking ahead they could see only tree-trunks of innumerable sizes and shapes: straight or bent, twisted, leaning, squat or slender, smooth or gnarled and branched; and all the stems were green or grey with moss and slimy, shaggy growths.

Merry alone seemed fairly cheerful. 'You had better lead on and find that path,' Frodo said to him. 'Don't let us lose one another, or forget which way the Hedge lies!'

They picked a way among the trees, and their ponies plodded along, carefully avoiding the many writhing and interlacing roots. There was no undergrowth. The ground was rising steadily, and as they went forward it seemed that the trees became taller, darker, and thicker. There was no sound, except an occasional drip of moisture falling through the still leaves. For the moment there was no whispering or movement among the branches; but they all got an uncomfortable feeling that they were being watched with disapproval, deepening to dislike and even enmity. The feeling steadily grew, until they found themselves looking up quickly, or glancing back over their shoulders, as if they expected a sudden blow.

There was not as yet any sign of a path, and the trees seemed constantly to bar their way. Pippin suddenly felt that he could not bear it any longer, and without warning let out a shout. 'Oi! Oi!' he cried. 'I am not going to do anything. Just let me pass through, will you!'

The others halted startled; but the cry fell as if muffled by a heavy curtain. There was no echo or answer though the wood seemed to become more crowded and more watchful than before.

'I should not shout, if I were you,' said Merry. 'It does more harm than good.'

Frodo began to wonder if it were possible to find a way through, and if he had been right to make the others come into this abominable wood. Merry was looking from side to side, and seemed already uncertain which way to go. Pippin noticed it. 'It has not taken you long to lose us,' he said. But at that moment Merry gave a whistle of relief and pointed ahead.

'Well, well!' he said. 'These trees *do* shift. There is the Bonfire Glade in front of us (or I hope so), but the path to it seems to have moved away!'

The light grew clearer as they went forward. Suddenly they came out of the trees and found themselves in a wide circular space. There was sky above them, blue and clear to their surprise, for down under the Forest-roof they had not been able to see the rising morning and the lifting of the mist. The sun was not, however, high enough yet to shine down into the clearing, though its light was on the tree-tops. The leaves were all thicker and greener about the edges of the glade, enclosing it with an almost solid wall. No tree grew there, only rough grass and many tall plants: stalky and faded hemlocks and wood-parsley, fire-weed seeding into fluffy ashes, and rampant nettles and thistles. A dreary place: but it seemed a charming and cheerful garden after the close Forest.

The hobbits felt encouraged, and looked up hopefully at the broadening daylight in the sky. At the far side of the glade there was a break in the wall of trees, and a clear path beyond it. They could see it running on into the

wood, wide in places and open above, though every now and again the trees drew in and overshadowed it with their dark boughs. Up this path they rode. They were still climbing gently, but they now went much quicker, and with better heart; for it seemed to them that the Forest had relented, and was going to let them pass unhindered after all.

But after a while the air began to get hot and stuffy. The trees drew close again on either side, and they could no longer see far ahead. Now stronger than ever they felt again the ill will of the wood pressing on them. So silent was it that the fall of their ponies' hoofs, rustling on dead leaves and occasionally stumbling on hidden roots, seemed to thud in their ears. Frodo tried to sing a song to encourage them, but his voice sank to a murmur.

*O! Wanderers in the shadowed land  
despair not! For though dark they stand,  
all woods there be must end at last,  
and see the open sun go past:  
the setting sun, the rising sun,  
the day's end, or the day begun.  
For east or west all woods must fail . . . .*

*Fail*—even as he said the word his voice faded into silence. The air seemed heavy and the making of words wearisome. Just behind them a large branch fell from an old overhanging tree with a crash into the path. The trees seemed to close in before them.

'They do not like all that about ending and failing,' said Merry. 'I should not sing any more at present. Wait till we do get to the edge, and then we'll turn and give them a rousing chorus!'

He spoke cheerfully, and if he felt any great anxiety, he did not show it. The others did not answer. They were depressed. A heavy weight was settling steadily on Frodo's heart, and he regretted now with every step forward that he had ever thought of challenging the menace of the trees. He was, indeed, just about to stop and propose going back (if that was still possible), when things took a new turn. The path stopped climbing, and became for a while nearly level. The dark trees drew aside, and ahead they could see the path going almost straight forward. Before them, but some distance off, there stood a green hill-top, treeless, rising like a bald head out of the encircling wood. The path seemed to be making directly for it.

They now hurried forward again, delighted with the thought of climbing out for a while above the roof of the Forest. The path dipped, and then again began to climb upwards, leading them at last to the foot of the steep hillside. There it left the trees and faded into the turf. The wood stood all round the hill like thick hair that ended sharply in a circle round a shaven crown.

The hobbits led their ponies up, winding round and round until they reached the top. There they stood and gazed about them. The air was gleaming and sunlit, but hazy; and they could not see to any great distance. Near at hand the mist was now almost gone; though here and there it lay in hollows of the wood, and to the south of them, out of a deep fold cutting right across the Forest, the fog still rose like steam or wisps of white smoke.

'That,' said Merry, pointing with his hand, 'that is the line of the Withywindle. It comes down out of the Downs and flows south-west through the midst of the Forest to join the Brandywine below Haysend. We don't want to go *that* way! The Withywindle valley is said to be the queerest part of the whole wood—the centre from which all the queerness comes, as it were.'

The others looked in the direction that Merry pointed out, but they could see little but mists over the damp and deep-cut valley; and beyond it the southern half of the Forest faded from view.

The sun on the hill-top was now getting hot. It must have been about eleven o'clock; but the autumn haze still prevented them from seeing much in other directions. In the west they could not make out either the line of the Hedge or the valley of the Brandywine beyond it. Northward, where they looked most hopefully, they could see nothing that might be the line of the great East Road, for which they were making. They were on an island in a sea of trees, and the horizon was veiled.

On the south-eastern side the ground fell very steeply, as if the slopes of the hill were continued far down under the trees, like island-shores that really are the sides of a mountain rising out of deep waters. They sat on the green edge and looked out over the woods below them, while they ate their mid-day meal. As the sun rose and passed noon they glimpsed far off in the east the grey-green lines of the Downs that lay beyond the Old Forest on that side. That cheered them greatly; for it was good to see a sight of anything beyond the wood's borders, though they did not mean to go that way, if they could help it: the Barrow-downs had as sinister a reputation in hobbit-legend as the Forest itself.

At length they made up their minds to go on again. The path that had brought them to the hill reappeared on the northward side; but they had not followed it far before they became aware that it was bending steadily to the right. Soon it began to descend rapidly and they guessed that it must actually be heading towards the Withywindle valley: not at all the direction they wished to take. After some discussion they decided to leave this misleading path and strike northward; for although they had not been able to see it from the hill-top, the Road must lie that way, and it could not be many miles off. Also northward, and to the left of the path, the land seemed to be drier and more open, climbing up to slopes where the trees were thinner, and pines and firs replaced the oaks and ashes and other strange and nameless trees of the denser wood.

At first their choice seemed to be good: they got along at a fair speed, though whenever they got a glimpse of the sun in an open glade they seemed unaccountably to have veered eastwards. But after a time the trees began to close in again, just where they had appeared from a distance to be thinner and less tangled. Then deep folds in the ground were discovered unexpectedly, like the ruts of great giant-wheels or wide moats and sunken roads long disused and choked with brambles. These lay usually right across their line of march, and could only be crossed by scrambling down and out again, which was troublesome and difficult with their ponies. Each time they climbed down they found the hollow filled with thick bushes and matted undergrowth, which somehow would not yield to the left, but only gave way when they turned to the right; and they had to go some distance along the bottom before they could find a way up the further bank. Each time they clambered out, the trees seemed deeper and darker; and always to the left and upwards it was most difficult to find a way, and they were forced to the right and downwards.

After an hour or two they had lost all clear sense of direction, though they knew well enough that they had long ceased to go northward at all. They were being headed off, and were simply following a course chosen for them—eastwards and southwards, into the heart of the Forest and not out of it.

The afternoon was wearing away when they scrambled and stumbled into a fold that was wider and deeper than any they had yet met. It was so steep and overhung that it proved impossible to climb out of it again, either forwards or backwards, without leaving their ponies and their baggage behind. All they could do was to follow the fold—downwards. The ground grew soft, and in places boggy; springs appeared in the banks, and soon they found themselves following a brook that trickled and babbled through a weedy bed. Then the ground began to fall rapidly, and the brook growing strong and noisy, flowed and leaped swiftly downhill. They were in a deep dim-lit gully over-arched by trees high above them.

After stumbling along for some way along the stream, they came quite suddenly out of the gloom. As if through a gate they saw the sunlight before them. Coming to the opening they found that they had made their way down through a cleft in a high steep bank, almost a cliff. At its feet was a wide space of grass and reeds; and in the distance could be glimpsed another bank almost as steep. A golden afternoon of late sunshine lay warm and drowsy upon the hidden land between. In the midst of it there wound lazily a dark river of brown water, bordered with ancient willows, arched over with willows, blocked with fallen willows, and flecked with thousands of faded willow-leaves. The air was thick with them, fluttering yellow from the branches; for there was a warm and gentle breeze blowing softly in the valley, and the reeds were rustling, and the willow-boughs were creaking.

‘Well, now I have at least some notion of where we are!’ said Merry. ‘We have come almost in the opposite direction to which we intended. This is the River Withywindle! I will go on and explore.’

He passed out into the sunshine and disappeared into the long grasses. After a while he reappeared, and reported that there was fairly solid ground between the cliff-foot and the river; in some places firm turf went

down to the water's edge. 'What's more,' he said, 'there seems to be something like a footpath winding along on this side of the river. If we turn left and follow it, we shall be bound to come out on the east side of the Forest eventually.'

'I dare say!' said Pippin. 'That is, if the track goes on so far, and does not simply lead us into a bog and leave us there. Who made the track, do you suppose, and why? I am sure it was not for our benefit. I am getting very suspicious of this Forest and everything in it, and I begin to believe all the stories about it. And have you any idea how far eastward we should have to go?'

'No,' said Merry, 'I haven't. I don't know in the least how far down the Withywindle we are, or who could possibly come here often enough to make a path along it. But there is no other way out that I can see or think of.'

There being nothing else for it, they filed out, and Merry led them to the path that he had discovered. Everywhere the reeds and grasses were lush and tall, in places far above their heads; but once found, the path was easy to follow, as it turned and twisted, picking out the sounder ground among the bogs and pools. Here and there it passed over other rills, running down gullies into the Withywindle out of the higher forest-lands, and at these points there were tree-trunks or bundles of brushwood laid carefully across.

The hobbits began to feel very hot. There were armies of flies of all kinds buzzing round their ears, and the afternoon sun was burning on their backs. At last they came suddenly into a thin shade; great grey branches reached across the path. Each step forward became more reluctant than the last. Sleepiness seemed to be creeping out of the ground and up their legs, and falling softly out of the air upon their heads and eyes.

Frodo felt his chin go down and his head nod. Just in front of him Pippin fell forward on to his knees. Frodo halted. 'It's no good,' he heard Merry saying. 'Can't go another step without rest. Must have nap. It's cool under the willows. Less flies!'

Frodo did not like the sound of this. 'Come on!' he cried. 'We can't have a nap yet. We must get clear of the Forest first.' But the others were too far gone to care. Beside them Sam stood yawning and blinking stupidly.

Suddenly Frodo himself felt sleep overwhelming him. His head swam. There now seemed hardly a sound in the air. The flies had stopped buzzing. Only a gentle noise on the edge of hearing, a soft fluttering as of a song half whispered, seemed to stir in the boughs above. He lifted his heavy eyes and saw leaning over him a huge willow-tree, old and hoary. Enormous it looked, its sprawling branches going up like reaching arms with many long-fingered hands, its knotted and twisted trunk gaping in wide fissures that creaked faintly as the boughs moved. The leaves fluttering against the bright sky dazzled him, and he toppled over, lying where he fell upon the grass.

Merry and Pippin dragged themselves forward and lay down with their backs to the willow-trunk. Behind them the great cracks gaped wide to receive them as the tree swayed and creaked. They looked up at the grey and yellow leaves, moving softly against the light, and singing. They shut their eyes, and then it seemed that they could almost hear words, cool words, saying something about water and sleep. They gave themselves up to the spell and fell fast asleep at the foot of the great grey willow.

Frodo lay for a while fighting with the sleep that was overpowering him; then with an effort he struggled to his feet again. He felt a compelling desire for cool water. 'Wait for me, Sam,' he stammered. 'Must bathe feet a minute.'

Half in a dream he wandered forward to the riverward side of the tree, where great winding roots grew out into the stream, like gnarled dragonets straining down to drink. He straddled one of these, and paddled his hot feet in the cool brown water; and there he too suddenly fell asleep with his back against the tree.

Sam sat down and scratched his head, and yawned like a cavern. He was worried. The afternoon was getting late, and he thought this sudden sleepiness uncanny. 'There's more behind this than sun and warm air,' he muttered to himself. 'I don't like this great big tree. I don't trust it. Hark at it singing about sleep now! This won't do at all!'

He pulled himself to his feet, and staggered off to see what had become of the ponies. He found that two had wandered on a good way along the path; and he had just caught them and brought them back towards the others, when he heard two noises; one loud, and the other soft but very clear. One was the splash of something heavy falling into the water; the other was a noise like the snick of a lock when a door quietly closes fast.

He rushed back to the bank. Frodo was in the water close to the edge, and a great tree-root seemed to be over him and holding him down, but he was not struggling. Sam gripped him by the jacket, and dragged him from under the root; and then with difficulty hauled him on to the bank. Almost at once he woke, and coughed and spluttered.

‘Do you know, Sam,’ he said at length, ‘the beastly tree *threw* me in! I felt it. The big root just twisted round and tipped me in!’

‘You were dreaming I expect, Mr. Frodo,’ said Sam. ‘You shouldn’t sit in such a place, if you feel sleepy.’

‘What about the others?’ Frodo asked. ‘I wonder what sort of dreams they are having.’

They went round to the other side of the tree, and then Sam understood the click that he had heard. Pippin had vanished. The crack by which he had laid himself had closed together, so that not a chink could be seen. Merry was trapped: another crack had closed about his waist; his legs lay outside, but the rest of him was inside a dark opening, the edges of which gripped like a pair of pincers.

Frodo and Sam beat first upon the tree-trunk where Pippin had lain. They then struggled frantically to pull open the jaws of the crack that held poor Merry. It was quite useless.

‘What a foul thing to happen!’ cried Frodo wildly. ‘Why did we ever come into this dreadful Forest? I wish we were all back at Crickhollow!’ He kicked the tree with all his strength, heedless of his own feet. A hardly perceptible shiver ran through the stem and up into the branches; the leaves rustled and whispered, but with a sound now of faint and far-off laughter.

‘I suppose we haven’t got an axe among our luggage, Mr. Frodo?’ asked Sam.

‘I brought a little hatchet for chopping firewood,’ said Frodo. ‘That wouldn’t be much use.’

‘Wait a minute!’ cried Sam, struck by an idea suggested by firewood. ‘We might do something with fire!’

‘We might,’ said Frodo doubtfully. ‘We might succeed in roasting Pippin alive inside.’

‘We might try to hurt or frighten this tree to begin with,’ said Sam fiercely. ‘If it don’t let them go, I’ll have it down, if I have to gnaw it.’ He ran to the ponies and before long came back with two tinder-boxes and a hatchet.

Quickly they gathered dry grass and leaves, and bits of bark; and made a pile of broken twigs and chopped sticks. These they heaped against the trunk on the far side of the tree from the prisoners. As soon as Sam had struck a spark into the tinder, it kindled the dry grass and a flurry of flame and smoke went up. The twigs crackled. Little fingers of fire licked against the dry scored rind of the ancient tree and scorched it. A tremor ran through the whole willow. The leaves seemed to hiss above their heads with a sound of pain and anger. A loud scream came from Merry, and from far inside the tree they heard Pippin give a muffled yell.

‘Put it out! Put it out!’ cried Merry. ‘He’ll squeeze me in two, if you don’t. He says so!’

‘Who? What?’ shouted Frodo, rushing round to the other side of the tree.

‘Put it out! Put it out!’ begged Merry. The branches of the willow began to sway violently. There was a sound as of a wind rising and spreading outwards to the branches of all the other trees round about, as though they had dropped a stone into the quiet slumber of the river-valley and set up ripples of anger that ran out over the whole Forest. Sam kicked at the little fire and stamped out the sparks. But Frodo, without any clear idea of why he did so, or what he hoped for, ran along the path crying *help! help! help!* It seemed to him that he could hardly hear the sound of his own shrill voice: it was blown away from him by the willow-wind and drowned in a clamour of leaves, as soon as the words left his mouth. He felt desperate: lost and witless.

Suddenly he stopped. There was an answer, or so he thought; but it seemed to come from behind him, away down the path further back in the Forest. He turned round and listened, and soon there could be no doubt: someone was singing a song; a deep glad voice was singing carelessly and happily, but it was singing nonsense:

*Hey dol! merry dol! ring a dong dillo!  
Ring a dong! hop along! fal lal the willow!  
Tom Bom, jolly Tom, Tom Bombadillo!*

Half hopeful and half afraid of some new danger, Frodo and Sam now both stood still. Suddenly out of a long string of nonsense-words (or so they seemed) the voice rose up loud and clear and burst into this song:

*Hey! Come merry dol! derry dol! My darling!  
Light goes the weather-wind and the feathered starling.  
Down along under Hill, shining in the sunlight,  
Waiting on the doorstep for the cold starlight,  
There my pretty lady is, River-woman's daughter,  
Slender as the willow-wand, clearer than the water.  
Old Tom Bombadil water-lilies bringing  
Comes hopping home again. Can you hear him singing?  
Hey! Come merry dol! derry dol! and merry-o,  
Goldberry, Goldberry, merry yellow berry-o!  
Poor old Willow-man, you tuck your roots away!  
Tom's in a hurry now. Evening will follow day.  
Tom's going home again water-lilies bringing.  
Hey! Come derry dol! Can you hear me singing?*

Frodo and Sam stood as if enchanted. The wind puffed out. The leaves hung silently again on stiff branches. There was another burst of song, and then suddenly, hopping and dancing along the path, there appeared above the reeds an old battered hat with a tall crown and a long blue feather stuck in the band. With another hop and a bound there came into view a man, or so it seemed. At any rate he was too large and heavy for a hobbit, if not quite tall enough for one of the Big People, though he made noise enough for one, stumping along with great yellow boots on his thick legs, and charging through grass and rushes like a cow going down to drink. He had a blue coat and a long brown beard; his eyes were blue and bright, and his face was red as a ripe apple, but creased into a hundred wrinkles of laughter. In his hands he carried on a large leaf as on a tray a small pile of white water-lilies.

‘Help!’ cried Frodo and Sam running towards him with their hands stretched out.

‘Whoa! Whoa! steady there!’ cried the old man, holding up one hand, and they stopped short, as if they had been struck stiff. ‘Now, my little fellows, where be you a-going to, puffing like a bellows? What’s the matter here then? Do you know who I am? I’m Tom Bombadil. Tell me what’s your trouble! Tom’s in a hurry now. Don’t you crush my lilies!’

‘My friends are caught in the willow-tree,’ cried Frodo breathlessly.

‘Master Merry’s being squeezed in a crack!’ cried Sam.

‘What?’ shouted Tom Bombadil, leaping up in the air. ‘Old Man Willow? Naught worse than that, eh? That can soon be mended. I know the tune for him. Old grey Willow-man! I’ll freeze his marrow cold, if he don’t behave himself. I’ll sing his roots off. I’ll sing a wind up and blow leaf and branch away. Old Man Willow!’

Setting down his lilies carefully on the grass, he ran to the tree. There he saw Merry’s feet still sticking out—the rest had already been drawn further inside. Tom put his mouth to the crack and began singing into it in a low voice. They could not catch the words, but evidently Merry was aroused. His legs began to kick. Tom sprang away, and breaking off a hanging branch smote the side of the willow with it. ‘You let them out again, Old Man Willow!’ he said. ‘What be you a-thinking of? You should not be waking. Eat earth! Dig deep! Drink

water! Go to sleep! Bombadil is talking!’ He then seized Merry’s feet and drew him out of the suddenly widening crack.

There was a tearing creak and the other crack split open, and out of it Pippin sprang, as if he had been kicked. Then with a loud snap both cracks closed fast again. A shudder ran through the tree from root to tip, and complete silence fell.

‘Thank you!’ said the hobbits, one after the other.

Tom Bombadil burst out laughing. ‘Well, my little fellows!’ said he, stooping so that he peered into their faces. ‘You shall come home with me! The table is all laden with yellow cream, honeycomb, and white bread and butter. Goldberry is waiting. Time enough for questions around the supper table. You follow after me as quick as you are able!’ With that he picked up his lilies, and then with a beckoning wave of his hand went hopping and dancing along the path eastward, still singing loudly and nonsensically.

Too surprised and too relieved to talk, the hobbits followed after him as fast as they could. But that was not fast enough. Tom soon disappeared in front of them, and the noise of his singing got fainter and further away. Suddenly his voice came floating back to them in a loud halloo!

*Hop along, my little friends, up the Withywindle!  
Tom’s going on ahead candles for to kindle.  
Down west sinks the Sun: soon you will be groping.  
When the night-shadows fall, then the door will open,  
Out of the window-panes light will twinkle yellow.  
Fear no alder black! Heed no hoary willow!  
Fear neither root nor bough! Tom goes on before you.  
Hey now! merry dol! We’ll be waiting for you!*

After that the hobbits heard no more. Almost at once the sun seemed to sink into the trees behind them. They thought of the slanting light of evening glittering on the Brandywine River, and the windows of Bucklebury beginning to gleam with hundreds of lights. Great shadows fell across them; trunks and branches of trees hung dark and threatening over the path. White mists began to rise and curl on the surface of the river and stray about the roots of the trees upon its borders. Out of the very ground at their feet a shadowy steam arose and mingled with the swiftly falling dusk.

It became difficult to follow the path, and they were very tired. Their legs seemed leaden. Strange furtive noises ran among the bushes and reeds on either side of them; and if they looked up to the pale sky, they caught sight of queer gnarled and knobbly faces that gloomed dark against the twilight, and leered down at them from the high bank and the edges of the wood. They began to feel that all this country was unreal, and that they were stumbling through an ominous dream that led to no awakening.

Just as they felt their feet slowing down to a standstill, they noticed that the ground was gently rising. The water began to murmur. In the darkness they caught the white glimmer of foam, where the river flowed over a short fall. Then suddenly the trees came to an end and the mists were left behind. They stepped out from the Forest, and found a wide sweep of grass welling up before them. The river, now small and swift, was leaping merrily down to meet them, glinting here and there in the light of the stars, which were already shining in the sky.

The grass under their feet was smooth and short, as if it had been mown or shaven. The eaves of the Forest behind were clipped, and trim as a hedge. The path was now plain before them, well-tended and bordered with stone. It wound up on to the top of a grassy knoll, now grey under the pale starry night; and there, still high above them on a further slope, they saw the twinkling lights of a house. Down again the path went, and then up again, up a long smooth hillside of turf, towards the light. Suddenly a wide yellow beam flowed out brightly from a door that was opened. There was Tom Bombadil’s house before them, up, down, under hill. Behind it a steep shoulder of the land lay grey and bare, and beyond that the dark shapes of the Barrow-downs stalked away into the eastern night.

They all hurried forward, hobbits and ponies. Already half their weariness and all their fears had fallen from them. *Hey! Come merry dol!* rolled out the song to greet them.

*Hey! Come derry dol! Hop along, my hearties!  
Hobbits! Ponies all! We are fond of parties.  
Now let the fun begin! Let us sing together!*

Then another clear voice, as young and as ancient as Spring, like the song of a glad water flowing down into the night from a bright morning in the hills, came falling like silver to meet them:

*Now let the song begin! Let us sing together  
Of sun, stars, moon and mist, rain and cloudy weather,  
Light on the budding leaf, dew on the feather,  
Wind on the open hill, bells on the heather,  
Reeds by the shady pool, lilies on the water:  
Old Tom Bombadil and the River-daughter!*

And with that song the hobbits stood upon the threshold, and a golden light was all about them.





## Chapter 7: In The House Of Tom Bombadil

The four hobbits stepped over the wide stone threshold, and stood still, blinking. They were in a long low room, filled with the light of lamps swinging from the beams of the roof; and on the table of dark polished wood stood many candles, tall and yellow, burning brightly.

In a chair, at the far side of the room facing the outer door, sat a woman. Her long yellow hair rippled down her shoulders; her gown was green, green as young reeds, shot with silver like beads of dew; and her belt was of gold, shaped like a chain of flag-lilies set with the pale-blue eyes of forget-me-nots. About her feet in wide vessels of green and brown earthenware, white water-lilies were floating, so that she seemed to be enthroned in the midst of a pool.

‘Enter, good guests!’ she said, and as she spoke they knew that it was her clear voice they had heard singing. They came a few timid steps further into the room, and began to bow low, feeling strangely surprised and awkward, like folk that, knocking at a cottage door to beg for a drink of water, have been answered by a fair young elf-queen clad in living flowers. But before they could say anything, she sprang lightly up and over the lily-bowls, and ran laughing towards them; and as she ran her gown rustled softly like the wind in the flowering borders of a river.

‘Come dear folk!’ she said, taking Frodo by the hand. ‘Laugh and be merry! I am Goldberry, daughter of the River.’ Then lightly she passed them and closing the door she turned her back to it, with her white arms spread out across it. ‘Let us shut out the night!’ she said. ‘For you are still afraid, perhaps, of mist and tree-shadows and deep water, and untame things. Fear nothing! For tonight you are under the roof of Tom Bombadil.’

The hobbits looked at her in wonder; and she looked at each of them and smiled. ‘Fair lady Goldberry!’ said Frodo at last, feeling his heart moved with a joy that he did not understand. He stood as he had at times stood enchanted by fair elven-voices; but the spell that was now laid upon him was different: less keen and lofty was the delight, but deeper and nearer to mortal heart; marvellous and yet not strange. ‘Fair lady Goldberry!’ he said again. ‘Now the joy that was hidden in the songs we heard is made plain to me.’

*O slender as a willow-wand! O clearer than clear water!  
O reed by the living pool! Fair River-daughter!  
O spring-time and summer-time, and spring again after!  
O wind on the waterfall, and the leaves’ laughter!’*

Suddenly he stopped and stammered, overcome with surprise to hear himself saying such things. But Goldberry laughed.

‘Welcome!’ she said. ‘I had not heard that folk of the Shire were so sweet-tongued. But I see that you are an Elf-friend; the light in your eyes and the ring in your voice tells it. This is a merry meeting! Sit now, and wait for the Master of the house! He will not be long. He is tending your tired beasts.’

The hobbits sat down gladly in low rush-seated chairs, while Goldberry busied herself about the table; and their eyes followed her, for the slender grace of her movement filled them with quiet delight. From somewhere behind the house came the sound of singing. Every now and again they caught, among many a *derry dol* and a *merry dol* and a *ring a ding dillo* the repeated words:

*Old Tom Bombadil is a merry fellow;  
Bright blue his jacket is, and his boots are yellow.*

‘Fair lady!’ said Frodo again after a while. ‘Tell me, if my asking does not seem foolish, who is Tom Bombadil?’

‘He is,’ said Goldberry, staying her swift movements and smiling.

Frodo looked at her questioningly. ‘He is, as you have seen him,’ she said in answer to his look. ‘He is the Master of wood, water, and hill.’

‘Then all this strange land belongs to him?’

‘No indeed!’ she answered, and her smile faded. ‘That would indeed be a burden,’ she added in a low voice, as if to herself. ‘The trees and the grasses and all things growing or living in the land belong each to themselves. Tom Bombadil is the Master. No-one has ever caught old Tom walking in the forest, wading in the water, leaping on the hill-tops under light and shadow. He has no fear. Tom Bombadil is master.’

A door opened and in came Tom Bombadil. He had now no hat and his thick brown hair was crowned with autumn leaves. He laughed, and going to Goldberry, took her hand.

‘Here’s my pretty lady!’ he said, bowing to the hobbits. ‘Here’s my Goldberry clothed all in silver-green with flowers in her girdle! Is the table laden? I see yellow cream and honeycomb, and white bread, and butter; milk, cheese, and green herbs and ripe berries gathered. Is that enough for us? Is the supper ready?’

‘It is,’ said Goldberry; ‘but the guests perhaps are not?’ Tom clapped his hands and cried: ‘Tom, Tom! your guests are tired, and you had near forgotten! Come now, my merry friends, and Tom will refresh you! You shall clean grimy hands, and wash your weary faces; cast off your muddy cloaks and comb out your tangles!’ He opened the door, and they followed him down a short passage and round a sharp turn. They came to a low room with a sloping roof (a penthouse, it seemed, built on to the north end of the house). Its walls were of clean stone, but they were mostly covered with green hanging mats and yellow curtains. The floor was flagged, and strewn with fresh green rushes. There were four deep mattresses, each piled with white blankets, laid on the floor along one side. Against the opposite wall was a long bench laden with wide earthenware basins, and beside it stood brown ewers filled with water, some cold, some steaming hot. There were soft green slippers set ready beside each bed.

Before long, washed and refreshed, the hobbits were seated at the table, two on each side, while at either end sat Goldberry and the Master. It was a long and merry meal. Though the hobbits ate, as only famished hobbits can eat, there was no lack. The drink in their drinking-bowls seemed to be clear cold water, yet it went to their hearts like wine and set free their voices. The guests became suddenly aware that they were singing merrily, as if it was easier and more natural than talking.

At last Tom and Goldberry rose and cleared the table swiftly. The guests were commanded to sit quiet, and were set in chairs, each with a footstool to his tired feet. There was a fire in the wide hearth before them, and it was burning with a sweet smell, as if it were built of apple-wood. When everything was set in order, all the lights in the room were put out, except one lamp and a pair of candles at each end of the chimney-shelf. Then Goldberry came and stood before them, holding a candle; and she wished them each a good night and deep sleep.

‘Have peace now,’ she said, ‘until the morning! Heed no nightly noises! For nothing passes door and window here save moonlight and starlight and the wind off the hill-top. Good night!’ She passed out of the room with a glimmer and a rustle. The sound of her footsteps was like a stream falling gently away downhill over cool stones in the quiet of night.

Tom sat on a while beside them in silence, while each of them tried to muster the courage to ask one of the many questions he had meant to ask at supper. Sleep gathered on their eyelids. At last Frodo spoke:

‘Did you hear me calling, Master, or was it just chance that brought you at that moment?’

Tom stirred like a man shaken out of a pleasant dream. ‘Eh, what?’ said he. ‘Did I hear you calling? Nay, I did not hear: I was busy singing. Just chance brought me then, if chance you call it. It was no plan of mine, though I was waiting for you. We heard news of you, and learned that you were wandering. We guessed you’d come ere long down to the water: all paths lead that way, down to Withywindle. Old grey Willow-man, he’s a mighty

singer; and it's hard for little folk to escape his cunning mazes. But Tom had an errand there, that he dared not hinder.' Tom nodded as if sleep was taking him again; but he went on in a soft singing voice:

*I had an errand there: gathering water-lilies,  
green leaves and lilies white to please my pretty lady,  
the last ere the year's end to keep them from the winter,  
to flower by her pretty feet till the snows are melted.  
Each year at summer's end I go to find them for her,  
in a wide pool, deep and clear, far down Withywindle;  
there they open first in spring and there they linger latest.  
By that pool long ago I found the River-daughter,  
fair young Goldberry sitting in the rushes.  
Sweet was her singing then, and her heart was beating!*

He opened his eyes and looked at them with a sudden glint of blue:

*And that proved well for you—for now I shall no longer  
go down deep again along the forest-water,  
not while the year is old. Nor shall I be passing  
Old Man Willow's house this side of spring-time,  
not till the merry spring, when the River-daughter  
dances down the withy-path to bathe in the water.*

He fell silent again; but Frodo could not help asking one more question: the one he most desired to have answered. 'Tell us, Master,' he said, 'about the Willow-man. What is he? I have never heard of him before.'

'No, don't!' said Merry and Pippin together, sitting suddenly upright. 'Not now! Not until the morning!'

'That is right!' said the old man. 'Now is the time for resting. Some things are ill to hear when the world's in shadow. Sleep till the morning-light, rest on the pillow! Heed no nightly noise! Fear no grey willow!' And with that he took down the lamp and blew it out, and grasping a candle in either hand he led them out of the room.

Their mattresses and pillows were soft as down, and the blankets were of white wool. They had hardly laid themselves on the deep beds and drawn the light covers over them before they were asleep.

In the dead night, Frodo lay in a dream without light. Then he saw the young moon rising; under its thin light there loomed before him a black wall of rock, pierced by a dark arch like a great gate. It seemed to Frodo that he was lifted up, and passing over he saw that the rock-wall was a circle of hills, and that within it was a plain, and in the midst of the plain stood a pinnacle of stone, like a vast tower but not made by hands. On its top stood the figure of a man. The moon as it rose seemed to hang for a moment above his head and glistened in his white hair as the wind stirred it. Up from the dark plain below came the crying of fell voices, and the howling of many wolves. Suddenly a shadow, like the shape of great wings, passed across the moon. The figure lifted his arms and a light flashed from the staff that he wielded. A mighty eagle swept down and bore him away. The voices wailed and the wolves yammered. There was a noise like a strong wind blowing, and on it was borne the sound of hoofs, galloping, galloping, galloping from the East. 'Black Riders!' thought Frodo as he wakened, with the sound of the hoofs still echoing in his mind. He wondered if he would ever again have the courage to leave the safety of these stone walls. He lay motionless, still listening; but all was now silent, and at last he turned and fell asleep again or wandered into some other unremembered dream.

At his side Pippin lay dreaming pleasantly; but a change came over his dreams and he turned and groaned. Suddenly he woke, or thought he had waked, and yet still heard in the darkness the sound that had disturbed his dream: *tip-tap, squeak*: the noise was like branches fretting in the wind, twig-fingers scraping wall and window: *creak, creak, creak*. He wondered if there were willow-trees close to the house; and then suddenly he had a dreadful feeling that he was not in an ordinary house at all, but inside the willow and listening to that horrible dry creaking voice laughing at him again. He sat up, and felt the soft pillows yield to his hands, and he lay

down again relieved. He seemed to hear the echo of words in his ears: 'Fear nothing! Have peace until the morning! Heed no nightly noises!' Then he went to sleep again.

It was the sound of water that Merry heard falling into his quiet sleep: water streaming down gently, and then spreading, spreading irresistibly all round the house into a dark shoreless pool. It gurgled under the walls, and was rising slowly but surely. 'I shall be drowned!' he thought. 'It will find its way in, and then I shall drown.' He felt that he was lying in a soft slimy bog, and springing up he set his foot on the corner of a cold hard flagstone. Then he remembered where he was and lay down again. He seemed to hear or remember hearing: 'Nothing passes doors or windows save moonlight and starlight and the wind off the hill-top.' A little breath of sweet air moved the curtain. He breathed deep and fell asleep again.

As far as he could remember, Sam slept through the night in deep content, if logs are contented.

They woke up, all four at once, in the morning light. Tom was moving about the room whistling like a starling. When he heard them stir he clapped his hands, and cried: 'Hey! Come merry dol! derry dol! My hearties!' He drew back the yellow curtains, and the hobbits saw that these had covered the windows, at either end of the room, one looking east and the other looking west.

They leapt up refreshed. Frodo ran to the eastern window, and found himself looking into a kitchen-garden grey with dew. He had half expected to see turf right up to the walls, turf all pocked with hoof-prints. Actually his view was screened by a tall line of beans on poles; but above and far beyond them the grey top of the hill loomed up against the sunrise. It was a pale morning: in the East, behind long clouds like lines of soiled wool stained red at the edges, lay glimmering deeps of yellow. The sky spoke of rain to come; but the light was broadening quickly, and the red flowers on the beans began to glow against the wet green leaves.

Pippin looked out of the western window, down into a pool of mist. The Forest was hidden under a fog. It was like looking down on to a sloping cloud-roof from above. There was a fold or channel where the mist was broken into many plumes and billows: the valley of the Withywindle. The stream ran down the hill on the left and vanished into the white shadows. Near at hand was a flower-garden and a clipped hedge silver-netted, and beyond that grey shaven grass pale with dew-drops. There was no willow-tree to be seen.

'Good morning, merry friends!' cried Tom, opening the eastern window wide. A cool air flowed in; it had a rainy smell. 'Sun won't show her face much today, I'm thinking. I have been walking wide, leaping on the hill-tops, since the grey dawn began, nosing wind and weather, wet grass underfoot, wet sky above me. I wakened Goldberry singing under window; but naught wakes hobbit-folk in the early morning. In the night little folk wake up in the darkness, and sleep after light has come! Ring a ding dillo! Wake now, my merry friends! Forget the nightly noises! Ring a ding dillo del! derry del, my hearties! If you come soon you'll find breakfast on the table. If you come late you'll get grass and rain-water!'

Needless to say—not that Tom's threat sounded very serious—the hobbits came soon, and left the table late and only when it was beginning to look rather empty. Neither Tom nor Goldberry were there. Tom could be heard about the house, clattering in the kitchen, and up and down the stairs, and singing here and there outside. The room looked westward over the mist-clouded valley, and the window was open. Water dripped down from the thatched eaves above. Before they had finished breakfast the clouds had joined into an unbroken roof, and a straight grey rain came softly and steadily down. Behind its deep curtain the Forest was completely veiled.

As they looked out of the window there came falling gently as if it was flowing down the rain out of the sky, the clear voice of Goldberry singing up above them. They could hear few words, but it seemed plain to them that the song was a rain-song, as sweet as showers on dry hills, that told the tale of a river from the spring in the highlands to the Sea far below. The hobbits listened with delight; and Frodo was glad in his heart, and blessed the kindly weather, because it delayed them from departing. The thought of going had been heavy upon him from the moment he awoke; but he guessed now that they would not go further that day.

The upper wind settled in the West and deeper and wetter clouds rolled up to spill their laden rain on the bare heads of the Downs. Nothing could be seen all round the house but falling water. Frodo stood near the open door and watched the white chalky path turn into a little river of milk and go bubbling away down into the valley. Tom Bombadil came trotting round the corner of the house, waving his arms as if he was warding off

the rain—and indeed when he sprang over the threshold he seemed quite dry, except for his boots. These he took off and put in the chimney-corner. Then he sat in the largest chair and called the hobbits to gather round him.

‘This is Goldberry’s washing day,’ he said, ‘and her autumn-cleaning. Too wet for hobbit-folk—let them rest while they are able! It’s a good day for long tales, for questions and for answers, so Tom will start the talking.’

He then told them many remarkable stories, sometimes half as if speaking to himself, sometimes looking at them suddenly with a bright blue eye under his deep brows. Often his voice would turn to song, and he would get out of his chair and dance about. He told them tales of bees and flowers, the ways of trees, and the strange creatures of the Forest, about the evil things and good things, things friendly and things unfriendly, cruel things and kind things, and secrets hidden under brambles.

As they listened, they began to understand the lives of the Forest, apart from themselves, indeed to feel themselves as the strangers where all other things were at home. Moving constantly in and out of his talk was Old Man Willow, and Frodo learned now enough to content him, indeed more than enough, for it was not comfortable lore. Tom’s words laid bare the hearts of trees and their thoughts, which were often dark and strange, and filled with a hatred of things that go free upon the earth, gnawing, biting, breaking, hacking, burning: destroyers and usurpers. It was not called the Old Forest without reason, for it was indeed ancient, a survivor of vast forgotten woods; and in it there lived yet, ageing no quicker than the hills, the fathers of the fathers of trees, remembering times when they were lords. The countless years had filled them with pride and rooted wisdom, and with malice. But none were more dangerous than the Great Willow: his heart was rotten, but his strength was green; and he was cunning, and a master of winds, and his song and thought ran through the woods on both sides of the river. His grey thirsty spirit drew power out of the earth and spread like fine root-threads in the ground, and invisible twig-fingers in the air, till it had under its dominion nearly all the trees of the Forest from the Hedge to the Downs.

Suddenly Tom’s talk left the woods and went leaping up the young stream, over bubbling waterfalls, over pebbles and worn rocks, and among small flowers in close grass and wet crannies, wandering at last up on to the Downs. They heard of the Great Barrows, and the green mounds, and the stone-rings upon the hills and in the hollows among the hills. Sheep were bleating in flocks. Green walls and white walls rose. There were fortresses on the heights. Kings of little kingdoms fought together, and the young Sun shone like fire on the red metal of their new and greedy swords. There was victory and defeat; and towers fell, fortresses were burned, and flames went up into the sky. Gold was piled on the biers of dead kings and queens; and mounds covered them, and the stone doors were shut; and the grass grew over all. Sheep walked for a while biting the grass, but soon the hills were empty again. A shadow came out of dark places far away, and the bones were stirred in the mounds. Barrow-wights walked in the hollow places with a clink of rings on cold fingers, and gold chains in the wind. Stone rings grinned out of the ground like broken teeth in the moonlight.

The hobbits shuddered. Even in the Shire the rumour of the Barrow-wights of the Barrow-downs beyond the Forest had been heard. But it was not a tale that any hobbit liked to listen to, even by a comfortable fireside far away. These four now suddenly remembered what the joy of this house had driven from their minds: the house of Tom Bombadil nestled under the very shoulder of those dreaded hills. They lost the thread of his tale and shifted uneasily, looking aside at one another.

When they caught his words again they found that he had now wandered into strange regions beyond their memory and beyond their waking thought, into times when the world was wider, and the seas flowed straight to the western Shore; and still on and back Tom went singing out into ancient starlight, when only the Elf-sires were awake. Then suddenly he stopped, and they saw that he nodded as if he was falling asleep. The hobbits sat still before him, enchanted; and it seemed as if, under the spell of his words, the wind had gone, and the clouds had dried up, and the day had been withdrawn, and darkness had come from East and West, and all the sky was filled with the light of white stars.

Whether the morning and evening of one day or of many days had passed Frodo could not tell. He did not feel either hungry or tired, only filled with wonder. The stars shone through the window and the silence of the heavens seemed to be round him. He spoke at last out of his wonder and a sudden fear of that silence:

‘Who are you, Master?’ he asked.

‘Eh, what?’ said Tom sitting up, and his eyes glinting in the gloom. ‘Don’t you know my name yet? That’s the only answer. Tell me, who are you, alone, yourself and nameless? But you are young and I am old. Eldest, that’s what I am. Mark my words, my friends: Tom was here before the river and the trees; Tom remembers the first raindrop and the first acorn. He made paths before the Big People, and saw the little People arriving. He was here before the Kings and the graves and the Barrow-wights. When the Elves passed westward, Tom was here already, before the seas were bent. He knew the dark under the stars when it was fearless—before the Dark Lord came from Outside.’

A shadow seemed to pass by the window, and the hobbits glanced hastily through the panes. When they turned again, Goldberry stood in the door behind, framed in light. She held a candle, shielding its flame from the draught with her hand; and the light flowed through it, like sunlight through a white shell.

‘The rain has ended,’ she said; ‘and new waters are running downhill, under the stars. Let us now laugh and be glad!’

‘And let us have food and drink!’ cried Tom. ‘Long tales are thirsty. And long listening’s hungry work, morning, noon, and evening!’ With that he jumped out of his chair, and with a bound took a candle from the chimney-shelf and lit it in the flame that Goldberry held; then he danced about the table. Suddenly he hopped through the door and disappeared.

Quickly he returned, bearing a large and laden tray. Then Tom and Goldberry set the table; and the hobbits sat half in wonder and half in laughter: so fair was the grace of Goldberry and so merry and odd the caperings of Tom. Yet in some fashion they seemed to weave a single dance, neither hindering the other, in and out of the room, and round about the table; and with great speed food and vessels and lights were set in order. The boards blazed with candles, white and yellow. Tom bowed to his guests. ‘Supper is ready,’ said Goldberry; and now the hobbits saw that she was clothed all in silver with a white girdle, and her shoes were like fishes’ mail. But Tom was all in clean blue, blue as rain-washed forget-me-nots, and he had green stockings.

It was a supper even better than before. The hobbits under the spell of Tom’s words may have missed one meal or many, but when the food was before them it seemed at least a week since they had eaten. They did not sing or even speak much for a while, and paid close attention to business. But after a time their hearts and spirits rose high again, and their voices rang out in mirth and laughter.

After they had eaten, Goldberry sang many songs for them, songs that began merrily in the hills and fell softly down into silence; and in the silences they saw in their minds pools and waters wider than any they had known, and looking into them they saw the sky below them and the stars like jewels in the depths. Then once more she wished them each good night and left them by the fireside. But Tom now seemed wide awake and plied them with questions.

He appeared already to know much about them and all their families, and indeed to know much of all the history and doings of the Shire down from days hardly remembered among the hobbits themselves. It no longer surprised them; but he made no secret that he owed his recent knowledge largely to Farmer Maggot, whom he seemed to regard as a person of more importance than they had imagined. ‘There’s earth under his old feet, and clay on his fingers; wisdom in his bones, and both his eyes are open,’ said Tom. It was also clear that Tom had dealings with the Elves, and it seemed that in some fashion, news had reached him from Gildor concerning the flight of Frodo.

Indeed so much did Tom know, and so cunning was his questioning, that Frodo found himself telling him more about Bilbo and his own hopes and fears than he had told before even to Gandalf. Tom wagged his head up and down, and there was a glint in his eyes when he heard of the Riders.

‘Show me the precious Ring!’ he said suddenly in the midst of the story: and Frodo, to his own astonishment, drew out the chain from his pocket, and unfastening the Ring handed it at once to Tom.

It seemed to grow larger as it lay for a moment on his big brown-skinned hand. Then suddenly he put it to his eye and laughed. For a second the hobbits had a vision, both comical and alarming, of his bright blue eye gleaming through a circle of gold. Then Tom put the Ring round the end of his little finger and held it up to the

candlelight. For a moment the hobbits noticed nothing strange about this. Then they gasped. There was no sign of Tom disappearing!

Tom laughed again, and then he spun the Ring in the air—and it vanished with a flash. Frodo gave a cry—and Tom leaned forward and handed it back to him with a smile.

Frodo looked at it closely, and rather suspiciously (like one who has lent a trinket to a juggler). It was the same Ring, or looked the same and weighed the same: for that Ring had always seemed to Frodo to weigh strangely heavy in the hand. But something prompted him to make sure. He was perhaps a trifle annoyed with Tom for seeming to make so light of what even Gandalf thought so perilously important. He waited for an opportunity, when the talk was going again, and Tom was telling an absurd story about badgers and their queer ways—then he slipped the Ring on.

Merry turned towards him to say something and gave a start, and checked an exclamation. Frodo was delighted (in a way): it was his own ring all right, for Merry was staring blankly at his chair, and obviously could not see him. He got up and crept quietly away from the fireside towards the outer door.

‘Hey there!’ cried Tom, glancing towards him with a most seeing look in his shining eyes. ‘Hey! Come Frodo, there! Where be you a-going? Old Tom Bombadil’s not as blind as that yet. Take off your golden ring! Your hand’s more fair without it. Come back! Leave your game and sit down beside me! We must talk a while more, and think about the morning. Tom must teach the right road, and keep your feet from wandering.’

Frodo laughed (trying to feel pleased), and taking off the Ring he came and sat down again. Tom now told them that he reckoned the Sun would shine tomorrow, and it would be a glad morning, and setting out would be hopeful. But they would do well to start early; for weather in that country was a thing that even Tom could not be sure of for long, and it would change sometimes quicker than he could change his jacket. ‘I am no weather-master,’ said he; ‘nor is aught that goes on two legs.’

By his advice they decided to make nearly due North from his house, over the western and lower slopes of the Downs: they might hope in that way to strike the East Road in a day’s journey, and avoid the Barrows. He told them not to be afraid—but to mind their own business.

‘Keep to the green grass. Don’t you go a-meddling with old stone or cold Wights or prying in their houses, unless you be strong folk with hearts that never falter!’ He said this more than once; and he advised them to pass barrows by on the west-side, if they chanced to stray near one. Then he taught them a rhyme to sing, if they should by ill-luck fall into any danger or difficulty the next day.

*Ho! Tom Bombadil, Tom Bombadillo!  
By water, wood and hill, by the reed and willow,  
By fire, sun and moon, harken now and hear us!  
Come, Tom Bombadil, for our need is near us!*

When they had sung this altogether after him, he clapped them each on the shoulder with a laugh, and taking candles led them back to their bedroom.



## Chapter 8: Fog On The Barrow-Downs

That night they heard no noises. But either in his dreams or out of them, he could not tell which, Frodo heard a sweet singing running in his mind: a song that seemed to come like a pale light behind a grey rain-curtain, and growing stronger to turn the veil all to glass and silver, until at last it was rolled back, and a far green country opened before him under a swift sunrise.

The vision melted into waking; and there was Tom whistling like a tree-full of birds; and the sun was already slanting down the hill and through the open window. Outside everything was green and pale gold.

After breakfast, which they again ate alone, they made ready to say farewell, as nearly heavy of heart as was possible on such a morning: cool, bright, and clean under a washed autumn sky of thin blue. The air came fresh from the North-west. Their quiet ponies were almost frisky, sniffing and moving restlessly. Tom came out of the house and waved his hat and danced upon the doorstep, bidding the hobbits to get up and be off and go with good speed.

They rode off along a path that wound away from behind the house, and went slanting up towards the north end of the hill-brow under which it sheltered. They had just dismounted to lead their ponies up the last steep slope, when suddenly Frodo stopped.

‘Goldberry!’ he cried. ‘My fair lady, clad all in silver green! We have never said farewell to her, nor seen her since the evening!’ He was so distressed that he turned back; but at that moment a clear call came rippling down. There on the hill-brow she stood beckoning to them: her hair was flying loose, and as it caught the sun it shone and shimmered. A light like the glint of water on dewy grass flashed from under her feet as she danced.

They hastened up the last slope, and stood breathless beside her. They bowed, but with a wave of her arm she bade them look round; and they looked out from the hill-top over lands under the morning. It was now as clear and far-seen as it had been veiled and misty when they stood upon the knoll in the Forest, which could now be seen rising pale and green out of the dark trees in the West. In that direction the land rose in wooded ridges, green, yellow, russet under the sun, beyond which lay hidden the valley of the Brandywine. To the South, over the line of the Withywindle, there was a distant glint like pale glass where the Brandywine River made a great loop in the lowlands and flowed away out of the knowledge of the hobbits. Northward beyond the dwindling downs the land ran away in flats and swellings of grey and green and pale earth-colours, until it faded into a featureless and shadowy distance. Eastward the Barrow-downs rose, ridge behind ridge into the morning, and vanished out of eyesight into a guess: it was no more than a guess of blue and a remote white glimmer blending with the hem of the sky, but it spoke to them, out of memory and old tales, of the high and distant mountains.

They took a deep draught of the air, and felt that a skip and a few stout strides would bear them wherever they wished. It seemed fainthearted to go jogging aside over the crumpled skirts of the downs towards the Road, when they should be leaping, as lusty as Tom, over the stepping stones of the hills straight towards the Mountains.

Goldberry spoke to them and recalled their eyes and thoughts. ‘Speed now, fair guests!’ she said. ‘And hold to your purpose! North with the wind in the left eye and a blessing on your footsteps! Make haste while the Sun shines!’ And to Frodo she said: ‘Farewell, Elf-friend, it was a merry meeting!’

But Frodo found no words to answer. He bowed low, and mounted his pony, and followed by his friends jogged slowly down the gentle slope behind the hill. Tom Bombadil’s house and the valley, and the Forest were lost to view. The air grew warmer between the green walls of hillside and hillside, and the scent of turf rose strong and sweet as they breathed. Turning back, when they reached the bottom of the green hollow, they saw Goldberry, now small and slender like a sunlit flower against the sky: she was standing still watching them, and her hands



were stretched out towards them. As they looked she gave a clear call, and lifting up her hand she turned and vanished behind the hill.

Their way wound along the floor of the hollow, and round the green feet of a steep hill into another deeper and broader valley, and then over the shoulders of further hills, and down their long limbs, and up their smooth sides again, up on to new hill-tops and down into new valleys. There was no tree nor any visible water: it was a country of grass and short springy turf, silent except for the whisper of the air over the edges of the land, and high lonely cries of strange birds. As they journeyed the sun mounted, and grew hot. Each time they climbed a ridge the breeze seemed to have grown less. When they caught a glimpse of the country westward the distant Forest seemed to be smoking, as if the fallen rain was steaming up again from leaf and root and mould. A shadow now lay round the edge of sight, a dark haze above which the upper sky was like a blue cap, hot and heavy.

About mid-day they came to a hill whose top was wide and flattened, like a shallow saucer with a green mounded rim. Inside there was no air stirring, and the sky seemed near their heads. They rode across and looked northwards. Then their hearts rose; for it seemed plain that they had come further already than they had expected. Certainly the distances had now all become hazy and deceptive, but there could be no doubt that the Downs were coming to an end. A long valley lay below them winding away northwards, until it came to an opening between two steep shoulders. Beyond, there seemed to be no more hills. Due north they faintly glimpsed a long dark line. 'That is a line of trees,' said Merry, 'and that must mark the Road. All along it for many leagues east of the Bridge there are trees growing. Some say they were planted in the old days.'

'Splendid!' said Frodo. 'If we make as good going this afternoon as we have done this morning, we shall have left the Downs before the Sun sets and be jogging on in search of a camping place.' But even as he spoke he turned his glance eastwards, and he saw that on that side the hills were higher and looked down upon them; and all those hills were crowned with green mounds, and on some were standing stones, pointing upwards like jagged teeth out of green gums.

That view was somehow disquieting; so they turned from the sight and went down into the hollow circle. In the midst of it there stood a single stone, standing tall under the sun above, and at this hour casting no shadow. It was shapeless and yet significant: like a landmark, or a guarding finger, or more like a warning. But they were now hungry, and the sun was still at the fearless noon; so they set their backs against the east side of the stone. It was cool, as if the sun had had no power to warm it; but at that time this seemed pleasant. There they took food and drink, and made as good a noon-meal under the open sky as anyone could wish; for the food came from 'down under Hill'. Tom had provided them with plenty for the comfort of the day. Their ponies unburdened strayed upon the grass.

Riding over the hills, and eating their fill, the warm sun and the scent of turf, lying a little too long, stretching out their legs and looking at the sky above their noses: these things are, perhaps, enough to explain what happened. However that may be: they woke suddenly and uncomfortably from a sleep they had never meant to take. The standing stone was cold, and it cast a long pale shadow that stretched eastward over them. The sun, a pale and watery yellow, was gleaming through the mist just above the west wall of the hollow in which they lay; north, south, and east, beyond the wall the fog was thick, cold and white. The air was silent, heavy and chill. Their ponies were standing crowded together with their heads down.

The hobbits sprang to their feet in alarm, and ran to the western rim. They found that they were upon an island in the fog. Even as they looked out in dismay towards the setting sun, it sank before their eyes into a white sea, and a cold grey shadow sprang up in the East behind. The fog rolled up to the walls and rose above them, and as it mounted it bent over their heads until it became a roof: they were shut in a hall of mist whose central pillar was the standing stone.

They felt as if a trap was closing about them; but they did not quite lose heart. They still remembered the hopeful view they had had of the line of the Road ahead, and they still knew in which direction it lay. In any case, they now had so great a dislike for that hollow place about the stone that no thought of remaining there was in their minds. They packed up as quickly as their chilled fingers would work.

Soon they were leading their ponies in single file over the rim and down the long northward slope of the hill, down into a foggy sea. As they went down the mist became colder and damper, and their hair hung lank and dripping on their foreheads. When they reached the bottom it was so chill that they halted and got out cloaks and hoods, which soon became bedewed with grey drops. Then, mounting their ponies, they went slowly on again, feeling their way by the rise and fall of the ground. They were steering, as well as they could guess, for the gate-like opening at the far northward end of the long valley which they had seen in the morning. Once they were through the gap, they had only to keep on in anything like a straight line and they were bound in the end to strike the Road. Their thoughts did not go beyond that, except for a vague hope that perhaps away beyond the Downs there might be no fog.

Their going was very slow. To prevent their getting separated and wandering in different directions they went in file, with Frodo leading. Sam was behind him, and after him came Pippin, and then Merry. The valley seemed to stretch on endlessly. Suddenly Frodo saw a hopeful sign. On either side ahead a darkness began to loom through the mist; and he guessed that they were at last approaching the gap in the hills, the north-gate of the Barrow-downs. If they could pass that, they would be free.

‘Come on! Follow me!’ he called back over his shoulder, and he hurried forward. But his hope soon changed to bewilderment and alarm. The dark patches grew darker, but they shrank; and suddenly he saw, towering ominous before him and leaning slightly towards one another like the pillars of a headless door, two huge standing stones. He could not remember having seen any sign of these in the valley, when he looked out from the hill in the morning. He had passed between them almost before he was aware: and even as he did so darkness seemed to fall round him. His pony reared and snorted, and he fell off. When he looked back he found that he was alone: the others had not followed him.

‘Sam!’ he called. ‘Pippin! Merry! Come along! Why don’t you keep up?’

There was no answer. Fear took him, and he ran back past the stones shouting wildly: ‘Sam! Sam! Merry! Pippin!’ The pony bolted into the mist and vanished. From some way off, or so it seemed, he thought he heard a cry: ‘Hoy! Frodo! Hoy!’ It was away eastward, on his left as he stood under the great stones, staring and straining into the gloom. He plunged off in the direction of the call, and found himself going steeply uphill.

As he struggled on he called again, and kept on calling more and more frantically; but he heard no answer for some time, and then it seemed faint and far ahead and high above him. ‘Frodo! Hoy!’ came the thin voices out of the mist: and then a cry that sounded like *help, help!* often repeated, ending with a last *help!* that trailed off into a long wail suddenly cut short. He stumbled forward with all the speed he could towards the cries; but the light was now gone, and clinging night had closed about him, so that it was impossible to be sure of any direction. He seemed all the time to be climbing up and up.

Only the change in the level of the ground at his feet told him when he at last came to the top of a ridge or hill. He was weary, sweating and yet chilled. It was wholly dark.

‘Where are you?’ he cried out miserably.

There was no reply. He stood listening. He was suddenly aware that it was getting very cold, and that up here a wind was beginning to blow, an icy wind. A change was coming in the weather. The mist was flowing past him now in shreds and tatters. His breath was smoking, and the darkness was less near and thick. He looked up and saw with surprise that faint stars were appearing overhead amid the strands of hurrying cloud and fog. The wind began to hiss over the grass.

He imagined suddenly that he caught a muffled cry, and he made towards it; and even as he went forward the mist was rolled up and thrust aside, and the starry sky was unveiled. A glance showed him that he was now facing southwards and was on a round hill-top, which he must have climbed from the north. Out of the east the biting wind was blowing. To his right there loomed against the westward stars a dark black shape. A great barrow stood there.

‘Where are you?’ he cried again, both angry and afraid.

‘Here!’ said a voice, deep and cold, that seemed to come out of the ground. ‘I am waiting for you!’

‘No!’ said Frodo; but he did not run away. His knees gave, and he fell on the ground. Nothing happened, and there was no sound. Trembling he looked up, in time to see a tall dark figure like a shadow against the stars. It leaned over him. He thought there were two eyes, very cold though lit with a pale light that seemed to come from some remote distance. Then a grip stronger and colder than iron seized him. The icy touch froze his bones, and he remembered no more.

When he came to himself again, for a moment he could recall nothing except a sense of dread. Then suddenly he knew that he was imprisoned, caught hopelessly; he was in a barrow. A Barrow-wight had taken him, and he was probably already under the dreadful spells of the Barrow-wights about which whispered tales spoke. He dared not move, but lay as he found himself: flat on his back upon a cold stone with his hands on his breast.

But though his fear was so great that it seemed to be part of the very darkness that was round him, he found himself as he lay thinking about Bilbo Baggins and his stories, of their jogging along together in the lanes of the Shire and talking about roads and adventures. There is a seed of courage hidden (often deeply, it is true) in the heart of the fattest and most timid hobbit, waiting for some final and desperate danger to make it grow. Frodo was neither very fat nor very timid; indeed, though he did not know it, Bilbo (and Gandalf) had thought him the best hobbit in the Shire. He thought he had come to the end of his adventure, and a terrible end, but the thought hardened him. He found himself stiffening, as if for a final spring; he no longer felt limp like a helpless prey.

As he lay there, thinking and getting a hold of himself, he noticed all at once that the darkness was slowly giving way: a pale greenish light was growing round him. It did not at first show him what kind of a place he was in, for the light seemed to be coming out of himself, and from the floor beside him, and had not yet reached the roof or wall. He turned, and there in the cold glow he saw lying beside him Sam, Pippin, and Merry. They were on their backs, and their faces looked deathly pale; and they were clad in white. About them lay many treasures, of gold maybe, though in that light they looked cold and unlovely. On their heads were circlets, gold chains were about their waists, and on their fingers were many rings. Swords lay by their sides, and shields were at their feet. But across their three necks lay one long naked sword.

Suddenly a song began: a cold murmur, rising and falling. The voice seemed far away and immeasurably dreary, sometimes high in the air and thin, sometimes like a low moan from the ground. Out of the formless stream of sad but horrible sounds, strings of words would now and again shape themselves: grim, hard, cold words, heartless and miserable. The night was railing against the morning of which it was bereaved, and the cold was cursing the warmth for which it hungered. Frodo was chilled to the marrow. After a while the song became clearer, and with dread in his heart he perceived that it had changed into an incantation:

*Cold be hand and heart and bone,  
and cold be sleep under stone:  
never more to wake on stony bed,  
never, till the Sun fails and the Moon is dead.  
In the black wind the stars shall die,  
and still on gold here let them lie,  
till the dark lord lifts his hand  
over dead sea and withered land.*

He heard behind his head a creaking and scraping sound. Raising himself on one arm he looked, and saw now in the pale light that they were in a kind of passage which behind them turned a corner. Round the corner a long arm was groping, walking on its fingers towards Sam, who was lying nearest, and towards the hilt of the sword that lay upon him.

At first Frodo felt as if he had indeed been turned into stone by the incantation. Then a wild thought of escape came to him. He wondered if he put on the Ring, whether the Barrow-wight would miss him, and he might find some way out. He thought of himself running free over the grass, grieving for Merry, and Sam, and Pippin, but free and alive himself. Gandalf would admit that there had been nothing else he could do.

But the courage that had been awakened in him was now too strong: he could not leave his friends so easily. He wavered, groping in his pocket, and then fought with himself again; and as he did so the arm crept nearer.

Suddenly resolve hardened in him, and he seized a short sword that lay beside him, and kneeling he stooped low over the bodies of his companions. With what strength he had he hewed at the crawling arm near the wrist, and the hand broke off; but at the same moment the sword splintered up to the hilt. There was a shriek and the light vanished. In the dark there was a snarling noise.

Frodo fell forward over Merry, and Merry's face felt cold. All at once back into his mind, from which it had disappeared with the first coming of the fog, came the memory of the house down under the Hill, and of Tom singing. He remembered the rhyme that Tom had taught them. In a small desperate voice he began: *Ho! Tom Bombadil!* and with that name his voice seemed to grow strong: it had a full and lively sound, and the dark chamber echoed as if to drum and trumpet.

*Ho! Tom Bombadil, Tom Bombadillo!  
By water, wood and hill, by the reed and willow,  
By fire, sun and moon, harken now and hear us!  
Come, Tom Bombadil, for our need is near us!*

There was a sudden deep silence, in which Frodo could hear his heart beating. After a long slow moment he heard plain, but far away, as if it was coming down through the ground or through thick walls, an answering voice singing:

*Old Tom Bombadil is a merry fellow,  
Bright blue his jacket is, and his boots are yellow.  
None has ever caught him yet, for Tom, he is the master:  
His songs are stronger songs, and his feet are faster.*

There was a loud rumbling sound, as of stones rolling and falling, and suddenly light streamed in, real light, the plain light of day. A low door-like opening appeared at the end of the chamber beyond Frodo's feet; and there was Tom's head (hat, feather, and all) framed against the light of the sun rising red behind him. The light fell upon the floor, and upon the faces of the three hobbits lying beside Frodo. They did not stir, but the sickly hue had left them. They looked now as if they were only very deeply asleep.

Tom stooped, removed his hat, and came into the dark chamber, singing:

*Get out, you old Wight! Vanish in the sunlight!  
Shrivel like the cold mist, like the winds go wailing,  
Out into the barren lands far beyond the mountains!  
Come never here again! Leave your barrow empty!  
Lost and forgotten be, darker than the darkness,  
Where gates stand for ever shut, till the world is mended.*

At these words there was a cry and part of the inner end of the chamber fell in with a crash. Then there was a long trailing shriek, fading away into an unguessable distance; and after that silence.

'Come, friend Frodo!' said Tom. 'Let us get out on to clean grass! You must help me bear them.'

Together they carried out Merry, Pippin, and Sam. As Frodo left the barrow for the last time he thought he saw a severed hand wriggling still, like a wounded spider, in a heap of fallen earth. Tom went back in again, and there was a sound of much thumping and stamping. When he came out he was bearing in his arms a great load of treasure: things of gold, silver, copper, and bronze; many beads and chains and jewelled ornaments. He climbed the green barrow and laid them all on top in the sunshine.

There he stood, with his hat in his hand and the wind in his hair, and looked down upon the three hobbits, that had been laid on their backs upon the grass at the west side of the mound. Raising his right hand he said in a clear and commanding voice:

*Wake now my merry lads! Wake and hear me calling!  
Warm now be heart and limb! The cold stone is fallen;  
Dark door is standing wide; dead hand is broken.*

*Night under Night is flown, and the Gate is open!*

To Frodo's great joy the hobbits stirred, stretched their arms, rubbed their eyes, and then suddenly sprang up. They looked about in amazement, first at Frodo, and then at Tom standing large as life on the barrow-top above them; and then at themselves in their thin white rags, crowned and belted with pale gold, and jingling with trinkets.

'What in the name of wonder?' began Merry, feeling the golden circlet that had slipped over one eye. Then he stopped, and a shadow came over his face, and he closed his eyes. 'Of course, I remember!' he said. 'The men of Carn Dûm came on us at night, and we were worsted. Ah! the spear in my heart!' He clutched at his breast. 'No! No!' he said, opening his eyes. 'What am I saying? I have been dreaming. Where did you get to, Frodo?'

'I thought that I was lost,' said Frodo; 'but I don't want to speak of it. Let us think of what we are to do now! Let us go on!'

'Dressed up like this, sir?' said Sam. 'Where are my clothes?' He flung his circlet, belt, and rings on the grass, and looked round helplessly, as if he expected to find his cloak, jacket, and breeches, and other hobbit-garments lying somewhere to hand.

'You won't find your clothes again,' said Tom, bounding down from the mound, and laughing as he danced round them in the sunlight. One would have thought that nothing dangerous or dreadful had happened; and indeed the horror faded out of their hearts as they looked at him, and saw the merry glint in his eyes.

'What do you mean?' asked Pippin, looking at him, half puzzled and half amused. 'Why not?'

But Tom shook his head, saying: 'You've found yourselves again, out of the deep water. Clothes are but little loss, if you escape from drowning. Be glad, my merry friends, and let the warm sunlight heat now heart and limb! Cast off these cold rags! Run naked on the grass, while Tom goes a-hunting!'

He sprang away down hill, whistling and calling. Looking down after him Frodo saw him running away southwards along the green hollow between their hill and the next, still whistling and crying:

*Hey! now! Come hoy now! Whither do you wander?  
Up, down, near or far, here, there or yonder?  
Sharp-ears, Wise-nose, Swish-tail and Bumpkin,  
White-socks my little lad, and old Fatty Lumpkin!*

So he sang, running fast, tossing up his hat and catching it, until he was hidden by a fold of the ground: but for some time his *hey now! hoy now!* came floating back down the wind, which had shifted round towards the south.

The air was growing very warm again. The hobbits ran about for a while on the grass, as he told them. Then they lay basking in the sun with the delight of those that have been wafted suddenly from bitter winter to a friendly clime, or of people that, after being long ill and bedridden, wake one day to find that they are unexpectedly well and the day is again full of promise.

By the time that Tom returned they were feeling strong (and hungry). He reappeared, hat first, over the brow of the hill, and behind him came in an obedient line *six* ponies: their own five and one more. The last was plainly old Fatty Lumpkin: he was larger, stronger, fatter (and older) than their own ponies. Merry, to whom the others belonged, had not, in fact, given them any such names, but they answered to the new names that Tom had given them for the rest of their lives. Tom called them one by one and they climbed over the brow and stood in a line. Then Tom bowed to the hobbits.

'Here are your ponies, now!' he said. 'They've more sense (in some ways) than you wandering hobbits have—more sense in their noses. For they sniff danger ahead which you walk right into; and if they run to save themselves, then they run the right way. You must forgive them all; for though their hearts are faithful, to face fear of Barrow-wights is not what they were made for. See, here they come again, bringing all their burdens!'

Merry, Sam, and Pippin now clothed themselves in spare garments from their packs; and they soon felt too hot, for they were obliged to put on some of the thicker and warmer things that they had brought against the oncoming of winter.

‘Where does that other old animal, that Fatty Lumpkin, come from?’ asked Frodo.

‘He’s mine,’ said Tom. ‘My four-legged friend; though I seldom ride him, and he wanders often far, free upon the hillsides. When your ponies stayed with me, they got to know my Lumpkin; and they smelt him in the night, and quickly ran to meet him. I thought he’d look for them and with his words of wisdom take all their fear away. But now, my jolly Lumpkin, old Tom’s going to ride. Hey! he’s coming with you, just to set you on the road; so he needs a pony. For you cannot easily talk to hobbits that are riding, when you’re on your own legs trying to trot beside them.’

The hobbits were delighted to hear this, and thanked Tom many times; but he laughed, and said that they were so good at losing themselves that he would not feel happy till he had seen them safe over the borders of his land. ‘I’ve got things to do,’ he said: ‘my making and my singing, my talking and my walking, and my watching of the country. Tom can’t be always near to open doors and willow-cracks. Tom has his house to mind, and Goldberry is waiting.’

It was still fairly early by the sun, something between nine and ten, and the hobbits turned their minds to food. Their last meal had been lunch beside the standing stone the day before. They breakfasted now off the remainder of Tom’s provisions, meant for their supper, with additions that Tom had brought with him. It was not a large meal (considering hobbits and the circumstances), but they felt much better for it. While they were eating Tom went up to the mound, and looked through the treasures. Most of these he made into a pile that glistened and sparkled on the grass. He bade them lie there ‘free to all finders, birds, beasts, Elves or Men, and all kindly creatures’; for so the spell of the mound should be broken and scattered and no Wight ever come back to it. He chose for himself from the pile a brooch set with blue stones, many-shaded like flax-flowers or the wings of blue butterflies. He looked long at it, as if stirred by some memory, shaking his head, and saying at last:

‘Here is a pretty toy for Tom and for his lady! Fair was she who long ago wore this on her shoulder. Goldberry shall wear it now, and we will not forget her!’

For each of the hobbits he chose a dagger, long, leaf-shaped, and keen, of marvellous workmanship, damasked with serpent-forms in red and gold. They gleamed as he drew them from their black sheaths, wrought of some strange metal, light and strong, and set with many fiery stones. Whether by some virtue in these sheaths or because of the spell that lay on the mound, the blades seemed untouched by time, unruined, sharp, glittering in the sun.

‘Old knives are long enough as swords for hobbit-people,’ he said. ‘Sharp blades are good to have, if Shire-folk go walking, east, south, or far away into dark and danger.’ Then he told them that these blades were forged many long years ago by Men of Westemnet: they were foes of the Dark Lord, but they were overcome by the evil king of Carn Dûm in the Land of Angmar.

‘Few now remember them,’ Tom murmured, ‘yet still some go wandering, sons of forgotten kings walking in loneliness, guarding from evil things folk that are heedless.’

The hobbits did not understand his words, but as he spoke they had a vision as it were of a great expanse of years behind them, like a vast shadowy plain over which there strode shapes of Men, tall and grim with bright swords, and last came one with a star on his brow<sup>382</sup>. Then the vision faded, and they were back in the sunlit world. It was time to start again. They made ready, packing their bags and lading their ponies. Their new weapons they hung on their leather belts under their jackets, feeling them very awkward, and wondering if they would be of any use. Fighting had not before occurred to any of them as one of the adventures in which their flight would land them.

At last they set off. They led their ponies down the hill; and then mounting they trotted quickly along the valley. They looked back and saw the top of the old mound on the hill, and from it the sunlight on the gold went up like a yellow flame. Then they turned a shoulder of the Downs and it was hidden from view.

Though Frodo looked about him on every side he saw no sign of the great stones standing like a gate, and before long they came to the northern gap and rode swiftly through, and the land fell away before them. It was a merry journey with Tom Bombadil trotting gaily beside them, or before them, on Fatty Lumpkin, who could move much faster than his girth promised. Tom sang most of the time, but it was chiefly nonsense, or else perhaps a strange language unknown to the hobbits, an ancient language whose words were mainly those of wonder and delight.

They went forward steadily, but they soon saw that the Road was further away than they had imagined. Even without a fog, their sleep at mid-day would have prevented them from reaching it until after nightfall on the day before. The dark line they had seen was not a line of trees but a line of bushes growing on the edge of a deep dike with a steep wall on the further side. Tom said that it had once been the boundary of a kingdom, but a very long time ago. He seemed to remember something sad about it, and would not say much.

They climbed down and out of the dike and through a gap in the wall, and then Tom turned due north, for they had been bearing somewhat to the west. The land was now open and fairly level, and they quickened their pace, but the sun was already sinking low when at last they saw a line of tall trees ahead, and they knew that they had come back to the Road after many unexpected adventures. They galloped their ponies over the last furlongs, and halted under the long shadows of the trees. They were on the top of a sloping bank, and the Road, now dim as evening drew on, wound away below them. At this point it ran nearly from South-west to North-east, and on their right it fell quickly down into a wide hollow. It was rutted and bore many signs of the recent heavy rain; there were pools and pot-holes full of water.

They rode down the bank and looked up and down. There was nothing to be seen. ‘Well, here we are again at last!’ said Frodo. ‘I suppose we haven’t lost more than two days by my short cut through the Forest! But perhaps the delay will prove useful—it may have put them off our trail.’

The others looked at him. The shadow of the fear of the Black Riders came suddenly over them again. Ever since they had entered the Forest they had thought chiefly of getting back to the Road; only now when it lay beneath their feet did they remember the danger which pursued them, and was more than likely to be lying in wait for them upon the Road itself. They looked anxiously back towards the setting sun, but the Road was brown and empty.

‘Do you think,’ asked Pippin hesitatingly, ‘do you think we may be pursued, tonight?’

‘No, I hope not tonight,’ answered Tom Bombadil; ‘nor perhaps the next day. But do not trust my guess; for I cannot tell for certain. Out east my knowledge fails. Tom is not master of Riders from the Black Land far beyond his country.’

All the same the hobbits wished he was coming with them. They felt that he would know how to deal with Black Riders, if anyone did. They would soon now be going forward into lands wholly strange to them, and beyond all but the most vague and distant legends of the Shire, and in the gathering twilight they longed for home. A deep loneliness and sense of loss was on them. They stood silent, reluctant to make the final parting, and only slowly became aware that Tom was wishing them farewell, and telling them to have good heart and to ride on till dark without halting.

‘Tom will give you good advice, till this day is over (after that your own luck must go with you and guide you): four miles along the Road you’ll come upon a village, Bree under Bree-hill, with doors looking westward. There you’ll find an old inn that is called *The Prancing Pony*. Barliman Butterbur is the worthy keeper. There you can stay the night, and afterwards the morning will speed you upon your way. Be bold, but wary! Keep up your merry hearts, and ride to meet your fortune!’

They begged him to come at least as far as the inn and drink once more with them; but he laughed and refused, saying:

*Tom’s country ends here: he will not pass the borders.  
Tom has his house to mind, and Goldberry is waiting!*

Then he turned, tossed up his hat, leaped on Lumpkin’s back, and rode up over the bank and away singing into the dusk.

The hobbits climbed up and watched him until he was out of sight.

‘I am sorry to take leave of Master Bombadil,’ said Sam. ‘He’s a caution and no mistake. I reckon we may go a good deal further and see naught better, nor queerer. But I won’t deny I’ll be glad to see this *Prancing Pony* he spoke of. I hope it’ll be like *The Green Dragon* away back home! What sort of folk are they in Bree?’

‘There are hobbits in Bree,’ said Merry, ‘as well as Big Folk. I daresay it will be homelike enough. *The Pony* is a good inn by all accounts. My people ride out there now and again.’

‘It may be all we could wish,’ said Frodo; ‘but it is outside the Shire all the same. Don’t make yourselves too much at home! Please remember—all of you—that the name of Baggins must NOT be mentioned. I am Mr. Underhill, if any name must be given.’

They now mounted their ponies and rode off silently into the evening. Darkness came down quickly, as they plodded slowly downhill and up again, until at last they saw lights twinkling some distance ahead.

Before them rose Bree-hill barring the way, a dark mass against misty stars; and under its western flank nestled a large village. Towards it they now hurried desiring only to find a fire, and a door between them and the night.





## Chapter 9: At The Sign Of The Prancing Pony

Bree was the chief village of the Bree-land, a small inhabited region, like an island in the empty lands round about. Besides Bree itself, there was Staddle on the other side of the hill, Combe in a deep valley a little further eastward, and Archet on the edge of the Chetwood. Lying round Bree-hill and the villages was a small country of fields and tamed woodland only a few miles broad.

The Men of Bree were brown-haired, broad, and rather short, cheerful and independent: they belonged to nobody but themselves; but they were more friendly and familiar with Hobbits, Dwarves, Elves, and other inhabitants of the world about them than was (or is) usual with Big People. According to their own tales they were the original inhabitants and were the descendants of the first Men that ever wandered into the West of the middle-world. Few had survived the turmoils of the Elder Days; but when the Kings returned again over the Great Sea they had found the Bree-men still there, and they were still there now, when the memory of the old Kings had faded into the grass.

In those days no other Men had settled dwellings so far west, or within a hundred leagues of the Shire. But in the wild lands beyond Bree there were mysterious wanderers. The Bree-folk called them Rangers, and knew nothing of their origin. They were taller and darker than the Men of Bree and were believed to have strange powers of sight and hearing, and to understand the languages of beasts and birds. They roamed at will southwards, and eastwards even as far as the Misty Mountains; but they were now few and rarely seen. When they appeared they brought news from afar, and told strange forgotten tales which were eagerly listened to; but the Bree-folk did not make friends of them.

There were also many families of hobbits in the Bree-land; and *they* claimed to be the oldest settlement of Hobbits in the world, one that was founded long before even the Brandywine was crossed and the Shire colonized. They lived mostly in Staddle though there were some in Bree itself, especially on the higher slopes of the hill, above the houses of the Men. The Big Folk and the Little Folk (as they called one another) were on friendly terms, minding their own affairs in their own ways, but both rightly regarding themselves as necessary parts of the Bree-folk. Nowhere else in the world was this peculiar (but excellent) arrangement to be found.

The Bree-folk, Big and Little, did not themselves travel much; and the affairs of the four villages were their chief concern. Occasionally the Hobbits of Bree went as far as Buckland, or the Eastfarthing; but though their little land was not much further than a day's riding east of the Brandywine Bridge, the Hobbits of the Shire now seldom visited it. An occasional Bucklander or adventurous Took would come out to the Inn for a night or two, but even that was becoming less and less usual. The Shire-hobbits referred to those of Bree, and to any others that lived beyond the borders, as Outsiders, and took very little interest in them, considering them dull and uncouth. There were probably many more Outsiders scattered about in the West of the World in those days than the people of the Shire imagined. Some, doubtless, were no better than tramps, ready to dig a hole in any bank and stay only as long as it suited them. But in the Bree-land, at any rate, the hobbits were decent and prosperous, and no more rustic than most of their distant relatives Inside. It was not yet forgotten that there had been a time when there was much coming and going between the Shire and Bree. There was Bree-blood in the Brandybucks by all accounts.

The village of Bree had some hundred stone houses of the Big Folk, mostly above the Road, nestling on the hillside with windows looking west. On that side, running in more than half a circle from the hill and back to it, there was a deep dike with a thick hedge on the inner side. Over this the Road crossed by a causeway; but where it pierced the hedge it was barred by a great gate. There was another gate in the southern corner where the Road ran out of the village. The gates were closed at nightfall; but just inside them were small lodges for the gatekeepers.

Down on the Road, where it swept to the right to go round the foot of the hill, there was a large inn. It had been built long ago when the traffic on the roads had been far greater. For Bree stood at an old meeting of ways; another ancient road crossed the East Road just outside the dike at the western end of the village, and in former days Men and other folk of various sorts had travelled much on it. *Strange as News from Bree* was still a saying in the Eastfarthing, descending from those days, when news from North, South, and East could be heard in the inn, and when the Shire-hobbits used to go more often to hear it. But the Northern Lands had long been desolate, and the North Road was now seldom used: it was grass-grown, and the Bree-folk called it the Greenway.

The Inn of Bree was still there, however, and the innkeeper was an important person. His house was a meeting place for the idle, talkative, and inquisitive among the inhabitants, large and small, of the four villages; and a resort of Rangers and other wanderers, and for such travellers (mostly dwarves) as still journeyed on the East Road, to and from the Mountains.

It was dark, and white stars were shining, when Frodo and his companions came at last to the Greenway-crossing and drew near the village. They came to the West-gate and found it shut; but at the door of the lodge beyond it, there was a man sitting. He jumped up and fetched a lantern and looked over the gate at them in surprise.

‘What do you want, and where do you come from?’ he asked gruffly.

‘We are making for the inn here,’ answered Frodo. ‘We are journeying east and cannot go further tonight.’

‘Hobbits! Four hobbits! And what’s more, out of the Shire by their talk,’ said the gatekeeper, softly as if speaking to himself. He stared at them darkly for a moment, and then slowly opened the gate and let them ride through.

‘We don’t often see Shire-folk riding on the Road at night,’ he went on, as they halted a moment by his door. ‘You’ll pardon my wondering what business takes you away east of Bree! What may your names be, might I ask?’

‘Our names and our business are our own, and this does not seem a good place to discuss them,’ said Frodo, not liking the look of the man or the tone of his voice.

‘Your business is your own, no doubt,’ said the man; ‘but it’s my business to ask questions after nightfall.’

‘We are hobbits from Buckland, and we have a fancy to travel and to stay at the inn here,’ put in Merry. ‘I am Mr. Brandybuck. Is that enough for you? The Bree-folk used to be fair-spoken to travellers, or so I had heard.’

‘All right, all right!’ said the man. ‘I meant no offence. But you’ll find maybe that more folk than old Harry at the gate will be asking you questions. There’s queer folk about. If you go on to *The Pony*, you’ll find you’re not the only guests.’

He wished them good night, and they said no more; but Frodo could see in the lantern-light that the man was still eyeing them curiously. He was glad to hear the gate clang to behind them, as they rode forward. He wondered why the man was so suspicious, and whether anyone had been asking for news of a party of hobbits. Could it have been Gandalf? He might have arrived, while they were delayed in the Forest and the Downs. But there was something in the look and the voice of the gatekeeper that made him uneasy.

The man stared after the hobbits for a moment, and then he went back to his house. As soon as his back was turned, a dark figure climbed quickly in over the gate and melted into the shadows of the village street.

The hobbits rode on up a gentle slope, passing a few detached houses, and drew up outside the inn. The houses looked large and strange to them. Sam stared up at the inn with its three storeys and many windows, and felt his heart sink. He had imagined himself meeting giants taller than trees, and other creatures even more terrifying, some time or other in the course of his journey; but at the moment he was finding his first sight of Men and their tall houses quite enough, indeed too much for the dark end of a tiring day. He pictured black horses standing all saddled in the shadows of the inn-yard, and Black Riders peering out of dark upper windows.

‘We surely aren’t going to stay here for the night, are we, sir?’ he exclaimed. ‘If there are hobbit-folk in these parts, why don’t we look for some that would be willing to take us in? It would be more homelike.’

‘What’s wrong with the inn?’ said Frodo. ‘Tom Bombadil recommended it. I expect it’s homelike enough inside.’

Even from the outside the inn looked a pleasant house to familiar eyes. It had a front on the Road, and two wings running back on land partly cut out of the lower slopes of the hill, so that at the rear the second-floor windows were level with the ground. There was a wide arch leading to a courtyard between the two wings, and on the left under the arch there was a large doorway reached by a few broad steps. The door was open and light streamed out of it. Above the arch there was a lamp, and beneath it swung a large signboard: a fat white pony reared up on its hind legs. Over the door was painted in white letters: THE PRANCING PONY by BARLIMAN BUTTERBUR. Many of the lower windows showed lights behind thick curtains.

As they hesitated outside in the gloom, someone began singing a merry song inside, and many cheerful voices joined loudly in the chorus. They listened to this encouraging sound for a moment and then got off their ponies. The song ended and there was a burst of laughter and clapping.

They led their ponies under the arch, and leaving them standing in the yard they climbed up the steps. Frodo went forward and nearly bumped into a short fat man with a bald head and a red face. He had a white apron on, and was bustling out of one door and in through another, carrying a tray laden with full mugs.

‘Can we—’ began Frodo.

‘Half a minute, if you please!’ shouted the man over his shoulder, and vanished into a babel of voices and a cloud of smoke. In a moment he was out again, wiping his hands on his apron.

‘Good evening, little master!’ he said, bending down. ‘What may you be wanting?’

‘Beds for four, and stabling for five ponies, if that can be managed. Are you Mr. Butterbur?’

‘That’s right! Barliman is my name. Barliman Butterbur at your service! You’re from the Shire, eh?’ he said, and then suddenly he clapped his hand to his forehead, as if trying to remember something. ‘Hobbits!’ he cried. ‘Now what does that remind me of? Might I ask your names, sirs?’

‘Mr. Took and Mr. Brandybuck,’ said Frodo; ‘and this is Sam Gamgee. My name is Underhill.’

‘There now!’ said Mr. Butterbur, snapping his fingers. ‘It’s gone again! But it’ll come back, when I have time to think. I’m run off my feet; but I’ll see what I can do for you. We don’t often get a party out of the Shire nowadays, and I should be sorry not to make you welcome. But there is such a crowd already in the house tonight as there hasn’t been for long enough. It never rains but it pours, we say in Bree.’

‘Hi! Nob!’ he shouted. ‘Where are you, you woolly-footed slowcoach? Nob!’

‘Coming, sir! Coming!’ A cheery-looking hobbit bobbed out of a door, and seeing the travellers, stopped short and stared at them with great interest.

‘Where’s Bob?’ asked the landlord. ‘You don’t know? Well, find him! Double sharp! I haven’t got six legs, nor six eyes neither! Tell Bob there’s five ponies that have to be stabled. He must find room somehow.’ Nob trotted off with a grin and a wink.

‘Well now, what was I going to say?’ said Mr. Butterbur, tapping his forehead. ‘One thing drives out another, so to speak. I’m that busy tonight, my head is going round. There’s a party that came up the Greenway from down South last night—and that was strange enough to begin with. Then there’s a travelling company of dwarves going West come in this evening. And now there’s you. If you weren’t hobbits, I doubt if we could house you. But we’ve got a room or two in the north wing that were made special for hobbits, when this place was built. On the ground floor as they usually prefer; round windows and all as they like it. I hope you’ll be comfortable. You’ll be wanting supper, I don’t doubt. As soon as may be. This way now!’

He led them a short way down a passage, and opened a door. ‘Here is a nice little parlour!’ he said. ‘I hope it will suit. Excuse me now. I’m that busy. No time for talking. I must be trotting. It’s hard work for two legs, but

I don't get thinner. I'll look in again later. If you want anything, ring the hand-bell, and Nob will come. If he don't come, ring and shout!'

Off he went at last, and left them feeling rather breathless. He seemed capable of an endless stream of talk, however busy he might be. They found themselves in a small and cosy room. There was a bit of bright fire burning on the hearth, and in front of it were some low and comfortable chairs. There was a round table, already spread with a white cloth, and on it was a large hand-bell. But Nob, the hobbit servant, came bustling in long before they thought of ringing. He brought candles and a tray full of plates.

'Will you be wanting anything to drink, masters?' he asked. 'And shall I show you the bedrooms, while your supper is got ready?'

They were washed and in the middle of good deep mugs of beer when Mr. Butterbur and Nob came in again. In a twinkling the table was laid. There was hot soup, cold meats, a blackberry tart, new loaves, slabs of butter, and half a ripe cheese: good plain food, as good as the Shire could show, and homelike enough to dispel the last of Sam's misgivings (already much relieved by the excellence of the beer).

The landlord hovered round for a little, and then prepared to leave them. 'I don't know whether you would care to join the company, when you have supped,' he said, standing at the door. 'Perhaps you would rather go to your beds. Still the company would be very pleased to welcome you, if you had a mind. We don't get Outsiders—travellers from the Shire, I should say, begging your pardon—often; and we like to hear a bit of news, or any story or song you may have in mind. But as you please! Ring the bell, if you lack anything!'

So refreshed and encouraged did they feel at the end of their supper (about three quarters of an hour's steady going, not hindered by unnecessary talk) that Frodo, Pippin, and Sam decided to join the company. Merry said it would be too stuffy. 'I shall sit here quietly by the fire for a bit, and perhaps go out later for a sniff of the air. Mind your Ps and Qs, and don't forget that you are supposed to be escaping in secret, and are still on the high-road and not very far from the Shire!'

'All right!' said Pippin. 'Mind yourself! Don't get lost, and don't forget that it is safer indoors!'

The company was in the big common-room of the inn. The gathering was large and mixed, as Frodo discovered, when his eyes got used to the light. This came chiefly from a blazing log-fire, for the three lamps hanging from the beams were dim, and half veiled in smoke. Barliman Butterbur was standing near the fire, talking to a couple of dwarves and one or two strange-looking men. On the benches were various folk: men of Bree, a collection of local hobbits (sitting chattering together), a few more dwarves, and other vague figures difficult to make out away in the shadows and corners.

As soon as the Shire-hobbits entered, there was a chorus of welcome from the Bree-landers. The strangers, especially those that had come up the Greenway, stared at them curiously. The landlord introduced the newcomers to the Bree-folk, so quickly that, though they caught many names, they were seldom sure who the names belonged to. The Men of Bree seemed all to have rather botanical (and to the Shire-folk rather odd) names, like Rushlight, Goatleaf, Heathertoes, Appledore, Thistlewool and Ferny (not to mention Butterbur). Some of the hobbits had similar names. The Mugworts, for instance, seemed numerous. But most of them had natural names, such as Banks, Brockhouse, Longholes, Sandheaver, and Tunnelly, many of which were used in the Shire. There were several Underhills from Staddle, and as they could not imagine sharing a name without being related, they took Frodo to their hearts as a long-lost cousin.

The Bree-hobbits were, in fact, friendly and inquisitive, and Frodo soon found that some explanation of what he was doing would have to be given. He gave out that he was interested in history and geography (at which there was much wagging of heads, although neither of these words were much used in the Bree-dialect). He said he was thinking of writing a book (at which there was silent astonishment), and that he and his friends wanted to collect information about hobbits living outside the Shire, especially in the eastern lands.

At this a chorus of voices broke out. If Frodo had really wanted to write a book, and had had many ears, he would have learned enough for several chapters in a few minutes. And if that was not enough, he was given a whole list of names, beginning with 'Old Barliman here', to whom he could go for further information. But after a time, as Frodo did not show any sign of writing a book on the spot, the hobbits returned to their

questions about doings in the Shire. Frodo did not prove very communicative, and he soon found himself sitting alone in a corner, listening and looking around.

The Men and Dwarves were mostly talking of distant events and telling news of a kind that was becoming only too familiar. There was trouble away in the South, and it seemed that the Men who had come up the Greenway were on the move, looking for lands where they could find some peace. The Bree-folk were sympathetic, but plainly not very ready to take a large number of strangers into their little land. One of the travellers, a squint-eyed ill-favoured fellow, was foretelling that more and more people would be coming north in the near future. 'If room isn't found for them, they'll find it for themselves. They've a right to live, same as other folk,' he said loudly. The local inhabitants did not look pleased at the prospect.

The hobbits did not pay much attention to all this, as it did not at the moment seem to concern hobbits. Big Folk could hardly beg for lodgings in hobbit-holes. They were more interested in Sam and Pippin, who were now feeling quite at home, and were chatting gaily about events in the Shire. Pippin roused a good deal of laughter with an account of the collapse of the roof of the Town Hole in Michel Delving: Will Whitfoot, the Mayor, and the fattest hobbit in the Westfarthing, had been buried in chalk, and came out like a floured dumpling. But there were several questions asked that made Frodo a little uneasy. One of the Bree-landers, who seemed to have been in the Shire several times, wanted to know where the Underhills lived and who they were related to.

Suddenly Frodo noticed that a strange-looking weather-beaten man, sitting in the shadows near the wall, was also listening intently to the hobbit-talk. He had a tall tankard in front of him, and was smoking a long-stemmed pipe curiously carved. His legs were stretched out before him, showing high boots of supple leather that fitted him well, but had seen much wear and were now caked with mud. A travel-stained cloak of heavy dark-green cloth was drawn close about him, and in spite of the heat of the room he wore a hood that overshadowed his face; but the gleam of his eyes could be seen as he watched the hobbits.

'Who is that?' Frodo asked, when he got a chance to whisper to Mr. Butterbur. 'I don't think you introduced him?'

'Him?' said the landlord in an answering whisper, cocking an eye without turning his head. 'I don't rightly know. He is one of the wandering folk—Rangers we call them. He seldom talks: not but what he can tell a rare tale when he has the mind. He disappears for a month, or a year, and then he pops up again. He was in and out pretty often last spring; but I haven't seen him about lately. What his right name is I've never heard: but he's known round here as Strider. Goes about at a great pace on his long shanks; though he don't tell nobody what cause he has to hurry. But there's no accounting for East and West, as we say in Bree, meaning the Rangers and the Shire-folk, begging your pardon. Funny you should ask about him.' But at that moment Mr. Butterbur was called away by a demand for more ale and his last remark remained unexplained.

Frodo found that Strider was now looking at him, as if he had heard or guessed all that had been said. Presently, with a wave of his hand and a nod, he invited Frodo to come over and sit by him. As Frodo drew near he threw back his hood, showing a shaggy head of dark hair flecked with grey, and in a pale stern face a pair of keen grey eyes.

'I am called Strider,' he said in a low voice. 'I am very pleased to meet you, Master—Underhill, if old Butterbur got your name right.'

'He did,' said Frodo stiffly. He felt far from comfortable under the stare of those keen eyes.

'Well, Master Underhill,' said Strider, 'if I were you, I should stop your young friends from talking too much. Drink, fire, and chance-meeting are pleasant enough, but, well—this isn't the Shire. There are queer folk about. Though I say it as shouldn't, you may think,' he added with a wry smile, seeing Frodo's glance. 'And there have been even stranger travellers through Bree lately,' he went on, watching Frodo's face.

Frodo returned his gaze but said nothing; and Strider made no further sign. His attention seemed suddenly to be fixed on Pippin. To his alarm Frodo became aware that the ridiculous young Took, encouraged by his success with the fat Mayor of Michel Delving, was now actually giving a comic account of Bilbo's farewell party. He was already giving an imitation of the Speech, and was drawing near to the astonishing Disappearance.

Frodo was annoyed. It was a harmless enough tale for most of the local hobbits, no doubt: just a funny story about those funny people away beyond the River; but some (old Butterbur, for instance) knew a thing or two, and had probably heard rumours long ago about Bilbo's vanishing. It would bring the name of Baggins to their minds, especially if there had been inquiries in Bree after that name.

Frodo fidgeted, wondering what to do. Pippin was evidently much enjoying the attention he was getting, and had become quite forgetful of their danger. Frodo had a sudden fear that in his present mood he might even mention the Ring; and that might well be disastrous.

'You had better do something quick!' whispered Strider in his ear.

Frodo jumped up and stood on a table, and began to talk. The attention of Pippin's audience was disturbed. Some of the hobbits looked at Frodo and laughed and clapped, thinking that Mr. Underhill had taken as much ale as was good for him.

Frodo suddenly felt very foolish, and found himself (as was his habit when making a speech) fingering the things in his pocket. He felt the Ring on its chain, and quite unaccountably the desire came over him to slip it on and vanish out of the silly situation. It seemed to him, somehow, as if the suggestion came to him from outside, from someone or something in the room. He resisted the temptation firmly, and clasped the Ring in his hand, as if to keep a hold on it and prevent it from escaping or doing any mischief. At any rate it gave him no inspiration. He spoke 'a few suitable words', as they would have said in the Shire: *We are all very much gratified by the kindness of your reception, and I venture to hope that my brief visit will help to renew the old ties of friendship between the Shire and Bree*; and then he hesitated and coughed.

Everyone in the room was now looking at him. 'A song!' shouted one of the hobbits. 'A song! A song!' shouted all the others. 'Come on now, master, sing us something that we haven't heard before!'

For a moment Frodo stood gaping. Then in desperation he began a ridiculous song that Bilbo had been rather fond of (and indeed rather proud of, for he had made up the words himself). It was about an inn; and that is probably why it came into Frodo's mind just then. Here it is in full. Only a few words of it are now, as a rule, remembered.

*There is an inn<sup>423</sup>, a merry old inn  
beneath an old grey hill,  
And there they brew a beer so brown  
That the Man in the Moon himself came down  
one night to drink his fill.*

*The ostler has a tipsy cat  
that plays a five-stringed fiddle;  
And up and down he runs his bow,  
Now squeaking high, now purring low,  
now sawing in the middle.*

*The landlord keeps a little dog  
that is mighty fond of jokes;  
When there's good cheer among the guests,  
He cocks an ear at all the jests  
and laughs until he chokes.*

*They also keep a hornéd cow  
as proud as any queen;  
But music turns her head like ale,  
And makes her wave her tufted tail  
and dance upon the green.*

*And O! the rows of silver dishes  
and the store of silver spoons!  
For Sunday<sup>21</sup> there's a special pair,  
And these they polish up with care  
on Saturday afternoons.*

*The Man in the Moon was drinking deep,  
and the cat began to wail;  
A dish and a spoon on the table danced,  
The cow in the garden madly pranced,  
and the little dog chased his tail.*

*The Man in the Moon took another mug,  
and then rolled beneath his chair;  
And there he dozed and dreamed of ale,  
Till in the sky the stars were pale,  
and dawn was in the air.*

*Then the ostler said to his tipsy cat:  
'The white horses of the Moon,  
They neigh and champ their silver bits;  
But their master's been and drowned his wits,  
and the Sun'll be rising soon!'*

*So the cat on his fiddle played hey-diddle-diddle,  
a jig that would wake the dead:  
He squeaked and sawed and quickened the tune,  
While the landlord shook the Man in the Moon:  
'It's after three!' he said.*

*They rolled the Man slowly up the hill  
and bundled him into the Moon,  
While his horses galloped up in rear,  
And the cow came capering like a deer,  
and a dish ran up with the spoon.  
Now quicker the fiddle went deedle-dum-diddle;  
the dog began to roar,  
The cow and the horses stood on their heads;  
The guests all bounded from their beds  
and danced upon the floor.*

*With a ping and a pong the fiddle-strings broke!  
the cow jumped over the Moon,  
And the little dog laughed to see such fun,  
And the Saturday dish went off at a run  
with the silver Sunday spoon.*

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<sup>21</sup> See [note 423](#), III, p. 1111.

*The round Moon rolled behind the hill  
as the Sun raised up her head.  
She<sup>22</sup> hardly believed her fiery eyes;  
For though it was day, to her surprise  
they all went back to bed!*

There was loud and long applause. Frodo had a good voice, and the song tickled their fancy. ‘Where’s old Barley?’ they cried. ‘He ought to hear this. Bob ought to learn his cat the fiddle, and then we’d have a dance.’ They called for more ale, and began to shout: ‘Let’s have it again, master! Come on now! Once more!’

They made Frodo have another drink, and then begin his song again, while many of them joined in; for the tune was well known, and they were quick at picking up words. It was now Frodo’s turn to feel pleased with himself. He capered about on the table; and when he came a second time to *the cow jumped over the Moon*, he leaped in the air. Much too vigorously; for he came down, bang, into a tray full of mugs, and slipped, and rolled off the table with a crash, clatter, and bump! The audience all opened their mouths wide for laughter, and stopped short in gaping silence; for the singer disappeared. He simply vanished, as if he had gone slap through the floor without leaving a hole!

The local hobbits stared in amazement, and then sprang to their feet and shouted for Barliman. All the company drew away from Pippin and Sam, who found themselves left alone in a corner, and eyed darkly and doubtfully from a distance. It was plain that many people regarded them now as the companions of a travelling magician of unknown powers and purpose. But there was one swarthy Bree-lander, who stood looking at them with a knowing and half-mocking expression that made them feel very uncomfortable. Presently he slipped out of the door, followed by the squint-eyed southerner: the two had been whispering together a good deal during the evening.

Frodo felt a fool. Not knowing what else to do, he crawled away under the tables to the dark corner by Strider, who sat unmoved, giving no sign of his thoughts. Frodo leaned back against the wall and took off the Ring. How it came to be on his finger he could not tell. He could only suppose that he had been handling it in his pocket while he sang, and that somehow it had slipped on when he stuck out his hand with a jerk to save his fall. For a moment he wondered if the Ring itself had not played him a trick; perhaps it had tried to reveal itself in response to some wish or command that was felt in the room. He did not like the looks of the men that had gone out.

‘Well?’ said Strider, when he reappeared. ‘Why did you do that? Worse than anything your friends could have said! You have put your foot in it! Or should I say your finger?’

‘I don’t know what you mean,’ said Frodo, annoyed and alarmed.

‘Oh yes, you do,’ answered Strider; ‘but we had better wait until the uproar has died down. Then, if you please, Mr. *Baggins*, I should like a quiet word with you.’

‘What about?’ asked Frodo, ignoring the sudden use of his proper name.

‘A matter of some importance—to us both,’ answered Strider, looking Frodo in the eye. ‘You may hear something to your advantage.’

‘Very well,’ said Frodo, trying to appear unconcerned. ‘I’ll talk to you later.’

Meanwhile an argument was going on by the fireplace. Mr. Butterbur had come trotting in, and he was now trying to listen to several conflicting accounts of the event at the same time.

‘I saw him, Mr. Butterbur,’ said a hobbit; ‘or leastways I didn’t see him, if you take my meaning. He just vanished into thin air, in a manner of speaking.’

‘You don’t say, Mr. Mugwort!’ said the landlord, looking puzzled.

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<sup>22</sup> Elves (and Hobbits) always refer to the Sun as She.



‘Yes I do!’ replied Mugwort. ‘And I mean what I say, what’s more.’

‘There’s some mistake somewhere,’ said Butterbur, shaking his head. ‘There was too much of that Mr. Underhill to go vanishing into thin air; or into thick air, as is more likely in this room.’

‘Well, where is he now?’ cried several voices.

‘How should I know? He’s welcome to go where he will, so long as he pays in the morning. There’s Mr. Took, now: he’s not vanished.’

‘Well, I saw what I saw, and I saw what I didn’t,’ said Mugwort obstinately.

‘And I say there’s some mistake,’ repeated Butterbur, picking up the tray and gathering up the broken crockery.

‘Of course there’s a mistake!’ said Frodo. ‘I haven’t vanished. Here I am! I’ve just been having a few words with Strider in the corner.’

He came forward into the firelight; but most of the company backed away, even more perturbed than before. They were not in the least satisfied by his explanation that he had crawled away quickly under the tables after he had fallen. Most of the Hobbits and the Men of Bree went off then and there in a huff, having no fancy for further entertainment that evening. One or two gave Frodo a black look and departed muttering among themselves. The Dwarves and the two or three strange Men that still remained got up and said good night to the landlord, but not to Frodo and his friends. Before long no-one was left but Strider, who sat on, unnoticed, by the wall.

Mr. Butterbur did not seem much put out. He reckoned, very probably, that his house would be full again on many future nights, until the present mystery had been thoroughly discussed. ‘Now what have you been doing, Mr. Underhill?’ he asked. ‘Frightening my customers and breaking up my crocks with your acrobatics!’

‘I am very sorry to have caused any trouble,’ said Frodo. ‘It was quite unintentional, I assure you. A most unfortunate accident.’

‘All right, Mr. Underhill! But if you’re going to do any more tumbling, or conjuring, or whatever it was, you’d best warn folk beforehand—and warn *me*. We’re a bit suspicious round here of anything out of the way—uncanny, if you understand me; and we don’t take to it all of a sudden.’

‘I shan’t be doing anything of the sort again, Mr. Butterbur, I promise you. And now I think I’ll be getting to bed. We shall be making an early start. Will you see that our ponies are ready by eight o’clock?’

‘Very good! But before you go, I should like a word with you in private, Mr. Underhill. Something has just come back to my mind that I ought to tell you. I hope that you’ll not take it amiss. When I’ve seen to a thing or two, I’ll come along to your room, if you’re willing.’

‘Certainly!’ said Frodo; but his heart sank. He wondered how many private talks he would have before he got to bed, and what they would reveal. Were these people all in league against him? He began to suspect even old Butterbur’s fat face of concealing dark designs.



## Chapter 10: Strider

Frodo, Pippin, and Sam made their way back to the parlour. There was no light. Merry was not there, and the fire had burned low. It was not until they had puffed up the embers into a blaze and thrown on a couple of faggots that they discovered Strider had come with them. There he was calmly sitting in a chair by the door!

‘Hallo!’ said Pippin. ‘Who are you, and what do you want?’

‘I am called Strider,’ he answered; ‘and though he may have forgotten it, your friend promised to have a quiet talk with me.’

‘You said I might hear something to my advantage, I believe,’ said Frodo. ‘What have you to say?’

‘Several things,’ answered Strider. ‘But, of course, I have my price.’

‘What do you mean?’ asked Frodo sharply.

‘Don’t be alarmed! I mean just this: I will tell you what I know, and give you some good advice—but I shall want a reward.’

‘And what will that be, pray?’ said Frodo. He suspected now that he had fallen in with a rascal, and he thought uncomfortably that he had brought only a little money with him. All of it would hardly satisfy a rogue, and he could not spare any of it.

‘No more than you can afford,’ answered Strider with a slow smile, as if he guessed Frodo’s thoughts. ‘Just this: you must take me along with you, until I wish to leave you.’

‘Oh, indeed!’ replied Frodo, surprised, but not much relieved. ‘Even if I wanted another companion, I should not agree to any such thing, until I knew a good deal more about you, and your business.’

‘Excellent!’ exclaimed Strider, crossing his legs and sitting back comfortably. ‘You seem to be coming to your senses again, and that is all to the good. You have been much too careless so far. Very well! I will tell you what I know, and leave the reward to you. You may be glad to grant it, when you have heard me.’

‘Go on then!’ said Frodo. ‘What do you know?’

‘Too much; too many dark things,’ said Strider grimly. ‘But as for your business—He got up and went to the door, opened it quickly and looked out. Then he shut it quietly and sat down again. ‘I have quick ears,’ he went on, lowering his voice, ‘and though I cannot disappear, I have hunted many wild and wary things and I can usually avoid being seen, if I wish. Now, I was behind the hedge this evening on the Road west of Bree, when four hobbits came out of the Downlands. I need not repeat all that they said to old Bombadil or to one another; but one thing interested me. *Please remember, said one of them, that the name Baggins must not be mentioned. I am Mr. Underhill, if any name must be given.* That interested me so much that I followed them here. I slipped over the gate just behind them. Maybe Mr. Baggins has an honest reason for leaving his name behind; but if so, I should advise him and his friends to be more careful.’

‘I don’t see what interest my name has for anyone in Bree,’ said Frodo angrily, ‘and I have still to learn why it interests you. Mr. Strider may have an honest reason for spying and eavesdropping; but if so, I should advise him to explain it.’

‘Well answered!’ said Strider laughing. ‘But the explanation is simple: I was looking for a Hobbit called Frodo Baggins. I wanted to find him quickly. I had learned that he was carrying out of the Shire, well, a secret that concerned me and my friends.’

‘Now, don’t mistake me!’ he cried, as Frodo rose from his seat, and Sam jumped up with a scowl. ‘I shall take more care of the secret than you do. And care is needed!’ He leaned forward and looked at them. ‘Watch every shadow!’ he said in a low voice. ‘Black horsemen have passed through Bree. On Monday one came down the Greenway, they say; and another appeared later, coming up the Greenway from the south.’

There was a silence. At last Frodo spoke to Pippin and Sam: ‘I ought to have guessed it from the way the gatekeeper greeted us,’ he said. ‘And the landlord seems to have heard something. Why did he press us to join the company? And why on earth did we behave so foolishly: we ought to have stayed quiet in here.’

‘It would have been better,’ said Strider. ‘I would have stopped your going into the common-room, if I could; but the innkeeper would not let me in to see you, or take a message.’

‘Do you think he—’ began Frodo.

‘No, I don’t think any harm of old Butterbur. Only he does not altogether like mysterious vagabonds of my sort.’ Frodo gave him a puzzled look. ‘Well, I have rather a rascally look, have I not?’ said Strider with a curl of his lip and a queer gleam in his eye. ‘But I hope we shall get to know one another better. When we do, I hope you will explain what happened at the end of your song. For that little prank—’

‘It was sheer accident!’ interrupted Frodo.

‘I wonder,’ said Strider. ‘Accident, then. That accident has made your position dangerous.’

‘Hardly more than it was already,’ said Frodo. ‘I knew these horsemen were pursuing me; but now at any rate they seem to have missed me and to have gone away.’

‘You must not count on that!’ said Strider sharply. ‘They will return. And more are coming. There are others. I know their number. I know these Riders.’ He paused, and his eyes were cold and hard. ‘And there are some folk in Bree who are not to be trusted,’ he went on. ‘Bill Ferny, for instance. He has an evil name in the Bree-land, and queer folk call at his house. You must have noticed him among the company: a swarthy sneering fellow. He was very close with one of the Southern strangers, and they slipped out together just after your “accident”. Not all of those Southerners mean well; and as for Ferny, he would sell anything to anybody; or make mischief for amusement.’

‘What will Ferny sell, and what has my accident got to do with him?’ said Frodo, still determined not to understand Strider’s hints.

‘News of you, of course,’ answered Strider. ‘An account of your performance would be very interesting to certain people. After that they would hardly need to be told your real name. It seems to me only too likely that they will hear of it before this night is over. Is that enough? You can do as you like about my reward: take me as a guide or not. But I may say that I know all the lands between the Shire and the Misty Mountains, for I have wandered over them for many years. I am older than I look. I might prove useful. You will have to leave the open road after tonight; for the horsemen will watch it night and day. You may escape from Bree, and be allowed to go forward while the Sun is up; but you won’t go far. They will come on you in the wild, in some dark place where there is no help. Do you wish them to find you? They are terrible!’

The hobbits looked at him, and saw with surprise that his face was drawn as if with pain, and his hands clenched the arms of his chair. The room was very quiet and still, and the light seemed to have grown dim. For a while he sat with unseeing eyes as if walking in distant memory or listening to sounds in the Night far away.

‘There!’ he cried after a moment, drawing his hand across his brow. ‘Perhaps I know more about these pursuers than you do. You fear them, but you do not fear them enough, yet. Tomorrow you will have to escape, if you can. Strider can take you by paths that are seldom trodden. Will you have him?’

There was a heavy silence. Frodo made no answer; his mind was confused with doubt and fear. Sam frowned, and looked at his master; and at last he broke out:

‘With your leave, Mr. Frodo, I’d say *no*! This Strider here, he warns and he says take care; and I say *yes* to that, and let’s begin with him. He comes out of the Wild, and I never heard no good of such folk. He knows

something, that's plain, and more than I like; but it's no reason why we should let him go leading us out into some dark place far from help, as he puts it.'

Pippin fidgeted and looked uncomfortable. Strider did not reply to Sam, but turned his keen eyes on Frodo. Frodo caught his glance and looked away. 'No,' he said slowly. 'I don't agree. I think, I think you are not really as you choose to look. You began to talk to me like the Bree-folk, but your voice has changed. Still Sam seems right in this: I don't see why you should warn us to take care, and yet ask us to take you on trust. Why the disguise? Who are you? What do you really know about—about my business; and how do you know it?'

'The lesson in caution has been well learned,' said Strider with a grim smile. 'But caution is one thing and wavering is another. You will never get to Rivendell now on your own, and to trust me is your only chance. You must make up your mind. I will answer some of your questions, if that will help you to do so. But why should you believe my story, if you do not trust me already? Still here it is—'

At that moment there came a knock at the door. Mr. Butterbur had arrived with candles, and behind him was Nob with cans of hot water. Strider withdrew into a dark corner.

'I've come to bid you good night,' said the landlord, putting the candles on the table. 'Nob! Take the water to the rooms!' He came in and shut the door.

'It's like this,' he began, hesitating and looking troubled. 'If I've done any harm, I'm sorry indeed. But one thing drives out another, as you'll admit; and I'm a busy man. But first one thing and then another this week have jogged my memory, as the saying goes; and not too late I hope. You see, I was asked to look out for hobbits of the Shire, and for one by the name of Baggins in particular.'

'And what has that got to do with me?' asked Frodo.

'Ah! you know best,' said the landlord, knowingly. 'I won't give you away; but I was told that this Baggins would be going by the name of Underhill, and I was given a description that fits you well enough, if I may say so.'

'Indeed! Let's have it then!' said Frodo, unwisely interrupting.

'*A stout little fellow with red cheeks,*' said Mr. Butterbur solemnly. Pippin chuckled, but Sam looked indignant. '*That won't help you much; it goes for most hobbits, Barley,* he says to me,' continued Mr. Butterbur with a glance at Pippin. '*But this one is taller than some and fairer than most, and he has a cleft in his chin: perky chap with a bright eye.* Begging your pardon, but he said it, not me.'

'He said it? And who was he?' asked Frodo eagerly.

'Ah! That was Gandalf, if you know who I mean. A wizard they say he is, but he's a good friend of mine, whether or no. But now I don't know what he'll have to say to me, if I see him again: turn all my ale sour or me into a block of wood, I shouldn't wonder. He's a bit hasty. Still what's done can't be undone.'

'Well, what have you done?' said Frodo, getting impatient with the slow unravelling of Butterbur's thoughts.

'Where was I?' said the landlord, pausing and snapping his fingers. 'Ah, yes! Old Gandalf. Three months back he walked right into my room without a knock. *Barley,* he says, *I'm off in the morning. Will you do something for me? You've only to name it,* I said. *I'm in a hurry,* said he, *and I've no time myself, but I want a message took to the Shire. Have you anyone you can send, and trust to go? I can find someone,* I said, *tomorrow, maybe, or the day after. Make it tomorrow,* he says, and then he gave me a letter.

'It's addressed plain enough,' said Mr. Butterbur, producing a letter from his pocket, and reading out the address slowly and proudly (he valued his reputation as a lettered man):

*Mr. FRODO BAGGINS, BAG END, HOBBITON in the SHIRE.*

'A letter for me from Gandalf!' cried Frodo.

'Ah!' said Mr. Butterbur. 'Then your right name is Baggins?'

'It is,' said Frodo, 'and you had better give me that letter at once, and explain why you never sent it. That's what you came to tell me, I suppose, though you've taken a long time to come to the point.'

Poor Mr. Butterbur looked troubled. 'You're right, master,' he said, 'and I beg your pardon. And I'm mortal afraid of what Gandalf will say, if harm comes of it. But I didn't keep it back a-purpose. I put it by safe. Then I couldn't find nobody willing to go to the Shire next day, nor the day after, and none of my own folk were to spare; and then one thing after another drove it out of my mind. I'm a busy man. I'll do what I can to set matters right, and if there's any help I can give, you've only to name it.'

'Leaving the letter aside, I promised Gandalf no less. *Barley*, he says to me, *this friend of mine from the Shire, he may be coming out this way before long, him and another. He'll be calling himself Underhill. Mind that! But you need ask no questions. And if I'm not with him, he may be in trouble, and he may need help. Do whatever you can for him, and I'll be grateful*, he says. And here you are, and trouble is not far off, seemingly.'

'What do you mean?' asked Frodo.

'These black men,' said the landlord lowering his voice. 'They're looking for *Baggins*, and if they mean well, then I'm a hobbit. It was on Monday, and all the dogs were yammering and the geese screaming. Uncanny, I called it. Nob, he came and told me that two black men were at the door asking for a hobbit called Baggins. Nob's hair was all stood on end. I bid the black fellows be off, and slammed the door on them; but they've been asking the same question all the way to Archet, I hear. And that Ranger, Strider, he's been asking questions, too. Tried to get in here to see you, before you'd had bite or sup, he did.'

'He did!' said Strider suddenly, coming forward into the light. 'And much trouble would have been saved, if you had let him in, Barliman.'

The landlord jumped with surprise. 'You!' he cried. 'You're always popping up. What do you want now?'

'He's here with my leave,' said Frodo. 'He came to offer me his help.'

'Well, you know your own business, maybe,' said Mr. Butterbur, looking suspiciously at Strider. 'But if I was in your plight, I wouldn't take up with a Ranger.'

'Then who would you take up with?' asked Strider. 'A fat innkeeper who only remembers his own name because people shout it at him all day? They cannot stay in *The Pony* for ever, and they cannot go home. They have a long road before them. Will you go with them and keep the black men off?'

'Me? Leave Bree! I wouldn't do that for any money,' said Mr. Butterbur, looking really scared. 'But why can't you stay here quiet for a bit, Mr. Underhill? What are all these queer goings on? What are these black men after, and where do they come from, I'd like to know?'

'I'm sorry I can't explain it all,' answered Frodo. 'I am tired and very worried, and it's a long tale. But if you mean to help me, I ought to warn you that you will be in danger as long as I am in your house. These Black Riders: I am not sure, but I think, I fear they come from—'

'They come from Mordor,' said Strider in a low voice. 'From Mordor, Barliman, if that means anything to you.'

'Save us!' cried Mr. Butterbur turning pale; the name evidently was known to him. 'That is the worst news that has come to Bree in my time.'

'It is,' said Frodo. 'Are you still willing to help me?'

'I am,' said Mr. Butterbur. 'More than ever. Though I don't know what the likes of me can do against, against—' he faltered.

'Against the Shadow in the East,' said Strider quietly. 'Not much, Barliman, but every little helps. You can let Mr. Underhill stay here tonight, as Mr. Underhill; and you can forget the name of Baggins, till he is far away.'

'I'll do that,' said Butterbur. 'But they'll find out he's here without help from me, I'm afraid. It's a pity Mr. Baggins drew attention to himself this evening, to say no more. The story of that Mr. Bilbo's going off has been heard before tonight in Bree. Even our Nob has been doing some guessing in his slow pate; and there are others in Bree quicker in the uptake than he is.'

'Well, we can only hope the Riders won't come back yet,' said Frodo.

‘I hope not, indeed,’ said Butterbur. ‘But spooks or no spooks, they won’t get in *The Pony* so easy. Don’t you worry till the morning. Nob’ll say no word. No black man shall pass my doors, while I can stand on my legs. Me and my folk’ll keep watch tonight; but you had best get some sleep, if you can.’

‘In any case we must be called at dawn,’ said Frodo. ‘We must get off as early as possible. Breakfast at six-thirty, please.’

‘Right! I’ll see to the orders,’ said the landlord. ‘Good night, Mr. Baggins—Underhill, I should say! Good night—now, bless me! Where’s your Mr. Brandybuck?’

‘I don’t know,’ said Frodo with sudden anxiety. They had forgotten all about Merry, and it was getting late. ‘I am afraid he is out. He said something about going for a breath of air.’

‘Well, you do want looking after and no mistake: your party might be on a holiday!’ said Butterbur. ‘I must go and bar the doors quick, but I’ll see your friend is let in when he comes. I’d better send Nob to look for him. Good night to you all!’ At last Mr. Butterbur went out, with another doubtful look at Strider and a shake of his head. His footsteps retreated down the passage.

‘Well?’ said Strider. ‘When are you going to open that letter?’ Frodo looked carefully at the seal before he broke it. It seemed certainly to be Gandalf’s. Inside, written in the wizard’s strong but graceful script, was the following message:


*THE PRANCING PONY, BREE. Midyear’s Day, Shire Year, 1418.*


*Dear Frodo,*

*Bad news has reached me here. I must go off at once. You had better leave Bag End soon, and get out of the Shire before the end of July at latest. I will return as soon as I can; and I will follow you, if I find that you are gone. Leave a message for me here, if you pass through Bree. You can trust the landlord (Butterbur). You may meet a friend of mine on the Road: a Man, lean, dark, tall, by some called Strider. He knows our business and will help you. Make for Rivendell. There I hope we may meet again. If I do not come, Elrond will advise you.*

*Yours in haste*

GANDALF. 

*PS. Do NOT use It again, not for any reason whatever! Do not travel by night!* 

*PPS. Make sure that it is the real Strider. There are many strange men on the roads. His true name is Aragorn.* 

*All that is gold does not glitter,  
Not all those who wander are lost;  
The old that is strong does not wither,  
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.  
From the ashes a fire shall be woken,  
A light from the shadows shall spring;  
Renewed shall be blade that was broken,  
The crownless [382](#) again shall be king.*

*PPPS. I hope Butterbur sends this promptly. A worthy man, but his memory is like a lumber-room: thing wanted always buried. If he forgets, I shall roast him.*

*Fare Well!* 

Frodo read the letter to himself, and then passed it to Pippin and Sam. ‘Really old Butterbur has made a mess of things!’ he said. ‘He deserves roasting. If I had got this at once, we might all have been safe in Rivendell by now. But what can have happened to Gandalf? He writes as if he was going into great danger.’

‘He has been doing that for many years,’ said Strider.

Frodo turned and looked at him thoughtfully, wondering about Gandalf’s second postscript. ‘Why didn’t you tell me that you were Gandalf’s friend at once?’ he asked. ‘It would have saved time.’

‘Would it? Would any of you have believed me till now?’ said Strider. ‘I knew nothing of this letter. For all I knew I had to persuade you to trust me without proofs, if I was to help you. In any case, I did not intend to tell you all about myself at once. I had to study *you* first, and make sure of you. The Enemy has set traps for me before now. As soon as I had made up my mind, I was ready to tell you whatever you asked. But I must admit,’ he added with a queer laugh, ‘that I hoped you would take to me for my own sake. A hunted man sometimes wearies of distrust and longs for friendship. But there, I believe my looks are against me.’

‘They are—at first sight at any rate,’ laughed Pippin with sudden relief after reading Gandalf’s letter. ‘But handsome is as handsome does, as we say in the Shire; and I daresay we shall all look much the same after lying for days in hedges and ditches.’

‘It would take more than a few days, or weeks, or years, of wandering in the Wild to make you look like Strider,’ he answered. ‘And you would die first, unless you are made of sterner stuff than you look to be.’

Pippin subsided; but Sam was not daunted, and he still eyed Strider dubiously. ‘How do we know you are the Strider that Gandalf speaks about?’ he demanded. ‘You never mentioned Gandalf, till this letter came out. You might be a play-acting spy, for all I can see, trying to get us to go with you. You might have done in the real Strider and took his clothes. What have you to say to that?’

‘That you are a stout fellow,’ answered Strider; ‘but I am afraid my only answer to you, Sam Gamgee, is this. If I had killed the real Strider, I could kill you. And I should have killed you already without so much talk. If I was after the Ring, I could have it—NOW!’

He stood up, and seemed suddenly to grow taller. In his eyes gleamed a light, keen and commanding. Throwing back his cloak, he laid his hand on the hilt of a sword that had hung concealed by his side. They did not dare to move. Sam sat wide-mouthed staring at him dumbly.

‘But I *am* the real Strider, fortunately,’ he said, looking down at them with his face softened by a sudden smile. ‘I am Aragorn son of Arathorn; and if by life or death I can save you, I will.’

There was a long silence. At last Frodo spoke with hesitation. ‘I believed that you were a friend before the letter came,’ he said, ‘or at least I wished to. You have frightened me several times tonight, but never in the way that servants of the Enemy would, or so I imagine. I think one of his spies would—well, seem fairer and feel fouler, if you understand.’

‘I see,’ laughed Strider. ‘I look foul and feel fair. Is that it? *All that is gold does not glitter, not all those who wander are lost.*’

‘Did the verses apply to you then?’ asked Frodo. ‘I could not make out what they were about. But how did you know that they were in Gandalf’s letter, if you have never seen it?’

‘I did not know,’ he answered. ‘But I am Aragorn, and those verses go with that name.’ He drew out his sword, and they saw that the blade was indeed broken a foot below the hilt. ‘Not much use is it, Sam?’ said Strider. ‘But the time is near when it shall be forged anew.’

Sam said nothing.

‘Well,’ said Strider, ‘with Sam’s permission we will call that settled. Strider shall be your guide. And now I think it is time you went to bed and took what rest you can. We shall have a rough road tomorrow. Even if we are allowed to leave Bree unhindered, we can hardly hope now to leave it unnoticed. But I shall try to get lost as soon as possible. I know one or two ways out of Bree-land other than the main road. If once we shake off the pursuit, I shall make for Weathertop.’

‘Weathertop?’ said Sam. ‘What’s that?’

‘It is a hill, just to the north of the Road, about half way from here to Rivendell. It commands a wide view all round; and there we shall have a chance to look about us. Gandalf will make for that point, if he follows us. After Weathertop our journey will become more difficult, and we shall have to choose between various dangers.’

‘When did you last see Gandalf?’ asked Frodo. ‘Do you know where he is, or what he is doing?’

Strider looked grave. ‘I do not know,’ he said. ‘I came west with him in the spring. I have often kept watch on the borders of the Shire in the last few years, when he was busy elsewhere. He seldom left it unguarded. We last met on the first of May: at Sarn Ford down the Brandywine. He told me that his business with you had gone well, and that you would be starting for Rivendell in the last week of September. As I knew he was at your side, I went away on a journey of my own. And that has proved ill; for plainly some news reached him, and I was not at hand to help.

‘I am troubled, for the first time since I have known him. We should have had messages, even if he could not come himself. When I returned, many days ago, I heard the ill news. The tidings had gone far and wide that Gandalf was missing and the horsemen had been seen. It was the Elven-folk of Gildor that told me this; and later they told me that you had left your home; but there was no news of your leaving Buckland. I have been watching the East Road anxiously.’

‘Do you think the Black Riders have anything to do with it—with Gandalf’s absence, I mean?’ asked Frodo.

‘I do not know of anything else that could have hindered him, except the Enemy himself,’ said Strider. ‘But do not give up hope! Gandalf is greater than you Shire-folk know—as a rule you can only see his jokes and toys. But this business of ours will be his greatest task.’

Pippin yawned. ‘I am sorry,’ he said, ‘but I am dead tired. In spite of all the danger and worry I must go to bed, or sleep where I sit. Where is that silly fellow, Merry? It would be the last straw, if we had to go out in the dark to look for him.’

At that moment they heard a door slam; then feet came running along the passage. Merry came in with a rush followed by Nob. He shut the door hastily, and leaned against it. He was out of breath. They stared at him in alarm for a moment before he gasped: ‘I have seen them, Frodo! I have seen them! Black Riders!’

‘Black Riders!’ cried Frodo. ‘Where?’

‘Here. In the village. I stayed indoors for an hour. Then as you did not come back, I went out for a stroll. I had come back again and was standing just outside the light of the lamp looking at the stars. Suddenly I shivered and felt that something horrible was creeping near: there was a sort of deeper shade among the shadows across the road, just beyond the edge of the lamplight. It slid away at once into the dark without a sound. There was no horse.’

‘Which way did it go?’ asked Strider, suddenly and sharply.

Merry started, noticing the stranger for the first time. ‘Go on!’ said Frodo. ‘This is a friend of Gandalf’s. I will explain later.’

‘It seemed to make off up the Road, eastward,’ continued Merry. ‘I tried to follow. Of course, it vanished almost at once; but I went round the corner and on as far as the last house on the Road.’

Strider looked at Merry with wonder. ‘You have a stout heart,’ he said; ‘but it was foolish.’

‘I don’t know,’ said Merry. ‘Neither brave nor silly, I think. I could hardly help myself. I seemed to be drawn somehow. Anyway, I went, and suddenly I heard voices by the hedge. One was muttering; and the other was whispering, or hissing. I couldn’t hear a word that was said. I did not creep any closer, because I began to tremble all over. Then I felt terrified, and I turned back, and was just going to bolt home, when something came behind me and I . . . I fell over.’

‘I found him, sir,’ put in Nob. ‘Mr. Butterbur sent me out with a lantern. I went down to West-gate, and then back up towards South-gate. Just nigh Bill Ferny’s house I thought I could see something in the Road. I couldn’t swear to it, but it looked to me as if two men was stooping over something, lifting it. I gave a shout,



but when I got up to the spot there was no signs of them, and only Mr. Brandybuck lying by the roadside. He seemed to be asleep. "I thought I had fallen into deep water," he says to me, when I shook him. Very queer he was, and as soon as I had roused him, he got up and ran back here like a hare.'

'I am afraid that's true,' said Merry, 'though I don't know what I said. I had an ugly dream, which I can't remember. I went to pieces. I don't know what came over me.'

'I do,' said Strider. 'The Black Breath. The Riders must have left their horses outside, and passed back through the South-gate in secret. They will know all the news now, for they have visited Bill Ferny; and probably that Southerner was a spy as well. Something may happen in the night, before we leave Bree.'

'What will happen?' said Merry. 'Will they attack the inn?'

'No, I think not,' said Strider. 'They are not all here yet. And in any case that is not their way. In dark and loneliness they are strongest; they will not openly attack a house where there are lights and many people—not until they are desperate, not while all the long leagues of Eriador still lie before us. But their power is in terror, and already some in Bree are in their clutch. They will drive these wretches to some evil work: Ferny, and some of the strangers, and, maybe, the gatekeeper too. They had words with Harry at West-gate on Monday. I was watching them. He was white and shaking when they left him.'

'We seem to have enemies all round,' said Frodo. 'What are we to do?'

'Stay here, and do not go to your rooms! They are sure to have found out which those are. The hobbit-rooms have windows looking north and close to the ground. We will all remain together and bar this window and the door. But first Nob and I will fetch your luggage.'

While Strider was gone, Frodo gave Merry a rapid account of all that had happened since supper. Merry was still reading and pondering Gandalf's letter when Strider and Nob returned.

'Well Masters,' said Nob, 'I've ruffled up the clothes and put in a bolster down the middle of each bed. And I made a nice imitation of your head with a brown woollen mat, Mr. Bag—Underhill, sir,' he added with a grin.

Pippin laughed. 'Very life-like!' he said. 'But what will happen when they have penetrated the disguise?'

'We shall see,' said Strider. 'Let us hope to hold the fort till morning.'

'Good night to you,' said Nob, and went off to take his part in the watch on the doors.

Their bags and gear they piled on the parlour-floor. They pushed a low chair against the door and shut the window. Peering out, Frodo saw that the night was still clear. The Sickle<sup>23</sup> was swinging bright above the shoulders of Bree-hill. He then closed and barred the heavy inside shutters and drew the curtains together. Strider built up the fire and blew out all the candles.

The hobbits lay down on their blankets with their feet towards the hearth; but Strider settled himself in the chair against the door. They talked for a little, for Merry still had several questions to ask.

'Jumped over the Moon!' chuckled Merry as he rolled himself in his blanket. 'Very ridiculous of you, Frodo! But I wish I had been there to see. The worthies of Bree will be discussing it a hundred years hence.'

'I hope so,' said Strider. Then they all fell silent, and one by one the hobbits dropped off to sleep.

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<sup>23</sup> The Hobbits' name for the Plough or Great Bear.



## Chapter 11: A Knife In The Dark

As they prepared for sleep in the inn at Bree, darkness lay on Buckland; a mist strayed in the dells and along the river-bank. The house at Crickhollow stood silent. Fatty Bolger opened the door cautiously and peered out. A feeling of fear had been growing on him all day, and he was unable to rest or go to bed: there was a brooding threat in the breathless night-air. As he stared out into the gloom, a black shadow moved under the trees; the gate seemed to open of its own accord and close again without a sound. Terror seized him. He shrank back, and for a moment he stood trembling in the hall. Then he shut and locked the door.

The night deepened. There came the soft sound of horses led with stealth along the lane. Outside the gate they stopped, and three black figures entered, like shades of night creeping across the ground. One went to the door, one to the corner of the house on either side; and there they stood, as still as the shadows of stones, while night went slowly on. The house and the quiet trees seemed to be waiting breathlessly.

There was a faint stir in the leaves, and a cock crowed far away. The cold hour before dawn was passing. The figure by the door moved. In the dark without moon or stars a drawn blade gleamed, as if a chill light had been unsheathed. There was a blow, soft but heavy, and the door shuddered.

‘Open, in the name of Mordor!’ said a voice thin and menacing.

At a second blow the door yielded and fell back, with timbers burst and lock broken. The black figures passed swiftly in.

At that moment, among the trees nearby, a horn rang out. It rent the night like fire on a hill-top.

**AWAKE! FEAR! FIRE! FOES! AWAKE!**

Fatty Bolger had not been idle. As soon as he saw the dark shapes creep from the garden, he knew that he must run for it, or perish. And run he did, out of the back door, through the garden, and over the fields. When he reached the nearest house, more than a mile away, he collapsed on the doorstep. ‘No, no, no!’ he was crying. ‘No, not me! I haven’t got it!’ It was some time before anyone could make out what he was babbling about. At last they got the idea that enemies were in Buckland, some strange invasion from the Old Forest. And then they lost no more time.

**FEAR! FIRE! FOES!**

The Brandybucks were blowing the Horn-call of Buckland, that had not been sounded for a hundred years, not since the white wolves came in the Fell Winter, when the Brandywine was frozen over.

**AWAKE! AWAKE!**

Far away answering horns were heard. The alarm was spreading.

The black figures fled from the house. One of them let fall a hobbit-cloak on the step, as he ran. In the lane the noise of hoofs broke out, and gathering to a gallop, went hammering away into the darkness. All about Crickhollow there was the sound of horns blowing, and voices crying and feet running. But the Black Riders rode like a gale to the North-gate. Let the little people blow! Sauron would deal with them later. Meanwhile they had another errand: they knew now that the house was empty and the Ring had gone. They rode down the guards at the gate and vanished from the Shire.

In the early night Frodo woke from deep sleep, suddenly, as if some sound or presence had disturbed him. He saw that Strider was sitting alert in his chair: his eyes gleamed in the light of the fire, which had been tended and was burning brightly; but he made no sign or movement.

Frodo soon went to sleep again; but his dreams were again troubled with the noise of wind and of galloping hoofs. The wind seemed to be curling round the house and shaking it; and far off he heard a horn blowing wildly. He opened his eyes, and heard a cock crowing lustily in the inn-yard. Strider had drawn the curtains and pushed back the shutters with a clang. The first grey light of day was in the room, and a cold air was coming through the open window.

As soon as Strider had roused them all, he led the way to their bedrooms. When they saw them they were glad that they had taken his advice: the windows had been forced open and were swinging, and the curtains were flapping; the beds were tossed about, and the bolsters slashed and flung upon the floor; the brown mat was torn to pieces.

Strider immediately went to fetch the landlord. Poor Mr. Butterbur looked sleepy and frightened. He had hardly closed his eyes all night (so he said), but he had never heard a sound.

‘Never has such a thing happened in my time!’ he cried, raising his hands in horror. ‘Guests unable to sleep in their beds, and good bolsters ruined and all! What are we coming to?’

‘Dark times,’ said Strider. ‘But for the present you may be left in peace, when you have got rid of us. We will leave at once. Never mind about breakfast: a drink and a bite standing will have to do. We shall be packed in a few minutes.’

Mr. Butterbur hurried off to see that their ponies were got ready, and to fetch them a ‘bite’. But very soon he came back in dismay. The ponies had vanished! The stable-doors had all been opened in the night, and they were gone: not only Merry’s ponies, but every other horse and beast in the place.

Frodo was crushed by the news. How could they hope to reach Rivendell on foot, pursued by mounted enemies? They might as well set out for the Moon. Strider sat silent for a while, looking at the hobbits, as if he was weighing up their strength and courage.

‘Ponies would not help us to escape horsemen,’ he said at last, thoughtfully, as if he guessed what Frodo had in mind. ‘We should not go much slower on foot, not on the roads that I mean to take. I was going to walk in any case. It is the food and stores that trouble me. We cannot count on getting anything to eat between here and Rivendell, except what we take with us; and we ought to take plenty to spare; for we may be delayed, or forced to go round-about, far out of the direct way. How much are you prepared to carry on your backs?’

‘As much as we must,’ said Pippin with a sinking heart, but trying to show that he was tougher than he looked (or felt).

‘I can carry enough for two,’ said Sam defiantly.

‘Can’t anything be done, Mr. Butterbur?’ asked Frodo. ‘Can’t we get a couple of ponies in the village, or even one just for the baggage? I don’t suppose we could hire them, but we might be able to buy them,’ he added, doubtfully, wondering if he could afford it.

‘I doubt it,’ said the landlord unhappily. ‘The two or three riding-ponies that there were in Bree were stabled in my yard, and they’re gone. As for other animals, horses or ponies for draught or what not, there are very few of them in Bree, and they won’t be for sale. But I’ll do what I can. I’ll rout out Bob and send him round as soon as may be.’

‘Yes,’ said Strider reluctantly, ‘you had better do that. I am afraid we shall have to try to get one pony at least. But so ends all hope of starting early, and slipping away quietly! We might as well have blown a horn to announce our departure. That was part of their plan, no doubt.’

‘There is one crumb of comfort,’ said Merry, ‘and more than a crumb, I hope: we can have breakfast while we wait—and sit down to it. Let’s get hold of Nob!’

In the end there was more than three hours’ delay. Bob came back with the report that no horse or pony was to be got for love or money in the neighbourhood—except one: Bill Ferny had one that he might possibly sell. ‘A poor old half-starved creature it is,’ said Bob; ‘but he won’t part with it for less than thrice its worth, seeing how you’re placed, not if I knows Bill Ferny.’

‘Bill Ferny?’ said Frodo. ‘Isn’t there some trick? Wouldn’t the beast bolt back to him with all our stuff, or help in tracking us, or something?’

‘I wonder,’ said Strider. ‘But I cannot imagine any animal running home to him, once it got away. I fancy this is only an afterthought of kind Master Ferny’s: just a way of increasing his profits from the affair. The chief danger is that the poor beast is probably at death’s door. But there does not seem any choice. What does he want for it?’

Bill Ferny’s price was twelve silver pennies; and that was indeed at least three times the pony’s value in those parts. It proved to be a bony, underfed, and dispirited animal; but it did not look like dying just yet. Mr. Butterbur paid for it himself, and offered Merry another eighteen pence as some compensation for the lost animals. He was an honest man, and well-off as things were reckoned in Bree; but thirty silver pennies was a sore blow to him, and being cheated by Bill Ferny made it harder to bear.

As a matter of fact he came out on the right side in the end. It turned out later that only one horse had been actually stolen. The others had been driven off, or had bolted in terror, and were found wandering in different corners of the Bree-land. Merry’s ponies had escaped altogether, and eventually (having a good deal of sense) they made their way to the Downs in search of Fatty Lumpkin. So they came under the care of Tom Bombadil for a while, and were well-off. But when news of the events at Bree came to Tom’s ears, he sent them to Mr. Butterbur, who thus got five good beasts at a very fair price. They had to work harder in Bree, but Bob treated them well; so on the whole they were lucky: they missed a dark and dangerous journey. But they never came to Rivendell.

However, in the meanwhile for all Mr. Butterbur knew his money was gone for good, or for bad. And he had other troubles. For there was a great commotion as soon as the remaining guests were astir and heard news of the raid on the inn. The southern travellers had lost several horses and blamed the innkeeper loudly, until it became known that one of their own number had also disappeared in the night, none other than Bill Ferny’s squint-eyed companion. Suspicion fell on him at once.

‘If you pick up with a horse-thief, and bring him to my house,’ said Butterbur angrily, ‘you ought to pay for all the damage yourselves and not come shouting at me. Go and ask Ferny where your handsome friend is!’ But it appeared that he was nobody’s friend, and nobody could recollect when he had joined their party.

After their breakfast the hobbits had to re-pack, and get together further supplies for the longer journey they were now expecting. It was close on ten o’clock before they at last got off. By that time the whole of Bree was buzzing with excitement. Frodo’s vanishing trick; the appearance of the black horsemen; the robbing of the stables; and not least the news that Strider the Ranger had joined the mysterious hobbits, made such a tale as would last for many uneventful years. Most of the inhabitants of Bree and Staddle, and many even from Combe and Archet, were crowded in the road to see the travellers start. The other guests in the inn were at the doors or hanging out of the windows.

Strider had changed his mind, and had decided to leave Bree by the main road. Any attempt to set off across country at once would only make matters worse: half the inhabitants would follow them, to see what they were up to, and to prevent them from trespassing.

They said farewell to Nob and Bob, and took leave of Mr. Butterbur with many thanks. ‘I hope we shall meet again some day, when things are merry once more,’ said Frodo. ‘I should like nothing better than to stay in your house in peace for a while.’

They tramped off, anxious and downhearted, under the eyes of the crowd. Not all the faces were friendly, nor all the words that were shouted. But Strider seemed to be held in awe by most of the Bree-landers, and those that he stared at shut their mouths and drew away. He walked in front with Frodo; next came Merry and Pippin; and last came Sam leading the pony, which was laden with as much of their baggage as they had the heart to give it; but already it looked less dejected, as if it approved of the change in its fortunes. Sam was chewing an apple thoughtfully. He had a pocket full of them: a parting present from Nob and Bob. ‘Apples for walking, and a pipe for sitting,’ he said. ‘But I reckon I’ll miss them both before long.’

The hobbits took no notice of the inquisitive heads that peeped out of doors, or popped over walls and fences, as they passed. But as they drew near to the further gate, Frodo saw a dark ill-kept house behind a thick hedge: the last house in the village. In one of the windows he caught a glimpse of a sallow face with sly, slanting eyes; but it vanished at once.

‘So that’s where that southerner is hiding!’ he thought. ‘He looks more than half like a goblin.’

Over the hedge another man was staring boldly. He had heavy black brows, and dark scornful eyes; his large mouth curled in a sneer. He was smoking a short black pipe. As they approached he took it out of his mouth and spat.

‘Morning, Longshanks!’ he said. ‘Off early? Found some friends at last?’ Strider nodded, but did not answer.

‘Morning, my little friends!’ he said to the others. ‘I suppose you know who you’ve taken up with? That’s Stick-at-naught Strider, that is! Though I’ve heard other names not so pretty. Watch out tonight! And you, Sammie, don’t go ill-treating my poor old pony! Pah!’ He spat again.

Sam turned quickly. ‘And you, Ferny,’ he said, ‘put your ugly face out of sight, or it will get hurt.’ With a sudden flick, quick as lightning, an apple left his hand and hit Bill square on the nose. He ducked too late, and curses came from behind the hedge. ‘Waste of a good apple,’ said Sam regretfully, and strode on.

At last they left the village behind. The escort of children and stragglers that had followed them got tired and turned back at the South-gate. Passing through, they kept on along the Road for some miles. It bent to the left, curving back into its eastward line as it rounded the feet of Bree-hill, and then it began to run swiftly downwards into wooded country. To their left they could see some of the houses and hobbit-holes of Staddle on the gentler south-eastern slopes of the hill; down in a deep hollow away north of the Road there were wisps of rising smoke that showed where Combe lay; Archet was hidden in the trees beyond.

After the Road had run down some way, and had left Bree-hill standing tall and brown behind, they came on a narrow track that led off towards the North. ‘This is where we leave the open and take to cover,’ said Strider.

‘Not a “short cut”, I hope,’ said Pippin. ‘Our last short cut through woods nearly ended in disaster.’

‘Ah, but you had not got me with you then,’ laughed Strider. ‘My cuts, short or long, don’t go wrong.’ He took a look up and down the Road. No-one was in sight; and he led the way quickly down towards the wooded valley.

His plan, as far as they could understand it without knowing the country, was to go towards Archet at first, but to bear right and pass it on the east, and then to steer as straight as he could over the wild lands to Weathertop Hill. In that way they would, if all went well, cut off a great loop of the Road, which further on bent southwards to avoid the Midgewater Marshes. But, of course, they would have to pass through the marshes themselves, and Strider’s description of them was not encouraging.

However, in the meanwhile, walking was not unpleasant. Indeed, if it had not been for the disturbing events of the night before, they would have enjoyed this part of the journey better than any up to that time. The sun was shining, clear but not too hot. The woods in the valley were still leafy and full of colour, and seemed peaceful and wholesome. Strider guided them confidently among the many crossing paths, although left to themselves they would soon have been at a loss. He was taking a wandering course with many turns and doublings, to put off any pursuit.

‘Bill Ferny will have watched where we left the Road, for certain,’ he said; ‘though I don’t think he will follow us himself. He knows the land round here well enough, but he knows he is not a match for me in a wood. It is what he may tell others that I am afraid of. I don’t suppose they are far away. If they think we have made for Archet, so much the better.’

Whether because of Strider’s skill or for some other reason, they saw no sign and heard no sound of any other living thing all that day: neither two-footed, except birds; nor four-footed, except one fox and a few squirrels. The next day they began to steer a steady course eastwards; and still all was quiet and peaceful. On the third day out from Bree they came out of the Chetwood. The land had been falling steadily, ever since they turned aside from the Road, and they now entered a wide flat expanse of country, much more difficult to manage.

They were far beyond the borders of the Bree-land, out in the pathless wilderness, and drawing near to the Midgewater Marshes.

The ground now became damp, and in places boggy and here and there they came upon pools, and wide stretches of reeds and rushes filled with the warbling of little hidden birds. They had to pick their way carefully to keep both dry-footed and on their proper course. At first they made fair progress, but as they went on, their passage became slower and more dangerous. The marshes were bewildering and treacherous, and there was no permanent trail even for Rangers to find through their shifting quagmires. The flies began to torment them, and the air was full of clouds of tiny midges that crept up their sleeves and breeches and into their hair.

‘I am being eaten alive!’ cried Pippin. ‘Midgewater! There are more midges than water!’

‘What do they live on when they can’t get hobbit?’ asked Sam, scratching his neck.

They spent a miserable day in this lonely and unpleasant country. Their camping-place was damp, cold, and uncomfortable; and the biting insects would not let them sleep. There were also abominable creatures haunting the reeds and tussocks that from the sound of them were evil relatives of the cricket. There were thousands of them, and they squeaked all round, *neek-breek*, *breek-neek*, unceasingly all the night, until the hobbits were nearly frantic.

The next day, the fourth, was little better, and the night almost as comfortless. Though the Neekerbrekers (as Sam called them) had been left behind, the midges still pursued them.

As Frodo lay, tired but unable to close his eyes, it seemed to him that far away there came a light in the eastern sky: it flashed and faded many times. It was not the dawn, for that was still some hours off.

‘What is the light?’ he said to Strider, who had risen, and was standing, gazing ahead into the night.

‘I do not know,’ Strider answered. ‘It is too distant to make out. It is like lightning that leaps up from the hill-tops.’

Frodo lay down again, but for a long while he could still see the white flashes, and against them the tall dark figure of Strider, standing silent and watchful. At last he passed into uneasy sleep.

They had not gone far on the fifth day when they left the last straggling pools and reed-beds of the marshes behind them. The land before them began steadily to rise again. Away in the distance eastward they could now see a line of hills. The highest of them was at the right of the line and a little separated from the others. It had a conical top, slightly flattened at the summit.

‘That is Weathertop,’ said Strider. ‘The Old Road, which we have left far away on our right, runs to the south of it and passes not far from its foot. We might reach it by noon tomorrow, if we go straight towards it. I suppose we had better do so.’

‘What do you mean?’ asked Frodo.

‘I mean: when we do get there, it is not certain what we shall find. It is close to the Road.’

‘But surely we were hoping to find Gandalf there?’

‘Yes; but the hope is faint. If he comes this way at all, he may not pass through Bree, and so he may not know what we are doing. And anyway, unless by luck we arrive almost together, we shall miss one another; it will not be safe for him or for us to wait there long. If the Riders fail to find us in the wilderness, they are likely to make for Weathertop themselves. It commands a wide view all round. Indeed, there are many birds and beasts in this country that could see us, as we stand here, from that hill-top. Not all the birds are to be trusted, and there are other spies more evil than they are.’

The hobbits looked anxiously at the distant hills. Sam looked up into the pale sky, fearing to see hawks or eagles hovering over them with bright unfriendly eyes. ‘You do make me feel uncomfortable and lonesome, Strider!’ he said.

‘What do you advise us to do?’ asked Frodo.

‘I think,’ answered Strider slowly, as if he was not quite sure, ‘I think the best thing is to go as straight eastward from here as we can, to make for the line of hills, not for Weathertop. There we can strike a path I know that runs at their feet; it will bring us to Weathertop from the north and less openly. Then we shall see what we shall see.’

All that day they plodded along, until the cold and early evening came down. The land became drier and more barren; but mists and vapours lay behind them on the marshes. A few melancholy birds were piping and wailing, until the round red sun sank slowly into the western shadows; then an empty silence fell. The hobbits thought of the soft light of sunset glancing through the cheerful windows of Bag End far away.

At the day’s end they came to a stream that wandered down from the hills to lose itself in the stagnant marshland, and they went up along its banks while the light lasted. It was already night when at last they halted and made their camp under some stunted alder-trees by the shores of the stream. Ahead there loomed now against the dusky sky the bleak and treeless backs of the hills. That night they set a watch, and Strider, it seemed, did not sleep at all. The moon was waxing, and in the early night-hours a cold grey light lay on the land.

Next morning they set out again soon after sunrise. There was a frost in the air, and the sky was a pale clear blue. The hobbits felt refreshed, as if they had had a night of unbroken sleep. Already they were getting used to much walking on short commons—shorter at any rate than what in the Shire they would have thought barely enough to keep them on their legs. Pippin declared that Frodo was looking twice the hobbit that he had been.

‘Very odd,’ said Frodo, tightening his belt, ‘considering that there is actually a good deal less of me. I hope the thinning process will not go on indefinitely, or I shall become a wraith.’

‘Do not speak of such things!’ said Strider quickly, and with surprising earnestness.

The hills drew nearer. They made an undulating ridge, often rising almost to a thousand feet, and here and there falling again to low clefts or passes leading into the eastern land beyond. Along the crest of the ridge the hobbits could see what looked to be the remains of green-grown walls and dikes, and in the clefts there still stood the ruins of old works of stone. By night they had reached the feet of the westward slopes, and there they camped. It was the night of the fifth of October, and they were six days out from Bree.

In the morning they found, for the first time since they had left the Chetwood, a track plain to see. They turned right and followed it southwards. It ran cunningly, taking a line that seemed chosen so as to keep as much hidden as possible from the view, both of the hill-tops above and of the flats to the west. It dived into dells, and hugged steep banks; and where it passed over flatter and more open ground on either side of it there were lines of large boulders and hewn stones that screened the travellers almost like a hedge.

‘I wonder who made this path, and what for,’ said Merry, as they walked along one of these avenues, where the stones were unusually large and closely set. ‘I am not sure that I like it: it has a—well, rather a barrow-wightish look. Is there any barrow on Weathertop?’

‘No. There is no barrow on Weathertop, nor on any of these hills,’ answered Strider. ‘The Men of the West did not live here; though in their latter days they defended the hills for a while against the evil that came out of Angmar. This path was made to serve the forts<sup>377</sup> along the walls. But long before, in the first days of the North Kingdom, they built a great watch-tower on Weathertop, Amon Sûl they called it. It was burned and broken, and nothing remains of it now but a tumbled ring, like a rough crown on the old hill’s head. Yet once it was tall and fair. It is told that Elendil stood there watching for the coming of Gil-galad<sup>366</sup> out of the West, in the days of the Last Alliance.’

The hobbits gazed at Strider. It seemed that he was learned in old lore, as well as in the ways of the wild. ‘Who was Gil-galad?’ asked Merry; but Strider did not answer, and seemed to be lost in thought. Suddenly a low voice murmured:

*Gil-galad was an Elven-king.  
Of him the harpers sadly sing:  
the last whose realm was fair and free*

*between the Mountains and the Sea.*

*His sword was long, his lance was keen,  
his shining helm afar was seen;  
the countless stars of heaven's field  
were mirrored in his silver shield.*

*But long ago he rode away,  
and where he dwelleth none can say;  
for into darkness fell his star  
in Mordor where the shadows are.*

The others turned in amazement, for the voice was Sam's.

'Don't stop!' said Merry.

'That's all I know,' stammered Sam, blushing. 'I learned it from Mr. Bilbo when I was a lad. He used to tell me tales like that, knowing how I was always one for hearing about Elves. It was Mr. Bilbo as taught me my letters. He was mighty book-learned was dear old Mr. Bilbo. And he wrote *poetry*. He wrote what I have just said.'

'He did not make it up,' said Strider. 'It is part of the lay that is called *The Fall of Gil-galad*, which is in an ancient tongue. Bilbo must have translated it. I never knew that.'

'There was a lot more,' said Sam, 'all about Mordor. I didn't learn that part, it gave me the shivers. I never thought I should be going that way myself!'

'Going to Mordor!' cried Pippin. 'I hope it won't come to that!'

'Do not speak that name so loudly!' said Strider.

It was already mid-day when they drew near the southern end of the path, and saw before them, in the pale clear light of the October sun, a grey-green bank, leading up like a bridge on to the northward slope of the hill. They decided to make for the top at once, while the daylight was broad. Concealment was no longer possible, and they could only hope that no enemy or spy was observing them. Nothing was to be seen moving on the hill. If Gandalf was anywhere about, there was no sign of him.

On the western flank of Weathertop they found a sheltered hollow, at the bottom of which there was a bowl-shaped dell with grassy sides. There they left Sam and Pippin with the pony and their packs and luggage. The other three went on. After half an hour's plodding climb Strider reached the crown of the hill; Frodo and Merry followed, tired and breathless. The last slope had been steep and rocky.

On the top they found, as Strider had said, a wide ring of ancient stone-work, now crumbling or covered with age-long grass. But in the centre a cairn of broken stones had been piled. They were blackened as if with fire. About them the turf was burned to the roots and all within the ring the grass was scorched and shrivelled, as if flames had swept the hill-top; but there was no sign of any living thing.

Standing upon the rim of the ruined circle, they saw all round below them a wide prospect, for the most part of lands empty and featureless, except for patches of woodland away to the south, beyond which they caught here and there the glint of distant water. Beneath them on this southern side there ran like a ribbon the Old Road, coming out of the West and winding up and down, until it faded behind a ridge of dark land to the east. Nothing was moving on it. Following its line eastward with their eyes they saw the Mountains: the nearer foothills were brown and sombre; behind them stood taller shapes of grey, and behind those again were high white peaks glimmering among the clouds.

'Well, here we are!' said Merry. 'And very cheerless and uninviting it looks! There is no water and no shelter. And no sign of Gandalf. But I don't blame him for not waiting—if he ever came here.'

'I wonder,' said Strider, looking round thoughtfully. 'Even if he was a day or two behind us at Bree, he could have arrived here first. He can ride very swiftly when need presses.' Suddenly he stooped and looked at the



stone on the top of the cairn; it was flatter than the others, and whiter, as if it had escaped the fire. He picked it up and examined it, turning it in his fingers. 'This has been handled recently,' he said. 'What do you think of these marks?'

On the flat under-side Frodo saw some scratches:



'There seems to be a stroke, a dot, and three more strokes,' he said.

'The stroke on the left might be a G-rune with thin branches,' said Strider. 'It might be a sign left by Gandalf, though one cannot be sure. The scratches are fine, and they certainly look fresh. But the marks might mean something quite different, and have nothing to do with us. Rangers use runes, and they come here sometimes.'

'What could they mean, even if Gandalf made them?' asked Merry.

'I should say,' answered Strider, 'that they stood for G3, and were a sign that Gandalf was here on October the third: that is three days ago now. It would also show that he was in a hurry and danger was at hand, so that he had no time or did not dare to write anything longer or plainer. If that is so, we must be wary.'

'I wish we could feel sure that he made the marks, whatever they may mean,' said Frodo. 'It would be a great comfort to know that he was on the way, in front of us or behind us.'

'Perhaps,' said Strider. 'For myself, I believe that he was here, and was in danger. There have been scorching flames here; and now the light that we saw three nights ago in the eastern sky comes back to my mind. I guess that he was attacked on this hill-top, but with what result I cannot tell. He is here no longer, and we must now look after ourselves and make our own way to Rivendell, as best we can.'

'How far is Rivendell?' asked Merry, gazing round wearily. The world looked wild and wide from Weathertop.

'I don't know if the Road has ever been measured in miles beyond the *Forsaken Inn*, a day's journey east of Bree,' answered Strider. 'Some say it is so far, and some say otherwise. It is a strange road, and folk are glad to reach their journey's end, whether the time is long or short. But I know how long it would take me on my own feet, with fair weather and no ill fortune: twelve days from here to the Ford of Bruinen, where the Road crosses the Loudwater that runs out of Rivendell. We have at least a fortnight's journey before us, for I do not think we shall be able to use the Road.'

'A fortnight!' said Frodo. 'A lot may happen in that time.'

'It may,' said Strider.

They stood for a while silent on the hill-top, near its southward edge. In that lonely place Frodo for the first time fully realized his homelessness and danger. He wished bitterly that his fortune had left him in the quiet and beloved Shire. He stared down at the hateful Road, leading back westward—to his home. Suddenly he was aware that two black specks were moving slowly along it, going westward; and looking again he saw that three others were creeping eastward to meet them. He gave a cry and clutched Strider's arm.

'Look,' he said, pointing downwards.

At once Strider flung himself on the ground behind the ruined circle, pulling Frodo down beside him. Merry threw himself alongside.

'What is it?' he whispered.

'I do not know, but I fear the worst,' answered Strider.

Slowly they crawled up to the edge of the ring again, and peered through a cleft between two jagged stones. The light was no longer bright, for the clear morning had faded, and clouds creeping out of the East had now overtaken the sun, as it began to go down. They could all see the black specks, but neither Frodo nor Merry could make out their shapes for certain; yet something told them that there, far below, were Black Riders assembling on the Road beyond the foot of the hill.

‘Yes,’ said Strider, whose keener sight left him in no doubt. ‘The enemy is here!’

Hastily they crept away and slipped down the north side of the hill to find their companions.

Sam and Peregrin had not been idle. They had explored the small dell and the surrounding slopes. Not far away they found a spring of clear water in the hillside, and near it footprints not more than a day or two old. In the dell itself they found recent traces of a fire, and other signs of a hasty camp. There were some fallen rocks on the edge of the dell nearest to the hill. Behind them Sam came upon a small store of firewood neatly stacked.

‘I wonder if old Gandalf has been here,’ he said to Pippin. ‘Whoever it was put this stuff here meant to come back it seems.’

Strider was greatly interested in these discoveries. ‘I wish I had waited and explored the ground down here myself,’ he said, hurrying off to the spring to examine the footprints.

‘It is just as I feared,’ he said, when he came back. ‘Sam and Pippin have trampled the soft ground, and the marks are spoilt or confused. Rangers have been here lately. It is they who left the firewood behind. But there are also several newer tracks that were not made by Rangers. At least one set was made, only a day or two ago, by heavy boots. At least one. I cannot now be certain, but I think there were many booted feet.’ He paused and stood in anxious thought.

Each of the hobbits saw in his mind a vision of the cloaked and booted Riders. If the horsemen had already found the dell, the sooner Strider led them somewhere else the better. Sam viewed the hollow with great dislike, now that he had heard news of their enemies on the Road, only a few miles away.

‘Hadn’t we better clear out quick, Mr. Strider?’ he asked impatiently. ‘It is getting late, and I don’t like this hole: it makes my heart sink somehow.’

‘Yes, we certainly must decide what to do at once,’ answered Strider, looking up and considering the time and the weather. ‘Well, Sam,’ he said at last, ‘I do not like this place either; but I cannot think of anywhere better that we could reach before nightfall. At least we are out of sight for the moment, and if we moved we should be much more likely to be seen by spies. All we could do would be to go right out of our way back north on this side of the line of hills, where the land is all much the same as it is here. The Road is watched, but we should have to cross it, if we tried to take cover in the thickets away to the south. On the north side of the Road beyond the hills the country is bare and flat for miles.’

‘Can the Riders *see*?’ asked Merry. ‘I mean, they seem usually to have used their noses rather than their eyes, smelling for us, if smelling is the right word, at least in the daylight. But you made us lie down flat when you saw them down below; and now you talk of being seen, if we move.’

‘I was too careless on the hill-top,’ answered Strider. ‘I was very anxious to find some sign of Gandalf; but it was a mistake for three of us to go up and stand there so long. For the black horses can see, and the Riders can use men and other creatures as spies, as we found at Bree. They themselves do not see the world of light as we do, but our shapes cast shadows in their minds, which only the noon sun destroys; and in the dark they perceive many signs and forms that are hidden from us: then they are most to be feared. And at all times they smell the blood of living things, desiring and hating it. Senses, too, there are other than sight or smell. We can feel their presence—it troubled our hearts, as soon as we came here, and before we saw them; they feel ours more keenly. Also,’ he added, and his voice sank to a whisper, ‘the Ring draws them.’

‘Is there no escape then?’ said Frodo, looking round wildly. ‘If I move I shall be seen and hunted! If I stay, I shall draw them to me!’

Strider laid his hand on his shoulder. ‘There is still hope,’ he said. ‘You are not alone. Let us take this wood that is set ready for the fire as a sign. There is little shelter or defence here, but fire shall serve for both. Sauron can put fire to his evil uses, as he can all things, but these Riders do not love it, and fear those who wield it. Fire is our friend in the wilderness.’

‘Maybe,’ muttered Sam. ‘It is also as good a way of saying “here we are” as I can think of, bar shouting.’

Down in the lowest and most sheltered corner of the dell they lit a fire, and prepared a meal. The shades of evening began to fall, and it grew cold. They were suddenly aware of great hunger, for they had not eaten anything since breakfast; but they dared not make more than a frugal supper. The lands ahead were empty of all save birds and beasts, unfriendly places deserted by all the races of the world. Rangers passed at times beyond the hills, but they were few and did not stay. Other wanderers were rare, and of evil sort: trolls might stray down at times out of the northern valleys of the Misty Mountains. Only on the Road would travellers be found, most often dwarves, hurrying along on business of their own, and with no help and few words to spare for strangers.

‘I don’t see how our food can be made to last,’ said Frodo. ‘We have been careful enough in the last few days, and this supper is no feast; but we have used more than we ought, if we have two weeks still to go, and perhaps more.’

‘There is food in the wild,’ said Strider; ‘berry, root, and herb; and I have some skill as a hunter at need. You need not be afraid of starving before winter comes. But gathering and catching food is long and weary work, and we need haste. So tighten your belts, and think with hope of the tables of Elrond’s house!’

The cold increased as darkness came on. Peering out from the edge of the dell they could see nothing but a grey land now vanishing quickly into shadow. The sky above had cleared again and was slowly filled with twinkling stars. Frodo and his companions huddled round the fire, wrapped in every garment and blanket they possessed; but Strider was content with a single cloak, and sat a little apart, drawing thoughtfully at his pipe.

As night fell and the light of the fire began to shine out brightly he began to tell them tales to keep their minds from fear. He knew many histories and legends of long ago, of Elves and Men and the good and evil deeds of the Elder Days. They wondered how old he was, and where he had learned all this lore.

‘Tell us of Gil-galad,’ said Merry suddenly, when he paused at the end of a story of the Elf-kingdoms. ‘Do you know any more of that old lay that you spoke of?’

‘I do indeed,’ answered Strider. ‘So also does Frodo, for it concerns us closely.’ Merry and Pippin looked at Frodo, who was staring into the fire.

‘I know only the little that Gandalf has told me,’ said Frodo slowly. ‘Gil-galad was the last of the great Elf-kings of Middle-earth. Gil-galad is *Starlight* in their tongue. With Elendil, the Elf-friend, he went to the land of—’

‘No!’ said Strider interrupting, ‘I do not think that tale should be told now with the servants of the Enemy at hand. If we win through to the house of Elrond, you may hear it there, told in full.’

‘Then tell us some other tale of the old days,’ begged Sam; ‘a tale about the Elves before the fading time. I would dearly like to hear more about Elves; the dark seems to press round so close.’

‘I will tell you the tale of Tinúviel,’ said Strider, ‘in brief—for it is a long tale of which the end is not known; and there are none now, except Elrond, that remember it aright as it was told of old. It is a fair tale, though it is sad, as are all the tales of Middle-earth, and yet it may lift up your hearts.’ He was silent for some time, and then he began not to speak but to chant softly:

*The leaves were long, the grass was green,  
The hemlock-umbels tall and fair,  
And in the glade a light was seen  
Of stars in shadow shimmering.  
Tinúviel was dancing there  
To music of a pipe unseen,  
And light of stars was in her hair,  
And in her raiment glimmering.*

*There Beren came from mountains cold,  
And lost he wandered under leaves,*

*And where the Elven-river rolled  
He walked alone and sorrowing.  
He peered between the hemlock-leaves  
And saw in wonder flowers of gold  
Upon her mantle and her sleeves,  
And her hair like shadow following.*

*Enchantment healed his weary feet  
That over hills were doomed to roam;  
And forth he hastened, strong and fleet,  
And grasped at moonbeams glistening.  
Through woven woods in Elvenhome  
She lightly fled on dancing feet,  
And left him lonely still to roam  
In the silent forest listening.*

*He heard there oft the flying sound  
Of feet as light as linden-leaves,  
Or music welling underground,  
In hidden hollows quavering.  
Now withered lay the hemlock-sheaves,  
And one by one with sighing sound  
Whispering fell the beechen leaves  
In the wintry woodland wavering.*

*He sought her ever, wandering far  
Where leaves of years were thickly strewn,  
By light of moon and ray of star  
In frosty heavens shivering.  
Her mantle glinted in the moon,  
As on a hill-top high and far  
She danced, and at her feet was strewn  
A mist of silver quivering.*

*When winter passed, she came again,  
And her song released the sudden spring,  
Like rising lark, and falling rain,  
And melting water bubbling.  
He saw the elven-flowers spring  
About her feet, and healed again  
He longed by her to dance and sing  
Upon the grass untroubling.*

*Again she fled, but swift he came.  
Tinúviel! Tinúviel!  
He called her by her Elvish name;  
And there she halted listening.  
One moment stood she, and a spell  
His voice laid on her: Beren came,  
And doom fell on Tinúviel*

*That in his arms lay glistening.*

*As Beren looked into her eyes  
Within the shadows of her hair,  
The trembling starlight of the skies  
He saw there mirrored shimmering.  
Tinúviel the elven-fair,  
Immortal maiden elven-wise,  
About him cast her shadowy hair  
And arms like silver glimmering.*

*Long was the way that fate them bore,  
O'er stony mountains cold and grey,  
Through halls of iron and darkling door,  
And woods of nightshade morrowless.  
The Sundering Seas between them lay,  
And yet at last they met once more,  
And long ago they passed away  
In the forest singing sorrowless.*

Strider sighed and paused before he spoke again. 'That is a song,' he said, 'in the mode that is called *ann-thennath* among the Elves, but is hard to render in our Common Speech, and this is but a rough echo of it. It tells of the meeting of Beren son of Barahir and Lúthien Tinúviel. Beren was a mortal man, but Lúthien was the daughter of Thingol, a King of Elves upon Middle-earth when the world was young; and she was the fairest maiden that has ever been among all the children of this world. As the stars above the mists of the Northern lands was her loveliness, and in her face was a shining light. In those days the Great Enemy, of whom Sauron of Mordor was but a servant, dwelt in Angband in the North, and the Elves of the West coming back to Middle-earth made war upon him to regain the Silmarils which he had stolen; and the fathers of Men aided the Elves. But the Enemy was victorious and Barahir was slain, and Beren escaping through great peril came over the Mountains of Terror into the hidden Kingdom of Thingol in the forest of Neldoreth. There he beheld Lúthien singing and dancing in a glade beside the enchanted river Esgalduin; and he named her Tinúviel, that is Nightingale in the language of old. Many sorrows befell them afterwards, and they were parted long. Tinúviel rescued Beren from the dungeons of Sauron, and together they passed through great dangers, and cast down even the Great Enemy from his throne, and took from his iron crown<sup>362</sup> one of the three Silmarils, brightest of all jewels, to be the bride-price of Lúthien to Thingol her father. Yet at the last Beren was slain by the Wolf that came from the gates of Angband, and he died in the arms of Tinúviel. But she chose mortality, and to die from the world, so that she might follow him; and it is sung that they met again beyond the Sundering Seas, and after a brief time walking alive once more in the green woods, together they passed, long ago, beyond the confines of this world. So it is that Lúthien Tinúviel alone of the Elf-kindred has died indeed and left the world, and they have lost her whom they most loved. But from her the lineage of the Elf-lords of old descended among Men. There live still those of whom Lúthien was the foremother, and it is said that her line shall never fail. Elrond of Rivendell is of that Kin. For of Beren and Lúthien was born Dior Thingol's heir; and of him Elwing the White whom Eärendil wedded, he that sailed his ship out of the mists of the world into the seas of heaven with the Silmaril upon his brow. And of Eärendil came the Kings of Númenor, that is Westernessee.'

As Strider was speaking they watched his strange eager face, dimly lit in the red glow of the wood-fire. His eyes shone, and his voice was rich and deep. Above him was a black starry sky. Suddenly a pale light appeared over the crown of Weathertop behind him. The waxing moon was climbing slowly above the hill that overshadowed them, and the stars above the hill-top faded.

The story ended. The hobbits moved and stretched. 'Look!' said Merry. 'The Moon is rising: it must be getting late.'

The others looked up. Even as they did so, they saw on the top of the hill something small and dark against the glimmer of the moonrise. It was perhaps only a large stone or jutting rock shown up by the pale light.

Sam and Merry got up and walked away from the fire. Frodo and Pippin remained seated in silence. Strider was watching the moonlight on the hill intently. All seemed quiet and still, but Frodo felt a cold dread creeping over his heart, now that Strider was no longer speaking. He huddled closer to the fire. At that moment Sam came running back from the edge of the dell.

‘I don’t know what it is,’ he said, ‘but I suddenly felt afraid. I durstn’t go outside this dell for any money; I felt that something was creeping up the slope.’

‘Did you *see* anything?’ asked Frodo, springing to his feet.

‘No, sir. I saw nothing, but I didn’t stop to look.’

‘I saw something,’ said Merry; ‘or I thought I did—away westwards where the moonlight was falling on the flats beyond the shadow of the hill-tops, I *thought* there were two or three black shapes. They seemed to be moving this way.’

‘Keep close to the fire, with your faces outward!’ cried Strider. ‘Get some of the longer sticks ready in your hands!’

For a breathless time they sat there, silent and alert, with their backs turned to the wood-fire, each gazing into the shadows that encircled them. Nothing happened. There was no sound or movement in the night. Frodo stirred, feeling that he must break the silence: he longed to shout out aloud.

‘Hush!’ whispered Strider. ‘What’s that?’ gasped Pippin at the same moment.

Over the lip of the little dell, on the side away from the hill, they felt, rather than saw, a shadow rise, one shadow or more than one. They strained their eyes, and the shadows seemed to grow. Soon there could be no doubt: three or four tall black figures were standing there on the slope, looking down on them. So black were they that they seemed like black holes in the deep shade behind them. Frodo thought that he heard a faint hiss as of venomous breath and felt a thin piercing chill. Then the shapes slowly advanced.

Terror overcame Pippin and Merry, and they threw themselves flat on the ground. Sam shrank to Frodo’s side. Frodo was hardly less terrified than his companions; he was quaking as if he was bitter cold, but his terror was swallowed up in a sudden temptation to put on the Ring. The desire to do this laid hold of him, and he could think of nothing else. He did not forget the Barrow, nor the message of Gandalf; but something seemed to be compelling him to disregard all warnings, and he longed to yield. Not with the hope of escape, or of doing anything, either good or bad: he simply felt that he must take the Ring and put it on his finger. He could not speak. He felt Sam looking at him, as if he knew that his master was in some great trouble, but he could not turn towards him. He shut his eyes and struggled for a while; but resistance became unbearable, and at last he slowly drew out the chain, and slipped the Ring on the forefinger of his left hand.

Immediately, though everything else remained as before, dim and dark, the shapes became terribly clear. He was able to see beneath their black wrappings. There were five tall figures: two standing on the lip of the dell, three advancing. In their white faces burned keen and merciless eyes; under their mantles were long grey robes; upon their grey hairs were helms of silver; in their haggard hands were swords of steel. Their eyes fell on him and pierced him, as they rushed towards him. Desperate, he drew his own sword, and it seemed to him that it flickered red, as if it was a firebrand. Two of the figures halted. The third was taller than the others: his hair was long and gleaming and on his helm was a crown. In one hand he held a long sword, and in the other a knife; both the knife and the hand that held it glowed with a pale light. He sprang forward and bore down on Frodo.

At that moment Frodo threw himself forward on the ground, and he heard himself crying aloud: *O Elbereth! Gilthoniel!* At the same time he struck at the feet of his enemy. A shrill cry rang out in the night; and he felt a pain like a dart of poisoned ice pierce his left shoulder. Even as he swooned he caught, as through a swirling mist, a glimpse of Strider leaping out of the darkness with a flaming brand of wood in either hand. With a last effort Frodo, dropping his sword, slipped the Ring from his finger and closed his right hand tight upon it.



## Chapter 12: Flight To The Ford

When Frodo came to himself he was still clutching the Ring desperately. He was lying by the fire, which was now piled high and burning brightly. His three companions were bending over him.

‘What has happened? Where is the pale king?’ he asked wildly.

They were too overjoyed to hear him speak to answer for a while; nor did they understand his question. At length he gathered from Sam that they had seen nothing but the vague shadowy shapes coming towards them. Suddenly to his horror Sam found that his master had vanished; and at that moment a black shadow rushed past him, and he fell. He heard Frodo’s voice, but it seemed to come from a great distance, or from under the earth, crying out strange words. They saw nothing more, until they stumbled over the body of Frodo, lying as if dead, face downwards on the grass with his sword beneath him. Strider ordered them to pick him up and lay him near the fire, and then he disappeared. That was now a good while ago.

Sam plainly was beginning to have doubts again about Strider; but while they were talking he returned, appearing suddenly out of the shadows. They started, and Sam drew his sword and stood over Frodo; but Strider knelt down swiftly at his side.

‘I am not a Black Rider, Sam,’ he said gently, ‘nor in league with them. I have been trying to discover something of their movements; but I have found nothing. I cannot think why they have gone and do not attack again. But there is no feeling of their presence anywhere at hand.’

When he heard what Frodo had to tell, he became full of concern, and shook his head and sighed. Then he ordered Pippin and Merry to heat as much water as they could in their small kettles, and to bathe the wound with it. ‘Keep the fire going well, and keep Frodo warm!’ he said. Then he got up and walked away, and called Sam to him. ‘I think I understand things better now,’ he said in a low voice. ‘There seem only to have been five of the enemy. Why they were not all here, I don’t know; but I don’t think they expected to be resisted. They have drawn off for the time being. But not far, I fear. They will come again another night, if we cannot escape. They are only waiting, because they think that their purpose is almost accomplished, and that the Ring cannot fly much further. I fear, Sam, that they believe your master has a deadly wound that will subdue him to their will. We shall see!’

Sam choked with tears. ‘Don’t despair!’ said Strider. ‘You must trust me now. Your Frodo is made of sterner stuff than I had guessed, though Gandalf hinted that it might prove so. He is not slain, and I think he will resist the evil power of the wound longer than his enemies expect. I will do all I can to help and heal him. Guard him well, while I am away!’ He hurried off and disappeared again into the darkness.

Frodo dozed, though the pain of his wound was slowly growing, and a deadly chill was spreading from his shoulder to his arm and side. His friends watched over him, warming him, and bathing his wound. The night passed slowly and wearily. Dawn was growing in the sky, and the dell was filling with grey light, when Strider at last returned.

‘Look!’ he cried; and stooping he lifted from the ground a black cloak that had lain there hidden by the darkness. A foot above the lower hem there was a slash. ‘This was the stroke of Frodo’s sword,’ he said. ‘The only hurt that it did to his enemy, I fear; for it is unharmed, but all blades perish that pierce that dreadful King. More deadly to him was the name of Elbereth.’

‘And more deadly to Frodo was this!’ He stooped again and lifted up a long thin knife. There was a cold gleam in it. As Strider raised it they saw that near the end its edge was notched and the point was broken off. But even as he held it up in the growing light, they gazed in astonishment, for the blade seemed to melt, and vanished

like a smoke in the air, leaving only the hilt in Strider's hand. 'Alas!' he cried. 'It was this accursed knife that gave the wound. Few now have the skill in healing to match such evil weapons. But I will do what I can.'

He sat down on the ground, and taking the dagger-hilt laid it on his knees, and he sang over it a slow song in a strange tongue. Then setting it aside, he turned to Frodo and in a soft tone spoke words the others could not catch. From the pouch at his belt he drew out the long leaves of a plant.

'These leaves,' he said, 'I have walked far to find; for this plant does not grow in the bare hills; but in the thickets away south of the Road I found it in the dark by the scent of its leaves.' He crushed a leaf in his fingers, and it gave out a sweet and pungent fragrance. 'It is fortunate that I could find it, for it is a healing plant that the Men of the West brought to Middle-earth. *Athelas* they named it, and it grows now sparsely and only near places where they dwelt or camped of old; and it is not known in the North, except to some of those who wander in the Wild. It has great virtues, but over such a wound as this its healing powers may be small.'

He threw the leaves into boiling water and bathed Frodo's shoulder. The fragrance of the steam was refreshing, and those that were unhurt felt their minds calmed and cleared. The herb had also some power over the wound, for Frodo felt the pain and also the sense of frozen cold lessen in his side; but the life did not return to his arm, and he could not raise or use his hand. He bitterly regretted his foolishness, and reproached himself for weakness of will; for he now perceived that in putting on the Ring he obeyed not his own desire but the commanding wish of his enemies. He wondered if he would remain maimed for life, and how they would now manage to continue their journey. He felt too weak to stand.

The others were discussing this very question. They quickly decided to leave Weathertop as soon as possible. 'I think now,' said Strider, 'that the enemy has been watching this place for some days. If Gandalf ever came here, then he must have been forced to ride away, and he will not return. In any case we are in great peril here after dark, since the attack of last night, and we can hardly meet greater danger wherever we go.'

As soon as the daylight was full, they had some hurried food and packed. It was impossible for Frodo to walk, so they divided the greater part of their baggage among the four of them, and put Frodo on the pony. In the last few days the poor beast had improved wonderfully; it already seemed fatter and stronger, and had begun to show an affection for its new masters, especially for Sam. Bill Ferny's treatment must have been very hard for the journey in the wild to seem so much better than its former life.

They started off in a southerly direction. This would mean crossing the Road, but it was the quickest way to more wooded country. And they needed fuel; for Strider said that Frodo must be kept warm, especially at night, while fire would be some protection for them all. It was also his plan to shorten their journey by cutting across another great loop of the Road: east beyond Weathertop it changed its course and took a wide bend northwards.

They made their way slowly and cautiously round the southwestern slopes of the hill, and came in a little while to the edge of the Road. There was no sign of the Riders. But even as they were hurrying across they heard far away two cries: a cold voice calling and a cold voice answering. Trembling they sprang forward, and made for the thickets that lay ahead. The land before them sloped away southwards, but it was wild and pathless; bushes and stunted trees grew in dense patches with wide barren spaces in between. The grass was scanty, coarse, and grey; and the leaves in the thickets were faded and falling. It was a cheerless land, and their journey was slow and gloomy. They spoke little as they trudged along. Frodo's heart was grieved as he watched them walking beside him with their heads down, and their backs bowed under their burdens. Even Strider seemed tired and heavy-hearted.

Before the first day's march was over Frodo's pain began to grow again, but he did not speak of it for a long time. Four days passed, without the ground or the scene changing much, except that behind them Weathertop slowly sank, and before them the distant mountains loomed a little nearer. Yet since that far cry they had seen and heard no sign that the enemy had marked their flight or followed them. They dreaded the dark hours, and kept watch in pairs by night, expecting at any time to see black shapes stalking in the grey night, dimly lit by the cloud-veiled moon; but they saw nothing, and heard no sound but the sigh of withered leaves and grass. Not once did they feel the sense of present evil that had assailed them before the attack in the dell. It seemed too much to hope that the Riders had already lost their trail again. Perhaps they were waiting to make some ambush in a narrow place?



At the end of the fifth day the ground began once more to rise slowly out of the wide shallow valley into which they had descended. Strider now turned their course again north-eastwards, and on the sixth day they reached the top of a long slow-climbing slope, and saw far ahead a huddle of wooded hills. Away below them they could see the Road sweeping round the feet of the hills; and to their right a grey river gleamed pale in the thin sunshine. In the distance they glimpsed yet another river in a stony valley half-veiled in mist.

‘I am afraid we must go back to the Road here for a while,’ said Strider. ‘We have now come to the River Hoarwell, that the Elves call Mitheithel. It flows down out of the Ettenmoors, the troll-fells north of Rivendell, and joins the Loudwater away in the South. Some call it the Greyflood after that. It is a great water before it finds the Sea. There is no way over it below its sources in the Ettenmoors, except by the Last Bridge on which the Road crosses.’

‘What is that other river we can see far away there?’ asked Merry.

‘That is Loudwater, the Bruinen of Rivendell,’ answered Strider. ‘The Road runs along the edge of the hills for many miles from the Bridge to the Ford of Bruinen. But I have not yet thought how we shall cross that water. One river at a time! We shall be fortunate indeed if we do not find the Last Bridge held against us.’

Next day, early in the morning, they came down again to the borders of the Road. Sam and Strider went forward, but they found no sign of any travellers or riders. Here under the shadow of the hills there had been some rain. Strider judged that it had fallen two days before, and had washed away all footprints. No horseman had passed since then, as far as he could see.

They hurried along with all the speed they could make, and after a mile or two they saw the Last Bridge ahead, at the bottom of a short steep slope. They dreaded to see black figures waiting there, but they saw none. Strider made them take cover in a thicket at the side of the Road, while he went forward to explore.

Before long he came hurrying back. ‘I can see no sign of the enemy,’ he said, ‘and I wonder very much what that means. But I have found something very strange.’

He held out his hand, and showed a single pale-green jewel. ‘I found it in the mud in the middle of the Bridge,’ he said. ‘It is a beryl, an elf-stone. Whether it was set there, or let fall by chance, I cannot say; but it brings hope to me. I will take it as a sign that we may pass the Bridge; but beyond that I dare not keep to the Road, without some clearer token.’

At once they went on again. They crossed the Bridge in safety, hearing no sound but the water swirling against its three great arches. A mile further on they came to a narrow ravine that led away northwards through the steep lands on the left of the Road. Here Strider turned aside, and soon they were lost in a sombre country of dark trees winding among the feet of sullen hills.

The hobbits were glad to leave the cheerless lands and the perilous Road behind them; but this new country seemed threatening and unfriendly. As they went forward the hills about them steadily rose. Here and there upon heights and ridges they caught glimpses of ancient walls of stone, and the ruins of towers: they had an ominous look. Frodo, who was not walking, had time to gaze ahead and to think. He recalled Bilbo’s account of his journey and the threatening towers on the hills north of the Road, in the country near the Trolls’ wood where his first serious adventure had happened. Frodo guessed that they were now in the same region, and wondered if by chance they would pass near the spot.

‘Who lives in this land?’ he asked. ‘And who built these towers? Is this troll-country?’

‘No!’ said Strider. ‘Trolls do not build. No-one lives in this land. Men once dwelt here, ages ago; but none remain now. They became an evil people, as legends tell, for they fell under the shadow of Angmar.<sup>378</sup> But all were destroyed in the war that brought the North Kingdom to its end. But that is now so long ago that the hills have forgotten them, though a shadow still lies on the land.’

‘Where did you learn such tales, if all the land is empty and forgetful?’ asked Peregrin. ‘The birds and beasts do not tell tales of that sort.’

‘The heirs of Elendil do not forget all things past,’ said Strider; ‘and many more things than I can tell are remembered in Rivendell.’ ‘Have you often been to Rivendell?’ said Frodo. ‘I have,’ said Strider. ‘I dwelt there

once, and still I return when I may. There my heart is; but it is not my fate to sit in peace, even in the fair house of Elrond.'

The hills now began to shut them in. The Road behind held on its way to the River Bruinen, but both were now hidden from view. The travellers came into a long valley; narrow, deeply cloven, dark and silent. Trees with old and twisted roots hung over cliffs, and piled up behind into mounting slopes of pine-wood.

The hobbits grew very weary. They advanced slowly, for they had to pick their way through a pathless country, encumbered by fallen trees and tumbled rocks. As long as they could they avoided climbing for Frodo's sake, and because it was in fact difficult to find any way up out of the narrow dales. They had been two days in this country when the weather turned wet. The wind began to blow steadily out of the West and pour the water of the distant seas on the dark heads of the hills in fine drenching rain. By nightfall they were all soaked, and their camp was cheerless, for they could not get any fire to burn. The next day the hills rose still higher and steeper before them, and they were forced to turn away northwards out of their course. Strider seemed to be getting anxious: they were nearly ten days out from Weathertop, and their stock of provisions was beginning to run low. It went on raining.

That night they camped on a stony shelf with a rock-wall behind them, in which there was a shallow cave, a mere scoop in the cliff. Frodo was restless. The cold and wet had made his wound more painful than ever, and the ache and sense of deadly chill took away all sleep. He lay tossing and turning and listening fearfully to the stealthy night-noises: wind in chinks of rock, water dripping, a crack, the sudden rattling fall of a loosened stone. He felt that black shapes were advancing to smother him; but when he sat up he saw nothing but the back of Strider sitting hunched up, smoking his pipe, and watching. He lay down again and passed into an uneasy dream, in which he walked on the grass in his garden in the Shire, but it seemed faint and dim, less clear than the tall black shadows that stood looking over the hedge.

In the morning he woke to find that the rain had stopped. The clouds were still thick, but they were breaking, and pale strips of blue appeared between them. The wind was shifting again. They did not start early. Immediately after their cold and comfortless breakfast Strider went off alone, telling the others to remain under the shelter of the cliff, until he came back. He was going to climb up, if he could, and get a look at the lie of the land.

When he returned he was not reassuring. 'We have come too far to the north,' he said, 'and we must find some way to turn back southwards again. If we keep on as we are going we shall get up into the Ettendales far north of Rivendell. That is troll-country, and little known to me. We could perhaps find our way through and come round to Rivendell from the north; but it would take too long, for I do not know the way, and our food would not last. So somehow or other we must find the Ford of Bruinen.'

The rest of that day they spent scrambling over rocky ground. They found a passage between two hills that led them into a valley running south-east, the direction that they wished to take; but towards the end of the day they found their road again barred by a ridge of high land; its dark edge against the sky was broken into many bare points like teeth of a blunted saw. They had a choice between going back or climbing over it.

They decided to attempt the climb, but it proved very difficult. Before long Frodo was obliged to dismount and struggle along on foot. Even so they often despaired of getting their pony up, or indeed of finding a path for themselves, burdened as they were. The light was nearly gone, and they were all exhausted, when at last they reached the top. They had climbed on to a narrow saddle between two higher points, and the land fell steeply away again, only a short distance ahead. Frodo threw himself down, and lay on the ground shivering. His left arm was lifeless, and his side and shoulder felt as if icy claws were laid upon them. The trees and rocks about him seemed shadowy and dim.

'We cannot go any further,' said Merry to Strider. 'I am afraid this has been too much for Frodo. I am dreadfully anxious about him. What are we to do? Do you think they will be able to cure him in Rivendell, if we ever get there?'

'We shall see,' answered Strider. 'There is nothing more that I can do in the wilderness; and it is chiefly because of his wound that I am so anxious to press on. But I agree that we can go no further tonight.'

‘What is the matter with my master?’ asked Sam in a low voice, looking appealingly at Strider. ‘His wound was small, and it is already closed. There’s nothing to be seen but a cold white mark on his shoulder.’

‘Frodo has been touched by the weapons of the Enemy,’ said Strider, ‘and there is some poison or evil at work that is beyond my skill to drive out. But do not give up hope, Sam!’

Night was cold up on the high ridge. They lit a small fire down under the gnarled roots of an old pine, that hung over a shallow pit: it looked as if stone had once been quarried there. They sat huddled together. The wind blew chill through the pass, and they heard the tree-tops lower down moaning and sighing. Frodo lay half in a dream, imagining that endless dark wings were sweeping by above him, and that on the wings rode pursuers that sought him in all the hollows of the hills.

The morning dawned bright and fair; the air was clean, and the light pale and clear in a rain-washed sky. Their hearts were encouraged, but they longed for the sun to warm their cold stiff limbs. As soon as it was light, Strider took Merry with him and went to survey the country from the height to the east of the pass. The sun had risen and was shining brightly when he returned with more comforting news. They were now going more or less in the right direction. If they went on, down the further side of the ridge, they would have the Mountains on their left. Some way ahead Strider had caught a glimpse of the Loudwater again, and he knew that, though it was hidden from view, the Road to the Ford was not far from the River and lay on the side nearest to them.

‘We must make for the Road again,’ he said. ‘We cannot hope to find a path through these hills. Whatever danger may beset it, the Road is our only way to the Ford.’

As soon as they had eaten they set out again. They climbed slowly down the southern side of the ridge; but the way was much easier than they had expected, for the slope was far less steep on this side, and before long Frodo was able to ride again. Bill Ferny’s poor old pony was developing an unexpected talent for picking out a path, and for sparing its rider as many jolts as possible. The spirits of the party rose again. Even Frodo felt better in the morning light, but every now and again a mist seemed to obscure his sight, and he passed his hands over his eyes.

Pippin was a little ahead of the others. Suddenly he turned round and called to them. ‘There is a path here!’ he cried.

When they came up with him, they saw that he had made no mistake: there were clearly the beginnings of a path, that climbed with many windings out of the woods below and faded away on the hill-top behind. In places it was now faint and overgrown, or choked with fallen stones and trees; but at one time it seemed to have been much used. It was a path made by strong arms and heavy feet. Here and there old trees had been cut or broken down, and large rocks cloven or heaved aside to make a way.

They followed the track for some while, for it offered much the easiest way down, but they went cautiously, and their anxiety increased as they came into the dark woods, and the path grew plainer and broader. Suddenly coming out of a belt of fir-trees it ran steeply down a slope, and turned sharply to the left round the corner of a rocky shoulder of the hill. When they came to the corner they looked round and saw that the path ran on over a level strip under the face of a low cliff overhung with trees. In the stony wall there was a door hanging crookedly ajar upon one great hinge.

Outside the door they all halted. There was a cave or rock-chamber behind, but in the gloom inside nothing could be seen. Strider, Sam, and Merry pushing with all their strength managed to open the door a little wider, and then Strider and Merry went in. They did not go far, for on the floor lay many old bones, and nothing else was to be seen near the entrance except some great empty jars and broken pots.

‘Surely this is a troll-hole, if ever there was one!’ said Pippin. ‘Come out, you two, and let us get away. Now we know who made the path—and we had better get off it quick.’

‘There is no need, I think,’ said Strider, coming out. ‘It is certainly a troll-hole, but it seems to have been long forsaken. I don’t think we need be afraid. But let us go on down warily, and we shall see.’

The path went on again from the door, and turning to the right again across the level space plunged down a thick wooded slope. Pippin, not liking to show Strider that he was still afraid, went on ahead with Merry. Sam

and Strider came behind, one on each side of Frodo's pony, for the path was now broad enough for four or five hobbits to walk abreast. But they had not gone very far before Pippin came running back, followed by Merry. They both looked terrified.

'There *are* trolls!' Pippin panted. 'Down in a clearing in the woods not far below. We got a sight of them through the tree-trunks. They are very large!'

'We will come and look at them,' said Strider, picking up a stick. Frodo said nothing, but Sam looked scared.

The sun was now high, and it shone down through the half-stripped branches of the trees, and lit the clearing with bright patches of light. They halted suddenly on the edge, and peered through the tree-trunks, holding their breath. There stood the trolls: three large trolls. One was stooping, and the other two stood staring at him.

Strider walked forward unconcernedly. 'Get up, old stone!' he said, and broke his stick upon the stooping troll.

Nothing happened. There was a gasp of astonishment from the hobbits, and then even Frodo laughed. 'Well!' he said. 'We are forgetting our family history! These must be the very three that were caught by Gandalf, quarrelling over the right way to cook thirteen dwarves and one hobbit.'

'I had no idea we were anywhere near the place!' said Pippin. He knew the story well. Bilbo and Frodo had told it often; but as a matter of fact he had never more than half believed it. Even now he looked at the stone trolls with suspicion, wondering if some magic might not suddenly bring them to life again.

'You are forgetting not only your family history, but all you ever knew about trolls,' said Strider. 'It is broad daylight with a bright sun, and yet you come back trying to scare me with a tale of live trolls waiting for us in this glade! In any case you might have noticed that one of them has an old bird's nest behind his ear. That would be a most unusual ornament for a live troll!'

They all laughed. Frodo felt his spirits reviving: the reminder of Bilbo's first successful adventure was heartening. The sun, too, was warm and comforting, and the mist before his eyes seemed to be lifting a little. They rested for some time in the glade, and took their mid-day meal right under the shadow of the trolls' large legs.

'Won't somebody give us a bit of a song, while the sun is high?' said Merry, when they had finished. 'We haven't had a song or a tale for days.'

'Not since Weathertop,' said Frodo. The others looked at him. 'Don't worry about me!' he added. 'I feel much better, but I don't think I could sing. Perhaps Sam could dig something out of his memory.'

'Come on, Sam!' said Merry. 'There's more stored in your head than you let on about.'

'I don't know about that,' said Sam. 'But how would this suit? It ain't what I call proper poetry, if you understand me: just a bit of nonsense. But these old images here brought it to my mind.' Standing up, with his hands behind his back, as if he was at school, he began to sing to an old tune.

*Troll sat alone on his seat of stone,  
And munched and mumbled a bare old bone;  
For many a year he had gnawed it near,  
For meat was hard to come by.  
Done by! Gum by!  
In a cave in the hills he dwelt alone,  
And meat was hard to come by.*

*Up came Tom with his big boots on.  
Said he to Troll: 'Pray, what is yon?  
For it looks like the shin o' my nuncle Tim,  
As should be a-lyin' in graveyard.  
Caveyard! Paveward!  
This many a year has Tim been gone,*

*And I thought he were lyin' in graveyard.'*

*'My lad,' said Troll, 'this bone I stole.  
But what be bones that lie in a hole?  
Thy nuncle was dead as a lump o' lead,  
Afore I found his shinbone.*

*Tinbone! Thinbone!*

*He can spare a share for a poor old troll,  
For he don't need his shinbone.'*

*Said Tom: 'I don't see why the likes o' thee  
Without axin' leave should go makin' free  
With the shank or the shin o' my father's kin;  
So hand the old bone over!*

*Rover! Trover!*

*Though dead he be, it belongs to he;  
So hand the old bone over!'*

*'For a couple o' pins,' says Troll, and grins,  
'I'll eat thee too, and gnaw thy shins.  
A bit o' fresh meat will go down sweet!  
I'll try my teeth on thee now.  
Hee now! See now!*

*I'm tired o' gnawing old bones and skins;  
I've a mind to dine on thee now.'*

*But just as he thought his dinner was caught,  
He found his hands had hold of naught.  
Before he could mind, Tom slipped behind  
And gave him the boot to larn him.  
Warn him! Darn him!*

*A bump o' the boot on the seat, Tom thought,  
Would be the way to larn him.*

*But harder than stone is the flesh and bone  
Of a troll that sits in the hills alone.  
As well set your boot to the mountain's root,  
For the seat of a troll don't feel it.  
Peel it! Heal it!*

*Old Troll laughed, when he heard Tom groan,  
And he knew his toes could feel it.*

*Tom's leg is game, since home he came,  
And his bootless foot is lasting lame;  
But Troll don't care, and he's still there  
With the bone he boned from its owner.*

*Doner! Boner!*

*Troll's old seat is still the same,  
And the bone he boned from its owner!*

*'Well, that's a warning to us all!' laughed Merry. 'It is as well you used a stick, and not your hand, Strider!'*

‘Where did you come by that, Sam?’ asked Pippin. ‘I’ve never heard those words before.’

Sam muttered something inaudible. ‘It’s out of his own head, of course,’ said Frodo. ‘I am learning a lot about Sam Gamgee on this journey. First he was a conspirator, now he’s a jester. He’ll end up by becoming a wizard—or a warrior!’

‘I hope not,’ said Sam. ‘I don’t want to be neither!’

In the afternoon they went on down the woods. They were probably following the very track that Gandalf, Bilbo, and the dwarves had used many years before. After a few miles they came out on the top of a high bank above the Road. At this point the Road had left the Hoarwell far behind in its narrow valley, and now clung close to the feet of the hills, rolling and winding eastward among woods and heather-covered slopes towards the Ford and the Mountains. Not far down the bank Strider pointed out a stone in the grass. On it roughly cut and now much weathered could still be seen dwarf-runes and secret marks.

‘There!’ said Merry. ‘That must be the stone that marked the place where the trolls’ gold was hidden. How much is left of Bilbo’s share, I wonder, Frodo?’

Frodo looked at the stone, and wished that Bilbo had brought home no treasure more perilous, nor less easy to part with. ‘None at all,’ he said. ‘Bilbo gave it all away. He told me he did not feel it was really his, as it came from robbers.’

The Road lay quiet under the long shadows of early evening. There was no sign of any other travellers to be seen. As there was now no other possible course for them to take, they climbed down the bank, and turning left went off as fast as they could. Soon a shoulder of the hills cut off the light of the fast westering sun. A cold wind flowed down to meet them from the mountains ahead.

They were beginning to look out for a place off the Road, where they could camp for the night, when they heard a sound that brought sudden fear back into their hearts: the noise of hoofs behind them. They looked back, but they could not see far because of the many windings and rollings of the Road. As quickly as they could they scrambled off the beaten way and up into the deep heather and bilberry brushwood on the slopes above, until they came to a small patch of thick-growing hazels. As they peered out from among the bushes, they could see the Road, faint and grey in the failing light, some thirty feet below them. The sound of hoofs drew nearer. They were going fast, with a light *clippety-clippety-clip*. Then faintly, as if it was blown away from them by the breeze, they seemed to catch a dim ringing, as of small bells tinkling.

‘That does not sound like a Black Rider’s horse!’ said Frodo, listening intently. The other hobbits agreed hopefully that it did not, but they all remained full of suspicion. They had been in fear of pursuit for so long that any sound from behind seemed ominous and unfriendly. But Strider was now leaning forward, stooped to the ground, with a hand to his ear, and a look of joy on his face.

The light faded, and the leaves on the bushes rustled softly. Clearer and nearer now the bells jingled, and *clippety-clip* came the quick trotting feet. Suddenly into view below came a white horse, gleaming in the shadows, running swiftly. In the dusk its headstall flickered and flashed, as if it were studded with gems like living stars. The rider’s cloak streamed behind him, and his hood was thrown back; his golden hair flowed shimmering in the wind of his speed. To Frodo it appeared that a white light was shining through the form and raiment of the rider, as if through a thin veil.

Strider sprang from hiding and dashed down towards the Road, leaping with a cry through the heather; but even before he had moved or called, the rider had reined in his horse and halted, looking up towards the thicket where they stood. When he saw Strider, he dismounted and ran to meet him calling out: *Ai na vedui Dúnadan! Maegovannen!* His speech and clear ringing voice left no doubt in their hearts: the rider was of the Elven-folk. No others that dwelt in the wide world had voices so fair to hear. But there seemed to be a note of haste or fear in his call, and they saw that he was now speaking quickly and urgently to Strider.

Soon Strider beckoned to them, and the hobbits left the bushes and hurried down to the Road. ‘This is Glorfindel, who dwells in the house of Elrond,’ said Strider.

‘Hail, and well met at last!’ said the Elf-lord to Frodo. ‘I was sent from Rivendell to look for you. We feared that you were in danger upon the road.’

‘Then Gandalf has reached Rivendell?’ cried Frodo joyfully.

‘No. He had not when I departed; but that was nine days ago,’ answered Glorfindel. ‘Elrond received news that troubled him. Some of my kindred, journeying in your land beyond the Baranduin,<sup>24</sup> learned that things were amiss, and sent messages as swiftly as they could. They said that the Nine were abroad, and that you were astray bearing a great burden without guidance, for Gandalf had not returned. There are few even in Rivendell that can ride openly against the Nine; but such as there were, Elrond sent out north, west, and south. It was thought that you might turn far aside to avoid pursuit, and become lost in the Wilderness.

‘It was my lot to take the Road, and I came to the Bridge of Mitheithel, and left a token there, nigh on seven days ago. Three of the servants of Sauron were upon the Bridge, but they withdrew and I pursued them westward. I came also upon two others, but they turned away southward. Since then I have searched for your trail. Two days ago I found it, and followed it over the Bridge; and today I marked where you descended from the hills again. But come! There is no time for further news. Since you are here we must risk the peril of the Road and go. There are five behind us, and when they find your trail upon the Road they will ride after us like the wind. And they are not all. Where the other four may be, I do not know. I fear that we may find the Ford is already held against us.’

While Glorfindel was speaking the shades of evening deepened. Frodo felt a great weariness come over him. Ever since the sun began to sink the mist before his eyes had darkened, and he felt that a shadow was coming between him and the faces of his friends. Now pain assailed him, and he felt cold. He swayed, clutching at Sam’s arm.

‘My master is sick and wounded,’ said Sam angrily. ‘He can’t go on riding after nightfall. He needs rest.’

Glorfindel caught Frodo as he sank to the ground, and taking him gently in his arms he looked in his face with grave anxiety.

Briefly Strider told of the attack on their camp under Weathertop, and of the deadly knife. He drew out the hilt, which he had kept, and handed it to the Elf. Glorfindel shuddered as he took it, but he looked intently at it.

‘There are evil things written on this hilt,’ he said; ‘though maybe your eyes cannot see them. Keep it, Aragorn, till we reach the house of Elrond! But be wary, and handle it as little as you may! Alas! the wounds of this weapon are beyond my skill to heal. I will do what I can—but all the more do I urge you now to go on without rest.’

He searched the wound on Frodo’s shoulder with his fingers, and his face grew graver, as if what he learned disquieted him. But Frodo felt the chill lessen in his side and arm; a little warmth crept down from his shoulder to his hand, and the pain grew easier. The dusk of evening seemed to grow lighter about him, as if a cloud had been withdrawn. He saw his friends’ faces more clearly again, and a measure of new hope and strength returned.

‘You shall ride my horse,’ said Glorfindel. ‘I will shorten the stirrups up to the saddle-skirts, and you must sit as tight as you can. But you need not fear: my horse will not let any rider fall that I command him to bear. His pace is light and smooth; and if danger presses too near, he will bear you away with a speed that even the black steeds of the enemy cannot rival.’

‘No, he will not!’ said Frodo. ‘I shall not ride him, if I am to be carried off to Rivendell or anywhere else, leaving my friends behind in danger.’

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<sup>24</sup> The Brandywine River.

Glorfindel smiled. 'I doubt very much,' he said, 'if your friends would be in danger if you were not with them! The pursuit would follow you and leave us in peace, I think. It is you, Frodo, and that which you bear that brings us all in peril.'

To that Frodo had no answer, and he was persuaded to mount Glorfindel's white horse. The pony was laden instead with a great part of the others' burdens, so that they now marched lighter, and for a time made good speed; but the hobbits began to find it hard to keep up with the swift tireless feet of the Elf. On he led them, into the mouth of darkness, and still on under the deep clouded night. There was neither star nor moon. Not until the grey of dawn did he allow them to halt. Pippin, Merry, and Sam were by that time nearly asleep on their stumbling legs; and even Strider seemed by the sag of his shoulders to be weary. Frodo sat upon the horse in a dark dream.

They cast themselves down in the heather a few yards from the road-side, and fell asleep immediately. They seemed hardly to have closed their eyes when Glorfindel, who had set himself to watch while they slept, awoke them again. The sun had now climbed far into the morning, and the clouds and mists of the night were gone.

'Drink this!' said Glorfindel to them, pouring for each in turn a little liquor from his silver-studded flask of leather. It was clear as spring water and had no taste, and it did not feel either cool or warm in the mouth; but strength and vigour seemed to flow into all their limbs as they drank it. Eaten after that draught the stale bread and dried fruit (which was now all that they had left) seemed to satisfy their hunger better than many a good breakfast in the Shire had done.

They had rested rather less than five hours when they took to the Road again. Glorfindel still urged them on, and only allowed two brief halts during the day's march. In this way they covered almost twenty miles before nightfall, and came to a point where the Road bent right and ran down towards the bottom of the valley, now making straight for the Bruinen. So far there had been no sign or sound of pursuit that the hobbits could see or hear; but often Glorfindel would halt and listen for a moment, if they lagged behind, and a look of anxiety clouded his face. Once or twice he spoke to Strider in the elf-tongue.

But however anxious their guides might be, it was plain that the hobbits could go no further that night. They were stumbling along dizzy with weariness, and unable to think of anything but their feet and legs. Frodo's pain had redoubled, and during the day things about him faded to shadows of ghostly grey. He almost welcomed the coming of night, for then the world seemed less pale and empty.

The hobbits were still weary, when they set out again early next morning. There were many miles yet to go between them and the Ford, and they hobbled forward at the best pace they could manage.

'Our peril will be greatest just ere we reach the river,' said Glorfindel; 'for my heart warns me that the pursuit is now swift behind us, and other danger may be waiting by the Ford.'

The Road was still running steadily downhill, and there was now in places much grass at either side, in which the hobbits walked when they could, to ease their tired feet. In the late afternoon they came to a place where the Road went suddenly under the dark shadow of tall pine-trees, and then plunged into a deep cutting with steep moist walls of red stone. Echoes ran along as they hurried forward; and there seemed to be a sound of many footfalls following their own. All at once, as if through a gate of light, the Road ran out again from the end of the tunnel into the open. There at the bottom of a sharp incline they saw before them a long flat mile, and beyond that the Ford of Rivendell. On the further side was a steep brown bank, threaded by a winding path; and behind that the tall mountains climbed, shoulder above shoulder, and peak beyond peak, into the fading sky.

There was still an echo as of following feet in the cutting behind them; a rushing noise as if a wind were rising and pouring through the branches of the pines. One moment Glorfindel turned and listened, then he sprang forward with a loud cry.

'Fly!' he called. 'Fly! The enemy is upon us!'

The white horse leaped forward. The hobbits ran down the slope. Glorfindel and Strider followed as rearguard. They were only half way across the flat, when suddenly there was a noise of horses galloping. Out of the gate in the trees that they had just left rode a Black Rider. He reined his horse in, and halted, swaying in his saddle. Another followed him, and then another; then again two more.



‘Ride forward! Ride!’ cried Glorfindel to Frodo.

He did not obey at once, for a strange reluctance seized him. Checking the horse to a walk, he turned and looked back. The Riders seemed to sit upon their great steeds like threatening statues upon a hill, dark and solid, while all the woods and land about them receded as if into a mist. Suddenly he knew in his heart that they were silently commanding him to wait. Then at once fear and hatred awoke in him. His hand left the bridle and gripped the hilt of his sword, and with a red flash he drew it.

‘Ride on! Ride on!’ cried Glorfindel, and then loud and clear he called to the horse in the elf-tongue: *noro lim, noro lim, Asfaloth!*

At once the white horse sprang away and sped like the wind along the last lap of the Road. At the same moment the black horses leaped down the hill in pursuit, and from the Riders came a terrible cry, such as Frodo had heard filling the woods with horror in the Eastfarthing far away. It was answered; and to the dismay of Frodo and his friends out from the trees and rocks away on the left four other Riders came flying. Two rode towards Frodo; two galloped madly towards the Ford to cut off his escape. They seemed to him to run like the wind and to grow swiftly larger and darker, as their courses converged with his.

Frodo looked back for a moment over his shoulder. He could no longer see his friends. The Riders behind were falling back: even their great steeds were no match in speed for the white elf-horse of Glorfindel. He looked forward again, and hope faded. There seemed no chance of reaching the Ford before he was cut off by the others that had lain in ambush. He could see them clearly now: they appeared to have cast aside their hoods and black cloaks, and they were robed in white and grey. Swords were naked in their pale hands; helms were on their heads. Their cold eyes glittered, and they called to him with fell voices.

Fear now filled all Frodo’s mind. He thought no longer of his sword. No cry came from him. He shut his eyes and clung to the horse’s mane. The wind whistled in his ears, and the bells upon the harness rang wild and shrill. A breath of deadly cold pierced him like a spear, as with a last spurt, like a flash of white fire, the elf-horse speeding as if on wings, passed right before the face of the foremost Rider.

Frodo heard the splash of water. It foamed about his feet. He felt the quick heave and surge as the horse left the river and struggled up the stony path. He was climbing the steep bank. He was across the Ford.

But the pursuers were close behind. At the top of the bank the horse halted and turned about neighing fiercely. There were Nine Riders at the water’s edge below, and Frodo’s spirit quailed before the threat of their uplifted faces. He knew of nothing that would prevent them from crossing as easily as he had done; and he felt that it was useless to try to escape over the long uncertain path from the Ford to the edge of Rivendell, if once the Riders crossed. In any case he felt that he was commanded urgently to halt. Hatred again stirred in him, but he had no longer the strength to refuse.

Suddenly the foremost Rider spurred his horse forward. It checked at the water and reared up. With a great effort Frodo sat upright and brandished his sword.

‘Go back!’ he cried. ‘Go back to the Land of Mordor, and follow me no more!’ His voice sounded thin and shrill in his own ears. The Riders halted, but Frodo had not the power of Bombadil. His enemies laughed at him with a harsh and chilling laughter. ‘Come back! Come back!’ they called. ‘To Mordor we will take you!’

‘Go back!’ he whispered.

‘The Ring! The Ring!’ they cried with deadly voices; and immediately their leader urged his horse forward into the water, followed closely by two others.

‘By Elbereth and Lúthien the Fair,’ said Frodo with a last effort, lifting up his sword, ‘you shall have neither the Ring nor me!’

Then the leader, who was now half across the Ford, stood up menacing in his stirrups, and raised up his hand. Frodo was stricken dumb. He felt his tongue cleave to his mouth, and his heart labouring. His sword broke and fell out of his shaking hand. The elf-horse reared and snorted. The foremost of the black horses had almost set foot upon the shore.

At that moment there came a roaring and a rushing: a noise of loud waters rolling many stones. Dimly Frodo saw the river below him rise, and down along its course there came a plumed cavalry of waves. White flames seemed to Frodo to flicker on their crests, and he half fancied that he saw amid the water white riders upon white horses with frothing manes. The three Riders that were still in the midst of the Ford were overwhelmed: they disappeared, buried suddenly under angry foam. Those that were behind drew back in dismay.

With his last failing senses Frodo heard cries, and it seemed to him that he saw, beyond the Riders that hesitated on the shore, a shining figure of white light; and behind it ran small shadowy forms waving flames, that flared red in the grey mist that was falling over the world.

The black horses were filled with madness, and leaping forward in terror they bore their riders into the rushing flood. Their piercing cries were drowned in the roaring of the river as it carried them away. Then Frodo felt himself falling, and the roaring and confusion seemed to rise and engulf him together with his enemies. He heard and saw no more.





## Chapter 1: Many Meetings

Frodo woke and found himself lying in bed. At first he thought that he had slept late, after a long unpleasant dream that still hovered on the edge of memory. Or perhaps he had been ill? But the ceiling looked strange; it was flat, and it had dark beams richly carved. He lay a little while longer looking at patches of sunlight on the wall, and listening to the sound of a waterfall.

‘Where am I, and what is the time?’ he said aloud to the ceiling.

‘In the house of Elrond, and it is ten o’clock in the morning,’ said a voice. ‘It is the morning of October the twenty-fourth, if you want to know.’

‘Gandalf!’ cried Frodo, sitting up. There was the old wizard, sitting in a chair by the open window.

‘Yes,’ he said, ‘I am here. And you are lucky to be here, too, after all the absurd things you have done since you left home.’

Frodo lay down again. He felt too comfortable and peaceful to argue, and in any case he did not think he would get the better of an argument. He was fully awake now, and the memory of his journey was returning: the disastrous ‘short cut’ through the Old Forest; the ‘accident’ at *The Prancing Pony*; and his madness in putting on the Ring in the dell under Weathertop. While he was thinking of all these things and trying in vain to bring his memory down to his arriving in Rivendell, there was a long silence, broken only by the soft puffs of Gandalf’s pipe, as he blew white smoke-rings out of the window.

‘Where’s Sam?’ Frodo asked at length. ‘And are the others all right?’

‘Yes, they are all safe and sound,’ answered Gandalf. ‘Sam was here until I sent him off to get some rest, about half an hour ago.’

‘What happened at the Ford?’ said Frodo. ‘It all seemed so dim, somehow; and it still does.’

‘Yes, it would. You were beginning to fade,’ answered Gandalf. ‘The wound was overcoming you at last. A few more hours and you would have been beyond our aid. But you have some strength in you, my dear hobbit! As you showed in the Barrow. That was touch and go: perhaps the most dangerous moment of all. I wish you could have held out at Weathertop.’

‘You seem to know a great deal already,’ said Frodo. ‘I have not spoken to the others about the Barrow. At first it was too horrible, and afterwards there were other things to think about. How do you know about it?’

‘You have talked long in your sleep, Frodo,’ said Gandalf gently, ‘and it has not been hard for me to read your mind and memory. Do not worry! Though I said “absurd” just now, I did not mean it. I think well of you—and of the others. It is no small feat to have come so far, and through such dangers, still bearing the Ring.’

‘We should never have done it without Strider,’ said Frodo. ‘But we needed you. I did not know what to do without you.’

‘I was delayed,’ said Gandalf, ‘and that nearly proved our ruin. And yet I am not sure: it may have been better so.’

‘I wish you would tell me what happened!’

‘All in good time! You are not supposed to talk or worry about anything today, by Elrond’s orders.’

‘But talking would stop me thinking and wondering, which are quite as tiring,’ said Frodo. ‘I am wide awake now, and I remember so many things that want explaining. Why were you delayed? You ought to tell me that at least.’

‘You will soon hear all you wish to know,’ said Gandalf. ‘We shall have a Council, as soon as you are well enough. At the moment I will only say that I was held captive.’

‘You?’ cried Frodo.

‘Yes, I, Gandalf the Grey,’ said the wizard solemnly. ‘There are many powers in the world, for good or for evil. Some are greater than I am. Against some I have not yet been measured. But my time is coming. The Morgul-lord and his Black Riders have come forth. War is preparing!’

‘Then you knew of the Riders already—before I met them?’

‘Yes, I knew of them. Indeed I spoke of them once to you; for the Black Riders are the Ringwraiths, the Nine Servants of the Lord of the Rings. But I did not know that they had arisen again or I should have fled with you at once. I heard news of them only after I left you in June; but that story must wait. For the moment we have been saved from disaster, by Aragorn.’

‘Yes,’ said Frodo, ‘it was Strider that saved us. Yet I was afraid of him at first. Sam never quite trusted him, I think, not at any rate until we met Glorfindel.’

Gandalf smiled. ‘I have heard all about Sam,’ he said. ‘He has no more doubts now.’

‘I am glad,’ said Frodo. ‘For I have become very fond of Strider. Well, *fond* is not the right word. I mean he is dear to me; though he is strange, and grim at times. In fact, he reminds me often of you. I didn’t know that any of the Big People were like that. I thought, well, that they were just big, and rather stupid: kind and stupid like Butterbur; or stupid and wicked like Bill Ferny. But then we don’t know much about Men in the Shire, except perhaps the Bree-landers.’

‘You don’t know much even about them, if you think old Barliman is stupid,’ said Gandalf. ‘He is wise enough on his own ground. He thinks less than he talks, and slower; yet he can see through a brick wall in time (as they say in Bree). But there are few left in Middle-earth like Aragorn son of Arathorn. The race of the Kings from over the Sea is nearly at an end. It may be that this War of the Ring will be their last adventure.’

‘Do you really mean that Strider is one of the people of the old Kings?’ said Frodo in wonder. ‘I thought they had all vanished long ago. I thought he was only a Ranger.’

‘Only a Ranger!’ cried Gandalf. ‘My dear Frodo, that is just what the Rangers are: the last remnant in the North of the great people, the Men of the West. They have helped me before; and I shall need their help in the days to come; for we have reached Rivendell, but the Ring is not yet at rest.’

‘I suppose not,’ said Frodo. ‘But so far my only thought has been to get here; and I hope I shan’t have to go any further. It is very pleasant just to rest. I have had a month of exile and adventure, and I find that has been as much as I want.’

He fell silent and shut his eyes. After a while he spoke again. ‘I have been reckoning,’ he said, ‘and I can’t bring the total up to October the twenty-fourth. It ought to be the twenty-first. We must have reached the Ford by the twentieth.’

‘You have talked and reckoned more than is good for you,’ said Gandalf. ‘How do the side and shoulder feel now?’

‘I don’t know,’ Frodo answered. ‘They don’t feel at all: which is an improvement, but’—he made an effort—‘I can move my arm again a little. Yes, it is coming back to life. It is not cold,’ he added, touching his left hand with his right.

‘Good!’ said Gandalf. ‘It is mending fast. You will soon be sound again. Elrond has cured you: he has tended you for days, ever since you were brought in.’

‘Days?’ said Frodo.

‘Well, four nights and three days, to be exact. The Elves brought you from the Ford on the night of the twentieth, and that is where you lost count. We have been terribly anxious, and Sam has hardly left your side, day or night, except to run messages. Elrond is a master of healing, but the weapons of our Enemy are deadly. To tell you the truth, I had very little hope; for I suspected that there was some fragment of the blade still in the closed wound. But it could not be found until last night. Then Elrond removed a splinter. It was deeply buried, and it was working inwards.’

Frodo shuddered, remembering the cruel knife with notched blade that had vanished in Strider’s hands. ‘Don’t be alarmed!’ said Gandalf. ‘It is gone now. It has been melted. And it seems that Hobbits fade very reluctantly. I have known strong warriors of the Big People who would quickly have been overcome by that splinter, which you bore for seventeen days.’

‘What would they have done to me?’ asked Frodo. ‘What were the Riders trying to do?’

‘They tried to pierce your heart with a Morgul-knife which remains in the wound. If they had succeeded, you would have become like they are, only weaker and under their command. You would have become a wraith under the dominion of the Dark Lord; and he would have tormented you for trying to keep his Ring, if any greater torment were possible than being robbed of it and seeing it on his hand.’

‘Thank goodness I did not realize the horrible danger!’ said Frodo faintly. ‘I was mortally afraid, of course; but if I had known more, I should not have dared even to move. It is a marvel that I escaped!’

‘Yes, fortune or fate have helped you,’ said Gandalf, ‘not to mention courage. For your heart was not touched, and only your shoulder was pierced; and that was because you resisted to the last. But it was a terribly narrow shave, so to speak. You were in gravest peril while you wore the Ring, for then you were half in the wraith-world yourself, and they might have seized you. You could see them, and they could see you.’

‘I know,’ said Frodo. ‘They were terrible to behold! But why could we all see their horses?’

‘Because they are real horses; just as the black robes are real robes that they wear to give shape to their nothingness when they have dealings with the living.’

‘Then why do these black horses endure such riders? All other animals are terrified when they draw near, even the elf-horse of Glorfindel. The dogs howl and the geese scream at them.’

‘Because these horses are born and bred to the service of the Dark Lord in Mordor. Not all his servants and chattels are wraiths! There are orcs and trolls, there are wargs and werewolves; and there have been and still are many Men, warriors and kings, that walk alive under the Sun, and yet are under his sway. And their number is growing daily.’

‘What about Rivendell and the Elves? Is Rivendell safe?’

‘Yes, at present, until all else is conquered. The Elves may fear the Dark Lord, and they may fly before him, but never again will they listen to him or serve him. And here in Rivendell there live still some of his chief foes: the Elven-wise, lords of the Eldar from beyond the furthest seas. They do not fear the Ringwraiths, for those who have dwelt in the Blessed Realm live at once in both worlds, and against both the Seen and the Unseen they have great power.’

‘I thought that I saw a white figure that shone and did not grow dim like the others. Was that Glorfindel then?’

‘Yes, you saw him for a moment as he is upon the other side: one of the mighty of the Firstborn. He is an Elf-lord of a house of princes. Indeed there is a power in Rivendell to withstand the might of Mordor, for a while: and elsewhere other powers still dwell. There is power, too, of another kind in the Shire. But all such places will soon become islands under siege, if things go on as they are going. The Dark Lord is putting forth all his strength.

‘Still,’ he said, standing suddenly up and sticking out his chin, while his beard went stiff and straight like bristling wire, ‘we must keep up our courage. You will soon be well, if I do not talk you to death. You are in Rivendell, and you need not worry about anything for the present.’

‘I haven’t any courage to keep up,’ said Frodo, ‘but I am not worried at the moment. Just give me news of my friends, and tell me the end of the affair at the Ford, as I keep on asking, and I shall be content for the present. After that I shall have another sleep, I think; but I shan’t be able to close my eyes until you have finished the story for me.’

Gandalf moved his chair to the bedside and took a good look at Frodo. The colour had come back to his face, and his eyes were clear, and fully awake and aware. He was smiling, and there seemed to be little wrong with him. But to the wizard’s eye there was a faint change, just a hint as it were of transparency, about him, and especially about the left hand that lay outside upon the coverlet.

‘Still that must be expected,’ said Gandalf to himself. ‘He is not half through yet, and to what he will come in the end not even Elrond can foretell. Not to evil, I think. He may become like a glass filled with a clear light for eyes to see that can.’

‘You look splendid,’ he said aloud. ‘I will risk a brief tale without consulting Elrond. But quite brief, mind you, and then you must sleep again. This is what happened, as far as I can gather. The Riders made straight for you, as soon as you fled. They did not need the guidance of their horses any longer: you had become visible to them, being already on the threshold of their world. And also the Ring drew them. Your friends sprang aside, off the road, or they would have been ridden down. They knew that nothing could save you, if the white horse could not. The Riders were too swift to overtake, and too many to oppose. On foot even Glorfindel and Aragorn together could not withstand all the Nine at once.

‘When the Ringwraiths swept by, your friends ran up behind. Close to the Ford there is a small hollow beside the road masked by a few stunted trees. There they hastily kindled fire; for Glorfindel knew that a flood would come down, if the Riders tried to cross, and then he would have to deal with any that were left on his side of the river. The moment the flood appeared, he rushed out, followed by Aragorn and the others with flaming brands. Caught between fire and water, and seeing an Elf-lord revealed in his wrath, they were dismayed, and their horses were stricken with madness. Three were carried away by the first assault of the flood; the others were now hurled into the water by their horses and overwhelmed.’

‘And is that the end of the Black Riders?’ asked Frodo.

‘No,’ said Gandalf. ‘Their horses must have perished, and without them they are crippled. But the Ringwraiths themselves cannot be so easily destroyed. However, there is nothing more to fear from them at present. Your friends crossed after the flood had passed and they found you lying on your face at the top of the bank, with a broken sword under you. The horse was standing guard beside you. You were pale and cold, and they feared that you were dead, or worse. Elrond’s folk met them, carrying you slowly towards Rivendell.’

‘Who made the flood?’ asked Frodo.

‘Elrond commanded it,’ answered Gandalf. ‘The river of this valley is under his power, and it will rise in anger when he has great need to bar the Ford. As soon as the captain of the Ringwraiths rode into the water the flood was released. If I may say so, I added a few touches of my own: you may not have noticed, but some of the waves took the form of great white horses with shining white riders; and there were many rolling and grinding boulders. For a moment I was afraid that we had let loose too fierce a wrath, and the flood would get out of hand and wash you all away. There is great vigour in the waters that come down from the snows of the Misty Mountains.’

‘Yes, it all comes back to me now,’ said Frodo: ‘the tremendous roaring. I thought I was drowning, with my friends and enemies and all. But now we are safe!’

Gandalf looked quickly at Frodo, but he had shut his eyes. ‘Yes, you are all safe for the present. Soon there will be feasting and merrymaking to celebrate the victory at the Ford of Bruinen, and you will all be there in places of honour.’

‘Splendid!’ said Frodo. ‘It is wonderful that Elrond, and Glorfindel and such great lords, not to mention Strider, should take so much trouble and show me so much kindness.’

‘Well, there are many reasons why they should,’ said Gandalf, smiling. ‘I am one good reason. The Ring is another: you are the Ring-bearer. And you are the heir of Bilbo, the Ring-finder.’

‘Dear Bilbo!’ said Frodo sleepily. ‘I wonder where he is. I wish he was here and could hear all about it. It would have made him laugh. The cow jumped over the Moon! And the poor old troll!’ With that he fell fast asleep.

Frodo was now safe in the Last Homely House east of the Sea. That house was, as Bilbo had long ago reported, ‘a perfect house, whether you like food or sleep or story-telling or singing, or just sitting and thinking best, or a pleasant mixture of them all’. Merely to be there was a cure for weariness, fear, and sadness.

As the evening drew on, Frodo woke up again, and he found that he no longer felt in need of rest or sleep, but had a mind for food and drink, and probably for singing and story-telling afterwards. He got out of bed and discovered that his arm was already nearly as useful again as it ever had been. He found laid ready clean garments of green cloth that fitted him excellently. Looking in a mirror he was startled to see a much thinner reflection of himself than he remembered: it looked remarkably like the young nephew of Bilbo who used to go tramping with his uncle in the Shire; but the eyes looked out at him thoughtfully.

‘Yes, you have seen a thing or two since you last peeped out of a looking-glass,’ he said to his reflection. ‘But now for a merry meeting!’ He stretched out his arms and whistled a tune.

At that moment there was a knock on the door, and Sam came in. He ran to Frodo and took his left hand, awkwardly and shyly. He stroked it gently and then he blushed and turned hastily away.

‘Hullo, Sam!’ said Frodo.

‘It’s warm!’ said Sam. ‘Meaning your hand, Mr. Frodo. It has felt so cold through the long nights. But glory and trumpets!’ he cried, turning round again with shining eyes and dancing on the floor. ‘It’s fine to see you up and yourself again, sir! Gandalf asked me to come and see if you were ready to come down, and I thought he was joking.’

‘I am ready,’ said Frodo. ‘Let’s go and look for the rest of the party!’

‘I can take you to them, sir,’ said Sam. ‘It’s a big house this, and very peculiar. Always a bit more to discover, and no knowing what you’ll find round a corner. And Elves, sir! Elves here, and Elves there! Some like kings, terrible and splendid; and some as merry as children. And the music and the singing—not that I have had the time or the heart for much listening since we got here. But I’m getting to know some of the ways of the place.’

‘I know what you have been doing, Sam,’ said Frodo, taking his arm. ‘But you shall be merry tonight, and listen to your heart’s content. Come on, guide me round the corners!’

Sam led him along several passages and down many steps and out into a high garden above the steep bank of the river. He found his friends sitting in a porch on the side of the house looking east. Shadows had fallen in the valley below, but there was still a light on the faces of the mountains far above. The air was warm. The sound of running and falling water was loud, and the evening was filled with a faint scent of trees and flowers, as if summer still lingered in Elrond’s gardens.

‘Hurray!’ cried Pippin, springing up. ‘Here is our noble cousin! Make way for Frodo, Lord of the Ring!’

‘Hush!’ said Gandalf from the shadows at the back of the porch. ‘Evil things do not come into this valley; but all the same we should not name them. The Lord of the Ring is not Frodo, but the master of the Dark Tower of Mordor, whose power is again stretching out over the world. We are sitting in a fortress. Outside it is getting dark.’

‘Gandalf has been saying many cheerful things like that,’ said Pippin. ‘He thinks I need keeping in order. But it seems impossible, somehow, to feel gloomy or depressed in this place. I feel I could sing, if I knew the right song for the occasion.’

‘I feel like singing myself,’ laughed Frodo. ‘Though at the moment I feel more like eating and drinking.’



‘That will soon be cured,’ said Pippin. ‘You have shown your usual cunning in getting up just in time for a meal.’

‘More than a meal! A feast!’ said Merry. ‘As soon as Gandalf reported that you were recovered, the preparations began.’ He had hardly finished speaking when they were summoned to the hall by the ringing of many bells.

The hall of Elrond’s house was filled with folk: Elves for the most part, though there were a few guests of other sorts. Elrond, as was his custom, sat in a great chair at the end of the long table upon the dais; and next to him on the one side sat Glorfindel, on the other side sat Gandalf.

Frodo looked at them in wonder; for he had never before seen Elrond, of whom so many tales spoke; and as they sat upon his right hand and his left, Glorfindel, and even Gandalf, whom he thought he knew so well, were revealed as lords of dignity and power.

Gandalf was shorter in stature than the other two; but his long white hair, his sweeping silver beard, and his broad shoulders, made him look like some wise king of ancient legend. In his aged face under great snowy brows his dark eyes were set like coals that could leap suddenly into fire.

Glorfindel was tall and straight; his hair was of shining gold, his face fair and young and fearless and full of joy; his eyes were bright and keen, and his voice like music; on his brow sat wisdom, and in his hand was strength.

The face of Elrond was ageless, neither old nor young, though in it was written the memory of many things both glad and sorrowful. His hair was dark as the shadows of twilight, and upon it was set a circlet of silver; his eyes were grey as a clear evening, and in them was a light like the light of stars. Venerable he seemed as a king crowned with many winters, and yet hale as a tried warrior in the fulness of his strength. He was the Lord of Rivendell and mighty among both Elves and Men.

In the middle of the table, against the woven cloths upon the wall, there was a chair under a canopy, and there sat a lady fair to look upon, and so like was she in form of womanhood to Elrond that Frodo guessed that she was one of his close kindred. Young she was and yet not so. The braids of her dark hair were touched by no frost; her white arms and clear face were flawless and smooth, and the light of stars was in her bright eyes, grey as a cloudless night; yet queenly she looked, and thought and knowledge were in her glance, as of one who has known many things that the years bring. Above her brow her head was covered with a cap of silver lace netted with small gems, glittering white; but her soft grey raiment had no ornament save a girdle of leaves wrought in silver.

So it was that Frodo saw her whom few mortals had yet seen; Arwen, daughter of Elrond, in whom it was said that the likeness of Lúthien had come on earth again; and she was called Undómiel, for she was the Evenstar of her people. Long she had been in the land of her mother’s kin, in Lórien beyond the mountains, and was but lately returned to Rivendell to her father’s house. But her brothers, Elladan and Elrohir, were out upon errantry; for they rode often far afield with the Rangers of the North, forgetting never their mother’s torment in the dens of the orcs.

Such loveliness in living thing Frodo had never seen before nor imagined in his mind; and he was both surprised and abashed to find that he had a seat at Elrond’s table among all these folk so high and fair. Though he had a suitable chair, and was raised upon several cushions, he felt very small, and rather out of place; but that feeling quickly passed. The feast was merry and the food all that his hunger could desire. It was some time before he looked about him again or even turned to his neighbours.

He looked first for his friends. Sam had begged to be allowed to wait on his master, but had been told that for this time he was a guest of honour. Frodo could see him now, sitting with Pippin and Merry at the upper end of one of the side-tables close to the dais. He could see no sign of Strider.

Next to Frodo on his right sat a dwarf of important appearance, richly dressed. His beard, very long and forked, was white, nearly as white as the snow-white cloth of his garments. He wore a silver belt, and round his neck hung a chain of silver and diamonds. Frodo stopped eating to look at him.

‘Welcome and well met!’ said the dwarf, turning towards him. Then he actually rose from his seat and bowed. ‘Glóin at your service,’ he said, and bowed still lower.

‘Frodo Baggins at your service and your family’s,’ said Frodo correctly, rising in surprise and scattering his cushions. ‘Am I right in guessing that you are *the* Glóin, one of the twelve companions of the great Thorin Oakenshield?’

‘Quite right,’ answered the dwarf, gathering up the cushions and courteously assisting Frodo back into his seat. ‘And I do not ask, for I have already been told that you are the kinsman and adopted heir of our friend Bilbo the renowned. Allow me to congratulate you on your recovery.’

‘Thank you very much,’ said Frodo.

‘You have had some very strange adventures, I hear,’ said Glóin. ‘I wonder greatly what brings *four* hobbits on so long a journey. Nothing like it has happened since Bilbo came with us. But perhaps I should not inquire too closely, since Elrond and Gandalf do not seem disposed to talk of this?’

‘I think we will not speak of it, at least not yet,’ said Frodo politely. He guessed that even in Elrond’s house the matter of the Ring was not one for casual talk; and in any case he wished to forget his troubles for a time. ‘But I am equally curious,’ he added, ‘to learn what brings so important a dwarf so far from the Lonely Mountain.’

Glóin looked at him. ‘If you have not heard, I think we will not speak yet of that either. Master Elrond will summon us all ere long, I believe, and then we shall all hear many things. But there is much else that may be told.’

Throughout the rest of the meal they talked together, but Frodo listened more than he spoke; for the news of the Shire, apart from the Ring, seemed small and far-away and unimportant, while Glóin had much to tell of events in the northern regions of Wilderland. Frodo learned that Grimbeorn the Old, son of Beorn, was now the lord of many sturdy men, and to their land between the Mountains and Mirkwood neither orc nor wolf dared to go.

‘Indeed,’ said Glóin, ‘if it were not for the Beornings, the passage from Dale to Rivendell would long ago have become impossible. They are valiant men and keep open the High Pass and the Ford of Carrock. But their tolls are high,’ he added with a shake of his head; ‘and like Beorn of old they are not over fond of dwarves. Still, they are trusty, and that is much in these days. Nowhere are there any men so friendly to us as the Men of Dale. They are good folk, the Bardings. The grandson of Bard the Bowman rules them, Brand son of Bain son of Bard. He is a strong king, and his realm now reaches far south and east of Esgaroth.’

‘And what of your own people?’ asked Frodo.

‘There is much to tell, good and bad,’ said Glóin; ‘yet it is mostly good: we have so far been fortunate, though we do not escape the shadow of these times. If you really wish to hear of us, I will tell you tidings gladly. But stop me when you are weary! Dwarves’ tongues run on when speaking of their handiwork, they say.’

And with that Glóin embarked on a long account of the doings of the Dwarf-kingdom. He was delighted to have found so polite a listener; for Frodo showed no sign of weariness and made no attempt to change the subject, though actually he soon got rather lost among the strange names of people and places that he had never heard of before. He was interested, however, to hear that Dáin was still King under the Mountain, and was now old (having passed his two hundred and fiftieth year), venerable, and fabulously rich. Of the ten companions who had survived the Battle of Five Armies seven were still with him: Dwalin, Glóin, Dori, Nori, Bifur, Bofur, and Bombur. Bombur was now so fat that he could not move himself from his couch to his chair at table, and it took six young dwarves to lift him.

‘And what has become of Balin and Ori and Óin?’ asked Frodo.

A shadow passed over Glóin’s face. ‘We do not know,’ he answered. ‘It is largely on account of Balin that I have come to ask the advice of those that dwell in Rivendell. But tonight let us speak of merrier things!’

Glóin began then to talk of the works of his people, telling Frodo about their great labours in Dale and under the Mountain. ‘We have done well,’ he said. ‘But in metal-work we cannot rival our fathers, many of whose secrets are lost. We make good armour and keen swords, but we cannot again make mail or blade to match those that

were made before the dragon came. Only in mining and building have we surpassed the old days. You should see the waterways of Dale, Frodo, and the fountains, and the pools! You should see the stone-paved roads of many colours! And the halls and cavernous streets under the earth with arches carved like trees; and the terraces and towers upon the Mountain's sides! Then you would see that we have not been idle.'

'I will come and see them, if ever I can,' said Frodo. 'How surprised Bilbo would have been to see all the changes in the Desolation of Smaug!'

Glóin looked at Frodo and smiled. 'You were very fond of Bilbo were you not?' he asked.

'Yes,' answered Frodo. 'I would rather see him than all the towers and palaces in the world.'

At length the feast came to an end. Elrond and Arwen rose and went down the hall, and the company followed them in due order. The doors were thrown open, and they went across a wide passage and through other doors, and came into a further hall. In it were no tables, but a bright fire was burning in a great hearth between the carven pillars upon either side.

Frodo found himself walking with Gandalf. 'This is the Hall of Fire,' said the wizard. 'Here you will hear many songs and tales—if you can keep awake. But except on high days it usually stands empty and quiet, and people come here who wish for peace, and thought. There is always a fire here, all the year round, but there is little other light.'

As Elrond entered and went towards the seat prepared for him, Elvish minstrels began to make sweet music. Slowly the hall filled, and Frodo looked with delight upon the many fair faces that were gathered together; the golden firelight played upon them and shimmered in their hair. Suddenly he noticed, not far from the further end of the fire, a small dark figure seated on a stool with his back propped against a pillar. Beside him on the ground was a drinking-cup and some bread. Frodo wondered whether he was ill (if people were ever ill in Rivendell), and had been unable to come to the feast. His head seemed sunk in sleep on his breast, and a fold of his dark cloak was drawn over his face.

Elrond went forward and stood beside the silent figure. 'Awake, little master!' he said, with a smile. Then, turning to Frodo, he beckoned to him. 'Now at last the hour has come that you have wished for, Frodo,' he said. 'Here is a friend that you have long missed.'

The dark figure raised its head and uncovered its face.

'Bilbo!' cried Frodo with sudden recognition, and he sprang forward.

'Hullo, Frodo my lad!' said Bilbo. 'So you have got here at last. I hoped you would manage it. Well, well! So all this feasting is in your honour, I hear. I hope you enjoyed yourself?'

'Why weren't you there?' cried Frodo. 'And why haven't I been allowed to see you before?'

'Because you were asleep. I have seen a good deal of *you*. I have sat by your side with Sam each day. But as for the feast, I don't go in for such things much now. And I had something else to do.'

'What were you doing?'

'Why, sitting and thinking. I do a lot of that nowadays, and this is the best place to do it in, as a rule. Wake up, indeed!' he said, cocking an eye at Elrond. There was a bright twinkle in it and no sign of sleepiness that Frodo could see. 'Wake up! I was not asleep, Master Elrond. If you want to know, you have all come out from your feast too soon, and you have disturbed me—in the middle of making up a song. I was stuck over a line or two, and was thinking about them; but now I don't suppose I shall ever get them right. There will be such a deal of singing that the ideas will be driven clean out of my head. I shall have to get my friend the Dúnadan to help me. Where is he?'

Elrond laughed. 'He shall be found,' he said. 'Then you two shall go into a corner and finish your task, and we will hear it and judge it before we end our merrymaking.' Messengers were sent to find Bilbo's friend, though none knew where he was, or why he had not been present at the feast.

In the meanwhile Frodo and Bilbo sat side by side, and Sam came quickly and placed himself near them. They talked together in soft voices, oblivious of the mirth and music in the hall about them. Bilbo had not much to say of himself. When he had left Hobbiton he had wandered off aimlessly, along the Road or in the country on either side; but somehow he had steered all the time towards Rivendell.

‘I got here without much adventure,’ he said, ‘and after a rest I went on with the dwarves to Dale: my last journey. I shan’t travel again. Old Balin had gone away. Then I came back here, and here I have been. I have done this and that. I have written some more of my book. And, of course, I make up a few songs. They sing them occasionally: just to please me, I think; for, of course, they aren’t really good enough for Rivendell. And I listen and I think. Time doesn’t seem to pass here: it just is. A remarkable place altogether.

‘I hear all kinds of news, from over the Mountains, and out of the South, but hardly anything from the Shire. I heard about the Ring, of course. Gandalf has been here often. Not that he has told me a great deal, he has become closer than ever these last few years. The Dúnadan has told me more. Fancy that ring of mine causing such a disturbance! It is a pity that Gandalf did not find out more sooner. I could have brought the thing here myself long ago without so much trouble. I have thought several times of going back to Hobbiton for it; but I am getting old, and they would not let me: Gandalf and Elrond, I mean. They seemed to think that the Enemy was looking high and low for me, and would make mincemeat of me, if he caught me tottering about in the Wild.

‘And Gandalf said: “The Ring has passed on, Bilbo. It would do no good to you or to others, if you tried to meddle with it again.” Odd sort of remark, just like Gandalf. But he said he was looking after you, so I let things be. I am frightfully glad to see you safe and sound.’ He paused and looked at Frodo doubtfully.

‘Have you got it here?’ he asked in a whisper. ‘I can’t help feeling curious, you know, after all I’ve heard. I should very much like just to peep at it again.’

‘Yes, I’ve got it,’ answered Frodo, feeling a strange reluctance. ‘It looks just the same as ever it did.’

‘Well, I should just like to see it for a moment,’ said Bilbo.

When he had dressed, Frodo found that while he slept the Ring had been hung about his neck on a new chain, light but strong. Slowly he drew it out. Bilbo put out his hand. But Frodo quickly drew back the Ring. To his distress and amazement he found that he was no longer looking at Bilbo; a shadow seemed to have fallen between them, and through it he found himself eyeing a little wrinkled creature with a hungry face and bony groping hands. He felt a desire to strike him.

The music and singing round them seemed to falter, and a silence fell. Bilbo looked quickly at Frodo’s face and passed his hand across his eyes. ‘I understand now,’ he said. ‘Put it away! I am sorry: sorry you have come in for this burden; sorry about everything. Don’t adventures ever have an end? I suppose not. Someone else always has to carry on the story. Well, it can’t be helped. I wonder if it’s any good trying to finish my book? But don’t let’s worry about it now—let’s have some real News! Tell me all about the Shire!’

Frodo hid the Ring away, and the shadow passed leaving hardly a shred of memory. The light and music of Rivendell was about him again. Bilbo smiled and laughed happily. Every item of news from the Shire that Frodo could tell—aided and corrected now and again by Sam—was of the greatest interest to him, from the felling of the least tree to the pranks of the smallest child in Hobbiton. They were so deep in the doings of the Four Farthings that they did not notice the arrival of a man clad in dark green cloth. For many minutes he stood looking down at them with a smile.

Suddenly Bilbo looked up. ‘Ah, there you are at last, Dúnadan!’ he cried.

‘Strider!’ said Frodo. ‘You seem to have a lot of names.’

‘Well, *Strider* is one that I haven’t heard before, anyway,’ said Bilbo. ‘What do you call him that for?’

‘They call me that in Bree,’ said Strider laughing, ‘and that is how I was introduced to him.’

‘And why do you call him Dúnadan?’ asked Frodo.

‘*The Dúnadan*,’ said Bilbo. ‘He is often called that here. But I thought you knew enough Elvish at least to know *dún-adan*: Man of the West, Númenórean. But this is not the time for lessons!’ He turned to Strider. ‘Where have you been, my friend? Why weren’t you at the feast? The Lady Arwen was there.’

Strider looked down at Bilbo gravely. ‘I know,’ he said. ‘But often I must put mirth aside. Elladan and Elrohir have returned out of the Wild unlooked-for, and they had tidings that I wished to hear at once.’

‘Well, my dear fellow,’ said Bilbo, ‘now you’ve heard the news, can’t you spare me a moment? I want your help in something urgent. Elrond says this song of mine is to be finished before the end of the evening, and I am stuck. Let’s go off into a corner and polish it up!’

Strider smiled. ‘Come then!’ he said. ‘Let me hear it!’

Frodo was left to himself for a while, for Sam had fallen asleep. He was alone and felt rather forlorn, although all about him the folk of Rivendell were gathered. But those near him were silent, intent upon the music of the voices and the instruments, and they gave no heed to anything else. Frodo began to listen.

At first the beauty of the melodies and of the interwoven words in elven-tongues, even though he understood them little, held him in a spell, as soon as he began to attend to them. Almost it seemed that the words took shape, and visions of far lands and bright things that he had never yet imagined opened out before him; and the firelit hall became like a golden mist above seas of foam that sighed upon the margins of the world. Then the enchantment became more and more dreamlike, until he felt that an endless river of swelling gold and silver was flowing over him, too multitudinous for its pattern to be comprehended; it became part of the throbbing air about him, and it drenched and drowned him. Swiftly he sank under its shining weight into a deep realm of sleep.

There he wandered long in a dream of music that turned into running water, and then suddenly into a voice. It seemed to be the voice of Bilbo chanting verses. Faint at first and then clearer ran the words.

*Eärendil was a mariner  
that tarried in Arvernien;  
he built a boat of timber felled  
in Nimbrethil to journey in;  
her sails he wove of silver fair,  
of silver were her lanterns made,  
her prow he fashioned like a swan,  
and light upon her banners laid.*

*In panoply of ancient kings,  
in chainéd rings he armoured him;  
his shining shield was scored with runes  
to ward all wounds and harm from him;  
his bow was made of dragon-horn,  
his arrows shorn of ebony,  
of silver was his habergeon,  
his scabbard of chalcedony;  
his sword of steel was valiant,  
of adamant his helmet tall,  
an eagle-plume upon his crest,  
upon his breast an emerald.*

*Beneath the Moon and under star  
he wandered far from northern strands,  
bewildered on enchanted ways  
beyond the days of mortal lands.*

*From gnashing of the Narrow Ice  
where shadow lies on frozen hills,  
from nether heats and burning waste  
he turned in haste, and roving still  
on starless waters far astray  
at last he came to Night of Naught,  
and passed, and never sight he saw  
of shining shore nor light he sought.  
The winds of wrath came driving him,  
and blindly in the foam he fled  
from west to east, and errandless,  
unheralded he homeward sped.*

*There flying Elwing came to him,  
and flame was in the darkness lit;  
more bright than light of diamond  
the fire upon her carcanet.  
The Silmaril she bound on him  
and crowned him with the living light,  
and dauntless then with burning brow  
he turned his prow; and in the night  
from Otherworld beyond the Sea  
there strong and free a storm arose,  
a wind of power in Tarmenel;  
by paths that seldom mortal goes  
his boat it bore with biting breath  
as might of death across the grey  
and long-forsaken seas distressed:  
from east to west he passed away.*

*Through Evernight he back was borne  
on black and roaring waves that ran  
o'er leagues unlit and foundered shores  
that drowned before the Days began,  
until he heard on strands of pearl  
where ends the world the music long,  
where ever-foaming billows roll  
the yellow gold and jewels wan.  
He saw the Mountain silent rise  
where twilight lies upon the knees  
of Valinor, and Eldamar  
beheld afar beyond the seas.  
A wanderer escaped from night  
to haven white he came at last,  
to Elvenhome the green and fair  
where keen the air, where pale as glass  
beneath the Hill of Ilmarin  
a-glimmer in a valley sheer  
the lamplit towers of Tirion*

*are mirrored on the Shadowmere.*

*He tarried there from errantry,  
and melodies they taught to him,  
and sages old him marvels told,  
and harps of gold they brought to him.  
They clothed him then in elven-white,  
and seven lights before him sent,  
as through the Calacirian  
to hidden land forlorn he went.  
He came unto the timeless halls  
where shining fall the countless years,  
and endless reigns the Elder King<sup>368</sup>  
in Ilmarin on Mountain sheer;  
and words unheard were spoken then  
of folk of Men and Elven-kin,  
beyond the world were visions showed  
forbid to those that dwell therein.*

*A ship then new they built for him  
of mithril and of elven-glass  
with shining prow; no shaven oar  
nor sail she bore on silver mast:  
the Silmaril as lantern light  
and banner bright with living flame  
to gleam thereon by Elbereth  
herself was set, who thither came  
and wings immortal made for him,  
and laid on him undying doom,  
to sail the shoreless skies and come  
behind the Sun and light of Moon.*

*From Evereven's lofty hills  
where softly silver fountains fall  
his wings him bore, a wandering light,  
beyond the mighty Mountain Wall.  
From World's End then he turned away,  
and yearned again to find afar  
his home through shadows journeying,  
and burning as an island star  
on high above the mists he came,  
a distant flame before the Sun,  
a wonder ere the waking dawn  
where grey the Norland waters run.*

*And over Middle-earth he passed  
and heard at last the weeping sore  
of women and of elven-maids  
in Elder Days, in years of yore.  
But on him mighty doom was laid,*

*till Moon should fade, an orbéd star  
to pass, and tarry never more  
on Hither Shores where mortals are;  
for ever still a herald on  
an errand that should never rest  
to bear his shining lamp afar,  
the Flammifer of Westernessee.*

The chanting ceased. Frodo opened his eyes and saw that Bilbo was seated on his stool in a circle of listeners, who were smiling and applauding.

‘Now we had better have it again,’ said an Elf.

Bilbo got up and bowed. ‘I am flattered, Lindir,’ he said. ‘But it would be too tiring to repeat it all.’

‘Not too tiring for you,’ the Elves answered laughing. ‘You know you are never tired of reciting your own verses. But really we cannot answer your question at one hearing!’

‘What!’ cried Bilbo. ‘You can’t tell which parts were mine, and which were the Dúnadan’s?’

‘It is not easy for us to tell the difference between two mortals,’ said the Elf.

‘Nonsense, Lindir,’ snorted Bilbo. ‘If you can’t distinguish between a Man and a Hobbit, your judgement is poorer than I imagined. They’re as different as peas and apples.’

‘Maybe. To sheep other sheep no doubt appear different,’ laughed Lindir. ‘Or to shepherds. But Mortals have not been our study. We have other business.’

‘I won’t argue with you,’ said Bilbo. ‘I am sleepy after so much music and singing. I’ll leave you to guess, if you want to.’

He got up and came towards Frodo. ‘Well, that’s over,’ he said in a low voice. ‘It went off better than I expected. I don’t often get asked for a second hearing. What did you think of it?’

‘I am not going to try and guess,’ said Frodo smiling.

‘You needn’t,’ said Bilbo. ‘As a matter of fact it was all mine. Except that Aragorn insisted on my putting in a green stone. He seemed to think it important. I don’t know why. Otherwise he obviously thought the whole thing rather above my head, and he said that if I had the cheek to make verses about Eärendil in the house of Elrond, it was my affair. I suppose he was right.’

‘I don’t know,’ said Frodo. ‘It seemed to me to fit somehow, though I can’t explain. I was half asleep when you began, and it seemed to follow on from something that I was dreaming about. I didn’t understand that it was really you speaking until near the end.’

‘It *is* difficult to keep awake here, until you get used to it,’ said Bilbo. ‘Not that hobbits would ever acquire quite the Elvish appetite for music and poetry and tales. They seem to like them as much as food, or more. They will be going on for a long time yet. What do you say to slipping off for some more quiet talk?’

‘Can we?’ said Frodo.

‘Of course. This is merrymaking not business. Come and go as you like, as long as you don’t make a noise.’

They got up and withdrew quietly into the shadows, and made for the doors. Sam they left behind, fast asleep still with a smile on his face. In spite of his delight in Bilbo’s company Frodo felt a tug of regret as they passed out of the Hall of Fire. Even as they stepped over the threshold a single clear voice rose in song.

*A Elbereth Gilthoniel,  
silivren penna miriel  
o menel aglar elenath!  
Na-chaered palan-diriel  
o galadhremmin ennorath*<sup>427</sup>,



*Fanuilos, le linnathon  
nefaear, sí nefaearon!*

Frodo halted for a moment, looking back. Elrond was in his chair and the fire was on his face like summer-light upon the trees. Near him sat the Lady Arwen. To his surprise Frodo saw that Aragorn stood beside her; his dark cloak was thrown back, and he seemed to be clad in elven-mail, and a star shone on his breast. They spoke together, and then suddenly it seemed to Frodo that Arwen turned towards him, and the light of her eyes fell on him from afar and pierced his heart.

He stood still enchanted, while the sweet syllables of the Elvish song fell like clear jewels of blended word and melody. 'It is a song to Elbereth,' said Bilbo. 'They will sing that, and other songs of the Blessed Realm, many times tonight. Come on!'

He led Frodo back to his own little room. It opened on to the gardens and looked south across the ravine of the Bruinen. There they sat for some while, looking through the window at the bright stars above the steep-climbing woods, and talking softly. They spoke no more of the small news of the Shire far away, nor of the dark shadows and perils that encompassed them, but of the fair things they had seen in the world together, of the Elves, of the stars, of trees, and the gentle fall of the bright year in the woods.

At last there came a knock on the door. 'Begging your pardon,' said Sam, putting in his head, 'but I was just wondering if you would be wanting anything.'

'And begging yours, Sam Gamgee,' replied Bilbo. 'I guess you mean that it is time your master went to bed.'

'Well, sir, there is a Council early tomorrow, I hear, and he only got up today for the first time.'

'Quite right, Sam,' laughed Bilbo. 'You can trot off and tell Gandalf that he has gone to bed. Good night, Frodo! Bless me, but it has been good to see you again! There are no folk like hobbits after all for a real good talk. I am getting very old, and I began to wonder if I should live to see your chapters of our story. Good night! I'll take a walk, I think, and look at the stars of Elbereth in the garden. Sleep well!'



## Chapter 2: The Council Of Elrond

Next day Frodo woke early, feeling refreshed and well. He walked along the terraces above the loud-flowing Bruinen and watched the pale, cool sun rise above the far mountains, and shine down, slanting through the thin silver mist; the dew upon the yellow leaves was glimmering, and the woven nets of gossamer twinkled on every bush. Sam walked beside him, saying nothing, but sniffing the air, and looking every now and again with wonder in his eyes at the great heights in the East. The snow was white upon their peaks.

On a seat cut in the stone beside a turn in the path they came upon Gandalf and Bilbo deep in talk. ‘Hullo! Good morning!’ said Bilbo. ‘Feel ready for the great council?’

‘I feel ready for anything,’ answered Frodo. ‘But most of all I should like to go walking today and explore the valley. I should like to get into those pine-woods up there.’ He pointed away far up the side of Rivendell to the north.

‘You may have a chance later,’ said Gandalf. ‘But we cannot make any plans yet. There is much to hear and decide today.’

Suddenly as they were talking a single clear bell rang out. ‘That is the warning bell for the Council of Elrond,’ cried Gandalf. ‘Come along now! Both you and Bilbo are wanted.’

Frodo and Bilbo followed the wizard quickly along the winding path back to the house; behind them, uninvited and for the moment forgotten, trotted Sam.

Gandalf led them to the porch where Frodo had found his friends the evening before. The light of the clear autumn morning was now glowing in the valley. The noise of bubbling waters came up from the foaming river-bed. Birds were singing, and a wholesome peace lay on the land. To Frodo his dangerous flight, and the rumours of the darkness growing in the world outside, already seemed only the memories of a troubled dream; but the faces that were turned to meet them as they entered were grave.

Elrond was there, and several others were seated in silence about him. Frodo saw Glorfindel and Glóin; and in a corner alone Strider was sitting, clad in his old travel-worn clothes again. Elrond drew Frodo to a seat by his side, and presented him to the company, saying:

‘Here, my friends, is the hobbit, Frodo son of Drogo. Few have ever come hither through greater peril or on an errand more urgent.’ He then pointed out and named those whom Frodo had not met before. There was a younger dwarf at Glóin’s side: his son Gimli. Beside Glorfindel there were several other counsellors of Elrond’s household, of whom Erestor was the chief; and with him was Galdor, an Elf from the Grey Havens who had come on an errand from Círdan the Shipwright. There was also a strange Elf clad in green and brown, Legolas, a messenger from his father, Thranduil, the King of the Elves of Northern Mirkwood. And seated a little apart was a tall man with a fair and noble face, dark-haired and grey-eyed, proud and stern of glance.

He was cloaked and booted as if for a journey on horseback; and indeed though his garments were rich, and his cloak was lined with fur, they were stained with long travel. He had a collar of silver in which a single white stone was set; his locks were shorn about his shoulders. On a baldric he wore a great horn tipped with silver that now was laid upon his knees. He gazed at Frodo and Bilbo with sudden wonder.

‘Here,’ said Elrond, turning to Gandalf, ‘is Boromir, a man from the South. He arrived in the grey morning, and seeks for counsel. I have bidden him to be present, for here his questions will be answered.’

Not all that was spoken and debated in the Council need now be told. Much was said of events in the world outside, especially in the South, and in the wide lands east of the Mountains. Of these things Frodo had already

heard many rumours; but the tale of Glóin was new to him, and when the dwarf spoke he listened attentively. It appeared that amid the splendour of their works of hand the hearts of the Dwarves of the Lonely Mountain were troubled.

‘It is now many years ago,’ said Glóin, ‘that a shadow of disquiet fell upon our people. Whence it came we did not at first perceive. Words began to be whispered in secret: it was said that we were hemmed in a narrow place, and that greater wealth and splendour would be found in a wider world. Some spoke of Moria: the mighty works of our fathers that are called in our own tongue Khazad-dûm; and they declared that now at last we had the power and numbers to return.’

Glóin sighed. ‘Moria! Moria! Wonder of the Northern world! Too deep we delved there, and woke the nameless fear. Long have its vast mansions lain empty since the children of Durin fled. But now we spoke of it again with longing, and yet with dread; for no dwarf has dared to pass the doors of Khazad-dûm for many lives of kings, save Thrór only, and he perished. At last, however, Balin listened to the whispers, and resolved to go; and though Dáin did not give leave willingly, he took with him Ori and Óin and many of our folk, and they went away south.

‘That was nigh on thirty years ago. For a while we had news and it seemed good: messages reported that Moria had been entered and a great work begun there. Then there was silence, and no word has ever come from Moria since.

‘Then about a year ago a messenger came to Dáin, but not from Moria—from Mordor: a horseman in the night, who called Dáin to his gate. The Lord Sauron the Great, so he said, wished for our friendship. Rings he would give for it, such as he gave of old. And he asked urgently concerning *hobbits*, of what kind they were, and where they dwelt. “For Sauron knows,” said he, “that one of these was known to you on a time.”

‘At this we were greatly troubled, and we gave no answer. And then his fell voice was lowered, and he would have sweetened it if he could. “As a small token only of your friendship Sauron asks this,” he said: “that you should find this thief,” such was his word, “and get from him, willing or no, a little ring, the least of rings, that once he stole. It is but a trifle that Sauron fancies, and an earnest of your good will. Find it, and three rings that the Dwarf-sires possessed of old shall be returned to you, and the realm of Moria shall be yours for ever. Find only news of the thief, whether he still lives and where, and you shall have great reward and lasting friendship from the Lord. Refuse, and things will not seem so well. Do you refuse?”

‘At that his breath came like the hiss of snakes, and all who stood by shuddered, but Dáin said: “I say neither yea nor nay. I must consider this message and what it means under its fair cloak.”

“Consider well, but not too long,” said he.

“The time of my thought is my own to spend,” answered Dáin.

“For the present,” said he, and rode into the darkness.

‘Heavy have the hearts of our chieftains been since that night. We needed not the fell voice of the messenger to warn us that his words held both menace and deceit; for we knew already that the power that has re-entered Mordor has not changed, and ever it betrayed us of old. Twice the messenger has returned, and has gone unanswered. The third and last time, so he says, is soon to come, before the ending of the year.

‘And so I have been sent at last by Dáin to warn Bilbo that he is sought by the Enemy, and to learn, if may be, why he desires this ring, this least of rings. Also we crave the advice of Elrond. For the Shadow grows and draws nearer. We discover that messengers have come also to King Brand in Dale, and that he is afraid. We fear that he may yield. Already war is gathering on his eastern borders. If we make no answer, the Enemy may move Men of his rule to assail King Brand, and Dáin also.’

‘You have done well to come,’ said Elrond. ‘You will hear today all that you need in order to understand the purposes of the Enemy. There is naught that you can do, other than to resist, with hope or without it. But you do not stand alone. You will learn that your trouble is but part of the trouble of all the western world. The Ring! What shall we do with the Ring, the least of rings, the trifle that Sauron fancies? That is the doom that we must deem.

‘That is the purpose for which you are called hither. Called, I say, though I have not called you to me, strangers from distant lands. You have come and are here met, in this very nick of time, by chance as it may seem. Yet it is not so. Believe rather that it is so ordered that we, who sit here, and none others, must now find counsel for the peril of the world.

‘Now, therefore, things shall be openly spoken that have been hidden from all but a few until this day. And first, so that all may understand what is the peril, the Tale of the Ring shall be told from the beginning even to this present. And I will begin that tale, though others shall end it.’

Then all listened while Elrond in his clear voice spoke of Sauron and the Rings of Power, and their forging in the Second Age of the world long ago. A part of his tale was known to some there, but the full tale to none, and many eyes were turned to Elrond in fear and wonder as he told of the Elven-smiths of Eregion and their friendship with Moria, and their eagerness for knowledge, by which Sauron ensnared them. For in that time he was not yet evil to behold, and they received his aid and grew mighty in craft, whereas he learned all their secrets, and betrayed them, and forged secretly in the Mountain of Fire the One Ring to be their master. But Celebrimbor was aware of him, and hid the Three which he had made; and there was war, and the land was laid waste, and the gate of Moria was shut.

Then through all the years that followed he traced the Ring; but since that history is elsewhere recounted, even as Elrond himself set it down in his books of lore, it is not here recalled. For it is a long tale, full of deeds great and terrible, and briefly though Elrond spoke, the sun rode up the sky, and the morning was passing ere he ceased.

Of Númenor he spoke, its glory and its fall, and the return of the Kings of Men to Middle-earth out of the deeps of the Sea, borne upon the wings of storm. Then Elendil the Tall and his mighty sons, Isildur and Anárion, became great lords; and the North-realm they made in Arnor, and the South-realm in Gondor above the mouths of Anduin. But Sauron of Mordor assailed them, and they made the Last Alliance of Elves and Men, and the hosts of Gil-galad and Elendil were mustered in Arnor.

Thereupon Elrond paused a while and sighed. ‘I remember well the splendour of their banners,’ he said. ‘It recalled to me the glory of the Elder Days and the hosts of Beleriand, so many great princes and captains were assembled. And yet not so many, nor so fair, as when Thangorodrim was broken, and the Elves deemed that evil was ended for ever, and it was not so.’

‘You remember?’ said Frodo, speaking his thought aloud in his astonishment. ‘But I thought,’ he stammered as Elrond turned towards him, ‘I thought that the fall of Gil-galad was a long age ago.’

‘So it was indeed,’ answered Elrond gravely. ‘But my memory reaches back even to the Elder Days. Eärendil was my sire, who was born in Gondolin before its fall; and my mother was Elwing, daughter of Dior, son of Lúthien of Doriath. I have seen three ages in the West of the world, and many defeats, and many fruitless victories.

‘I was the herald of Gil-galad and marched with his host. I was at the Battle of Dagorlad before the Black Gate of Mordor, where we had the mastery: for the Spear of Gil-galad and the Sword of Elendil, Aeglos and Narsil, none could withstand. I beheld the last combat on the slopes of Orodruin, where Gil-galad died, and Elendil fell, and Narsil broke beneath him; but Sauron himself was overthrown, and Isildur cut the Ring from his hand with the hilt-shard of his father’s sword, and took it for his own.’

At this the stranger, Boromir, broke in. ‘So that is what became of the Ring!’ he cried. ‘If ever such a tale was told in the South, it has long been forgotten. I have heard of the Great Ring of him that we do not name; but we believed that it perished from the world in the ruin of his first realm. Isildur took it! That is tidings indeed.’

‘Alas! yes,’ said Elrond. ‘Isildur took it, as should not have been. It should have been cast then into Orodruin’s fire nigh at hand where it was made. But few marked what Isildur did. He alone stood by his father in that last mortal contest; and by Gil-galad only Círdan stood, and I. But Isildur would not listen to our counsel.

“‘This I will have as weregild for my father, and my brother,” he said; and therefore whether we would or no, he took it to treasure it. But soon he was betrayed by it to his death; and so it is named in the North Isildur’s Bane. Yet death maybe was better than what else might have befallen him.

‘Only to the North did these tidings come, and only to a few. Small wonder is it that you have not heard them, Boromir. From the ruin of the Gladden Fields, where Isildur perished, three men only came ever back over the mountains after long wandering. One of these was Ohtar, the esquire of Isildur, who bore the shards of the sword of Elendil; and he brought them to Valandil, the heir of Isildur, who being but a child had remained here in Rivendell. But Narsil was broken and its light extinguished, and it has not yet been forged again.

‘Fruitless did I call the victory of the Last Alliance? Not wholly so, yet it did not achieve its end. Sauron was diminished, but not destroyed. His Ring was lost but not unmade. The Dark Tower was broken, but its foundations were not removed; for they were made with the power of the Ring, and while it remains they will endure. Many Elves and many mighty Men, and many of their friends, had perished in the war. Anárion was slain, and Isildur was slain; and Gil-galad and Elendil were no more. Never again shall there be any such league of Elves and Men; for Men multiply and the Firstborn decrease, and the two kindreds are estranged. And ever since that day the race of Númenor has decayed, and the span of their years has lessened.

‘In the North after the war and the slaughter of the Gladden Fields the Men of Westergates were diminished, and their city of Annúminas beside Lake Evendim fell into ruin; and the heirs of Valandil removed and dwelt at Fornost on the high North Downs, and that now too is desolate. Men call it Deadmen’s Dike, and they fear to tread there. For the folk of Arnor dwindled, and their foes devoured them, and their lordship passed, leaving only green mounds in the grassy hills.

‘In the South the realm of Gondor long endured; and for a while its splendour grew, recalling somewhat of the might of Númenor, ere it fell. High towers that people built, and strong places, and havens of many ships; and the winged crown of the Kings of Men was held in awe by folk of many tongues. Their chief city was Osgiliath, Citadel of the Stars, through the midst of which the River flowed. And Minas Ithil they built, Tower of the Rising Moon, eastward upon a shoulder of the Mountains of Shadow; and westward at the feet of the White Mountains Minas Anor they made, Tower of the Setting Sun. There in the courts of the King grew a white tree, from the seed of that tree which Isildur brought over the deep waters, and the seed of that tree before came from Eressëa, and before that out of the Uttermost West in the Day before days when the world was young.

‘But in the wearing of the swift years of Middle-earth the line of Meneldil son of Anárion failed, and the Tree withered, and the blood of the Númenóreans became mingled with that of lesser men. Then the watch upon the walls of Mordor slept, and dark things crept back to Gorgoroth. And on a time evil things came forth, and they took Minas Ithil and abode in it, and they made it into a place of dread; and it is called Minas Morgul, the Tower of Sorcery. Then Minas Anor was named anew Minas Tirith, the Tower of Guard; and these two cities were ever at war, but Osgiliath which lay between was deserted and in its ruins shadows walked.

‘So it has been for many lives of men. But the Lords of Minas Tirith still fight on, defying our enemies, keeping the passage of the River from Argonath to the Sea. And now that part of the tale that I shall tell is drawn to its close. For in the days of Isildur the Ruling Ring passed out of all knowledge, and the Three were released from its dominion. But now in this latter day they are in peril once more, for to our sorrow the One has been found. Others shall speak of its finding, for in that I played small part.’

He ceased, but at once Boromir stood up, tall and proud, before them. ‘Give me leave, Master Elrond,’ said he, ‘first to say more of Gondor, for verily from the land of Gondor I am come. And it would be well for all to know what passes there. For few, I deem, know of our deeds, and therefore guess little at their peril, if we should fail at last.

‘Believe not that in the land of Gondor the blood of Númenor is spent, nor all its pride and dignity forgotten. By our valour the wild folk of the East are still restrained, and the terror of Morgul kept at bay; and thus alone are peace and freedom maintained in the lands behind us, bulwark of the West. But if the passages of the River should be won, what then?

‘Yet that hour, maybe, is not now far away. The Nameless Enemy has arisen again. Smoke rises once more from Orodruin that we call Mount Doom. The power of the Black Land grows and we are hard beset. When the Enemy returned our folk were driven from Ithilien, our fair domain east of the River, though we kept a foothold there and strength of arms. But this very year, in the days of June, sudden war came upon us out of Mordor, and

we were swept away. We were outnumbered, for Mordor has allied itself with the Easterlings and the cruel Haradrim; but it was not by numbers that we were defeated. A power was there that we have not felt before.

‘Some said that it could be seen, like a great black horseman, a dark shadow under the moon. Wherever he came a madness filled our foes, but fear fell on our boldest, so that horse and man gave way and fled. Only a remnant of our eastern force came back, destroying the last bridge that still stood amid the ruins of Osgiliath.

‘I was in the company that held the bridge, until it was cast down behind us. Four only were saved by swimming: my brother and myself and two others. But still we fight on, holding all the west shores of Anduin; and those who shelter behind us give us praise, if ever they hear our name: much praise but little help. Only from Rohan now will any men ride to us when we call.

‘In this evil hour I have come on an errand over many dangerous leagues to Elrond: a hundred and ten days I have journeyed all alone. But I do not seek allies in war. The might of Elrond is in wisdom not in weapons, it is said. I come to ask for counsel and the unravelling of hard words. For on the eve of the sudden assault a dream came to my brother in a troubled sleep; and afterwards a like dream came oft to him again, and once to me.

‘In that dream I thought the eastern sky grew dark and there was a growing thunder, but in the West a pale light lingered, and out of it I heard a voice, remote but clear, crying:

*Seek for the Sword that was broken:*

*In Imladris it dwells;*

*There shall be counsels taken*

*Stronger than Morgul-spells.*

*There shall be shown a token*

*That Doom is near at hand,*

*For Isildur’s Bane shall waken,*

*And the Halfling forth shall stand.*

Of these words we could understand little, and we spoke to our father, Denethor, Lord of Minas Tirith, wise in the lore of Gondor. This only would he say, that Imladris was of old the name among the Elves of a far northern dale, where Elrond the Halfelven dwelt, greatest of lore-masters. Therefore my brother, seeing how desperate was our need, was eager to heed the dream and seek for Imladris; but since the way was full of doubt and danger, I took the journey upon myself. Loth was my father to give me leave, and long have I wandered by roads forgotten, seeking the house of Elrond, of which many had heard, but few knew where it lay.’

‘And here in the house of Elrond more shall be made clear to you,’ said Aragorn, standing up. He cast his sword upon the table that stood before Elrond, and the blade was in two pieces. ‘Here is the Sword that was Broken!’ he said.

‘And who are you, and what have you to do with Minas Tirith?’ asked Boromir, looking in wonder at the lean face of the Ranger and his weather-stained cloak.

‘He is Aragorn son of Arathorn,’ said Elrond; ‘and he is descended through many fathers from Isildur Elendil’s son of Minas Ithil. He is the Chief of the Dúnedain in the North, and few are now left of that folk.’

‘Then it belongs to you, and not to me at all!’ cried Frodo in amazement, springing to his feet, as if he expected the Ring to be demanded at once.

‘It does not belong to either of us,’ said Aragorn; ‘but it has been ordained that you should hold it for a while.’

‘Bring out the Ring, Frodo!’ said Gandalf solemnly. ‘The time has come. Hold it up, and then Boromir will understand the remainder of his riddle.’

There was a hush, and all turned their eyes on Frodo. He was shaken by a sudden shame and fear; and he felt a great reluctance to reveal the Ring, and a loathing of its touch. He wished he was far away. The Ring gleamed and flickered as he held it up before them in his trembling hand.

‘Behold Isildur’s Bane!’ said Elrond.

Boromir's eyes glinted as he gazed at the golden thing. 'The Halfling!' he muttered. 'Is then the doom of Minas Tirith come at last? But why then should we seek a broken sword?'

'The words were not *the doom of Minas Tirith*,' said Aragorn. 'But doom and great deeds are indeed at hand. For the Sword that was Broken is the Sword of Elendil that broke beneath him when he fell. It has been treasured by his heirs when all other heirlooms were lost; for it was spoken of old among us that it should be made again when the Ring, Isildur's Bane, was found. Now you have seen the sword that you have sought, what would you ask? Do you wish for the House of Elendil to return to the Land of Gondor?'

'I was not sent to beg any boon, but to seek only the meaning of a riddle,' answered Boromir proudly. 'Yet we are hard pressed, and the Sword of Elendil would be a help beyond our hope—if such a thing could indeed return out of the shadows of the past.' He looked again at Aragorn, and doubt was in his eyes.

Frodo felt Bilbo stir impatiently at his side. Evidently he was annoyed on his friend's behalf. Standing suddenly up he burst out:

*All that is gold does not glitter,  
Not all those who wander are lost;  
The old that is strong does not wither,  
Deep roots are not reached by the frost.  
From the ashes a fire shall be woken,  
A light from the shadows shall spring;  
Renewed shall be blade that was broken:  
The crownless [382](#) again shall be king.*

'Not very good perhaps, but to the point—if you need more beyond the word of Elrond. If that was worth a journey of a hundred and ten days to hear, you had best listen to it.' He sat down with a snort.

'I made that up myself,' he whispered to Frodo, 'for the Dúnadan, a long time ago when he first told me about himself. I almost wish that my adventures were not over, and that I could go with him when his day comes.'

Aragorn smiled at him; then he turned to Boromir again. 'For my part I forgive your doubt,' he said. 'Little do I resemble the figures of Elendil and Isildur as they stand carved in their majesty in the halls of Denethor. I am but the heir of Isildur, not Isildur himself. I have had a hard life and a long; and the leagues that lie between here and Gondor are a small part in the count of my journeys. I have crossed many mountains and many rivers, and trodden many plains, even into the far countries of Rhûn and Harad where the stars are strange.

'But my home, such as I have, is in the North. For here the heirs of Valandil have ever dwelt in long line unbroken from father unto son for many generations. Our days have darkened, and we have dwindled; but ever the Sword has passed to a new keeper. And this I will say to you, Boromir, ere I end. Lonely men are we, Rangers of the wild, hunters—but hunters ever of the servants of the Enemy; for they are found in many places, not in Mordor only.

'If Gondor, Boromir, has been a stalwart tower, we have played another part. Many evil things there are that your strong walls and bright swords do not stay. You know little of the lands beyond your bounds. Peace and freedom, do you say? The North would have known them little but for us. Fear would have destroyed them. But when dark things come from the houseless hills, or creep from sunless woods, they fly from us. What roads would any dare to tread, what safety would there be in quiet lands, or in the homes of simple men at night, if the Dúnedain were asleep, or were all gone into the grave?

'And yet less thanks have we than you. Travellers scowl at us, and countrymen give us scornful names. "Strider" I am to one fat man who lives within a day's march of foes that would freeze his heart, or lay his little town in ruin, if he were not guarded ceaselessly. Yet we would not have it otherwise. If simple folk are free from care and fear, simple they will be, and we must be secret to keep them so. That has been the task of my kindred, while the years have lengthened and the grass has grown.

'But now the world is changing once again. A new hour comes. Isildur's Bane is found. Battle is at hand. The Sword shall be reforged. I will come to Minas Tirith.'

‘Isildur’s Bane is found, you say,’ said Boromir. ‘I have seen a bright ring in the Halfling’s hand; but Isildur perished ere this age of the world began, they say. How do the Wise know that this ring is his? And how has it passed down the years, until it is brought hither by so strange a messenger?’

‘That shall be told,’ said Elrond.

‘But not yet, I beg, Master!’ cried Bilbo. ‘Already the Sun is climbing to noon, and I feel the need of something to strengthen me.’

‘I had not named you,’ said Elrond smiling. ‘But I do so now. Come! Tell us your tale. And if you have not yet cast your story into verse, you may tell it in plain words. The briefer, the sooner shall you be refreshed.’

‘Very well,’ said Bilbo. ‘I will do as you bid. But I will now tell the true story, and if some here have heard me tell it otherwise’—he looked sidelong at Glóin—‘I ask them to forget it and forgive me. I only wished to claim the treasure as my very own in those days, and to be rid of the name of thief that was put on me. But perhaps I understand things a little better now. Anyway, this is what happened.’

To some there Bilbo’s tale was wholly new, and they listened with amazement while the old hobbit, actually not at all displeased, recounted his adventure with Gollum, at full length. He did not omit a single riddle. He would have given also an account of his party and disappearance from the Shire, if he had been allowed; but Elrond raised his hand.

‘Well told, my friend,’ he said, ‘but that is enough at this time. For the moment it suffices to know that the Ring passed to Frodo, your heir. Let him now speak!’

Then, less willingly than Bilbo, Frodo told of all his dealings with the Ring from the day that it passed into his keeping. Every step of his journey from Hobbiton to the Ford of Bruinen was questioned and considered, and everything that he could recall concerning the Black Riders was examined. At last he sat down again.

‘Not bad,’ Bilbo said to him. ‘You would have made a good story of it, if they hadn’t kept on interrupting. I tried to make a few notes, but we shall have to go over it all again together some time, if I am to write it up. There are whole chapters of stuff before you ever got here!’

‘Yes, it made quite a long tale,’ answered Frodo. ‘But the story still does not seem complete to me. I still want to know a good deal, especially about Gandalf.’

Galdor of the Havens, who sat nearby, overheard him. ‘You speak for me also,’ he cried, and turning to Elrond he said: ‘The Wise may have good reason to believe that the halfling’s trove is indeed the Great Ring of long debate, unlikely though that may seem to those who know less. But may we not hear the proofs? And I would ask this also. What of Saruman? He is learned in the lore of the Rings, yet he is not among us. What is his counsel—if he knows the things that we have heard?’

‘The questions that you ask, Galdor, are bound together,’ said Elrond. ‘I had not overlooked them, and they shall be answered. But these things it is the part of Gandalf to make clear; and I call upon him last, for it is the place of honour, and in all this matter he has been the chief.’

‘Some, Galdor,’ said Gandalf, ‘would think the tidings of Glóin, and the pursuit of Frodo, proof enough that the halfling’s trove is a thing of great worth to the Enemy. Yet it is a ring. What then? The Nine the Nazgûl keep. The Seven are taken or destroyed.’ At this Glóin stirred, but did not speak. ‘The Three we know of. What then is this one that he desires so much?’

‘There is indeed a wide waste of time between the River and the Mountain, between the loss and the finding. But the gap in the knowledge of the Wise has been filled at last. Yet too slowly. For the Enemy has been close behind, closer even than I feared. And well is it that not until this year, this very summer, as it seems, did he learn the full truth.

‘Some here will remember that many years ago I myself dared to pass the doors of the Necromancer in Dol Guldur, and secretly explored his ways, and found thus that our fears were true: he was none other than Sauron, our Enemy of old, at length taking shape and power again. Some, too, will remember also that Saruman dissuaded us from open deeds against him, and for long we watched him only. Yet at last, as his shadow grew,



Saruman yielded, and the Council put forth its strength and drove the evil out of Mirkwood—and that was in the very year of the finding of this Ring: a strange chance, if chance it was.

‘But we were too late, as Elrond foresaw. Sauron also had watched us, and had long prepared against our stroke, governing Mordor from afar through Minas Morgul, where his Nine servants dwelt, until all was ready. Then he gave way before us, but only feigned to flee, and soon after came to the Dark Tower and openly declared himself. Then for the last time the Council met; for now we learned that he was seeking ever more eagerly for the One. We feared then that he had some news of it that we knew nothing of. But Saruman said nay, and repeated what he had said to us before: that the One would never again be found in Middle-earth.

“‘At the worst,” said he, “our Enemy knows that we have it not, and that it still is lost. But what was lost may yet be found, he thinks. Fear not! His hope will cheat him. Have I not earnestly studied this matter? Into Anduin the Great it fell; and long ago, while Sauron slept, it was rolled down the River to the Sea. There let it lie until the End.”’

Gandalf fell silent, gazing eastward from the porch to the far peaks of the Misty Mountains, at whose great roots the peril of the world had so long lain hidden. He sighed.

‘There I was at fault,’ he said. ‘I was lulled by the words of Saruman the Wise; but I should have sought for the truth sooner, and our peril would now be less.’

‘We were all at fault,’ said Elrond, ‘and but for your vigilance the Darkness, maybe, would already be upon us. But say on!’

‘From the first my heart misgave me, against all reason that I knew,’ said Gandalf, ‘and I desired to know how this thing came to Gollum, and how long he had possessed it. So I set a watch for him, guessing that he would ere long come forth from his darkness to seek for his treasure. He came, but he escaped and was not found. And then alas! I let the matter rest, watching and waiting only, as we have too often done.

‘Time passed with many cares, until my doubts were awakened again to sudden fear. Whence came the hobbit’s ring? What, if my fear was true, should be done with it? Those things I must decide. But I spoke yet of my dread to none, knowing the peril of an untimely whisper, if it went astray. In all the long wars with the Dark Tower treason has ever been our greatest foe.

‘That was seventeen years ago. Soon I became aware that spies of many sorts, even beasts and birds, were gathered round the Shire, and my fear grew. I called for the help of the Dúnedain, and their watch was doubled; and I opened my heart to Aragorn, the heir of Isildur.’

‘And I,’ said Aragorn, ‘counselled that we should hunt for Gollum, too late though it may seem. And since it seemed fit that Isildur’s heir should labour to repair Isildur’s fault, I went with Gandalf on the long and hopeless search.’

Then Gandalf told how they had explored the whole length of Wilderland, down even to the Mountains of Shadow and the fences of Mordor. ‘There we had rumour of him, and we guess that he dwelt there long in the dark hills; but we never found him, and at last I despaired. And then in my despair I thought again of a test that might make the finding of Gollum unneeded. The ring itself might tell if it were the One. The memory of words at the Council came back to me: words of Saruman, half-heeded at the time. I heard them now clearly in my heart.

“‘The Nine, the Seven, and the Three,” he said, “had each their proper gem. Not so the One. It was round and unadorned, as it were one of the lesser rings; but its maker set marks upon it that the skilled, maybe, could still see and read.”’

‘What those marks were he had not said. Who now would know? The maker. And Saruman? But great though his lore may be, it must have a source. What hand save Sauron’s ever held this thing, ere it was lost? The hand of Isildur alone.

‘With that thought, I forsook the chase, and passed swiftly to Gondor. In former days the members of my order had been well received there, but Saruman most of all. Often he had been for long the guest of the Lords of the

City. Less welcome did the Lord Denethor show me then than of old, and grudgingly he permitted me to search among his hoarded scrolls and books.

“If indeed you look only, as you say, for records of ancient days, and the beginnings of the City, read on!” he said. “For to me what was is less dark than what is to come, and that is my care. But unless you have more skill even than Saruman, who has studied here long, you will find naught that is not well known to me, who am master of the lore of this City.”

‘So said Denethor. And yet there lie in his hoards many records that few even of the lore-masters now can read, for their scripts and tongues have become dark to later men. And Boromir, there lies in Minas Tirith still, unread, I guess, by any save Saruman and myself since the kings failed, a scroll that Isildur made himself. For Isildur did not march away straight from the war in Mordor, as some have told the tale.’

‘Some in the North, maybe,’ Boromir broke in. ‘All know in Gondor that he went first to Minas Anor and dwelt a while with his nephew Meneldil, instructing him, before he committed to him the rule of the South Kingdom. In that time he planted there the last sapling of the White Tree in memory of his brother.’

‘But in that time also he made this scroll,’ said Gandalf; ‘and that is not remembered in Gondor, it would seem. For this scroll concerns the Ring, and thus wrote Isildur therein:

*The Great Ring shall go now to be an heirloom of the North Kingdom; but records of it shall be left in Gondor, where also dwell the heirs of Elendil, lest a time come when the memory of these great matters shall grow dim.*

‘And after these words Isildur described the Ring, such as he found it.

*It was hot when I first took it, hot as a glede, and my hand was scorched, so that I doubt if ever again I shall be free of the pain of it. Yet even as I write it is cooled, and it seemeth to shrink, though it loseth neither its beauty nor its shape. Already the writing upon it, which at first was as clear as red flame, fadeth and is now only barely to be read. It is fashioned in an elven-script of Eregion, for they have no letters in Mordor for such subtle work; but the language is unknown to me. I deem it to be a tongue of the Black Land, since it is foul and uncouth. What evil it saith I do not know; but I trace here a copy of it, lest it fade beyond recall. The Ring misseeth, maybe, the heat of Sauron’s hand, which was black and yet burned like fire, and so Gil-galad was destroyed; and maybe were the gold made hot again, the writing would be refreshed. But for my part I will risk no hurt to this thing: of all the works of Sauron the only fair. It is precious to me, though I buy it with great pain.*

‘When I read these words, my quest was ended. For the traced writing was indeed as Isildur guessed, in the tongue of Mordor and the servants of the Tower. And what was said therein was already known. For in the day that Sauron first put on the One, Celebrimbor, maker of the Three, was aware of him, and from afar he heard him speak these words, and so his evil purposes were revealed.

‘At once I took my leave of Denethor, but even as I went northwards, messages came to me out of Lórien that Aragorn had passed that way, and that he had found the creature called Gollum. Therefore I went first to meet him and hear his tale. Into what deadly perils he had gone alone I dared not guess.’

‘There is little need to tell of them,’ said Aragorn. ‘If a man must needs walk in sight of the Black Gate, or tread the deadly flowers of Morgul Vale, then perils he will have. I, too, despaired at last, and I began my homeward journey. And then, by fortune, I came suddenly on what I sought: the marks of soft feet beside a muddy pool. But now the trail was fresh and swift, and it led not to Mordor but away. Along the skirts of the Dead Marshes I followed it, and then I had him. Lurking by a stagnant mere, peering in the water as the dark eve fell, I caught him, Gollum. He was covered with green slime. He will never love me, I fear; for he bit me, and I was not gentle. Nothing more did I ever get from his mouth than the marks of his teeth. I deemed it the worst part of all my journey, the road back, watching him day and night, making him walk before me with a halter on his neck, gagged, until he was tamed by lack of drink and food, driving him ever towards Mirkwood. I brought him there at last and gave him to the Elves, for we had agreed that this should be done; and I was glad to be rid of his company, for he stank. For my part I hope never to look upon him again; but Gandalf came and endured long speech with him.’

‘Yes, long and weary,’ said Gandalf, ‘but not without profit. For one thing, the tale he told of his loss agreed with that which Bilbo has now told openly for the first time; but that mattered little, since I had already guessed it. But I learned then first that Gollum’s ring came out of the Great River nigh to the Gladden Fields. And I learned also that he had possessed it long. Many lives of his small kind. The power of the ring had lengthened his years far beyond their span; but that power only the Great Rings wield.

‘And if that is not proof enough, Galdor, there is the other test that I spoke of. Upon this very ring which you have here seen held aloft, round and unadorned, the letters that Isildur reported may still be read, if one has the strength of will to set the golden thing in the fire a while. That I have done, and this I have read:

*Ash nazg durbatulûk, ash nazg gimbatul, ash nazg thrakatulûk agh burzum-ishi krimpatul.*’

The change in the wizard’s voice was astounding. Suddenly it became menacing, powerful, harsh as stone. A shadow seemed to pass over the high sun, and the porch for a moment grew dark. All trembled, and the Elves stopped their ears.

‘Never before has any voice dared to utter words of that tongue in Imladris, Gandalf the Grey,’ said Elrond, as the shadow passed and the company breathed once more.

‘And let us hope that none will ever speak it here again,’ answered Gandalf. ‘Nonetheless I do not ask your pardon, Master Elrond. For if that tongue is not soon to be heard in every corner of the West, then let all put doubt aside that this thing is indeed what the Wise have declared: the treasure of the Enemy, fraught with all his malice; and in it lies a great part of his strength of old. Out of the Black Years come the words that the Smiths of Eregion heard, and knew that they had been betrayed:

*One Ring<sup>432</sup> to rule them all, One Ring to find them, One Ring to bring them all and in the Darkness bind them.*

‘Know also, my friends, that I learned more yet from Gollum. He was loth to speak and his tale was unclear, but it is beyond all doubt that he went to Mordor, and there all that he knew was forced from him. Thus the Enemy knows now that the One is found, that it was long in the Shire; and since his servants have pursued it almost to our door, he soon will know, already he may know, even as I speak, that we have it here.’

All sat silent for a while, until at length Boromir spoke. ‘He is a small thing, you say, this Gollum? Small, but great in mischief. What became of him? To what doom did you put him?’

‘He is in prison, but no worse,’ said Aragorn. ‘He had suffered much. There is no doubt that he was tormented, and the fear of Sauron lies black on his heart. Still I for one am glad that he is safely kept by the watchful Elves of Mirkwood. His malice is great and gives him a strength hardly to be believed in one so lean and withered. He could work much mischief still, if he were free. And I do not doubt that he was allowed to leave Mordor on some evil errand.’

‘Alas! alas!’ cried Legolas, and in his fair Elvish face there was great distress. ‘The tidings that I was sent to bring must now be told. They are not good, but only here have I learned how evil they may seem to this company. Sméagol, who is now called Gollum, has escaped.’

‘Escaped?’ cried Aragorn. ‘That is ill news indeed. We shall all rue it bitterly, I fear. How came the folk of Thranduil to fail in their trust?’

‘Not through lack of watchfulness,’ said Legolas; ‘but perhaps through over-kindliness. And we fear that the prisoner had aid from others, and that more is known of our doings than we could wish. We guarded this creature day and night, at Gandalf’s bidding, much though we wearied of the task. But Gandalf bade us hope still for his cure, and we had not the heart to keep him ever in dungeons under the earth, where he would fall back into his old black thoughts.’

‘You were less tender to me,’ said Glóin with a flash of his eyes, as old memories were stirred of his imprisonment in the deep places of the Elven-king’s halls.

‘Now come!’ said Gandalf. ‘Pray, do not interrupt, my good Glóin. That was a regrettable misunderstanding, long set right. If all the grievances that stand between Elves and Dwarves are to be brought up here, we may as well abandon this Council.’

Glóin rose and bowed, and Legolas continued. ‘In the days of fair weather we led Gollum through the woods; and there was a high tree standing alone far from the others which he liked to climb. Often we let him mount up to the highest branches, until he felt the free wind; but we set a guard at the tree’s foot. One day he refused to come down, and the guards had no mind to climb after him: he had learned the trick of clinging to boughs with his feet as well as with his hands; so they sat by the tree far into the night.

‘It was that very night of summer, yet moonless and starless, that Orcs came on us at unawares. We drove them off after some time; they were many and fierce, but they came from over the mountains, and were unused to the woods. When the battle was over, we found that Gollum was gone, and his guards were slain or taken. It then seemed plain to us that the attack had been made for his rescue, and that he knew of it beforehand. How that was contrived we cannot guess; but Gollum is cunning, and the spies of the Enemy are many. The dark things that were driven out in the year of the Dragon’s fall have returned in greater numbers, and Mirkwood is again an evil place, save where our realm is maintained.

‘We have failed to recapture Gollum. We came on his trail among those of many Orcs, and it plunged deep into the Forest, going south. But ere long it escaped our skill, and we dared not continue the hunt; for we were drawing nigh to Dol Guldur, and that is still a very evil place; we do not go that way.’

‘Well, well, he is gone,’ said Gandalf. ‘We have no time to seek for him again. He must do what he will. But he may play a part yet that neither he nor Sauron have foreseen.

‘And now I will answer Galdor’s other questions. What of Saruman? What are his counsels to us in this need? This tale I must tell in full, for only Elrond has heard it yet, and that in brief; but it will bear on all that we must resolve. It is the last chapter in the Tale of the Ring, so far as it has yet gone.

‘At the end of June I was in the Shire, but a cloud of anxiety was on my mind, and I rode to the southern borders of the little land; for I had a foreboding of some danger, still hidden from me but drawing near. There messages reached me telling me of war and defeat in Gondor, and when I heard of the Black Shadow a chill smote my heart. But I found nothing save a few fugitives from the South; yet it seemed to me that on them sat a fear of which they would not speak. I turned then east and north and journeyed along the Greenway; and not far from Bree I came upon a traveller sitting on a bank beside the road with his grazing horse beside him. It was Radagast the Brown, who at one time dwelt at Rhosgobel, near the borders of Mirkwood. He is one of my order, but I had not seen him for many a year.

“Gandalf!” he cried. “I was seeking you. But I am a stranger in these parts. All I knew was that you might be found in a wild region with the uncouth name of Shire.”

“Your information was correct,” I said. “But do not put it that way, if you meet any of the inhabitants. You are near the borders of the Shire now. And what do you want with me? It must be pressing. You were never a traveller, unless driven by great need.”

“I have an urgent errand,” he said. “My news is evil.” Then he looked about him, as if the hedges might have ears. “Nazgûl,” he whispered. “The Nine are abroad again. They have crossed the River secretly and are moving westward. They have taken the guise of riders in black.”

‘I knew then what I had dreaded without knowing it.

“The Enemy must have some great need or purpose,” said Radagast; “but what it is that makes him look to these distant and desolate parts, I cannot guess.”

“What do you mean?” said I.

“I have been told that wherever they go the Riders ask for news of a land called Shire.”

“*The Shire*,” I said; but my heart sank. For even the Wise might fear to withstand the Nine, when they are gathered together under their fell chieftain. A great king and sorcerer he was of old, and now he wields a deadly fear. “Who told you, and who sent you?” I asked.

“Saruman the White,” answered Radagast. “And he told me to say that if you feel the need, he will help; but you must seek his aid at once, or it will be too late.”

‘And that message brought me hope. For Saruman the White is the greatest of my order. Radagast is, of course, a worthy Wizard, a master of shapes and changes of hue; and he has much lore of herbs and beasts, and birds are especially his friends. But Saruman has long studied the arts of the Enemy himself, and thus we have often been able to forestall him. It was by the devices of Saruman that we drove him from Dol Guldur. It might be that he had found some weapons that would drive back the Nine.

“I will go to Saruman,” I said.

“Then you must go *now*,” said Radagast; “for I have wasted time in looking for you, and the days are running short. I was told to find you before Midsummer, and that is now here. Even if you set out from this spot, you will hardly reach him before the Nine discover the land that they seek. I myself shall turn back at once.” And with that he mounted and would have ridden straight off.

“Stay a moment!” I said. “We shall need your help, and the help of all things that will give it. Send out messages to all the beasts and birds that are your friends. Tell them to bring news of anything that bears on this matter to Saruman and Gandalf. Let messages be sent to Orthanc.”

“I will do that,” he said, and rode off as if the Nine were after him.

I could not follow him then and there. I had ridden very far already that day, and I was as weary as my horse; and I needed to consider matters. I stayed the night in Bree, and decided that I had no time to return to the Shire. Never did I make a greater mistake!

‘However, I wrote a message to Frodo, and trusted to my friend the innkeeper to send it to him. I rode away at dawn; and I came at long last to the dwelling of Saruman. That is far south in Isengard, in the end of the Misty Mountains, not far from the Gap of Rohan. And Boromir will tell you that that is a great open vale that lies between the Misty Mountains and the northmost foothills of Ered Nimrais, the White Mountains of his home. But Isengard is a circle of sheer rocks that enclose a valley as with a wall, and in the midst of that valley is a tower of stone called Orthanc. It was not made by Saruman, but by the Men of Númenor long ago; and it is very tall and has many secrets; yet it looks not to be a work of craft. It cannot be reached save by passing the circle of Isengard; and in that circle there is only one gate.

‘Late one evening I came to the gate, like a great arch in the wall of rock; and it was strongly guarded. But the keepers of the gate were on the watch for me and told me that Saruman awaited me. I rode under the arch, and the gate closed silently behind me, and suddenly I was afraid, though I knew no reason for it.

‘But I rode to the foot of Orthanc, and came to the stair of Saruman; and there he met me and led me up to his high chamber. He wore a ring on his finger.

“So you have come, Gandalf,” he said to me gravely; but in his eyes there seemed to be a white light, as if a cold laughter was in his heart.

“Yes, I have come,” I said. “I have come for your aid, Saruman the White.” And that title seemed to anger him.

“Have you indeed, Gandalf the *Grey*!” he scoffed. “For aid? It has seldom been heard of that Gandalf the Grey sought for aid, one so cunning and so wise, wandering about the lands, and concerning himself in every business, whether it belongs to him or not.”

I looked at him and wondered. “But if I am not deceived,” said I, “things are now moving which will require the union of all our strength.”

“That may be so,” he said, “but the thought is late in coming to you. How long, I wonder, have you concealed from me, the head of the Council, a matter of greatest import? What brings you now from your lurking-place in the Shire?”

“The Nine have come forth again,” I answered. “They have crossed the River. So Radagast said to me.”

“Radagast the Brown!” laughed Saruman, and he no longer concealed his scorn. “Radagast the Bird-tamer! Radagast the Simple! Radagast the Fool! Yet he had just the wit to play the part that I set him. For you have come, and that was all the purpose of my message. And here you will stay, Gandalf the Grey, and rest from journeys. For I am Saruman the Wise, Saruman Ring-maker, Saruman of Many Colours!”

‘I looked then and saw that his robes, which had seemed white, were not so, but were woven of all colours, and if he moved they shimmered and changed hue so that the eye was bewildered.

“I liked white better,” I said.

“White!” he sneered. “It serves as a beginning. White cloth may be dyed. The white page can be overwritten; and the white light can be broken.”

“In which case it is no longer white,” said I. “And he that breaks a thing to find out what it is has left the path of wisdom.”

“You need not speak to me as to one of the fools that you take for friends,” said he. “I have not brought you hither to be instructed by you, but to give you a choice.”

‘He drew himself up then and began to declaim, as if he were making a speech long rehearsed. “The Elder Days are gone. The Middle Days are passing. The Younger Days are beginning. The time of the Elves is over, but our time is at hand: the world of Men, which we must rule. But we must have power, power to order all things as we will, for that good which only the Wise can see.

“And listen, Gandalf, my old friend and helper!” he said, coming near and speaking now in a softer voice. “I said *we*, for *we* it may be, if you will join with me. A new Power is rising. Against it the old allies and policies will not avail us at all. There is no hope left in Elves or dying Númenor. This then is one choice before you, before us. We may join with that Power. It would be wise, Gandalf. There is hope that way. Its victory is at hand; and there will be rich reward for those that aided it. As the Power grows, its proved friends will also grow; and the Wise, such as you and I, may with patience come at last to direct its courses, to control it. We can bide our time, we can keep our thoughts in our hearts, deploring maybe evils done by the way, but approving the high and ultimate purpose: Knowledge, Rule, Order; all the things that we have so far striven in vain to accomplish, hindered rather than helped by our weak or idle friends. There need not be, there would not be, any real change in our designs, only in our means.”

“Saruman,” I said, “I have heard speeches of this kind before, but only in the mouths of emissaries sent from Mordor to deceive the ignorant. I cannot think that you brought me so far only to weary my ears.”

‘He looked at me sidelong, and paused a while considering. “Well, I see that this wise course does not commend itself to you,” he said. “Not yet? Not if some better way can be contrived?”

‘He came and laid his long hand on my arm. “And why not, Gandalf?” he whispered. “Why not? The Ruling Ring? If we could command that, then the Power would pass to *us*. That is in truth why I brought you here. For I have many eyes in my service, and I believe that you know where this precious thing now lies. Is it not so? Or why do the Nine ask for the Shire, and what is your business there?” As he said this a lust which he could not conceal shone suddenly in his eyes.

“Saruman,” I said, standing away from him, “only one hand at a time can wield the One, and you know that well, so do not trouble to say *we*! But I would not give it, nay, I would not give even news of it to you, now that I learn your mind. You were head of the Council, but you have unmasked yourself at last. Well, the choices are, it seems, to submit to Sauron, or to yourself. I will take neither. Have you others to offer?”

‘He was cold now and perilous. “Yes,” he said. “I did not expect you to show wisdom, even in your own behalf; but I gave you the chance of aiding me willingly, and so saving yourself much trouble and pain. The third choice is to stay here, until the end.”

““Until what end?”

““Until you reveal to me where the One may be found. I may find means to persuade you. Or until it is found in your despite, and the Ruler has time to turn to lighter matters: to devise, say, a fitting reward for the hindrance and insolence of Gandalf the Grey.”

““That may not prove to be one of the lighter matters,” said I. He laughed at me, for my words were empty, and he knew it.

‘They took me and they set me alone on the pinnacle of Orthanc, in the place where Saruman was accustomed to watch the stars. There is no descent save by a narrow stair of many thousand steps, and the valley below seems far away. I looked on it and saw that, whereas it had once been green and fair, it was now filled with pits and forges. Wolves and orcs were housed in Isengard, for Saruman was mustering a great force on his own account, in rivalry of Sauron and not in his service, yet. Over all his works a dark smoke hung and wrapped itself about the sides of Orthanc. I stood alone on an island in the clouds; and I had no chance of escape, and my days were bitter. I was pierced with cold, and I had but little room in which to pace to and fro, brooding on the coming of the Riders to the North.

‘That the Nine had indeed arisen I felt assured, apart from the words of Saruman which might be lies. Long ere I came to Isengard I had heard tidings by the way that could not be mistaken. Fear was ever in my heart for my friends in the Shire; but still I had some hope. I hoped that Frodo had set forth at once, as my letter had urged, and that he had reached Rivendell before the deadly pursuit began. And both my fear and my hope proved ill-founded. For my hope was founded on a fat man in Bree; and my fear was founded on the cunning of Sauron. But fat men who sell ale have many calls to answer; and the power of Sauron is still less than fear makes it. But in the circle of Isengard, trapped and alone, it was not easy to think that the hunters before whom all have fled or fallen would falter in the Shire far away.’

‘I saw you!’ cried Frodo. ‘You were walking backwards and forwards. The moon shone in your hair.’

Gandalf paused astonished and looked at him. ‘It was only a dream,’ said Frodo, ‘but it suddenly came back to me. I had quite forgotten it. It came some time ago; after I left the Shire, I think.’

‘Then it was late in coming,’ said Gandalf, ‘as you will see. I was in an evil plight. And those who know me will agree that I have seldom been in such need, and do not bear such misfortune well. Gandalf the Grey caught like a fly in a spider’s treacherous web! Yet even the most subtle spiders may leave a weak thread.

‘At first I feared, as Saruman no doubt intended, that Radagast had also fallen. Yet I had caught no hint of anything wrong in his voice or in his eye at our meeting. If I had, I should never have gone to Isengard, or I should have gone more warily. So Saruman guessed, and he had concealed his mind and deceived his messenger. It would have been useless in any case to try and win over the honest Radagast to treachery. He sought me in good faith, and so persuaded me.

‘That was the undoing of Saruman’s plot. For Radagast knew no reason why he should not do as I asked; and he rode away towards Mirkwood where he had many friends of old. And the Eagles of the Mountains went far and wide, and they saw many things: the gathering of wolves and the mustering of Orcs; and the Nine Riders going hither and thither in the lands; and they heard news of the escape of Gollum. And they sent a messenger to bring these tidings to me.

‘So it was that when summer waned, there came a night of moon, and Gwaihir the Windlord, swiftest of the Great Eagles, came unlooked-for to Orthanc; and he found me standing on the pinnacle. Then I spoke to him and he bore me away, before Saruman was aware. I was far from Isengard, ere the wolves and orcs issued from the gate to pursue me.

““How far can you bear me?” I said to Gwaihir.

““Many leagues,” said he, “but not to the ends of the earth. I was sent to bear tidings not burdens.”

“Then I must have a steed on land,” I said, “and a steed surpassingly swift, for I have never had such need of haste before.”

“Then I will bear you to Edoras, where the Lord of Rohan sits in his halls,” he said; “for that is not very far off.” And I was glad, for in the Riddermark of Rohan the Rohirrim, the Horse-lords, dwell, and there are no horses like those that are bred in that great vale between the Misty Mountains and the White.

“Are the Men of Rohan still to be trusted, do you think?” I said to Gwaihir, for the treason of Saruman had shaken my faith.

“They pay a tribute of horses,” he answered, “and send many yearly to Mordor, or so it is said; but they are not yet under the yoke. But if Saruman has become evil, as you say, then their doom cannot be long delayed.”

‘He set me down in the land of Rohan ere dawn; and now I have lengthened my tale over long. The rest must be more brief. In Rohan I found evil already at work: the lies of Saruman; and the king of the land would not listen to my warnings. He bade me take a horse and be gone; and I chose one much to my liking, but little to his. I took the best horse in his land, and I have never seen the like of him.’

‘Then he must be a noble beast indeed,’ said Aragorn; ‘and it grieves me more than many tidings that might seem worse to learn that Sauron levies such tribute. It was not so when last I was in that land.’

‘Nor is it now, I will swear,’ said Boromir. ‘It is a lie that comes from the Enemy. I know the Men of Rohan, true and valiant, our allies, dwelling still in the lands that we gave them long ago.’

‘The shadow of Mordor lies on distant lands,’ answered Aragorn. ‘Saruman has fallen under it. Rohan is beset. Who knows what you will find there, if ever you return?’

‘Not this at least,’ said Boromir, ‘that they will buy their lives with horses. They love their horses next to their kin. And not without reason, for the horses of the Riddermark come from the fields of the North, far from the Shadow, and their race, as that of their masters, is descended from the free days of old.’

‘True indeed!’ said Gandalf. ‘And there is one among them that might have been foaled in the morning of the world. The horses of the Nine cannot vie with him; tireless, swift as the flowing wind. Shadowfax they called him. By day his coat glistens like silver; and by night it is like a shade, and he passes unseen. Light is his footfall! Never before had any man mounted him, but I took him and I tamed him, and so speedily he bore me that I reached the Shire when Frodo was on the Barrow-downs, though I set out from Rohan only when he set out from Hobbiton.’

‘But fear grew in me as I rode. Ever as I came north I heard tidings of the Riders, and though I gained on them day by day, they were ever before me. They had divided their forces, I learned: some remained on the eastern borders, not far from the Greenway, and some invaded the Shire from the south. I came to Hobbiton and Frodo had gone; but I had words with old Gamgee. Many words and few to the point. He had much to say about the shortcomings of the new owners of Bag End.’

“I can’t abide changes,” said he, “not at my time of life, and least of all changes for the worst.” “Changes for the worst,” he repeated many times.

“Worst is a bad word,” I said to him, “and I hope you do not live to see it.” But amidst his talk I gathered at last that Frodo had left Hobbiton less than a week before, and that a black horseman had come to the Hill the same evening. Then I rode on in fear. I came to Buckland and found it in uproar, as busy as a hive of ants that has been stirred with a stick. I came to the house at Crickhollow, and it was broken open and empty; but on the threshold there lay a cloak that had been Frodo’s. Then for a while hope left me, and I did not wait to gather news, or I might have been comforted; but I rode on the trail of the Riders. It was hard to follow, for it went many ways, and I was at a loss. But it seemed to me that one or two had ridden towards Bree; and that way I went, for I thought of words that might be said to the innkeeper.

“Butterbur they call him,” thought I. “If this delay was his fault, I will melt all the butter in him. I will roast the old fool over a slow fire.” He expected no less, and when he saw my face he fell down flat and began to melt on the spot.’



‘What did you do to him?’ cried Frodo in alarm. ‘He was really very kind to us and did all that he could.’

Gandalf laughed. ‘Don’t be afraid!’ he said. ‘I did not bite, and I barked very little. So overjoyed was I by the news that I got out of him, when he stopped quaking, that I embraced the old fellow. How it had happened I could not then guess, but I learned that you had been in Bree the night before, and had gone off that morning with Strider.’

“‘Strider!’ I cried, shouting for joy.

“‘Yes, sir, I am afraid so, sir,’ said Butterbur, mistaking me. ‘He got at them, in spite of all that I could do, and they took up with him. They behaved very queer all the time they were here: wilful, you might say.’”

“‘Ass! Fool! Thrice worthy and beloved Barliman!’” said I. “‘It’s the best news I have had since Midsummer; it’s worth a gold piece at the least. May your beer be laid under an enchantment of surpassing excellence for seven years!’” said I. “‘Now I can take a night’s rest, the first since I have forgotten when.’”

‘So I stayed there that night, wondering much what had become of the Riders; for only of two had there yet been any news in Bree, it seemed. But in the night we heard more. Five at least came from the west, and they threw down the gates and passed through Bree like a howling wind; and the Bree-folk are still shivering and expecting the end of the world. I got up before dawn and went after them.

‘I do not know, but it seems clear to me that this is what happened. Their Captain remained in secret away south of Bree, while two rode ahead through the village, and four more invaded the Shire. But when these were foiled in Bree and at Crickhollow, they returned to their Captain with tidings, and so left the Road unguarded for a while, except by their spies. The Captain then sent some eastward straight across country, and he himself with the rest rode along the Road in great wrath.

‘I galloped to Weathertop like a gale, and I reached it before sundown on my second day from Bree—and they were there before me. They drew away from me, for they felt the coming of my anger and they dared not face it while the Sun was in the sky. But they closed round at night, and I was besieged on the hill-top, in the old ring of Amon Sûl. I was hard put to it indeed: such light and flame cannot have been seen on Weathertop since the war-beacons of old.

‘At sunrise I escaped and fled towards the north. I could not hope to do more. It was impossible to find you, Frodo, in the wilderness, and it would have been folly to try with all the Nine at my heels. So I had to trust to Aragorn. But I hoped to draw some of them off, and yet reach Rivendell ahead of you and send out help. Four Riders did indeed follow me, but they turned back after a while and made for the Ford, it seems. That helped a little, for there were only five, not nine, when your camp was attacked.

‘I reached here at last by a long hard road, up the Hoarwell and through the Ettenmoors, and down from the north. It took me nearly fifteen days from Weathertop, for I could not ride among the rocks of the troll-fells, and Shadowfax departed. I sent him back to his master; but a great friendship has grown between us, and if I have need he will come at my call. But so it was that I came to Rivendell only two days before the Ring, and news of its peril had already been brought here—which proved well indeed.

‘And that, Frodo, is the end of my account. May Elrond and the others forgive the length of it. But such a thing has not happened before, that Gandalf broke tryst and did not come when he promised. An account to the Ring-bearer of so strange an event was required, I think.

‘Well, the Tale is now told, from first to last. Here we all are, and here is the Ring. But we have not yet come any nearer to our purpose. What shall we do with it?’

There was a silence. At last Elrond spoke again.

‘This is grievous news concerning Saruman,’ he said; ‘for we trusted him and he is deep in all our counsels. It is perilous to study too deeply the arts of the Enemy, for good or for ill. But such falls and betrayals, alas, have happened before. Of the tales that we have heard this day the tale of Frodo was most strange to me. I have known few hobbits, save Bilbo here; and it seems to me that he is perhaps not so alone and singular as I had thought him. The world has changed much since I last was on the westward roads.

‘The Barrow-wights we know by many names; and of the Old Forest many tales have been told: all that now remains is but an outlier of its northern march. Time was when a squirrel could go from tree to tree from what is now the Shire to Dunland west of Isengard. In those lands I journeyed once, and many things wild and strange I knew. But I had forgotten Bombadil, if indeed this is still the same that walked the woods and hills long ago, and even then was older than the old. That was not then his name. Iarwain Ben-adar we called him, oldest and fatherless. But many another name he has since been given by other folk: Forn by the Dwarves, Orald by Northern Men, and other names beside. He is a strange creature, but maybe I should have summoned him to our Council.’

‘He would not have come,’ said Gandalf.

‘Could we not still send messages to him and obtain his help?’ asked Erestor. ‘It seems that he has a power even over the Ring.’

‘No, I should not put it so,’ said Gandalf. ‘Say rather that the Ring has no power over him. He is his own master. But he cannot alter the Ring itself, nor break its power over others. And now he is withdrawn into a little land, within bounds that he has set, though none can see them, waiting perhaps for a change of days, and he will not step beyond them.’

‘But within those bounds nothing seems to dismay him,’ said Erestor. ‘Would he not take the Ring and keep it there, for ever harmless?’

‘No,’ said Gandalf, ‘not willingly. He might do so, if all the free folk of the world begged him, but he would not understand the need. And if he were given the Ring, he would soon forget it, or most likely throw it away. Such things have no hold on his mind. He would be a most unsafe guardian; and that alone is answer enough.’

‘But in any case,’ said Glorfindel, ‘to send the Ring to him would only postpone the day of evil. He is far away. We could not now take it back to him, unguessed, unmarked by any spy. And even if we could, soon or late the Lord of the Rings would learn of its hiding place and would bend all his power towards it. Could that power be defied by Bombadil alone? I think not. I think that in the end, if all else is conquered, Bombadil will fall, Last as he was First; and then Night will come.’

‘I know little of Iarwain save the name,’ said Galdor; ‘but Glorfindel, I think, is right. Power to defy our Enemy is not in him, unless such power is in the earth itself. And yet we see that Sauron can torture and destroy the very hills. What power still remains lies with us, here in Imladris, or with Círdan at the Havens, or in Lórien. But have they the strength, have we here the strength to withstand the Enemy, the coming of Sauron at the last, when all else is overthrown?’

‘I have not the strength,’ said Elrond; ‘neither have they.’

‘Then if the Ring cannot be kept from him for ever by strength,’ said Glorfindel, ‘two things only remain for us to attempt: to send it over the Sea, or to destroy it.’

‘But Gandalf has revealed to us that we cannot destroy it by any craft that we here possess,’ said Elrond. ‘And they who dwell beyond the Sea would not receive it: for good or ill it belongs to Middle-earth; it is for us who still dwell here to deal with it.’

‘Then,’ said Glorfindel, ‘let us cast it into the deeps, and so make the lies of Saruman come true. For it is clear now that even at the Council his feet were already on a crooked path. He knew that the Ring was not lost for ever, but wished us to think so; for he began to lust for it for himself. Yet oft in lies truth is hidden: in the Sea it would be safe.’

‘Not safe for ever,’ said Gandalf. ‘There are many things in the deep waters; and seas and lands may change. And it is not our part here to take thought only for a season, or for a few lives of Men, or for a passing age of the world. We should seek a final end of this menace, even if we do not hope to make one.’

‘And that we shall not find on the roads to the Sea,’ said Galdor. ‘If the return to Iarwain be thought too dangerous, then flight to the Sea is now fraught with gravest peril. My heart tells me that Sauron will expect us to take the western way, when he learns what has befallen. He soon will. The Nine have been unhorsed indeed, but that is but a respite, ere they find new steeds and swifter. Only the waning might of Gondor stands now

between him and a march in power along the coasts into the North; and if he comes, assailing the White Towers and the Havens, hereafter the Elves may have no escape from the lengthening shadows of Middle-earth.'

'Long yet will that march be delayed,' said Boromir. 'Gondor wanes, you say. But Gondor stands, and even the end of its strength is still very strong.'

'And yet its vigilance can no longer keep back the Nine,' said Galdor. 'And other roads he may find that Gondor does not guard.'

'Then,' said Erebor, 'there are but two courses, as Glorfindel already has declared: to hide the Ring for ever; or to unmake it. But both are beyond our power. Who will read this riddle for us?'

'None here can do so,' said Elrond gravely. 'At least none can foretell what will come to pass, if we take this road or that. But it seems to me now clear which is the road that we must take. The westward road seems easiest. Therefore it must be shunned. It will be watched. Too often the Elves have fled that way. Now at this last we must take a hard road, a road unforeseen. There lies our hope, if hope it be. To walk into peril—to Mordor. We must send the Ring to the Fire.'

Silence fell again. Frodo, even in that fair house, looking out upon a sunlit valley filled with the noise of clear waters, felt a dead darkness in his heart. Boromir stirred, and Frodo looked at him. He was fingering his great horn and frowning. At length he spoke.

'I do not understand all this,' he said. 'Saruman is a traitor, but did he not have a glimpse of wisdom? Why do you speak ever of hiding and destroying? Why should we not think that the Great Ring has come into our hands to serve us in the very hour of need? Wielding it the Free Lords of the Free may surely defeat the Enemy. That is what he most fears, I deem.'

'The Men of Gondor are valiant, and they will never submit; but they may be beaten down. Valour needs first strength, and then a weapon. Let the Ring be your weapon, if it has such power as you say. Take it and go forth to victory!'

'Alas, no,' said Elrond. 'We cannot use the Ruling Ring. That we now know too well. It belongs to Sauron and was made by him alone, and is altogether evil. Its strength, Boromir, is too great for anyone to wield at will, save only those who have already a great power of their own. But for them it holds an even deadlier peril. The very desire of it corrupts the heart. Consider Saruman. If any of the Wise should with this Ring overthrow the Lord of Mordor, using his own arts, he would then set himself on Sauron's throne, and yet another Dark Lord would appear. And that is another reason why the Ring should be destroyed: as long as it is in the world it will be a danger even to the Wise. For nothing is evil in the beginning. Even Sauron was not so. I fear to take the Ring to hide it. I will not take the Ring to wield it.'

'Nor I,' said Gandalf.

Boromir looked at them doubtfully, but he bowed his head. 'So be it,' he said. 'Then in Gondor we must trust to such weapons as we have. And at the least, while the Wise ones guard this Ring, we will fight on. Mayhap the Sword-that-was-Broken may still stem the tide—if the hand that wields it has inherited not an heirloom only, but the sinews of the Kings of Men.'

'Who can tell?' said Aragorn. 'But we will put it to the test one day.'

'May the day not be too long delayed,' said Boromir. 'For though I do not ask for aid, we need it. It would comfort us to know that others fought also with all the means that they have.'

'Then be comforted,' said Elrond. 'For there are other powers and realms that you know not, and they are hidden from you. Anduin the Great flows past many shores, ere it comes to Argonath and the Gates of Gondor.'

'Still it might be well for all,' said Glóin the Dwarf, 'if all these strengths were joined, and the powers of each were used in league. Other rings there may be, less treacherous, that might be used in our need. The Seven are lost to us—if Balin has not found the ring of Thrór, which was the last; naught406 has been heard of it since Thrór perished in Moria. Indeed I may now reveal that it was partly in hope to find that ring that Balin went away.'

‘Balin will find no ring in Moria,’ said Gandalf. ‘Thrór gave it to Thráin his son, but not Thráin to Thorin. It was taken with torment from Thráin in the dungeons of Dol Guldur. I came too late.’

‘Ah, alas!’ cried Glóin. ‘When will the day come of our revenge? But still there are the Three. What of the Three Rings of the Elves? Very mighty Rings, it is said. Do not the Elf-lords keep them? Yet they too were made by the Dark Lord long ago. Are they idle? I see Elf-lords here. Will they not say?’

The Elves returned no answer. ‘Did you not hear me, Glóin?’ said Elrond. ‘The Three were not made by Sauron, nor did he ever touch them. But of them it is not permitted to speak. So much only in this hour of doubt I may now say. They are not idle. But they were not made as weapons of war or conquest: that is not their power. Those who made them did not desire strength or domination or hoarded wealth, but understanding, making, and healing, to preserve all things unstained. These things the Elves of Middle-earth have in some measure gained, though with sorrow. But all that has been wrought by those who wield the Three will turn to their undoing, and their minds and hearts will become revealed to Sauron, if he regains the One. It would be better if the Three had never been. That is his purpose.’

‘But what then would happen, if the Ruling Ring were destroyed, as you counsel?’ asked Glóin.

‘We know not for certain,’ answered Elrond sadly. ‘Some hope that the Three Rings, which Sauron has never touched, would then become free, and their rulers might heal the hurts of the world that he has wrought. But maybe when the One has gone, the Three will fail, and many fair things will fade and be forgotten. That is my belief.’

‘Yet all the Elves are willing to endure this chance,’ said Glorfindel, ‘if by it the power of Sauron may be broken, and the fear of his dominion be taken away for ever.’

‘Thus we return once more to the destroying of the Ring,’ said Erebor, ‘and yet we come no nearer. What strength have we for the finding of the Fire in which it was made? That is the path of despair. Of folly I would say, if the long wisdom of Elrond did not forbid me.’

‘Despair, or folly?’ said Gandalf. ‘It is not despair, for despair is only for those who see the end beyond all doubt. We do not. It is wisdom to recognize necessity, when all other courses have been weighed, though as folly it may appear to those who cling to false hope. Well, let folly be our cloak, a veil before the eyes of the Enemy! For he is very wise, and weighs all things to a nicety in the scales of his malice. But the only measure that he knows is desire, desire for power; and so he judges all hearts. Into his heart the thought will not enter that any will refuse it, that having the Ring we may seek to destroy it. If we seek this, we shall put him out of reckoning.’

‘At least for a while,’ said Elrond. ‘The road must be trod, but it will be very hard. And neither strength nor wisdom will carry us far upon it. This quest may be attempted by the weak with as much hope as the strong. Yet such is oft the course of deeds that move the wheels of the world: small hands do them because they must, while the eyes of the great are elsewhere.’

‘Very well, very well, Master Elrond!’ said Bilbo suddenly. ‘Say no more! It is plain enough what you are pointing at. Bilbo the silly hobbit started this affair, and Bilbo had better finish it, or himself. I was very comfortable here, and getting on with my book. If you want to know, I am just writing an ending for it. I had thought of putting: *and he lived happily ever afterwards to the end of his days*. It is a good ending, and none the worse for having been used before. Now I shall have to alter that: it does not look like coming true; and anyway there will evidently have to be several more chapters, if I live to write them. It is a frightful nuisance. When ought I to start?’

Boromir looked in surprise at Bilbo, but the laughter died on his lips when he saw that all the others regarded the old hobbit with grave respect. Only Glóin smiled, but his smile came from old memories.

‘Of course, my dear Bilbo,’ said Gandalf. ‘If you had really started this affair, you might be expected to finish it. But you know well enough now that *starting* is too great a claim for any, and that only a small part is played in great deeds by any hero. You need not bow! Though the word was meant, and we do not doubt that under jest you are making a valiant offer. But one beyond your strength, Bilbo. You cannot take this thing back. It has passed on. If you need my advice any longer, I should say that your part is ended, unless as a recorder. Finish

your book, and leave the ending unaltered! There is still hope for it. But get ready to write a sequel, when they come back.'

Bilbo laughed. 'I have never known you give me pleasant advice before,' he said. 'As all your unpleasant advice has been good, I wonder if this advice is not bad. Still, I don't suppose I have the strength or luck left to deal with the Ring. It has grown, and I have not. But tell me: what do you mean by *they*?'

'The messengers who are sent with the Ring.'

'Exactly! And who are they to be? That seems to me what this Council has to decide, and all that it has to decide. Elves may thrive on speech alone, and Dwarves endure great weariness; but I am only an old hobbit, and I miss my meal at noon. Can't we think of some names now? Or put it off till after dinner?'

No-one answered. The noon-bell rang. Still no-one spoke. Frodo glanced at all the faces, but they were not turned to him. All the Council sat with downcast eyes, as if in deep thought. A great dread fell on him, as if he was awaiting the pronouncement of some doom that he had long foreseen and vainly hoped might after all never be spoken. An overwhelming longing to rest and remain at peace by Bilbo's side in Rivendell filled all his heart. At last with an effort he spoke, and wondered to hear his own words, as if some other will was using his small voice.

'I will take the Ring,' he said, 'though I do not know the way.'

Elrond raised his eyes and looked at him, and Frodo felt his heart pierced by the sudden keenness of the glance. 'If I understand aright all that I have heard,' he said, 'I think that this task is appointed for you, Frodo; and that if you do not find a way, no-one will. This is the hour of the Shire-folk, when they arise from their quiet fields to shake the towers and counsels of the Great. Who of all the Wise could have foreseen it? Or, if they are wise, why should they expect to know it, until the hour has struck?'

'But it is a heavy burden. So heavy that none could lay it on another. I do not lay it on you. But if you take it freely, I will say that your choice is right; and though all the mighty Elf-friends of old, Hador, and Húrin, and Túrin, and Beren himself were assembled together, your seat should be among them.'

'But you won't send him off alone surely, Master?' cried Sam, unable to contain himself any longer, and jumping up from the corner where he had been quietly sitting on the floor.

'No indeed!' said Elrond, turning towards him with a smile. 'You at least shall go with him. It is hardly possible to separate you from him, even when he is summoned to a secret council and you are not.'

Sam sat down, blushing and muttering. 'A nice pickle we have landed ourselves in, Mr. Frodo!' he said, shaking his head.



## Chapter 3: The Ring Goes South

Later that day the hobbits held a meeting of their own in Bilbo's room. Merry and Pippin were indignant when they heard that Sam had crept into the Council, and had been chosen as Frodo's companion.

'It's most unfair,' said Pippin. 'Instead of throwing him out, and clapping him in chains, Elrond goes and rewards him for his cheek!'

'Rewards!' said Frodo. 'I can't imagine a more severe punishment. You are not thinking what you are saying: condemned to go on this hopeless journey, a reward? Yesterday I dreamed that my task was done, and I could rest here, a long while, perhaps for good.'

'I don't wonder,' said Merry, 'and I wish you could. But we are envying Sam, not you. If you have to go, then it will be a punishment for any of us to be left behind, even in Rivendell. We have come a long way with you and been through some stiff times. We want to go on.'

'That's what I meant,' said Pippin. 'We hobbits ought to stick together, and we will. I shall go, unless they chain me up. There must be someone with intelligence in the party.'

'Then you certainly will not be chosen, Peregrin Took!' said Gandalf, looking in through the window, which was near the ground. 'But you are all worrying yourselves unnecessarily. Nothing is decided yet.'

'Nothing decided!' cried Pippin. 'Then what were you all doing? You were shut up for hours.'

'Talking,' said Bilbo. 'There was a deal of talk, and everyone had an eye-opener. Even old Gandalf. I think Legolas's bit of news about Gollum caught even him on the hop, though he passed it off.'

'You were wrong,' said Gandalf. 'You were inattentive. I had already heard of it from Gwaihir. If you want to know, the only real eye-openers, as you put it, were you and Frodo; and I was the only one that was not surprised.'

'Well, anyway,' said Bilbo, 'nothing was decided beyond choosing poor Frodo and Sam. I was afraid all the time that it might come to that, if I was let off. But if you ask me, Elrond will send out a fair number, when the reports come in. Have they started yet, Gandalf?'

'Yes,' said the wizard. 'Some of the scouts have been sent out already. More will go tomorrow. Elrond is sending Elves, and they will get in touch with the Rangers, and maybe with Thranduil's folk in Mirkwood. And Aragorn has gone with Elrond's sons. We shall have to scour the lands all round for many long leagues before any move is made. So cheer up, Frodo! You will probably make quite a long stay here.'

'Ah!' said Sam gloomily. 'We'll just wait long enough for winter to come.'

'That can't be helped,' said Bilbo. 'It's your fault partly, Frodo my lad: insisting on waiting for my birthday. A funny way of honouring it, I can't help thinking. *Not* the day I should have chosen for letting the S.-B.s into Bag End. But there it is: you can't wait now till spring; and you can't go till the reports come back.'

*When winter first begins to bite  
and stones crack in the frosty night,  
when pools are black and trees are bare,  
'tis evil in the Wild to fare.*

But that I am afraid will be just your luck.'

'I am afraid it will,' said Gandalf. 'We can't start until we have found out about the Riders.'

‘I thought they were all destroyed in the flood,’ said Merry.

‘You cannot destroy Ringwraiths like that,’ said Gandalf. ‘The power of their master is in them, and they stand or fall by him. We hope that they were all unhorsed and unmasked, and so made for a while less dangerous; but we must find out for certain. In the meantime you should try and forget your troubles, Frodo. I do not know if I can do anything to help you; but I will whisper this in your ears. Someone said that intelligence would be needed in the party. He was right. I think I shall come with you.’

So great was Frodo’s delight at this announcement that Gandalf left the window-sill, where he had been sitting, and took off his hat and bowed. ‘I only said *I think I shall come*. Do not count on anything yet. In this matter Elrond will have much to say, and your friend the Strider. Which reminds me, I want to see Elrond. I must be off.’

‘How long do you think I shall have here?’ said Frodo to Bilbo when Gandalf had gone.

‘Oh, I don’t know. I can’t count days in Rivendell,’ said Bilbo. ‘But quite long, I should think. We can have many a good talk. What about helping me with my book, and making a start on the next? Have you thought of an ending?’

‘Yes, several, and all are dark and unpleasant,’ said Frodo.

‘Oh, that won’t do!’ said Bilbo. ‘Books ought to have good endings. How would this do: *and they all settled down and lived together happily ever after?*’

‘It will do well, if it ever comes to that,’ said Frodo. ‘Ah!’ said Sam. ‘And where will they live? That’s what I often wonder.’

For a while the hobbits continued to talk and think of the past journey and of the perils that lay ahead; but such was the virtue of the land of Rivendell that soon all fear and anxiety was lifted from their minds. The future, good or ill, was not forgotten, but ceased to have any power over the present. Health and hope grew strong in them, and they were content with each good day as it came, taking pleasure in every meal, and in every word and song.

So the days slipped away, as each morning dawned bright and fair, and each evening followed cool and clear. But autumn was waning fast; slowly the golden light faded to pale silver, and the lingering leaves fell from the naked trees. A wind began to blow chill from the Misty Mountains to the east. The Hunter’s Moon waxed round in the night sky, and put to flight all the lesser stars. But low in the South one star shone red. Every night, as the Moon waned again, it shone brighter and brighter. Frodo could see it from his window, deep in the heavens, burning like a watchful eye that glared above the trees on the brink of the valley.

The hobbits had been nearly two months in the house of Elrond, and November had gone by with the last shreds of autumn, and December was passing, when the scouts began to return. Some had gone north beyond the springs of the Hoarwell into the Ettenmoors; and others had gone west, and with the help of Aragorn and the Rangers had searched the lands far down the Greyflood, as far as Tharbad, where the old North Road crossed the river by a ruined town. Many had gone east and south; and some of these had crossed the Mountains and entered Mirkwood, while others had climbed the pass at the sources of the Gladden River, and had come down into Wilderland and over the Gladden Fields and so at length had reached the old home of Radagast at Rhosgobel. Radagast was not there; and they had returned over the high pass that was called the Redhorn Gate. The sons of Elrond, Elladan and Elrohir, were the last to return; they had made a great journey, passing down the Silverlode into a strange country, but of their errand they would not speak to any save to Elrond.

In no region had the messengers discovered any signs or tidings of the Riders or other servants of the Enemy. Even from the Eagles of the Misty Mountains they had learned no fresh news. Nothing had been seen or heard of Gollum; but the wild wolves were still gathering, and were hunting again far up the Great River. Three of the black horses had been found at once drowned in the flooded Ford. On the rocks of the rapids below it searchers discovered the bodies of five more, and also a long black cloak, slashed and tattered. Of the Black Riders no other trace was to be seen, and nowhere was their presence to be felt. It seemed that they had vanished from the North.

‘Eight out of the Nine are accounted for at least,’ said Gandalf. ‘It is rash to be too sure, yet I think that we may hope now that the Ringwraiths were scattered, and have been obliged to return as best they could to their Master in Mordor, empty and shapeless.’

‘If that is so, it will be some time before they can begin the hunt again. Of course the Enemy has other servants, but they will have to journey all the way to the borders of Rivendell before they can pick up our trail. And if we are careful that will be hard to find. But we must delay no longer.’

Elrond summoned the hobbits to him. He looked gravely at Frodo. ‘The time has come,’ he said. ‘If the Ring is to set out, it must go soon. But those who go with it must not count on their errand being aided by war or force. They must pass into the domain of the Enemy far from aid. Do you still hold to your word, Frodo, that you will be the Ring-bearer?’

‘I do,’ said Frodo. ‘I will go with Sam.’

‘Then I cannot help you much, not even with counsel,’ said Elrond. ‘I can foresee very little of your road; and how your task is to be achieved I do not know. The Shadow has crept now to the feet of the Mountains, and draws nigh even to the borders of the Greyflood; and under the Shadow all is dark to me. You will meet many foes, some open, and some disguised; and you may find friends upon your way when you least look for it. I will send out messages, such as I can contrive, to those whom I know in the wide world; but so perilous are the lands now become that some may well miscarry, or come no quicker than you yourself.’

‘And I will choose you companions to go with you, as far as they will or fortune allows. The number must be few, since your hope is in speed and secrecy. Had I a host of Elves in armour of the Elder Days, it would avail little, save to arouse the power of Mordor.’

‘The Company of the Ring shall be Nine; and the Nine Walkers shall be set against the Nine Riders that are evil. With you and your faithful servant, Gandalf will go; for this shall be his great task, and maybe the end of his labours.’

‘For the rest, they shall represent the other Free Peoples of the World: Elves, Dwarves, and Men. Legolas shall be for the Elves; and Gimli son of Glóin for the Dwarves. They are willing to go at least to the passes of the Mountains, and maybe beyond. For men you shall have Aragorn son of Arathorn, for the Ring of Isildur concerns him closely.’

‘Strider!’ cried Frodo.

‘Yes,’ he said with a smile. ‘I ask leave once again to be your companion, Frodo.’

‘I would have begged you to come,’ said Frodo, ‘only I thought you were going to Minas Tirith with Boromir.’

‘I am,’ said Aragorn. ‘And the Sword-that-was-Broken shall be re-forged ere I set out to war. But your road and our road lie together for many hundreds of miles. Therefore Boromir will also be in the Company. He is a valiant man.’

‘There remain two more to be found,’ said Elrond. ‘These I will consider. Of my household I may find some that it seems good to me to send.’

‘But that will leave no place for us!’ cried Pippin in dismay. ‘We don’t want to be left behind. We want to go with Frodo.’

‘That is because you do not understand and cannot imagine what lies ahead,’ said Elrond.

‘Neither does Frodo,’ said Gandalf, unexpectedly supporting Pippin. ‘Nor do any of us see clearly. It is true that if these hobbits understood the danger, they would not dare to go. But they would still wish to go, or wish that they dared, and be shamed and unhappy. I think, Elrond, that in this matter it would be well to trust rather to their friendship than to great wisdom. Even if you chose for us an Elf-lord, such as Glorfindel, he could not storm the Dark Tower, nor open the road to the Fire by the power that is in him.’

‘You speak gravely,’ said Elrond, ‘but I am in doubt. The Shire, I forebode, is not free now from peril; and these two I had thought to send back there as messengers, to do what they could, according to the fashion of



their country, to warn the people of their danger. In any case, I judge that the younger of these two, Peregrin Took, should remain. My heart is against his going.'

'Then, Master Elrond, you will have to lock me in prison, or send me home tied in a sack,' said Pippin. 'For otherwise I shall follow the Company.'

'Let it be so then. You shall go,' said Elrond, and he sighed. 'Now the tale of Nine is filled. In seven days the Company must depart.'

The Sword of Elendil was forged anew by Elvish smiths, and on its blade was traced a device of seven stars set between the crescent Moon and the rayed Sun, and about them was written many runes; for Aragorn son of Arathorn was going to war upon the marches of Mordor. Very bright was that sword when it was made whole again; the light of the sun shone redly in it, and the light of the moon shone cold, and its edge was hard and keen. And Aragorn gave it a new name and called it Andúril, Flame of the West.

Aragorn and Gandalf walked together or sat speaking of their road and the perils they would meet; and they pondered the storied and figured maps and books of lore that were in the house of Elrond. Sometimes Frodo was with them; but he was content to lean on their guidance, and he spent as much time as he could with Bilbo.

In those last days the hobbits sat together in the evening in the Hall of Fire, and there among many tales they heard told in full the lay of Beren and Lúthien and the winning of the Great Jewel; but in the day, while Merry and Pippin were out and about, Frodo and Sam were to be found with Bilbo in his own small room. Then Bilbo would read passages from his book (which still seemed very incomplete), or scraps of his verses, or would take notes of Frodo's adventures.

On the morning of the last day Frodo was alone with Bilbo, and the old hobbit pulled out from under his bed a wooden box. He lifted the lid and fumbled inside.

'Here is your sword,' he said. 'But it was broken, you know. I took it to keep it safe but I've forgotten to ask if the smiths could mend it. No time now. So I thought, perhaps, you would care to have this, don't you know?'

He took from the box a small sword in an old shabby leathern scabbard. Then he drew it, and its polished and well-tended blade glittered suddenly, cold and bright. 'This is Sting,' he said, and thrust it with little effort deep into a wooden beam. 'Take it, if you like. I shan't want it again, I expect.'

Frodo accepted it gratefully.

'Also there is this!' said Bilbo, bringing out a parcel which seemed to be rather heavy for its size. He unwound several folds of old cloth, and held up a small shirt of mail. It was close-woven of many rings, as supple almost as linen, cold as ice, and harder than steel. It shone like moonlit silver, and was studded with white gems. With it was a belt of pearl and crystal.

'It's a pretty thing, isn't it?' said Bilbo, moving it in the light. 'And useful. It is my dwarf-mail that Thorin gave me. I got it back from Michel Delving before I started, and packed it with my luggage. I brought all the mementoes of my Journey away with me, except the Ring. But I did not expect to use this, and I don't need it now, except to look at sometimes. You hardly feel any weight when you put it on.'

'I should look—well, I don't think I should look right in it,' said Frodo.

'Just what I said myself,' said Bilbo. 'But never mind about looks. You can wear it under your outer clothes. Come on! You must share this secret with me. Don't tell anybody else! But I should feel happier if I knew you were wearing it. I have a fancy it would turn even the knives of the Black Riders,' he ended in a low voice.

'Very well, I will take it,' said Frodo. Bilbo put it on him, and fastened Sting upon the glittering belt; and then Frodo put over the top his old weather-stained breeches, tunic, and jacket.

'Just a plain hobbit you look,' said Bilbo. 'But there is more about you now than appears on the surface. Good luck to you!' He turned away and looked out of the window, trying to hum a tune.

'I cannot thank you as I should, Bilbo, for this, and for all your past kindnesses,' said Frodo.

‘Don’t try!’ said the old hobbit, turning round and slapping him on the back. ‘Ow!’ he cried. ‘You are too hard now to slap! But there you are: Hobbits must stick together, and especially Bagginses. All I ask in return is: take as much care of yourself as you can, and bring back all the news you can, and any old songs and tales you can come by. I’ll do my best to finish my book before you return. I should like to write the second book, if I am spared.’ He broke off and turned to the window again, singing softly.

*I sit beside the fire and think  
of all that I have seen,  
of meadow-flowers and butterflies  
in summers that have been;*

*Of yellow leaves and gossamer  
in autumns that there were,  
with morning mist and silver sun  
and wind upon my hair.*

*I sit beside the fire and think  
of how the world will be  
when winter comes without a spring  
that I shall ever see.*

*For still there are so many things  
that I have never seen:  
in every wood in every spring  
there is a different green.*

*I sit beside the fire and think  
of people long ago,  
and people who will see a world  
that I shall never know.*

*But all the while I sit and think  
of times there were before,  
I listen for returning feet  
and voices at the door.*

It was a cold grey day near the end of December. The East Wind was streaming through the bare branches of the trees, and seething in the dark pines on the hills. Ragged clouds were hurrying overhead, dark and low. As the cheerless shadows of the early evening began to fall the Company made ready to set out. They were to start at dusk, for Elrond counselled them to journey under cover of night as often as they could, until they were far from Rivendell.

‘You should fear the many eyes of the servants of Sauron,’ he said. ‘I do not doubt that news of the discomfiture of the Riders has already reached him, and he will be filled with wrath. Soon now his spies on foot and wing will be abroad in the northern lands. Even of the sky above you must beware as you go on your way.’

The Company took little gear of war, for their hope was in secrecy not in battle. Aragorn had Andúril but no other weapon, and he went forth clad only in rusty green and brown, as a Ranger of the wilderness. Boromir had a long sword, in fashion like Andúril but of less lineage, and he bore also a shield and his war-horn.

‘Loud and clear it sounds in the valleys of the hills,’ he said, ‘and then let all the foes of Gondor flee!’ Putting it to his lips he blew a blast, and the echoes leapt from rock to rock, and all that heard that voice in Rivendell sprang to their feet.

‘Slow should you be to wind that horn again, Boromir,’ said Elrond, ‘until you stand once more on the borders of your land, and dire need is on you.’

‘Maybe,’ said Boromir. ‘But always I have let my horn cry at setting forth, and though thereafter we may walk in the shadows, I will not go forth as a thief in the night.’

Gimli the dwarf alone wore openly a short shirt of steel-rings, for dwarves make light of burdens; and in his belt was a broad-bladed axe. Legolas had a bow and a quiver, and at his belt a long white knife. The younger hobbits wore the swords that they had taken from the barrow; but Frodo took only Sting; and his mail-coat, as Bilbo wished, remained hidden. Gandalf bore his staff, but girt at his side was the elven-sword Glamdring, the mate of Orcrist that lay now upon the breast of Thorin under the Lonely Mountain.

All were well furnished by Elrond with thick warm clothes, and they had jackets and cloaks lined with fur. Spare food and clothes and blankets and other needs were laden on a pony, none other than the poor beast that they had brought from Bree.

The stay in Rivendell had worked a great wonder of change on him: he was glossy and seemed to have the vigour of youth. It was Sam who had insisted on choosing him, declaring that Bill (as he called him) would pine, if he did not come.

‘That animal can nearly talk,’ he said, ‘and would talk, if he stayed here much longer. He gave me a look as plain as Mr. Pippin could speak it: if you don’t let me go with you, Sam, I’ll follow on my own.’ So Bill was going as the beast of burden, yet he was the only member of the Company that did not seem depressed.

Their farewells had been said in the great hall by the fire, and they were only waiting now for Gandalf, who had not yet come out of the house. A gleam of firelight came from the open doors, and soft lights were glowing in many windows. Bilbo huddled in a cloak stood silent on the doorstep beside Frodo. Aragorn sat with his head bowed to his knees; only Elrond knew fully what this hour meant to him. The others could be seen as grey shapes in the darkness.

Sam was standing by the pony, sucking his teeth, and staring moodily into the gloom where the river roared stonily below; his desire for adventure was at its lowest ebb.

‘Bill, my lad,’ he said, ‘you oughtn’t to have took up with us. You could have stayed here and et the best hay till the new grass comes.’ Bill swished his tail and said nothing.

Sam eased the pack on his shoulders, and went over anxiously in his mind all the things that he had stowed in it, wondering if he had forgotten anything: his chief treasure, his cooking gear; and the little box of salt that he always carried and refilled when he could; a good supply of pipe-weed (but not near enough, I’ll warrant); flint and tinder; woollen hose; linen; various small belongings of his master’s that Frodo had forgotten and Sam had stowed to bring them out in triumph when they were called for. He went through them all.

‘Rope!’ he muttered. ‘No rope! And only last night you said to yourself: “Sam, what about a bit of rope? You’ll want it, if you haven’t got it.” Well, I’ll want it. I can’t get it now.’

At that moment Elrond came out with Gandalf, and he called the Company to him. ‘This is my last word,’ he said in a low voice. ‘The Ring-bearer is setting out on the Quest of Mount Doom. On him alone is any charge laid: neither to cast away the Ring, nor to deliver it to any servant of the Enemy nor indeed to let any handle it, save members of the Company and the Council, and only then in gravest need. The others go with him as free companions, to help him on his way. You may tarry, or come back, or turn aside into other paths, as chance allows. The further you go, the less easy will it be to withdraw; yet no oath or bond is laid on you to go further than you will. For you do not yet know the strength of your hearts, and you cannot foresee what each may meet upon the road.’

‘Faithless is he that says farewell when the road darkens,’ said Gimli.

‘Maybe,’ said Elrond, ‘but let him not vow to walk in the dark, who has not seen the nightfall.’

‘Yet sworn word may strengthen quaking heart,’ said Gimli.

‘Or break it,’ said Elrond. ‘Look not too far ahead! But go now with good hearts! Farewell, and may the blessing of Elves and Men and all Free Folk go with you. May the stars shine upon your faces!’

‘Good . . . good luck!’ cried Bilbo, stuttering with the cold. ‘I don’t suppose you will be able to keep a diary, Frodo my lad, but I shall expect a full account when you get back. And don’t be too long! Farewell!’

Many others of Elrond’s household stood in the shadows and watched them go, bidding them farewell with soft voices. There was no laughter, and no song or music. At last they turned away and faded silently into the dusk.

They crossed the bridge and wound slowly up the long steep paths that led out of the cloven vale of Rivendell; and they came at length to the high moor where the wind hissed through the heather. Then with one glance at the Last Homely House twinkling below them they strode away far into the night.

At the Ford of Bruinen they left the Road and turning southwards went on by narrow paths among the folded lands. Their purpose was to hold this course west of the Mountains for many miles and days. The country was much rougher and more barren than in the green vale of the Great River in Wilderland on the other side of the range, and their going would be slow; but they hoped in this way to escape the notice of unfriendly eyes. The spies of Sauron had hitherto seldom been seen in this empty country, and the paths were little known except to the people of Rivendell.

Gandalf walked in front, and with him went Aragorn, who knew this land even in the dark. The others were in file behind, and Legolas whose eyes were keen was the rearguard. The first part of their journey was hard and dreary, and Frodo remembered little of it, save the wind. For many sunless days an icy blast came from the Mountains in the east, and no garment seemed able to keep out its searching fingers. Though the Company was well clad, they seldom felt warm, either moving or at rest. They slept uneasily during the middle of the day, in some hollow of the land, or hidden under the tangled thorn-bushes that grew in thickets in many places. In the late afternoon they were roused by the watch, and took their chief meal: cold and cheerless as a rule, for they could seldom risk the lighting of a fire. In the evening they went on again, always as nearly southward as they could find a way.

At first it seemed to the hobbits that although they walked and stumbled until they were weary, they were creeping forward like snails, and getting nowhere. Each day the land looked much the same as it had the day before. Yet steadily the mountains were drawing nearer. South of Rivendell they rose ever higher, and bent westwards; and about the feet of the main range there was tumbled an ever wider land of bleak hills, and deep valleys filled with turbulent waters. Paths were few and winding, and led them often only to the edge of some sheer fall, or down into treacherous swamps.

They had been a fortnight on the way when the weather changed. The wind suddenly fell and then veered round to the south. The swift-flowing clouds lifted and melted away, and the sun came out, pale and bright. There came a cold clear dawn at the end of a long stumbling night-march. The travellers reached a low ridge crowned with ancient holly-trees whose grey-green trunks seemed to have been built out of the very stone of the hills. Their dark leaves shone and their berries glowed red in the light of the rising sun.

Away in the south Frodo could see the dim shapes of lofty mountains that seemed now to stand across the path that the Company was taking. At the left of this high range rose three peaks; the tallest and nearest stood up like a tooth tipped with snow; its great, bare, northern precipice was still largely in the shadow, but where the sunlight slanted upon it, it glowed red.

Gandalf stood at Frodo’s side and looked out under his hand. ‘We have done well,’ he said. ‘We have reached the borders of the country that Men call Hollin; many Elves lived here in happier days, when Eregion was its name. Five-and-forty leagues as the crow flies we have come, though many long miles further our feet have walked. The land and the weather will be milder now, but perhaps all the more dangerous.’

‘Dangerous or not, a real sunrise is mighty welcome,’ said Frodo, throwing back his hood and letting the morning light fall on his face.

‘But the mountains are ahead of us,’ said Pippin. ‘We must have turned eastwards in the night.’

‘No,’ said Gandalf. ‘But you see further ahead in the clear light. Beyond those peaks the range bends round south-west. There are many maps in Elrond’s house, but I suppose you never thought to look at them?’

‘Yes I did, sometimes,’ said Pippin, ‘but I don’t remember them. Frodo has a better head for that sort of thing.’

‘I need no map,’ said Gimli, who had come up with Legolas, and was gazing out before him with a strange light in his deep eyes. ‘There is the land where our fathers worked of old, and we have wrought the image of those mountains into many works of metal and of stone, and into many songs and tales. They stand tall in our dreams: Baraz, Zirak, Shathûr.

‘Only once before have I seen them from afar in waking life, but I know them and their names, for under them lies Khazad-dûm, the Dwarrowdelf, that is now called the Black Pit, Moria in the Elvish tongue. Yonder stands Barazinbar, the Redhorn, cruel Caradhras; and beyond him are Silvertine and Cloudyhead: Celebdil the White, and Fanuidhol the Grey, that we call Zirakzigil and Bundushathûr.

‘There the Misty Mountains divide, and between their arms lies the deep-shadowed valley which we cannot forget: Azanulbizar, the Dimrill Dale, which the Elves call Nanduhirion.’

‘It is for the Dimrill Dale that we are making,’ said Gandalf. ‘If we climb the pass that is called the Redhorn Gate, under the far side of Caradhras, we shall come down by the Dimrill Stair into the deep vale of the Dwarves. There lies the Mirrormere, and there the River Silverlode rises in its icy springs.’

‘Dark is the water of Kheled-zâram,’ said Gimli, ‘and cold are the springs of Kibil-nâla. My heart trembles at the thought that I may see them soon.’

‘May you have joy of the sight, my good dwarf!’ said Gandalf. ‘But whatever you may do, we at least cannot stay in that valley. We must go down the Silverlode into the secret woods, and so to the Great River, and then—’

He paused.

‘Yes, and where then?’ asked Merry.

‘To the end of the journey—in the end,’ said Gandalf. ‘We cannot look too far ahead. Let us be glad that the first stage is safely over. I think we will rest here, not only today but tonight as well. There is a wholesome air about Hollin. Much evil must befall a country before it wholly forgets the Elves, if once they dwelt there.’

‘That is true,’ said Legolas. ‘But the Elves of this land were of a race strange to us of the silvan folk, and the trees and the grass do not now remember them. Only I hear the stones lament them: *deep they delved us, fair they wrought us, high they builded us; but they are gone*. They are gone. They sought the Havens long ago.’

That morning they lit a fire in a deep hollow shrouded by great bushes of holly, and their supper-breakfast was merrier than it had been since they set out. They did not hurry to bed afterwards, for they expected to have all the night to sleep in, and they did not mean to go on again until the evening of the next day. Only Aragorn was silent and restless. After a while he left the Company and wandered on to the ridge; there he stood in the shadow of a tree, looking out southwards and westwards, with his head posed as if he was listening. Then he returned to the brink of the dell and looked down at the others laughing and talking.

‘What is the matter, Strider?’ Merry called up. ‘What are you looking for? Do you miss the East Wind?’

‘No indeed,’ he answered. ‘But I miss something. I have been in the country of Hollin in many seasons. No folk dwell here now, but many other creatures live here at all times, especially birds. Yet now all things but you are silent. I can feel it. There is no sound for miles about us, and your voices seem to make the ground echo. I do not understand it.’

Gandalf looked up with sudden interest. ‘But what do you guess is the reason?’ he asked. ‘Is there more in it than surprise at seeing four hobbits, not to mention the rest of us, where people are so seldom seen or heard?’

‘I hope that is it,’ answered Aragorn. ‘But I have a sense of watchfulness, and of fear, that I have never had here before.’

‘Then we must be more careful,’ said Gandalf. ‘If you bring a Ranger with you, it is well to pay attention to him, especially if the Ranger is Aragorn. We must stop talking aloud, rest quietly, and set the watch.’

It was Sam’s turn that day to take the first watch, but Aragorn joined him. The others fell asleep. Then the silence grew until even Sam felt it. The breathing of the sleepers could be plainly heard. The swish of the pony’s tail and the occasional movements of his feet became loud noises. Sam could hear his own joints creaking, if he stirred. Dead silence was around him, and over all hung a clear blue sky, as the Sun rode up from the East. Away in the South a dark patch appeared, and grew, and drove north like flying smoke in the wind.

‘What’s that, Strider? It don’t look like a cloud,’ said Sam in a whisper to Aragorn. He made no answer, he was gazing intently at the sky; but before long Sam could see for himself what was approaching. Flocks of birds, flying at great speed, were wheeling and circling, and traversing all the land as if they were searching for something; and they were steadily drawing nearer.

‘Lie flat and still!’ hissed Aragorn, pulling Sam down into the shade of a holly-bush; for a whole regiment of birds had broken away suddenly from the main host, and came, flying low, straight towards the ridge. Sam thought they were a kind of crow of large size. As they passed overhead, in so dense a throng that their shadow followed them darkly over the ground below, one harsh croak was heard.

Not until they had dwindled into the distance, north and west, and the sky was again clear would Aragorn rise. Then he sprang up and went and wakened Gandalf.

‘Regiments of black crows are flying over all the land between the Mountains and the Greyflood,’ he said, ‘and they have passed over Hollin. They are not natives here; they are *crebain* out of Fangorn and Dunland. I do not know what they are about: possibly there is some trouble away south from which they are fleeing; but I think they are spying out the land. I have also glimpsed many hawks flying high up in the sky. I think we ought to move again this evening. Hollin is no longer wholesome for us: it is being watched.’

‘And in that case so is the Redhorn Gate,’ said Gandalf; ‘and how we can get over that without being seen, I cannot imagine. But we will think of that when we must. As for moving as soon as it is dark, I am afraid that you are right.’

‘Luckily our fire made little smoke, and had burned low before the *crebain* came,’ said Aragorn. ‘It must be put out and not lit again.’

‘Well if that isn’t a plague and a nuisance!’ said Pippin. The news: no fire, and a move again by night, had been broken to him, as soon as he woke in the late afternoon. ‘All because of a pack of crows! I had looked forward to a real good meal tonight: something hot.’

‘Well, you can go on looking forward,’ said Gandalf. ‘There may be many unexpected feasts ahead for you. For myself I should like a pipe to smoke in comfort, and warmer feet. However, we are certain of one thing at any rate: it will get warmer as we get south.’

‘Too warm, I shouldn’t wonder,’ muttered Sam to Frodo. ‘But I’m beginning to think it’s time we got a sight of that Fiery Mountain, and saw the end of the Road, so to speak. I thought at first that this here Redhorn, or whatever its name is, might be it, till Gimli spoke his piece. A fair jaw-cracker dwarf-language must be!’ Maps conveyed nothing to Sam’s mind, and all distances in these strange lands seemed so vast that he was quite out of his reckoning.

All that day the Company remained in hiding. The dark birds passed over now and again; but as the westering Sun grew red they disappeared southwards. At dusk the Company set out, and turning now half east they steered their course towards Caradhras, which far away still glowed faintly red in the last light of the vanished Sun. One by one white stars sprang forth as the sky faded.

Guided by Aragorn they struck a good path. It looked to Frodo like the remains of an ancient road, that had once been broad and well planned, from Hollin to the mountain-pass. The Moon, now at the full, rose over the mountains, and cast a pale light in which the shadows of stones were black. Many of them looked to have been worked by hands, though now they lay tumbled and ruinous in a bleak, barren land.

It was the cold chill hour before the first stir of dawn, and the moon was low. Frodo looked up at the sky. Suddenly he saw or felt a shadow pass over the high stars, as if for a moment they faded and then flashed out again. He shivered.

‘Did you see anything pass over?’ he whispered to Gandalf, who was just ahead.

‘No, but I felt it, whatever it was,’ he answered. ‘It may be nothing, only a wisp of thin cloud.’

‘It was moving fast then,’ muttered Aragorn, ‘and not with the wind.’

Nothing further happened that night. The next morning dawned even brighter than before. But the air was chill again; already the wind was turning back towards the east. For two more nights they marched on, climbing steadily but ever more slowly as their road wound up into the hills, and the mountains towered up, nearer and nearer. On the third morning Caradhras rose before them, a mighty peak, tipped with snow like silver, but with sheer naked sides, dull red as if stained with blood.

There was a black look in the sky, and the sun was wan. The wind had gone now round to the north-east. Gandalf snuffed the air and looked back.

‘Winter deepens behind us,’ he said quietly to Aragorn. ‘The heights away north are whiter than they were; snow is lying far down their shoulders. Tonight we shall be on our way high up towards the Redhorn Gate. We may well be seen by watchers on that narrow path, and waylaid by some evil; but the weather may prove a more deadly enemy than any. What do you think of your course now, Aragorn?’

Frodo overheard these words, and understood that Gandalf and Aragorn were continuing some debate that had begun long before. He listened anxiously.

‘I think no good of our course from beginning to end, as you know well, Gandalf,’ answered Aragorn. ‘And perils known and unknown will grow as we go on. But we must go on; and it is no good our delaying the passage of the mountains. Further south there are no passes, till one comes to the Gap of Rohan. I do not trust that way since your news of Saruman. Who knows which side now the marshals of the Horse-lords serve?’

‘Who knows indeed!’ said Gandalf. ‘But there is another way, and not by the pass of Caradhras: the dark and secret way that we have spoken of.’

‘But let us not speak of it again! Not yet. Say nothing to the others, I beg, not until it is plain that there is no other way.’

‘We must decide before we go further,’ answered Gandalf.

‘Then let us weigh the matter in our minds, while the others rest and sleep,’ said Aragorn.

In the late afternoon, while the others were finishing their breakfast, Gandalf and Aragorn went aside together and stood looking at Caradhras. Its sides were now dark and sullen, and its head was in grey cloud. Frodo watched them, wondering which way the debate would go. When they returned to the Company Gandalf spoke, and then he knew that it had been decided to face the weather and the high pass. He was relieved. He could not guess what was the other dark and secret way, but the very mention of it had seemed to fill Aragorn with dismay, and Frodo was glad that it had been abandoned.

‘From signs that we have seen lately,’ said Gandalf, ‘I fear that the Redhorn Gate may be watched; and also I have doubts of the weather that is coming up behind. Snow may come. We must go with all the speed that we can. Even so it will take us more than two marches before we reach the top of the pass. Dark will come early this evening. We must leave as soon as you can get ready.’

‘I will add a word of advice, if I may,’ said Boromir. ‘I was born under the shadow of the White Mountains and know something of journeys in the high places. We shall meet bitter cold, if no worse, before we come down on the other side. It will not help us to keep so secret that we are frozen to death. When we leave here, where there are still a few trees and bushes, each of us should carry a faggot of wood, as large as he can bear.’

‘And Bill could take a bit more, couldn’t you, lad?’ said Sam. The pony looked at him mournfully.

‘Very well,’ said Gandalf. ‘But we must not use the wood—not unless it is a choice between fire and death.’

The Company set out again, with good speed at first; but soon their way became steep and difficult. The twisting and climbing road had in many places almost disappeared, and was blocked with many fallen stones. The night grew deadly dark under great clouds. A bitter wind swirled among the rocks. By midnight they had climbed to the knees of the great mountains. The narrow path now wound under a sheer wall of cliffs to the left, above which the grim flanks of Caradhras towered up invisible in the gloom; on the right was a gulf of darkness where the land fell suddenly into a deep ravine.

Laboriously they climbed a sharp slope and halted for a moment at the top. Frodo felt a soft touch on his face. He put out his arm and saw the dim white flakes of snow settling on his sleeve.

They went on. But before long the snow was falling fast, filling all the air, and swirling into Frodo's eyes. The dark bent shapes of Gandalf and Aragorn only a pace or two ahead could hardly be seen.

'I don't like this at all,' panted Sam just behind. 'Snow's all right on a fine morning, but I like to be in bed while it's falling. I wish this lot would go off to Hobbiton! Folk might welcome it there.' Except on the high moors of the Northfarthing a heavy fall was rare in the Shire, and was regarded as a pleasant event and a chance for fun. No living hobbit (save Bilbo) could remember the Fell Winter of 1311, when white wolves invaded the Shire over the frozen Brandywine.

Gandalf halted. Snow was thick on his hood and shoulders; it was already ankle-deep about his boots.

'This is what I feared,' he said. 'What do you say now, Aragorn?'

'That I feared it too,' Aragorn answered, 'but less than other things. I knew the risk of snow, though it seldom falls heavily so far south, save high up in the mountains. But we are not high yet; we are still far down, where the paths are usually open all the winter.'

'I wonder if this is a contrivance of the Enemy,' said Boromir. 'They say in my land that he can govern the storms in the Mountains of Shadow that stand upon the borders of Mordor. He has strange powers and many allies.'

'His arm has grown long indeed,' said Gimli, 'if he can draw snow down from the North to trouble us here three hundred leagues away.'

'His arm has grown long,' said Gandalf.

While they were halted, the wind died down, and the snow slackened until it almost ceased. They tramped on again. But they had not gone more than a furlong when the storm returned with fresh fury. The wind whistled and the snow became a blinding blizzard. Soon even Boromir found it hard to keep going. The hobbits, bent nearly double, toiled along behind the taller folk, but it was plain that they could not go much further, if the snow continued. Frodo's feet felt like lead. Pippin was dragging behind. Even Gimli, as stout as any dwarf could be, was grumbling as he trudged.

The Company halted suddenly, as if they had come to an agreement without any words being spoken. They heard eerie noises in the darkness round them. It may have been only a trick of the wind in the cracks and gullies of the rocky wall, but the sounds were those of shrill cries, and wild howls of laughter. Stones began to fall from the mountain-side, whistling over their heads, or crashing on the path beside them. Every now and again they heard a dull rumble, as a great boulder rolled down from hidden heights above.

'We cannot go further tonight,' said Boromir. 'Let those call it the wind who will; there are fell voices on the air; and these stones are aimed at us.'

'I do call it the wind,' said Aragorn. 'But that does not make what you say untrue. There are many evil and unfriendly things in the world that have little love for those that go on two legs, and yet are not in league with Sauron, but have purposes of their own. Some have been in this world longer than he.'

'Caradhras was called the Cruel, and had an ill name,' said Gimli, 'long years ago, when rumour of Sauron had not been heard in these lands.'

'It matters little who is the enemy, if we cannot beat off his attack,' said Gandalf.



‘But what can we do?’ cried Pippin miserably. He was leaning on Merry and Frodo, and he was shivering.

‘Either stop where we are, or go back,’ said Gandalf. ‘It is no good going on. Only a little higher, if I remember rightly, this path leaves the cliff and runs into a wide shallow trough at the bottom of a long hard slope. We should have no shelter there from snow, or stones—or anything else.’

‘And it is no good going back while the storm holds,’ said Aragorn. ‘We have passed no place on the way up that offered more shelter than this cliff-wall we are under now.’

‘Shelter!’ muttered Sam. ‘If this is shelter, then one wall and no roof make a house.’

The Company now gathered together as close to the cliff as they could. It faced southwards, and near the bottom it leaned out a little, so that they hoped it would give them some protection from the northerly wind and from the falling stones. But eddying blasts swirled round them from every side, and the snow flowed down in ever denser clouds.

They huddled together with their backs to the wall. Bill the pony stood patiently but dejectedly in front of the hobbits, and screened them a little; but before long the drifting snow was above his hocks, and it went on mounting. If they had had no larger companions the hobbits would soon have been entirely buried.

A great sleepiness came over Frodo; he felt himself sinking fast into a warm and hazy dream. He thought a fire was heating his toes, and out of the shadows on the other side of the hearth he heard Bilbo’s voice speaking. *I don’t think much of your diary*, he said. *Snowstorms on January the twelfth: there was no need to come back to report that!*

*But I wanted rest and sleep*, Bilbo, Frodo answered with an effort, when he felt himself shaken, and he came back painfully to wakefulness. Boromir had lifted him off the ground out of a nest of snow.

‘This will be the death of the halflings, Gandalf,’ said Boromir. ‘It is useless to sit here until the snow goes over our heads. We must do something to save ourselves.’

‘Give them this,’ said Gandalf, searching in his pack and drawing out a leathern flask. ‘Just a mouthful each—for all of us. It is very precious. It is *miruvor*, the cordial of Imladris. Elrond gave it to me at our parting. Pass it round!’

As soon as Frodo had swallowed a little of the warm and fragrant liquor he felt a new strength of heart, and the heavy drowsiness left his limbs. The others also revived and found fresh hope and vigour. But the snow did not relent. It whirled about them thicker than ever, and the wind blew louder.

‘What do you say to fire?’ asked Boromir suddenly. ‘The choice seems near now between fire and death, Gandalf. Doubtless we shall be hidden from all unfriendly eyes when the snow has covered us, but that will not help us.’

‘You may make a fire, if you can,’ answered Gandalf. ‘If there are any watchers that can endure this storm, then they can see us, fire or no.’

But though they had brought wood and kindlings by the advice of Boromir, it passed the skill of Elf or even Dwarf to strike a flame that would hold amid the swirling wind or catch in the wet fuel. At last reluctantly Gandalf himself took a hand. Picking up a faggot he held it aloft for a moment, and then with a word of command, *naur an edraith ammen!* he thrust the end of his staff into the midst of it. At once a great spout of green and blue flame sprang out, and the wood flared and sputtered.

‘If there are any to see, then I at least am revealed to them,’ he said. ‘I have written *Gandalf is here* in signs that all can read from Rivendell to the mouths of Anduin.’

But the Company cared no longer for watchers or unfriendly eyes. Their hearts were rejoiced to see the light of the fire. The wood burned merrily; and though all round it the snow hissed, and pools of slush crept under their feet, they warmed their hands gladly at the blaze. There they stood, stooping in a circle round the little dancing and blowing flames. A red light was on their tired and anxious faces; behind them the night was like a black wall.

But the wood was burning fast, and the snow still fell.

The fire burned low, and the last faggot was thrown on.

‘The night is getting old,’ said Aragorn. ‘The dawn is not far off.’

‘If any dawn can pierce these clouds,’ said Gimli.

Boromir stepped out of the circle and stared up into the blackness. ‘The snow is growing less,’ he said, ‘and the wind is quieter.’

Frodo gazed wearily at the flakes still falling out of the dark to be revealed white for a moment in the light of the dying fire; but for a long time he could see no sign of their slackening. Then suddenly, as sleep was beginning to creep over him again, he was aware that the wind had indeed fallen, and the flakes were becoming larger and fewer. Very slowly a dim light began to grow. At last the snow stopped altogether.

As the light grew stronger it showed a silent shrouded world. Below their refuge were white humps and domes and shapeless deeps beneath which the path that they had trodden was altogether lost; but the heights above were hidden in great clouds still heavy with the threat of snow.

Gimli looked up and shook his head. ‘Caradhras has not forgiven us,’ he said. ‘He has more snow yet to fling at us, if we go on. The sooner we go back and down the better.’

To this all agreed, but their retreat was now difficult. It might well prove impossible. Only a few paces from the ashes of their fire the snow lay many feet deep, higher than the heads of the hobbits; in places it had been scooped and piled by the wind into great drifts against the cliff.

‘If Gandalf would go before us with a bright flame, he might melt a path for you,’ said Legolas. The storm had troubled him little, and he alone of the Company remained still light of heart.

‘If Elves could fly over mountains, they might fetch the Sun to save us,’ answered Gandalf. ‘But I must have something to work on. I cannot burn snow.’

‘Well,’ said Boromir, ‘when heads are at a loss bodies must serve, as we say in my country. The strongest of us must seek a way. See! Though all is now snow-clad, our path, as we came up, turned about that shoulder of rock down yonder. It was there that the snow first began to burden us. If we could reach that point, maybe it would prove easier beyond. It is no more than a furlong off, I guess.’

‘Then let us force a path thither, you and I!’ said Aragorn.

Aragorn was the tallest of the Company, but Boromir, little less in height, was broader and heavier in build. He led the way, and Aragorn followed him. Slowly they moved off, and were soon toiling heavily. In places the snow was breast-high, and often Boromir seemed to be swimming or burrowing with his great arms rather than walking.

Legolas watched them for a while with a smile upon his lips, and then he turned to the others. ‘The strongest must seek a way, say you? But I say: let a ploughman plough, but choose an otter for swimming, and for running light over grass and leaf, or over snow—an Elf.’

With that he sprang forth nimbly, and then Frodo noticed as if for the first time, though he had long known it, that the Elf had no boots, but wore only light shoes, as he always did, and his feet made little imprint in the snow.

‘Farewell!’ he said to Gandalf. ‘I go to find the Sun!’ Then swift as a runner over firm sand he shot away, and quickly overtaking the toiling men, with a wave of his hand he passed them, and sped into the distance, and vanished round the rocky turn.

The others waited huddled together, watching until Boromir and Aragorn dwindled into black specks in the whiteness. At length they too passed from sight. The time dragged on. The clouds lowered, and now a few flakes of snow came curling down again.

An hour, maybe, went by, though it seemed far longer, and then at last they saw Legolas coming back. At the same time Boromir and Aragorn reappeared round the bend far behind him and came labouring up the slope.

‘Well,’ cried Legolas as he ran up, ‘I have not brought the Sun. She is walking in the blue fields of the South, and a little wreath of snow on this Redhorn hillock troubles her not at all. But I have brought back a gleam of good hope for those who are doomed to go on feet. There is the greatest wind-drift of all just beyond the turn, and there our Strong Men were almost buried. They despaired, until I returned and told them that the drift was little wider than a wall. And on the other side the snow suddenly grows less, while further down it is no more than a white coverlet to cool a hobbit’s toes.’

‘Ah, it is as I said,’ growled Gimli. ‘It was no ordinary storm. It is the ill will of Caradhras. He does not love Elves and Dwarves, and that drift was laid to cut off our escape.’

‘But happily your Caradhras has forgotten that you have Men with you,’ said Boromir, who came up at that moment. ‘And doughty Men too, if I may say it; though lesser men with spades might have served you better. Still, we have thrust a lane through the drift; and for that all here may be grateful who cannot run as light as Elves.’

‘But how are we to get down there, even if you have cut through the drift?’ said Pippin, voicing the thought of all the hobbits.

‘Have hope!’ said Boromir. ‘I am weary, but I still have some strength left, and Aragorn too. We will bear the little folk. The others no doubt will make shift to tread the path behind us. Come, Master Peregrin! I will begin with you.’

He lifted up the hobbit. ‘Cling to my back! I shall need my arms,’ he said and strode forward. Aragorn with Merry came behind. Pippin marvelled at his strength, seeing the passage that he had already forced with no other tool than his great limbs. Even now, burdened as he was, he was widening the track for those who followed, thrusting the snow aside as he went.

They came at length to the great drift. It was flung across the mountain-path like a sheer and sudden wall, and its crest, sharp as if shaped with knives, reared up more than twice the height of Boromir; but through the middle a passage had been beaten, rising and falling like a bridge. On the far side Merry and Pippin were set down, and there they waited with Legolas for the rest of the Company to arrive.

After a while Boromir returned carrying Sam. Behind in the narrow but now well-trodden track came Gandalf, leading Bill with Gimli perched among the baggage. Last came Aragorn carrying Frodo. They passed through the lane; but hardly had Frodo touched the ground when with a deep rumble there rolled down a fall of stones and slithering snow. The spray of it half blinded the Company as they crouched against the cliff, and when the air cleared again they saw that the path was blocked behind them.

‘Enough, enough!’ cried Gimli. ‘We are departing as quickly as we may!’ And indeed with that last stroke the malice of the mountain seemed to be expended, as if Caradhras was satisfied that the invaders had been beaten off and would not dare to return. The threat of snow lifted; the clouds began to break and the light grew broader.

As Legolas had reported, they found that the snow became steadily more shallow as they went down, so that even the hobbits could trudge along. Soon they all stood once more on the flat shelf at the head of the steep slope where they had felt the first flakes of snow the night before.

The morning was now far advanced. From the high place they looked back westwards over the lower lands. Far away in the tumble of country that lay at the foot of the mountain was the dell from which they had started to climb the pass.

Frodo’s legs ached. He was chilled to the bone and hungry; and his head was dizzy as he thought of the long and painful march downhill. Black specks swam before his eyes. He rubbed them, but the black specks remained. In the distance below him, but still high above the lower foothills, dark dots were circling in the air.

‘The birds again!’ said Aragorn, pointing down.

‘That cannot be helped now,’ said Gandalf. ‘Whether they are good or evil, or have nothing to do with us at all, we must go down at once. Not even on the knees of Caradhras will we wait for another night-fall!’

A cold wind flowed down behind them, as they turned their backs on the Redhorn Gate, and stumbled wearily down the slope. Caradhras had defeated them.



## Chapter 4: A Journey In The Dark

It was evening, and the grey light was again waning fast, when they halted for the night. They were very weary. The mountains were veiled in deepening dusk, and the wind was cold. Gandalf spared them one more mouthful each of the *miruvor* of Rivendell. When they had eaten some food he called a council.

‘We cannot, of course, go on again tonight,’ he said. ‘The attack on the Redhorn Gate has tired us out, and we must rest here for a while.’

‘And then where are we to go?’ asked Frodo.

‘We still have our journey and our errand before us,’ answered Gandalf. ‘We have no choice but to go on, or to return to Rivendell.’

Pippin’s face brightened visibly at the mere mention of return to Rivendell; Merry and Sam looked up hopefully. But Aragorn and Boromir made no sign. Frodo looked troubled.

‘I wish I was back there,’ he said. ‘But how can I return without shame—unless there is indeed no other way, and we are already defeated?’

‘You are right, Frodo,’ said Gandalf: ‘to go back is to admit defeat, and face worse defeat to come. If we go back now, then the Ring must remain there: we shall not be able to set out again. Then sooner or later Rivendell will be besieged, and after a brief and bitter time it will be destroyed. The Ringwraiths are deadly enemies, but they are only shadows yet of the power and terror they would possess if the Ruling Ring was on their master’s hand again.’

‘Then we must go on, if there is a way,’ said Frodo with a sigh. Sam sank back into gloom.

‘There is a way that we may attempt,’ said Gandalf. ‘I thought from the beginning, when first I considered this journey, that we should try it. But it is not a pleasant way, and I have not spoken of it to the Company before. Aragorn was against it, until the pass over the mountains had at least been tried.’

‘If it is a worse road than the Redhorn Gate, then it must be evil indeed,’ said Merry. ‘But you had better tell us about it, and let us know the worst at once.’

‘The road that I speak of leads to the Mines of Moria,’ said Gandalf. Only Gimli lifted up his head; a smouldering fire was in his eyes. On all the others a dread fell at the mention of that name. Even to the hobbits it was a legend of vague fear.

‘The road may lead to Moria, but how can we hope that it will lead through Moria?’ said Aragorn darkly.

‘It is a name of ill omen,’ said Boromir. ‘Nor do I see the need to go there. If we cannot cross the mountains, let us journey southwards, until we come to the Gap of Rohan, where men are friendly to my people, taking the road that I followed on my way hither. Or we might pass by and cross the Isen into Langstrand and Lebennin, and so come to Gondor from the regions nigh to the sea.’

‘Things have changed since you came north, Boromir,’ answered Gandalf. ‘Did you not hear what I told you of Saruman? With him I may have business of my own ere all is over. But the Ring must not come near Isengard, if that can by any means be prevented. The Gap of Rohan is closed to us while we go with the Bearer.’

‘As for the longer road: we cannot afford the time. We might spend a year in such a journey, and we should pass through many lands that are empty and harbourless. Yet they would not be safe. The watchful eyes both of Saruman and of the Enemy are on them. When you came north, Boromir, you were in the Enemy’s eyes only one stray wanderer from the South and a matter of small concern to him: his mind was busy with the pursuit of

the Ring. But you return now as a member of the Ring's Company, and you are in peril as long as you remain with us. The danger will increase with every league that we go south under the naked sky.

'Since our open attempt on the mountain-pass our plight has become more desperate, I fear. I see now little hope, if we do not soon vanish from sight for a while, and cover our trail. Therefore I advise that we should go neither over the mountains, nor round them, but under them. That is a road at any rate that the Enemy will least expect us to take.'

'We do not know what he expects,' said Boromir. 'He may watch all roads, likely and unlikely. In that case to enter Moria would be to walk into a trap, hardly better than knocking at the gates of the Dark Tower itself. The name of Moria is black.'

'You speak of what you do not know, when you liken Moria to the stronghold of Sauron,' answered Gandalf. 'I alone of you have ever been in the dungeons of the Dark Lord, and only in his older and lesser dwelling in Dol Guldur. Those who pass the gates of Barad-dûr do not return. But I would not lead you into Moria if there were no hope of coming out again. If there are Orcs there, it may prove ill for us, that is true. But most of the Orcs of the Misty Mountains were scattered or destroyed in the Battle of Five Armies. The Eagles report that Orcs are gathering again from afar; but there is a hope that Moria is still free.'

'There is even a chance that Dwarves are there, and that in some deep hall of his fathers, Balin son of Fundin may be found. However it may prove, one must tread the path that need chooses!'

'I will tread the path with you, Gandalf!' said Gimli. 'I will go and look on the halls of Durin, whatever may wait there—if you can find the doors that are shut.'

'Good, Gimli!' said Gandalf. 'You encourage me. We will seek the hidden doors together. And we will come through. In the ruins of the Dwarves, a dwarf's head will be less easy to bewilder than Elves or Men or Hobbits. Yet it will not be the first time that I have been to Moria. I sought there long for Thráin son of Thrór after he was lost. I passed through, and I came out again alive!'

'I too once passed the Dimrill Gate,' said Aragorn quietly; 'but though I also came out again, the memory is very evil. I do not wish to enter Moria a second time.'

'And I don't wish to enter it even once,' said Pippin.

'Nor me,' muttered Sam.

'Of course not!' said Gandalf. 'Who would? But the question is: who will follow me, if I lead you there?'

'I will,' said Gimli eagerly.

'I will,' said Aragorn heavily. 'You followed my lead almost to disaster in the snow, and have said no word of blame. I will follow your lead now—if this last warning does not move you. It is not of the Ring, nor of us others that I am thinking now, but of you, Gandalf. And I say to you: if you pass the doors of Moria, beware!'

'I will *not* go,' said Boromir; 'not unless the vote of the whole Company is against me. What do Legolas and the little folk say? The Ring-bearer's voice surely should be heard?'

'I do not wish to go to Moria,' said Legolas.

The hobbits said nothing. Sam looked at Frodo. At last Frodo spoke. 'I do not wish to go,' he said; 'but neither do I wish to refuse the advice of Gandalf. I beg that there should be no vote, until we have slept on it. Gandalf will get votes easier in the light of the morning than in this cold gloom. How the wind howls!'

At these words all fell into silent thought. They heard the wind hissing among the rocks and trees, and there was a howling and wailing round them in the empty spaces of the night.

Suddenly Aragorn leapt to his feet. 'How the wind howls!' he cried. 'It is howling with wolf-voices. The Wargs have come west of the Mountains!'

'Need we wait until morning then?' said Gandalf. 'It is as I said. The hunt is up! Even if we live to see the dawn, who now will wish to journey south by night with the wild wolves on his trail?'

‘How far is Moria?’ asked Boromir.

‘There was a door south-west of Caradhras, some fifteen miles as the crow flies, and maybe twenty as the wolf runs,’ answered Gandalf grimly.

‘Then let us start as soon as it is light tomorrow, if we can,’ said Boromir. ‘The wolf that one hears is worse than the orc that one fears.’

‘True!’ said Aragorn, loosening his sword in its sheath. ‘But where the warg howls, there also the orc prowls.’

‘I wish I had taken Elrond’s advice,’ muttered Pippin to Sam. ‘I am no good after all. There is not enough of the breed of Bandobras the Bullroarer in me: these howls freeze my blood. I don’t ever remember feeling so wretched.’

‘My heart’s right down in my toes, Mr. Pippin,’ said Sam. ‘But we aren’t etten yet, and there are some stout folk here with us. Whatever may be in store for old Gandalf, I’ll wager it isn’t a wolf’s belly.’

For their defence in the night the Company climbed to the top of the small hill under which they had been sheltering. It was crowned with a knot of old and twisted trees, about which lay a broken circle of boulder-stones. In the midst of this they lit a fire, for there was no hope that darkness and silence would keep their trail from discovery by the hunting packs.

Round the fire they sat, and those that were not on guard dozed uneasily. Poor Bill the pony trembled and sweated where he stood. The howling of the wolves was now all round them, sometimes nearer and sometimes further off. In the dead of night many shining eyes were seen peering over the brow of the hill. Some advanced almost to the ring of stones. At a gap in the circle a great dark wolf-shape could be seen halted, gazing at them. A shuddering howl broke from him, as if he were a captain summoning his pack to the assault.

Gandalf stood up and strode forward, holding his staff aloft. ‘Listen, Hound of Sauron!’ he cried. ‘Gandalf is here. Fly, if you value your foul skin! I will shrivel you from tail to snout, if you come within this ring.’

The wolf snarled and sprang towards them with a great leap. At that moment there was a sharp twang. Legolas had loosed his bow. There was a hideous yell, and the leaping shape thudded to the ground; the Elvish arrow had pierced its throat. The watching eyes were suddenly extinguished. Gandalf and Aragorn strode forward, but the hill was deserted; the hunting packs had fled. All about them the darkness grew silent, and no cry came on the sighing wind.

The night was old, and westward the waning moon was setting, gleaming fitfully through the breaking clouds. Suddenly Frodo started from sleep. Without warning a storm of howls broke out fierce and wild all about the camp. A great host of Wargs had gathered silently and was now attacking them from every side at once.

‘Fling fuel on the fire!’ cried Gandalf to the hobbits. ‘Draw your blades, and stand back to back!’

In the leaping light, as the fresh wood blazed up, Frodo saw many grey shapes spring over the ring of stones. More and more followed. Through the throat of one huge leader Aragorn passed his sword with a thrust; with a great sweep Boromir hewed the head off another. Beside them Gimli stood with his stout legs apart, wielding his dwarf-axe. The bow of Legolas was singing.

In the wavering firelight Gandalf seemed suddenly to grow: he rose up, a great menacing shape like the monument of some ancient king of stone set upon a hill. Stooping like a cloud, he lifted a burning branch and strode to meet the wolves. They gave back before him. High in the air he tossed the blazing brand. It flared with a sudden white radiance like lightning; and his voice rolled like thunder.

‘*Naur an edraith ammen! Naur dan i ngaurhoth!*’ he cried.

There was a roar and a crackle, and the tree above him burst into a leaf and bloom of blinding flame. The fire leapt from tree-top to tree-top. The whole hill was crowned with dazzling light. The swords and knives of the defenders shone and flickered. The last arrow of Legolas kindled in the air as it flew, and plunged burning into the heart of a great wolf-chieftain. All the others fled.

Slowly the fire died till nothing was left but falling ash and sparks; a bitter smoke curled above the burned tree-stumps, and blew darkly from the hill, as the first light of dawn came dimly in the sky. Their enemies were routed and did not return.

‘What did I tell you, Mr. Pippin?’ said Sam, sheathing his sword. ‘Wolves won’t get him. That was an eye-opener, and no mistake! Nearly singed the hair off my head!’

When the full light of the morning came no signs of the wolves were to be found, and they looked in vain for the bodies of the dead. No trace of the fight remained but the charred trees and the arrows of Legolas lying on the hill-top. All were undamaged save one of which only the point was left.

‘It is as I feared,’ said Gandalf. ‘These were no ordinary wolves hunting for food in the wilderness. Let us eat quickly and go!’

That day the weather changed again, almost as if it was at the command of some power that had no longer any use for snow, since they had retreated from the pass, a power that wished now to have a clear light in which things that moved in the wild could be seen from far away. The wind had been turning through north to north-west during the night, and now it failed. The clouds vanished southwards and the sky was opened, high and blue. As they stood upon the hillside, ready to depart, a pale sunlight gleamed over the mountain-tops.

‘We must reach the doors before sunset,’ said Gandalf, ‘or I fear we shall not reach them at all. It is not far, but our path may be winding, for here Aragorn cannot guide us; he has seldom walked in this country, and only once have I been under the west wall of Moria, and that was long ago.’

‘There it lies,’ he said, pointing away south-eastwards to where the mountains’ sides fell sheer into the shadows at their feet. In the distance could be dimly seen a line of bare cliffs, and in their midst, taller than the rest, one great grey wall. ‘When we left the pass I led you southwards, and not back to our starting point, as some of you may have noticed. It is well that I did so, for now we have several miles less to cross, and haste is needed. Let us go!’

‘I do not know which to hope,’ said Boromir grimly: ‘that Gandalf will find what he seeks, or that coming to the cliff we shall find the gates lost for ever. All choices seem ill, and to be caught between wolves and the wall the likeliest chance. Lead on!’

Gimli now walked ahead by the wizard’s side, so eager was he to come to Moria. Together they led the Company back towards the mountains. The only road of old to Moria from the west had lain along the course of a stream, the Sirannon, that ran out from the feet of the cliffs near where the doors had stood. But either Gandalf was astray, or else the land had changed in recent years; for he did not strike the stream where he looked to find it, only a few miles southwards from their start.

The morning was passing towards noon, and still the Company wandered and scrambled in a barren country of red stones. Nowhere could they see any gleam of water or hear any sound of it. All was bleak and dry. Their hearts sank. They saw no living thing, and not a bird was in the sky; but what the night would bring, if it caught them in that lost land, none of them cared to think.

Suddenly Gimli, who had pressed on ahead, called back to them. He was standing on a knoll and pointing to the right. Hurrying up they saw below them a deep and narrow channel. It was empty and silent, and hardly a trickle of water flowed among the brown and red-stained stones of its bed; but on the near side there was a path, much broken and decayed, that wound its way among the ruined walls and paving-stones of an ancient highroad.

‘Ah! Here it is at last!’ said Gandalf. ‘This is where the stream ran: Sirannon, the Gate-stream, they used to call it. But what has happened to the water, I cannot guess; it used to be swift and noisy. Come! We must hurry on. We are late.’

The Company were footsore and tired; but they trudged doggedly along the rough and winding track for many miles. The sun turned from the noon and began to go west. After a brief halt and a hasty meal they went on again. Before them the mountains frowned, but their path lay in a deep trough of land and they could see only the higher shoulders and the far eastward peaks.



At length they came to a sharp bend. There the road, which had been veering southwards between the brink of the channel and a steep fall of the land to the left, turned and went due east again. Rounding the corner they saw before them a low cliff, some five fathoms high, with a broken and jagged top. Over it a trickling water dripped, through a wide cleft that seemed to have been carved out by a fall that had once been strong and full.

‘Indeed things have changed!’ said Gandalf. ‘But there is no mistaking the place. There is all that remains of the Stair Falls. If I remember right, there was a flight of steps cut in the rock at their side, but the main road wound away left and climbed with several loops up to the level ground at the top. There used to be a shallow valley beyond the falls right up to the Walls of Moria, and the Sirannon flowed through it with the road beside it. Let us go and see what things are like now!’

They found the stone steps without difficulty, and Gimli sprang swiftly up them, followed by Gandalf and Frodo. When they reached the top they saw that they could go no further that way, and the reason for the drying up of the Gate-stream was revealed. Behind them the sinking Sun filled the cool western sky with glimmering gold. Before them stretched a dark still lake. Neither sky nor sunset was reflected on its sullen surface. The Sirannon had been dammed and had filled all the valley. Beyond the ominous water were reared vast cliffs, their stern faces pallid in the fading light: final and impassable. No sign of gate or entrance, not a fissure or crack could Frodo see in the frowning stone.

‘There are the Walls of Moria,’ said Gandalf, pointing across the water. ‘And there the Gate stood once upon a time, the Elven Door at the end of the road from Hollin by which we have come. But this way is blocked. None of the Company, I guess, will wish to swim this gloomy water at the end of the day. It has an unwholesome look.’

‘We must find a way round the northern edge,’ said Gimli. ‘The first thing for the Company to do is to climb up by the main path and see where that will lead us. Even if there were no lake, we could not get our baggage-pony up this stair.’

‘But in any case we cannot take the poor beast into the Mines,’ said Gandalf. ‘The road under the mountains is a dark road, and there are places narrow and steep which he cannot tread, even if we can.’

‘Poor old Bill!’ said Frodo. ‘I had not thought of that. And poor Sam! I wonder what he will say?’

‘I am sorry,’ said Gandalf. ‘Poor Bill has been a useful companion, and it goes to my heart to turn him adrift now. I would have travelled lighter and brought no animal, least of all this one that Sam is fond of, if I had had my way. I feared all along that we should be obliged to take this road.’

The day was drawing to its end, and cold stars were glinting in the sky high above the sunset, when the Company, with all the speed they could, climbed up the slopes and reached the side of the lake. In breadth it looked to be no more than two or three furlongs at the widest point. How far it stretched away southward they could not see in the failing light; but its northern end was no more than half a mile from where they stood, and between the stony ridges that enclosed the valley and the water’s edge there was a rim of open ground. They hurried forward, for they had still a mile or two to go before they could reach the point on the far shore that Gandalf was making for; and then he had still to find the doors.

When they came to the northernmost corner of the lake they found a narrow creek that barred their way. It was green and stagnant, thrust out like a slimy arm towards the enclosing hills. Gimli strode forward undeterred, and found that the water was shallow, no more than ankle-deep at the edge. Behind him they walked in file, threading their way with care, for under the weedy pools were sliding and greasy stones, and footing was treacherous. Frodo shuddered with disgust at the touch of the dark unclean water on his feet.

As Sam, the last of the Company, led Bill up on to the dry ground on the far side, there came a soft sound: a swish, followed by a plop, as if a fish had disturbed the still surface of the water. Turning quickly they saw ripples, black-edged with shadow in the waning light: great rings were widening outwards from a point far out in the lake. There was a bubbling noise, and then silence. The dusk deepened, and the last gleams of the sunset were veiled in cloud.

Gandalf now pressed on at a great pace, and the others followed as quickly as they could. They reached the strip of dry land between the lake and the cliffs: it was narrow, often hardly a dozen yards across, and encumbered

with fallen rock and stones; but they found a way, hugging the cliff, and keeping as far from the dark water as they might. A mile southwards along the shore they came upon holly trees. Stumps and dead boughs were rotting in the shallows, the remains it seemed of old thickets, or of a hedge that had once lined the road across the drowned valley. But close under the cliff there stood, still strong and living, two tall trees, larger than any trees of holly that Frodo had ever seen or imagined. Their great roots spread from the wall to the water. Under the looming cliffs they had looked like mere bushes, when seen far off from the top of the Stair; but now they towered overhead, stiff, dark, and silent, throwing deep night-shadows about their feet, standing like sentinel pillars at the end of the road.

‘Well, here we are at last!’ said Gandalf. ‘Here the Elven-way from Hollin ended. Holly was the token of the people of that land, and they planted it here to mark the end of their domain; for the West-door was made chiefly for their use in their traffic with the Lords of Moria. Those were happier days, when there was still close friendship at times between folk of different race, even between Dwarves and Elves.’

‘It was not the fault of the Dwarves that the friendship waned,’ said Gimli.

‘I have not heard that it was the fault of the Elves,’ said Legolas.

‘I have heard both,’ said Gandalf; ‘and I will not give judgement now. But I beg you two, Legolas and Gimli, at least to be friends, and to help me. I need you both. The doors are shut and hidden, and the sooner we find them the better. Night is at hand!’

Turning to the others he said: ‘While I am searching, will you each make ready to enter the Mines? For here I fear we must say farewell to our good beast of burden. You must lay aside much of the stuff that we brought against bitter weather: you will not need it inside, nor, I hope, when we come through and journey on down into the South. Instead each of us must take a share of what the pony carried, especially the food and the water-skins.’

‘But you can’t leave poor old Bill behind in this forsaken place, Mr. Gandalf!’ cried Sam, angry and distressed. ‘I won’t have it, and that’s flat. After he has come so far and all!’

‘I am sorry, Sam,’ said the wizard. ‘But when the Door opens I do not think you will be able to drag your Bill inside, into the long dark of Moria. You will have to choose between Bill and your master.’

‘He’d follow Mr. Frodo into a dragon’s den, if I led him,’ protested Sam. ‘It’d be nothing short of murder to turn him loose with all these wolves about.’

‘It will be short of murder, I hope,’ said Gandalf. He laid his hand on the pony’s head, and spoke in a low voice. ‘Go with words of guard and guiding on you,’ he said. ‘You are a wise beast, and have learned much in Rivendell. Make your ways to places where you can find grass, and so come in time to Elrond’s house, or wherever you wish to go.’

‘There, Sam! He will have quite as much chance of escaping wolves and getting home as we have.’

Sam stood sullenly by the pony and returned no answer. Bill, seeming to understand well what was going on, nuzzled up to him, putting his nose to Sam’s ear. Sam burst into tears, and fumbled with the straps, unlading all the pony’s packs and throwing them on the ground. The others sorted out the goods, making a pile of all that could be left behind, and dividing up the rest.

When this was done they turned to watch Gandalf. He appeared to have done nothing. He was standing between the two trees gazing at the blank wall of the cliff, as if he would bore a hole into it with his eyes. Gimli was wandering about, tapping the stone here and there with his axe. Legolas was pressed against the rock, as if listening.

‘Well, here we are and all ready,’ said Merry; ‘but where are the Doors? I can’t see any sign of them.’

‘Dwarf-doors are not made to be seen when shut,’ said Gimli. ‘They are invisible, and their own makers cannot find them or open them, if their secret is forgotten.’

‘But this Door was not made to be a secret known only to Dwarves,’ said Gandalf, coming suddenly to life and turning round. ‘Unless things are altogether changed, eyes that know what to look for may discover the signs.’

He walked forward to the wall. Right between the shadow of the trees there was a smooth space, and over this he passed his hands to and fro, muttering words under his breath. Then he stepped back.

‘Look!’ he said. ‘Can you see anything now?’

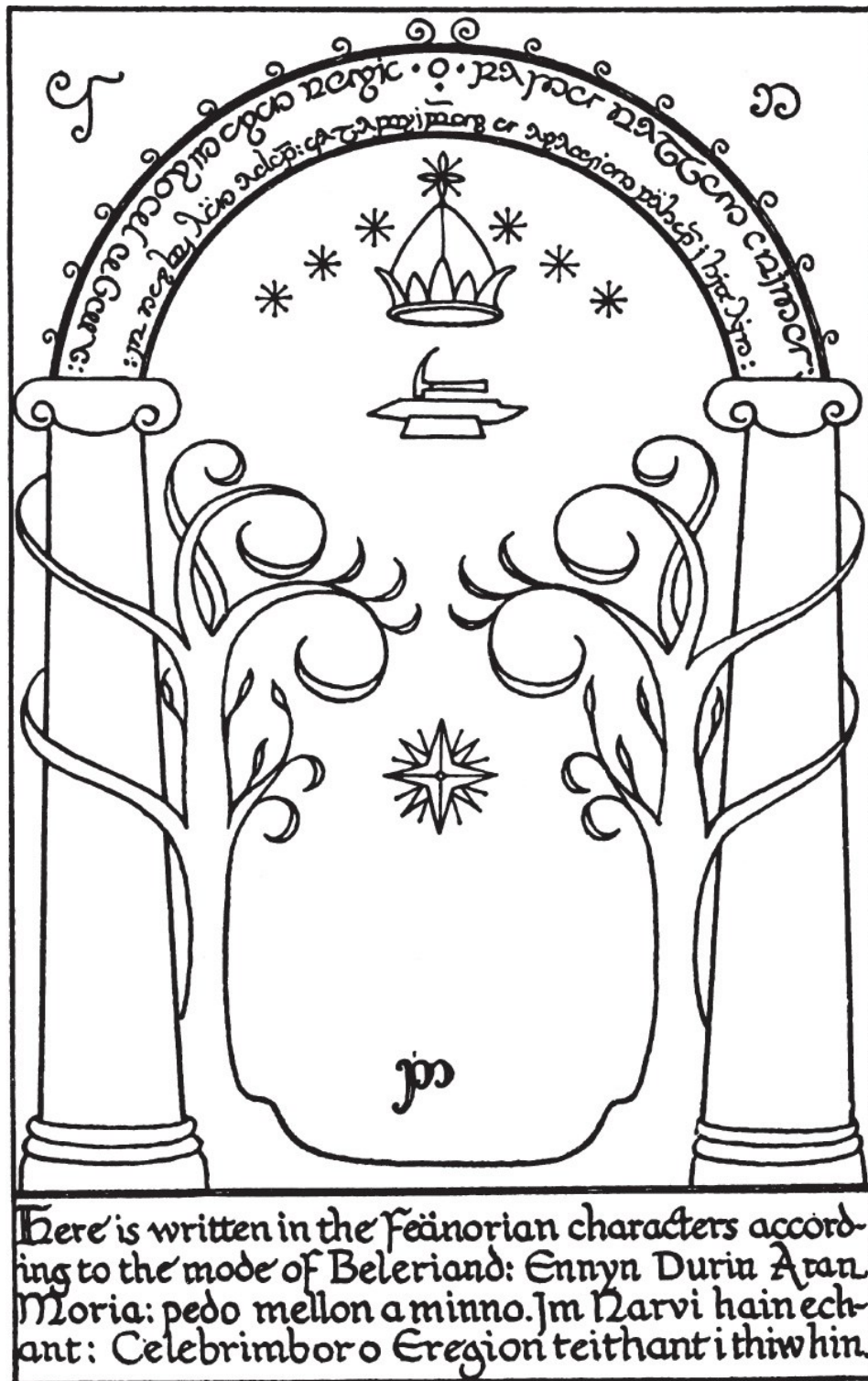
The Moon now shone upon the grey face of the rock; but they could see nothing else for a while. Then slowly on the surface, where the wizard’s hands had passed, faint lines appeared, like slender veins of silver running in the stone. At first they were no more than pale gossamer-threads, so fine that they only twinkled fitfully where the Moon caught them, but steadily they grew broader and clearer, until their design could be guessed.

At the top, as high as Gandalf could reach, was an arch of interlacing letters in an Elvish character. Below, though the threads were in places blurred or broken, the outline could be seen of an anvil and a hammer surmounted by a crown with seven stars. Beneath these again were two trees, each bearing crescent moons. More clearly than all else there shone forth in the middle of the door a single star with many rays.

‘There are the emblems of Durin!’ cried Gimli.

‘And there is the Tree of the High Elves!’ said Legolas.

‘And the Star of the House of Fëanor,’ said Gandalf. ‘They are wrought of *ithildin* that mirrors only starlight and moonlight, and sleeps until it is touched by one who speaks words now long forgotten in Middle-earth. It is long since I heard them, and I thought deeply before I could recall them to my mind.’



‘What does the writing say?’ asked Frodo, who was trying to decipher the inscription on the arch. ‘I thought I knew the elf-letters, but I cannot read these.’

‘The words are in the elven-tongue of the West of Middle-earth in the Elder Days,’ answered Gandalf. ‘But they do not say anything of importance to us. They say only: *The Doors of Durin, Lord of Moria. Speak, friend, and enter.* And underneath small and faint is written: *I, Narvi, made them. Celebrimbor of Hollin drew these signs.*’

‘What does it mean by *speak, friend, and enter*?’ asked Merry.

‘That is plain enough,’ said Gimli. ‘If you are a friend, speak the pass-word, and the doors will open, and you can enter.’

‘Yes,’ said Gandalf, ‘these doors are probably governed by words. Some dwarf-gates will open only at special times, or for particular persons; and some have locks and keys that are still needed when all necessary times and words are known. These doors have no key. In the days of Durin they were not secret. They usually stood open and doorwards sat here. But if they were shut, any who knew the opening word could speak it and pass in. At least so it is recorded, is it not, Gimli?’

‘It is,’ said the dwarf. ‘But what the word was is not remembered. Narvi and his craft and all his kindred have vanished from the earth.’

‘But do not *you* know the word, Gandalf?’ asked Boromir in surprise.

‘No!’ said the wizard.

The others looked dismayed; only Aragorn, who knew Gandalf well, remained silent and unmoved.

‘Then what was the use of bringing us to this accursed spot?’ cried Boromir, glancing back with a shudder at the dark water. ‘You told us that you had once passed through the Mines. How could that be, if you did not know how to enter?’

‘The answer to your first question, Boromir,’ said the wizard, ‘is that I do not know the word—yet. But we shall soon see. And,’ he added, with a glint in his eyes under their bristling brows, ‘you may ask what is the use of my deeds when they are proved useless. As for your other question: do you doubt my tale? Or have you no wits left? I did not enter this way. I came from the East.’

‘If you wish to know, I will tell you that these doors open outwards. From the inside you may thrust them open with your hands. From the outside nothing will move them save the spell of command. They cannot be forced inwards.’

‘What are you going to do then?’ asked Pippin, undaunted by the wizard’s bristling brows.

‘Knock on the doors with your head, Peregrin Took,’ said Gandalf. ‘But if that does not shatter them, and I am allowed a little peace from foolish questions, I will seek for the opening words.’

‘I once knew every spell in all the tongues of Elves or Men or Orcs, that was ever used for such a purpose. I can still remember ten score of them without searching in my mind. But only a few trials, I think, will be needed; and I shall not have to call on Gimli for words of the secret dwarf-tongue that they teach to none. The opening words were Elvish, like the writing on the arch: that seems certain.’

He stepped up to the rock again, and lightly touched with his staff the silver star in the middle beneath the sign of the anvil.

*Annon edhellen, edro hi ammen! Fennas nogothrim, lasto beth lammen!*

he said in a commanding voice. The silver lines faded, but the blank grey stone did not stir.

Many times he repeated these words in different order, or varied them. Then he tried other spells, one after another, speaking now faster and louder, now soft and slow. Then he spoke many single words of Elvish speech. Nothing happened. The cliff towered into the night, the countless stars were kindled, the wind blew cold, and the doors stood fast.

Again Gandalf approached the wall, and lifting up his arms he spoke in tones of command and rising wrath. *Edro, edro!* he cried, and struck the rock with his staff. *Open, open!* he shouted, and followed it with the same command in every language that had ever been spoken in the West of Middle-earth. Then he threw his staff on the ground, and sat down in silence.

At that moment from far off the wind bore to their listening ears the howling of wolves. Bill the pony started in fear, and Sam sprang to his side and whispered softly to him.

‘Do not let him run away!’ said Boromir. ‘It seems that we shall need him still, if the wolves do not find us. How I hate this foul pool!’ He stooped and picking up a large stone he cast it far into the dark water.

The stone vanished with a soft slap; but at the same instant there was a swish and a bubble. Great rippling rings formed on the surface out beyond where the stone had fallen, and they moved slowly towards the foot of the cliff.

‘Why did you do that, Boromir?’ said Frodo. ‘I hate this place, too, and I am afraid. I don’t know of what: not of wolves, or the dark behind the doors, but of something else. I am afraid of the pool. Don’t disturb it!’

‘I wish we could get away!’ said Merry.

‘Why doesn’t Gandalf do something quick?’ said Pippin.

Gandalf took no notice of them. He sat with his head bowed, either in despair or in anxious thought. The mournful howling of the wolves was heard again. The ripples on the water grew and came closer; some were already lapping on the shore.

With a suddenness that startled them all the wizard sprang to his feet. He was laughing! ‘I have it!’ he cried. ‘Of course, of course! Absurdly simple, like most riddles when you see the answer.’

Picking up his staff he stood before the rock and said in a clear voice: *Mellon!*

The star shone out briefly and faded again. Then silently a great doorway was outlined, though not a crack or joint had been visible before. Slowly it divided in the middle and swung outwards inch by inch, until both doors lay back against the wall. Through the opening a shadowy stair could be seen climbing steeply up; but beyond the lower steps the darkness was deeper than the night. The Company stared in wonder.

‘I was wrong after all,’ said Gandalf, ‘and Gimli too. Merry, of all people, was on the right track. The opening word was inscribed on the archway all the time! The translation should have been: *Say “Friend” and enter*. I had only to speak the Elvish word for *friend* and the doors opened. Quite simple. Too simple for a learned loremaster in these suspicious days. Those were happier times. Now let us go!’

He strode forward and set his foot on the lowest step. But at that moment several things happened. Frodo felt something seize him by the ankle, and he fell with a cry. Bill the pony gave a wild neigh of fear, and turned tail and dashed away along the lakeside into the darkness. Sam leaped after him, and then hearing Frodo’s cry he ran back again, weeping and cursing. The others swung round and saw the waters of the lake seething, as if a host of snakes were swimming up from the southern end.

Out from the water a long sinuous tentacle had crawled; it was pale-green and luminous and wet. Its fingered end had hold of Frodo’s foot, and was dragging him into the water. Sam on his knees was now slashing at it with a knife.

The arm let go of Frodo, and Sam pulled him away, crying out for help. Twenty other arms came rippling out. The dark water boiled, and there was a hideous stench.

‘Into the gateway! Up the stairs! Quick!’ shouted Gandalf leaping back. Rousing them from the horror that seemed to have rooted all but Sam to the ground where they stood, he drove them forward.

They were just in time. Sam and Frodo were only a few steps up, and Gandalf had just begun to climb, when the groping tentacles writhed across the narrow shore and fingered the cliff-wall and the doors. One came wriggling over the threshold, glistening in the starlight. Gandalf turned and paused. If he was considering what word would close the gate again from within, there was no need. Many coiling arms seized the doors on either side, and with horrible strength, swung them round. With a shattering echo they slammed, and all light was lost. A noise of rending and crashing came dully through the ponderous stone.

Sam, clinging to Frodo’s arm, collapsed on a step in the black darkness. ‘Poor old Bill!’ he said in a choking voice. ‘Poor old Bill! Wolves and snakes! But the snakes were too much for him. I had to choose, Mr. Frodo. I had to come with you.’

They heard Gandalf go back down the steps and thrust his staff against the doors. There was a quiver in the stone and the stairs trembled, but the doors did not open.

‘Well, well!’ said the wizard. ‘The passage is blocked behind us now, and there is only one way out—on the other side of the mountains. I fear from the sounds that boulders have been piled up, and the trees uprooted and thrown across the gate. I am sorry; for the trees were beautiful, and had stood so long.’

‘I felt that something horrible was near from the moment that my foot first touched the water,’ said Frodo. ‘What was the thing, or were there many of them?’

‘I do not know,’ answered Gandalf; ‘but the arms were all guided by one purpose. Something has crept, or has been driven out of dark waters under the mountains. There are older and fouler things than Orcs in the deep places of the world.’ He did not speak aloud his thought that whatever it was that dwelt in the lake, it had seized on Frodo first among all the Company.

Boromir muttered under his breath, but the echoing stone magnified the sound to a hoarse whisper that all could hear: ‘In the deep places of the world! And thither we are going against my wish. Who will lead us now in this deadly dark?’

‘I will,’ said Gandalf, ‘and Gimli shall walk with me. Follow my staff!’

As the wizard passed on ahead up the great steps, he held his staff aloft, and from its tip there came a faint radiance. The wide stairway was sound and undamaged. Two hundred steps they counted, broad and shallow; and at the top they found an arched passage with a level floor leading on into the dark.

‘Let us sit and rest and have something to eat, here on the landing, since we can’t find a dining-room!’ said Frodo. He had begun to shake off the terror of the clutching arm, and suddenly he felt extremely hungry.

The proposal was welcomed by all; and they sat down on the upper steps, dim figures in the gloom. After they had eaten, Gandalf gave them each a third sip of the *miruvor* of Rivendell.

‘It will not last much longer, I am afraid,’ he said; ‘but I think we need it after that horror at the gate. And unless we have great luck, we shall need all that is left before we see the other side! Go carefully with the water, too! There are many streams and wells in the Mines, but they should not be touched. We may not have a chance of filling our skins and bottles till we come down into Dimrill Dale.’

‘How long is that going to take us?’ asked Frodo.

‘I cannot say,’ answered Gandalf. ‘It depends on many chances. But going straight, without mishap or losing our way, we shall take three or four marches, I expect. It cannot be less than forty miles from West-door to East-gate in a direct line, and the road may wind much.’

After only a brief rest they started on their way again. All were eager to get the journey over as quickly as possible, and were willing, tired as they were, to go on marching still for several hours. Gandalf walked in front as before. In his left hand he held up his glimmering staff, the light of which just showed the ground before his feet; in his right he held his sword Glamdring. Behind him came Gimli, his eyes glinting in the dim light as he turned his head from side to side. Behind the dwarf walked Frodo, and he had drawn the short sword, Sting. No gleam came from the blades of Sting or of Glamdring; and that was some comfort, for being the work of Elvish smiths in the Elder Days these swords shone with a cold light, if any Orcs were near at hand. Behind Frodo went Sam, and after him Legolas, and the young hobbits, and Boromir. In the dark at the rear, grim and silent, walked Aragorn.

The passage twisted round a few turns, and then began to descend. It went steadily down for a long while before it became level once again. The air grew hot and stifling, but it was not foul, and at times they felt currents of cooler air upon their faces, issuing from half-guessed openings in the walls. There were many of these. In the pale ray of the wizard’s staff, Frodo caught glimpses of stairs and arches, and of other passages and tunnels, sloping up, or running steeply down, or opening blankly dark on either side. It was bewildering beyond hope of remembering.

Gimli aided Gandalf very little, except by his stout courage. At least he was not, as were most of the others, troubled by the mere darkness in itself. Often the wizard consulted him at points where the choice of way was doubtful; but it was always Gandalf who had the final word. The Mines of Moria were vast and intricate beyond the imagination of Gimli, Glóin’s son, dwarf of the mountain-race though he was. To Gandalf the far-off

memories of a journey long before were now of little help, but even in the gloom and despite all windings of the road he knew whither he wished to go, and he did not falter, as long as there was a path that led towards his goal.

‘Do not be afraid!’ said Aragorn. There was a pause longer than usual, and Gandalf and Gimli were whispering together; the others were crowded behind, waiting anxiously. ‘Do not be afraid! I have been with him on many a journey, if never on one so dark; and there are tales in Rivendell of greater deeds of his than any that I have seen. He will not go astray—if there is any path to find. He has led us in here against our fears, but he will lead us out again, at whatever cost to himself. He is surer of finding the way home in a blind night than the cats of Queen Berúthiel.’

It was well for the Company that they had such a guide. They had no fuel nor any means of making torches; in the desperate scramble at the doors many things had been left behind. But without any light they would soon have come to grief. There were not only many roads to choose from, there were also in many places holes and pitfalls, and dark wells beside the path in which their passing feet echoed. There were fissures and chasms in the walls and floor, and every now and then a crack would open right before their feet. The widest was more than seven feet across, and it was long before Pippin could summon enough courage to leap over the dreadful gap. The noise of churning water came up from far below, as if some great mill-wheel was turning in the depths.

‘Rope!’ muttered Sam. ‘I knew I’d want it, if I hadn’t got it!’

As these dangers became more frequent their march became slower. Already they seemed to have been tramping on, on, endlessly to the mountains’ roots. They were more than weary, and yet there seemed no comfort in the thought of halting anywhere. Frodo’s spirits had risen for a while after his escape, and after food and a draught of the cordial; but now a deep uneasiness, growing to dread, crept over him again. Though he had been healed in Rivendell of the knife-stroke, that grim wound had not been without effect. His senses were sharper and more aware of things that could not be seen. One sign of change that he soon had noticed was that he could see more in the dark than any of his companions, save perhaps Gandalf. And he was in any case the bearer of the Ring: it hung upon its chain against his breast, and at times it seemed a heavy weight. He felt the certainty of evil ahead and of evil following; but he said nothing. He gripped tighter on the hilt of his sword and went on doggedly.

The Company behind him spoke seldom, and then only in hurried whispers. There was no sound but the sound of their own feet: the dull stump of Gimli’s dwarf-boots; the heavy tread of Boromir; the light step of Legolas; the soft, scarce-heard patter of hobbit-feet; and in the rear the slow firm footfalls of Aragorn with his long stride. When they halted for a moment they heard nothing at all, unless it were occasionally a faint trickle and drip of unseen water. Yet Frodo began to hear, or to imagine that he heard, something else: like the faint fall of soft bare feet. It was never loud enough, or near enough, for him to feel certain that he heard it; but once it had started it never stopped, while the Company was moving. But it was not an echo, for when they halted it pattered on for a little all by itself, and then grew still.

It was after nightfall when they had entered the Mines. They had been going for several hours with only brief halts, when Gandalf came to his first serious check. Before him stood a wide dark arch opening into three passages: all led in the same general direction, eastwards; but the left-hand passage plunged down, while the right-hand climbed up, and the middle way seemed to run on, smooth and level but very narrow.

‘I have no memory of this place at all!’ said Gandalf, standing uncertainly under the arch. He held up his staff in the hope of finding some marks or inscription that might help his choice; but nothing of the kind was to be seen. ‘I am too weary to decide,’ he said, shaking his head. ‘And I expect that you are all as weary as I am, or wearier. We had better halt here for what is left of the night. You know what I mean! In here it is ever dark; but outside the late Moon is riding westward and the middle-night has passed.’

‘Poor old Bill!’ said Sam. ‘I wonder where he is. I hope those wolves haven’t got him yet.’

To the left of the great arch they found a stone door: it was half closed, but swung back easily to a gentle thrust. Beyond there seemed to lie a wide chamber cut in the rock.



‘Steady! Steady!’ cried Gandalf, as Merry and Pippin pushed forward, glad to find a place where they could rest with at least more feeling of shelter than in the open passage. ‘Steady! You do not know what is inside yet. I will go first.’

He went in cautiously, and the others filed behind. ‘There!’ he said, pointing with his staff to the middle of the floor. Before his feet they saw a large round hole like the mouth of a well. Broken and rusty chains lay at the edge and trailed down into the black pit. Fragments of stone lay near.

‘One of you might have fallen in and still be wondering when you were going to strike the bottom,’ said Aragorn to Merry. ‘Let the guide go first while you have one.’

‘This seems to have been a guardroom, made for the watching of the three passages,’ said Gimli. ‘That hole was plainly a well for the guards’ use, covered with a stone lid. But the lid is broken, and we must all take care in the dark.’

Pippin felt curiously attracted by the well. While the others were unrolling blankets and making beds against the walls of the chamber, as far as possible from the hole in the floor, he crept to the edge and peered over. A chill air seemed to strike his face, rising from invisible depths. Moved by a sudden impulse he groped for a loose stone, and let it drop. He felt his heart beat many times before there was any sound. Then far below, as if the stone had fallen into deep water in some cavernous place, there came a *plunk*, very distant, but magnified and repeated in the hollow shaft.

‘What’s that?’ cried Gandalf. He was relieved when Pippin confessed what he had done; but he was angry, and Pippin could see his eye glinting. ‘Fool of a Took!’ he growled. ‘This is a serious journey, not a hobbit walking-party. Throw yourself in next time, and then you will be no further nuisance. Now be quiet!’

Nothing more was heard for several minutes; but then there came out of the depths faint knocks: *tom-tap, tap-tom*. They stopped, and when the echoes had died away, they were repeated: *tap-tom, tom-tap, tap-tap, tom*. They sounded disquietingly like signals of some sort; but after a while the knocking died away and was not heard again.

‘That was the sound of a hammer, or I have never heard one,’ said Gimli.

‘Yes,’ said Gandalf, ‘and I do not like it. It may have nothing to do with Peregrin’s foolish stone; but probably something has been disturbed that would have been better left quiet. Pray, do nothing of the kind again! Let us hope we shall get some rest without further trouble. You, Pippin, can go on the first watch, as a reward,’ he growled, as he rolled himself in a blanket.

Pippin sat miserably by the door in the pitch dark; but he kept on turning round, fearing that some unknown thing would crawl up out of the well. He wished he could cover the hole, if only with a blanket, but he dared not move or go near it, even though Gandalf seemed to be asleep.

Actually Gandalf was awake, though lying still and silent. He was deep in thought, trying to recall every memory of his former journey in the Mines, and considering anxiously the next course that he should take; a false turn now might be disastrous. After an hour he rose up and came over to Pippin.

‘Get into a corner and have a sleep, my lad,’ he said in a kindly tone. ‘You want to sleep, I expect. I cannot get a wink, so I may as well do the watching.’

‘I know what is the matter with me,’ he muttered, as he sat down by the door. ‘I need smoke! I have not tasted it since the morning before the snowstorm.’

The last thing that Pippin saw, as sleep took him, was a dark glimpse of the old wizard huddled on the floor, shielding a glowing chip in his gnarled hands between his knees. The flicker for a moment showed his sharp nose, and the puff of smoke.

It was Gandalf who roused them all from sleep. He had sat and watched all alone for about six hours, and had let the others rest. ‘And in the watches I have made up my mind,’ he said. ‘I do not like the feel of the middle way; and I do not like the smell of the left-hand way: there is foul air down there, or I am no guide. I shall take the right-hand passage. It is time we began to climb up again.’

For eight dark hours, not counting two brief halts, they marched on; and they met no danger, and heard nothing, and saw nothing but the faint gleam of the wizard's light, bobbing like a will-o'-the-wisp in front of them. The passage they had chosen wound steadily upwards. As far as they could judge it went in great mounting curves, and as it rose it grew loftier and wider. There were now no openings to other galleries or tunnels on either side, and the floor was level and sound, without pits or cracks. Evidently they had struck what once had been an important road; and they went forward quicker than they had done on their first march.

In this way they advanced some fifteen miles, measured in a direct line east, though they must have actually walked twenty miles or more. As the road climbed upwards, Frodo's spirits rose a little; but he still felt oppressed, and still at times he heard, or thought he heard, away behind the Company and beyond the fall and patter of their feet, a following footstep that was not an echo.

They had marched as far as the hobbits could endure without a rest, and all were thinking of a place where they could sleep, when suddenly the walls to right and left vanished. They seemed to have passed through some arched doorway into a black and empty space. There was a great draught of warmer air behind them, and before them the darkness was cold on their faces. They halted and crowded anxiously together.

Gandalf seemed pleased. 'I chose the right way,' he said. 'At last we are coming to the habitable parts, and I guess that we are not far now from the eastern side. But we are high up, a good deal higher than the Dimrill Gate, unless I am mistaken. From the feeling of the air we must be in a wide hall. I will now risk a little real light.'

He raised his staff, and for a brief instant there was a blaze like a flash of lightning. Great shadows sprang up and fled, and for a second they saw a vast roof far above their heads upheld by many mighty pillars hewn of stone. Before them and on either side stretched a huge empty hall; its black walls, polished and smooth as glass, flashed and glittered. Three other entrances they saw, dark black arches: one straight before them eastwards, and one on either side. Then the light went out.

'That is all that I shall venture on for the present,' said Gandalf. 'There used to be great windows on the mountain-side, and shafts leading out to the light in the upper reaches of the Mines. I think we have reached them now, but it is night outside again, and we cannot tell until morning. If I am right, tomorrow we may actually see the morning peeping in. But in the meanwhile we had better go no further. Let us rest, if we can. Things have gone well so far, and the greater part of the dark road is over. But we are not through yet, and it is a long way down to the Gates that open on the world.'

The Company spent that night in the great cavernous hall, huddled close together in a corner to escape the draught: there seemed to be a steady inflow of chill air through the eastern archway. All about them as they lay hung the darkness, hollow and immense, and they were oppressed by the loneliness and vastness of the dolven halls and endlessly branching stairs and passages. The wildest imaginings that dark rumour had ever suggested to the hobbits fell altogether short of the actual dread and wonder of Moria.

'There must have been a mighty crowd of dwarves here at one time,' said Sam; 'and every one of them busier than badgers for five hundred years to make all this, and most in hard rock too! What did they do it all for? They didn't live in these darksome holes surely?'

'These are not holes,' said Gimli. 'This is the great realm and city of the Dwarrowdelf. And of old it was not darksome, but full of light and splendour, as is still remembered in our songs.'

He rose and standing in the dark he began to chant in a deep voice, while the echoes ran away into the roof.

*The world was young, the mountains green,  
No stain yet on the Moon was seen,  
No words were laid on stream or stone  
When Durin woke and walked alone.*

*He named the nameless hills and dells;  
He drank from yet untasted wells;  
He stooped and looked in Mirrormere,*

*And saw a crown of stars appear,  
As gems upon a silver thread,  
Above the shadow of his head.*

*The world was fair, the mountains tall,  
In Elder Days before the fall  
Of mighty kings in Nargothrond  
And Gondolin<sup>363</sup>, who now beyond  
The Western Seas have passed away:  
The world was fair in Durin's Day.*

*A king he was on carven throne  
In many-pillared halls of stone  
With golden roof and silver floor,  
And runes of power upon the door.  
The light of sun and star and moon  
In shining lamps of crystal hewn  
Undimmed by cloud or shade of night  
There shone for ever fair and bright.*

*There hammer on the anvil smote,  
There chisel clove, and graver wrote;  
There forged was blade, and bound was hilt;  
The delver mined, the mason built.  
There beryl, pearl, and opal pale,  
And metal wrought like fishes' mail,  
Buckler and corslet, axe and sword,  
And shining spears were laid in hoard.*

*Unwearied then were Durin's folk;  
Beneath the mountains music woke:  
The harpers harped, the minstrels sang,  
And at the gates the trumpets rang.*

*The world is grey, the mountains old,  
The forge's fire is ashen-cold;  
No harp is wrung, no hammer falls:  
The darkness dwells in Durin's halls;  
The shadow lies upon his tomb  
In Moria, in Khazad-dûm.*

*But still the sunken stars appear  
In dark and windless Mirrormere;  
There lies his crown in water deep,  
Till Durin wakes again from sleep.*

‘I like that!’ said Sam. ‘I should like to learn it. *In Moria, in Khazad-dûm!* But it makes the darkness seem heavier, thinking of all those lamps. Are there piles of jewels and gold lying about here still?’

Gimli was silent. Having sung his song he would say no more.

‘Piles of jewels?’ said Gandalf. ‘No. The Orcs have often plundered Moria; there is nothing left in the upper halls. And since the dwarves fled, no-one dares to seek the shafts and treasures down in the deep places: they are drowned in water—or in a shadow of fear.’

‘Then what do the dwarves want to come back for?’ asked Sam.

‘For *mithril*,’<sup>397</sup> answered Gandalf. ‘The wealth of Moria<sup>397</sup> was not in gold and jewels, the toys of the Dwarves; nor in iron, their servant. Such things they found here, it is true, especially iron; but they did not need to delve for them: all things that they desired they could obtain in traffic. For here alone in the world was found Moria-silver, or true-silver as some have called it: *mithril* is the Elvish name. The Dwarves have a name which they do not tell. Its worth was ten times that of gold, and now it is beyond price; for little is left above ground, and even the Orcs dare not delve here for it. The lodes lead away north towards Caradhras, and down to darkness. The Dwarves tell no tale; but even as *mithril* was the foundation of their wealth, so also it was their destruction: they delved too greedily and too deep, and disturbed that from which they fled, Durin’s Bane. Of what they brought to light the Orcs have gathered nearly all, and given it in tribute to Sauron, who covets it.

‘*Mithril!* All folk desired it. It could be beaten like copper, and polished like glass; and the Dwarves could make of it a metal, light and yet harder than tempered steel. Its beauty was like to that of common silver, but the beauty of *mithril* did not tarnish or grow dim. The Elves dearly loved it, and among many uses they made of it *ithildin*, starmoon, which you saw upon the doors. Bilbo had a corslet of mithril-rings that Thorin gave him. I wonder what has become of it? Gathering dust still in Michel Delving Mathom-house, I suppose.’

‘What?’ cried Gimli, startled out of his silence. ‘A corslet of Moria-silver? That was a kingly gift!’

‘Yes,’ said Gandalf. ‘I never told him, but its worth was greater than the value of the whole Shire and everything in it.’

Frodo said nothing, but he put his hand under his tunic and touched the rings of his mail-shirt. He felt staggered to think that he had been walking about with the price of the Shire under his jacket. Had Bilbo known? He felt no doubt that Bilbo knew quite well. It was indeed a kingly gift. But now his thoughts had been carried away from the dark Mines, to Rivendell, to Bilbo, and to Bag End in the days while Bilbo was still there. He wished with all his heart that he was back there, and in those days, mowing the lawn, or pottering among the flowers, and that he had never heard of Moria, or *mithril*—or the Ring.

A deep silence fell. One by one the others fell asleep. Frodo was on guard. As if it were a breath that came in through unseen doors out of deep places, dread came over him. His hands were cold and his brow damp. He listened. All his mind was given to listening and nothing else for two slow hours; but he heard no sound, not even the imagined echo of a footfall.

His watch was nearly over, when, far off where he guessed that the western archway stood, he fancied that he could see two pale points of light, almost like luminous eyes. He started. His head had nodded. ‘I must have nearly fallen asleep on guard,’ he thought. ‘I was on the edge of a dream.’ He stood up and rubbed his eyes, and remained standing, peering into the dark, until he was relieved by Legolas.

When he lay down he quickly went to sleep, but it seemed to him that the dream went on: he heard whispers, and saw the two pale points of light approaching, slowly. He woke and found that the others were speaking softly near him, and that a dim light was falling on his face. High up above the eastern archway through a shaft near the roof came a long pale gleam; and across the hall through the northern arch light also glimmered faint and distantly.

Frodo sat up. ‘Good morning!’ said Gandalf. ‘For morning it is again at last. I was right, you see. We are high up on the east side of Moria. Before today is over we ought to find the Great Gates and see the waters of Mirrormere lying in the Dimrill Dale before us.’

‘I shall be glad,’ said Gimli. ‘I have looked on Moria, and it is very great, but it has become dark and dreadful; and we have found no sign of my kindred. I doubt now that Balin ever came here.’

After they had breakfasted Gandalf decided to go on again at once. ‘We are tired, but we shall rest better when we are outside,’ he said. ‘I think that none of us will wish to spend another night in Moria.’

‘No indeed!’ said Boromir. ‘Which way shall we take? Yonder eastward arch?’

‘Maybe,’ said Gandalf. ‘But I do not know yet exactly where we are. Unless I am quite astray, I guess that we are above and to the north of the Great Gates; and it may not be easy to find the right road down to them. The eastern arch will probably prove to be the way that we must take; but before we make up our minds we ought to look about us. Let us go towards that light in the north door. If we could find a window it would help, but I fear that the light comes only down deep shafts.’

Following his lead the Company passed under the northern arch. They found themselves in a wide corridor. As they went along it the glimmer grew stronger, and they saw that it came through a doorway on their right. It was high and flat-topped, and the stone door was still upon its hinges, standing half open. Beyond it was a large square chamber. It was dimly lit, but to their eyes, after so long a time in the dark, it seemed dazzlingly bright, and they blinked as they entered.

Their feet disturbed a deep dust upon the floor, and stumbled among things lying in the doorway whose shapes they could not at first make out. The chamber was lit by a wide shaft high in the further eastern wall; it slanted upwards and, far above, a small square patch of blue sky could be seen. The light of the shaft fell directly on a table in the middle of the room: a single oblong block, about two feet high, upon which was laid a great slab of white stone.

‘It looks like a tomb,’ muttered Frodo, and bent forwards with a curious sense of foreboding, to look more closely at it. Gandalf came quickly to his side. On the slab runes were deeply graven:



‘These are Daeron’s Runes, such as were used of old in Moria,’ said Gandalf. ‘Here is written in the tongues of Men and Dwarves:

BALIN SON OF FUNDIN LORD OF MORIA.’

‘He is dead then,’ said Frodo. ‘I feared it was so.’ Gimli cast his hood over his face.



## Chapter 5: The Bridge Of Khazad-Dûm

The Company of the Ring stood silent beside the tomb of Balin. Frodo thought of Bilbo and his long friendship with the dwarf, and of Balin's visit to the Shire long ago. In that dusty chamber in the mountains it seemed a thousand years ago and on the other side of the world.

At length they stirred and looked up, and began to search for anything that would give them tidings of Balin's fate, or show what had become of his folk. There was another smaller door on the other side of the chamber, under the shaft. By both the doors they could now see that many bones were lying, and among them were broken swords and axe-heads, and cloven shields and helms. Some of the swords were crooked: orc-scimitars with blackened blades.

There were many recesses cut in the rock of the walls, and in them were large iron-bound chests of wood. All had been broken and plundered; but beside the shattered lid of one there lay the remains of a book. It had been slashed and stabbed and partly burned, and it was so stained with black and other dark marks like old blood that little of it could be read. Gandalf lifted it carefully, but the leaves cracked and broke as he laid it on the slab. He pored over it for some time without speaking. Frodo and Gimli standing at his side could see, as he gingerly turned the leaves, that they were written by many different hands, in runes, both of Moria and of Dale, and here and there in Elvish script.

At last Gandalf looked up. 'It seems to be a record of the fortunes of Balin's folk,' he said. 'I guess that it began with their coming to Dimrill Dale nigh on thirty years ago: the pages seem to have numbers referring to the years after their arrival. The top page is marked *one—three*, so at least two are missing from the beginning. Listen to this!

*'We drove out orcs from the great gate and guard—I think; the next word is blurred and burned: probably room—we slew many in the bright—I think—sun in the dale. Floi was killed by an arrow. He slew the great. Then there is a blur followed by Floi under grass near Mirror mere. The next line or two I cannot read. Then comes We have taken the twentyfirst hall of North end to dwell in. There is I cannot read what. A shaft is mentioned. Then Balin has set up his seat in the Chamber of Mazarbul.'*

'The Chamber of Records,' said Gimli. 'I guess that is where we now stand.'

'Well, I can read no more for a long way,' said Gandalf, 'except the word *gold*, and *Durin's Axe* and something *helm*. Then *Balin is now lord of Moria*. That seems to end a chapter. After some stars another hand begins, and I can see *we found truesilver*, and later the word *wellforged*, and then something, I have it! *mithril*; and the last two lines *Óin to seek for the upper armouries of Third Deep*, something *go westwards*, a blur, *to Hollin gate*.'

Gandalf paused and set a few leaves aside. 'There are several pages of the same sort, rather hastily written and much damaged,' he said; 'but I can make little of them in this light. Now there must be a number of leaves missing, because they begin to be numbered *five*, the fifth year of the colony, I suppose. Let me see! No, they are too cut and stained; I cannot read them. We might do better in the sunlight. Wait! Here is something: a large bold hand using an Elvish script.'

'That would be Ori's hand,' said Gimli, looking over the wizard's arm. 'He could write well and speedily, and often used the Elvish characters.'

'I fear he had ill tidings to record in a fair hand,' said Gandalf. 'The first clear word is *sorrow*, but the rest of the line is lost, unless it ends in *estre*. Yes, it must be *yestre* followed by *day being the tenth of novembre Balin lord of Moria fell in Dimrill Dale. He went alone to look in Mirror mere. an orc shot him from behind a stone. we slew the orc, but many more . . . up from east up the Silverlode*. The remainder of the page is so blurred that

I can hardly make anything out, but I think I can read *we have barred the gates*, and then *can hold them long if* and then perhaps *horrible* and *suffer*. Poor Balin! He seems to have kept the title that he took for less than five years. I wonder what happened afterwards; but there is no time to puzzle out the last few pages. Here is the last page of all.' He paused and sighed.

'It is grim reading,' he said. 'I fear their end was cruel. Listen! *We cannot get out. We cannot get out. They have taken the Bridge and second hall. Frár and Lóni and Náli fell there.* Then there are four lines smeared so that I can only read *went 5 days ago*. The last lines run *the pool is up to the wall at Westgate. The Watcher in the Water took Óin. We cannot get out. The end comes*, and then *drums, drums in the deep*. I wonder what that means. The last thing written is in a trailing scrawl of elf-letters: *they are coming*. There is nothing more.' Gandalf paused and stood in silent thought.

A sudden dread and a horror of the chamber fell on the Company. '*We cannot get out*,' muttered Gimli. 'It was well for us that the pool had sunk a little, and that the Watcher was sleeping down at the southern end.'

Gandalf raised his head and looked round. 'They seem to have made a last stand by both doors,' he said; 'but there were not many left by that time. So ended the attempt to retake Moria! It was valiant but foolish. The time is not come yet. Now, I fear, we must say farewell to Balin son of Fundin. Here he must lie in the halls of his fathers. We will take this book, the Book of Mazarbul, and look at it more closely later. You had better keep it, Gimli, and take it back to Dáin, if you get a chance. It will interest him, though it will grieve him deeply. Come, let us go! The morning is passing.'

'Which way shall we go?' asked Boromir.

'Back to the hall,' answered Gandalf. 'But our visit to this room has not been in vain. I now know where we are. This must be, as Gimli says, the Chamber of Mazarbul; and the hall must be the twenty-first of the North-end. Therefore we should leave by the eastern arch of the hall, and bear right and south, and go downwards. The Twenty-first Hall should be on the Seventh Level, that is six above the level of the Gates. Come now! Back to the hall!'

Gandalf had hardly spoken these words, when there came a great noise: a rolling *Boom* that seemed to come from depths far below, and to tremble in the stone at their feet. They sprang towards the door in alarm. *Doom, doom* it rolled again, as if huge hands were turning the very caverns of Moria into a vast drum. Then there came an echoing blast: a great horn was blown in the hall, and answering horns and harsh cries were heard further off. There was a hurrying sound of many feet.

'They are coming!' cried Legolas.

'We cannot get out,' said Gimli.

'Trapped!' cried Gandalf. 'Why did I delay? Here we are, caught, just as they were before. But I was not here then. We will see what—'

*Doom, doom* came the drum-beat and the walls shook.

'Slam the doors and wedge them!' shouted Aragorn. 'And keep your packs on as long as you can: we may get a chance to cut our way out yet.'

'No!' said Gandalf. 'We must not get shut in. Keep the east door ajar! We will go that way, if we get a chance.'

Another harsh horn-call and shrill cries rang out. Feet were coming down the corridor. There was a ring and clatter as the Company drew their swords. Glamdring shone with a pale light, and Sting glinted at the edges. Boromir set his shoulder against the western door.

'Wait a moment! Do not close it yet!' said Gandalf. He sprang forward to Boromir's side and drew himself up to his full height.

'Who comes hither to disturb the rest of Balin Lord of Moria?' he cried in a loud voice.

There was a rush of hoarse laughter, like the fall of sliding stones into a pit; amid the clamour a deep voice was raised in command. *Doom, boom, doom* went the drums in the deep.

With a quick movement Gandalf stepped before the narrow opening of the door and thrust forward his staff. There was a dazzling flash that lit the chamber and the passage outside. For an instant the wizard looked out. Arrows whined and whistled down the corridor as he sprang back.

‘There are Orcs, very many of them,’ he said. ‘And some are large and evil: black Uruks of Mordor. For the moment they are hanging back, but there is something else there. A great cave-troll, I think, or more than one. There is no hope of escape that way.’

‘And no hope at all, if they come at the other door as well,’ said Boromir.

‘There is no sound outside here yet,’ said Aragorn, who was standing by the eastern door listening. ‘The passage on this side plunges straight down a stair: it plainly does not lead back towards the hall. But it is no good flying blindly this way with the pursuit just behind. We cannot block the door. Its key is gone and the lock is broken, and it opens inwards. We must do something to delay the enemy first. We will make them fear the Chamber of Mazarbul!’ he said grimly, feeling the edge of his sword, Andúril.

Heavy feet were heard in the corridor. Boromir flung himself against the door and heaved it to; then he wedged it with broken sword-blades and splinters of wood. The Company retreated to the other side of the chamber. But they had no chance to fly yet. There was a blow on the door that made it quiver; and then it began to grind slowly open, driving back the wedges. A huge arm and shoulder, with a dark skin of greenish scales, was thrust through the widening gap. Then a great, flat, toeless foot was forced through below. There was a dead silence outside.

Boromir leaped forward and hewed at the arm with all his might; but his sword rang, glanced aside, and fell from his shaken hand. The blade was notched.

Suddenly, and to his own surprise, Frodo felt a hot wrath blaze up in his heart. ‘The Shire!’ he cried, and springing beside Boromir, he stooped, and stabbed with Sting at the hideous foot. There was a bellow, and the foot jerked back, nearly wrenching Sting from Frodo’s arm. Black drops dripped from the blade and smoked on the floor. Boromir hurled himself against the door and slammed it again.

‘One for the Shire!’ cried Aragorn. ‘The hobbit’s bite is deep! You have a good blade, Frodo son of Drogo!’

There was a crash on the door, followed by crash after crash. Rams and hammers were beating against it. It cracked and staggered back, and the opening grew suddenly wide. Arrows came whistling in, but struck the northern wall, and fell harmlessly to the floor. There was a horn-blast and a rush of feet, and orcs one after another leaped into the chamber.

How many there were the Company could not count. The affray was sharp, but the orcs were dismayed by the fierceness of the defence. Legolas shot two through the throat. Gimli hewed the legs from under another that had sprung up on Balin’s tomb. Boromir and Aragorn slew many. When thirteen had fallen the rest fled shrieking, leaving the defenders unharmed, except for Sam who had a scratch along the scalp. A quick duck had saved him; and he had felled his orc: a sturdy thrust with his Barrow-blade. A fire was smouldering in his brown eyes that would have made Ted Sandyman step backwards, if he had seen it.

‘Now is the time!’ cried Gandalf. ‘Let us go, before the troll returns!’

But even as they retreated, and before Pippin and Merry had reached the stair outside, a huge orc-chieftain, almost man-high, clad in black mail from head to foot, leaped into the chamber; behind him his followers clustered in the doorway. His broad flat face was swart, his eyes were like coals, and his tongue was red; he wielded a great spear. With a thrust of his huge hide shield he turned Boromir’s sword and bore him backwards, throwing him to the ground. Diving under Aragorn’s blow with the speed of a striking snake he charged into the Company and thrust with his spear straight at Frodo. The blow caught him on the right side, and Frodo was hurled against the wall and pinned. Sam, with a cry, hacked at the spear-shaft, and it broke. But even as the orc flung down the truncheon and swept out his scimitar, Andúril came down upon his helm. There was a flash like flame and the helm burst asunder. The orc fell with cloven head. His followers fled howling, as Boromir and Aragorn sprang at them.

*Doom, doom* went the drums in the deep. The great voice rolled out again.



‘Now!’ shouted Gandalf. ‘Now is the last chance. Run for it!’

Aragorn picked up Frodo where he lay by the wall and made for the stair, pushing Merry and Pippin in front of him. The others followed; but Gimli had to be dragged away by Legolas: in spite of the peril he lingered by Balin’s tomb with his head bowed. Boromir hauled the eastern door to, grinding upon its hinges: it had great iron rings on either side, but could not be fastened.

‘I am all right,’ gasped Frodo. ‘I can walk. Put me down!’

Aragorn nearly dropped him in his amazement. ‘I thought you were dead!’ he cried.

‘Not yet!’ said Gandalf. ‘But there is no time for wonder. Off you go, all of you, down the stairs! Wait a few minutes for me at the bottom, but if I do not come soon, go on! Go quickly and choose paths leading right and downwards.’

‘We cannot leave you to hold the door alone!’ said Aragorn.

‘Do as I say!’ said Gandalf fiercely. ‘Swords are no more use here. Go!’

The passage was lit by no shaft and was utterly dark. They groped their way down a long flight of steps, and then looked back; but they could see nothing, except high above them the faint glimmer of the wizard’s staff. He seemed to be still standing on guard by the closed door. Frodo breathed heavily and leaned against Sam, who put his arms about him. They stood peering up the stairs into the darkness. Frodo thought he could hear the voice of Gandalf above, muttering words that ran down the sloping roof with a sighing echo. He could not catch what was said. The walls seemed to be trembling. Every now and again the drum-beats throbbed and rolled: *doom, doom*.

Suddenly at the top of the stair there was a stab of white light. Then there was a dull rumble and a heavy thud. The drum-beats broke out wildly: *doom-boom, doom-boom*, and then stopped. Gandalf came flying down the steps and fell to the ground in the midst of the Company.

‘Well, well! That’s over!’ said the wizard struggling to his feet. ‘I have done all that I could. But I have met my match, and have nearly been destroyed. But don’t stand here! Go on! You will have to do without light for a while: I am rather shaken. Go on! Go on! Where are you, Gimli? Come ahead with me! Keep close behind, all of you!’

They stumbled after him wondering what had happened. *Doom, doom* went the drum-beats again: they now sounded muffled and far away, but they were following. There was no other sound of pursuit, neither tramp of feet, nor any voice. Gandalf took no turns, right or left, for the passage seemed to be going in the direction that he desired. Every now and again it descended a flight of steps, fifty or more, to a lower level. At the moment that was their chief danger; for in the dark they could not see a descent, until they came on it and put their feet out into emptiness. Gandalf felt the ground with his staff like a blind man.

At the end of an hour they had gone a mile, or maybe a little more, and had descended many flights of stairs. There was still no sound of pursuit. Almost they began to hope that they would escape. At the bottom of the seventh flight Gandalf halted.

‘It is getting hot!’ he gasped. ‘We ought to be down at least to the level of the Gates now. Soon I think we should look for a left-hand turn to take us east. I hope it is not far. I am very weary. I must rest here a moment, even if all the orcs ever spawned are after us.’

Gimli took his arm and helped him down to a seat on the step. ‘What happened away up there at the door?’ he asked. ‘Did you meet the beater of the drums?’

‘I do not know,’ answered Gandalf. ‘But I found myself suddenly faced by something that I have not met before. I could think of nothing to do but to try and put a shutting-spell on the door. I know many; but to do things of that kind rightly requires time, and even then the door can be broken by strength.

‘As I stood there I could hear orc-voices on the other side: at any moment I thought they would burst it open. I could not hear what was said; they seemed to be talking in their own hideous language. All I caught was *ghâsh*:

that is “fire”. Then something came into the chamber—I felt it through the door, and the orcs themselves were afraid and fell silent. It laid hold of the iron ring, and then it perceived me and my spell.

‘What it was I cannot guess, but I have never felt such a challenge. The counter-spell was terrible. It nearly broke me. For an instant the door left my control and began to open! I had to speak a word of Command. That proved too great a strain. The door burst in pieces. Something dark as a cloud was blocking out all the light inside, and I was thrown backwards down the stairs. All the wall gave way, and the roof of the chamber as well, I think.

‘I am afraid Balin is buried deep, and maybe something else is buried there too. I cannot say. But at least the passage behind us was completely blocked. Ah! I have never felt so spent, but it is passing. And now what about you, Frodo? There was not time to say so, but I have never been more delighted in my life than when you spoke. I feared that it was a brave but dead hobbit that Aragorn was carrying.’

‘What about me?’ said Frodo. ‘I am alive, and whole I think. I am bruised and in pain, but it is not too bad.’

‘Well,’ said Aragorn, ‘I can only say that hobbits are made of a stuff so tough that I have never met the like of it. Had I known, I would have spoken softer in the Inn at Bree! That spear-thrust would have skewered a wild boar!’

‘Well, it did not skewer me, I am glad to say,’ said Frodo; ‘though I feel as if I had been caught between a hammer and an anvil’ He said no more. He found breathing painful.

‘You take after Bilbo,’ said Gandalf. ‘There is more about you than meets the eye, as I said of him long ago.’ Frodo wondered if the remark meant more than it said.

They now went on again. Before long Gimli spoke. He had keen eyes in the dark. ‘I think,’ he said, ‘that there is a light ahead. But it is not daylight. It is red. What can it be?’

‘*Ghâsh!*’ muttered Gandalf. ‘I wonder if that is what they meant: that the lower levels are on fire? Still, we can only go on.’

Soon the light became unmistakable, and could be seen by all. It was flickering and glowing on the walls away down the passage before them. They could now see their way: in front the road sloped down swiftly, and some way ahead there stood a low archway; through it the growing light came. The air became very hot.

When they came to the arch Gandalf went through, signing to them to wait. As he stood just beyond the opening they saw his face lit by a red glow. Quickly he stepped back.

‘There is some new devilry here,’ he said, ‘devised for our welcome, no doubt. But I know now where we are: we have reached the First Deep, the level immediately below the Gates. This is the Second Hall of Old Moria; and the Gates are near: away beyond the eastern end, on the left, not more than a quarter of a mile. Across the Bridge, up a broad stair, along a wide road, through the First Hall, and out! But come and look!’

They peered out. Before them was another cavernous hall. It was loftier and far longer than the one in which they had slept. They were near its eastern end; westward it ran away into darkness. Down the centre stalked a double line of towering pillars. They were carved like boles of mighty trees whose boughs upheld the roof with a branching tracery of stone. Their stems were smooth and black, but a red glow was darkly mirrored in their sides. Right across the floor, close to the feet of two huge pillars a great fissure had opened. Out of it a fierce red light came, and now and again flames licked at the brink and curled about the bases of the columns. Wisps of dark smoke wavered in the hot air.

‘If we had come by the main road down from the upper halls, we should have been trapped here,’ said Gandalf. ‘Let us hope that the fire now lies between us and pursuit. Come! There is no time to lose.’

Even as he spoke they heard again the pursuing drum-beat: *Doom, doom, doom*. Away beyond the shadows at the western end of the hall there came cries and horn-calls. *Doom, doom*: the pillars seemed to tremble and the flames to quiver.

‘Now for the last race!’ said Gandalf. ‘If the sun is shining outside, we may still escape. After me!’

He turned left and sped across the smooth floor of the hall. The distance was greater than it had looked. As they ran they heard the beat and echo of many hurrying feet behind. A shrill yell went up: they had been seen. There was a ring and clash of steel. An arrow whistled over Frodo's head.

Boromir laughed. 'They did not expect this,' he said. 'The fire has cut them off. We are on the wrong side!'

'Look ahead!' called Gandalf. 'The Bridge is near. It is dangerous and narrow.'

Suddenly Frodo saw before him a black chasm. At the end of the hall the floor vanished and fell to an unknown depth. The outer door could only be reached by a slender bridge of stone, without kerb or rail, that spanned the chasm with one curving spring of fifty feet. It was an ancient defence of the Dwarves against any enemy that might capture the First Hall and the outer passages. They could only pass across it in single file. At the brink Gandalf halted and the others came up in a pack behind.

'Lead the way, Gimli!' he said. 'Pippin and Merry next. Straight on, and up the stair beyond the door!'

Arrows fell among them. One struck Frodo and sprang back. Another pierced Gandalf's hat and stuck there like a black feather. Frodo looked behind. Beyond the fire he saw swarming black figures: there seemed to be hundreds of orcs. They brandished spears and scimitars which shone red as blood in the firelight. *Doom, doom* rolled the drum-beats, growing louder and louder, *doom, doom*.

Legolas turned and set an arrow to the string, though it was a long shot for his small bow. He drew, but his hand fell, and the arrow slipped to the ground. He gave a cry of dismay and fear. Two great trolls appeared; they bore great slabs of stone, and flung them down to serve as gangways over the fire. But it was not the trolls that had filled the Elf with terror. The ranks of the orcs had opened, and they crowded away, as if they themselves were afraid. Something was coming up behind them. What it was could not be seen: it was like a great shadow, in the middle of which was a dark form, of man-shape maybe, yet greater; and a power and terror seemed to be in it and to go before it.

It came to the edge of the fire and the light faded as if a cloud had bent over it. Then with a rush it leaped across the fissure. The flames roared up to greet it, and wreathed about it; and a black smoke swirled in the air. Its streaming mane kindled, and blazed behind it. In its right hand was a blade like a stabbing tongue of fire; in its left it held a whip of many thongs.

'Ai! ai!' wailed Legolas. 'A Balrog! A Balrog is come!'

Gimli stared with wide eyes. 'Durin's Bane!' he cried, and letting his axe fall he covered his face.

'A Balrog,' muttered Gandalf. 'Now I understand.' He faltered and leaned heavily on his staff. 'What an evil fortune! And I am already weary.'

The dark figure streaming with fire raced towards them. The orcs yelled and poured over the stone gangways. Then Boromir raised his horn and blew. Loud the challenge rang and bellowed, like the shout of many throats under the cavernous roof. For a moment the orcs quailed and the fiery shadow halted. Then the echoes died as suddenly as a flame blown out by a dark wind, and the enemy advanced again.

'Over the bridge!' cried Gandalf, recalling his strength. 'Fly! This is a foe beyond any of you. I must hold the narrow way. Fly!' Aragorn and Boromir did not heed the command, but still held their ground, side by side, behind Gandalf at the far end of the bridge. The others halted just within the doorway at the hall's end, and turned, unable to leave their leader to face the enemy alone.

The Balrog reached the bridge. Gandalf stood in the middle of the span, leaning on the staff in his left hand, but in his other hand Glamdring gleamed, cold and white. His enemy halted again, facing him, and the shadow about it reached out like two vast wings. It raised the whip, and the thongs whined and cracked. Fire came from its nostrils. But Gandalf stood firm.

'You cannot pass,' he said. The orcs stood still, and a dead silence fell. 'I am a servant of the Secret Fire, wielder of the flame of Anor. You cannot pass. The dark fire will not avail you, flame of Udûn. Go back to the Shadow! You cannot pass.'

The Balrog made no answer. The fire in it seemed to die, but the darkness grew. It stepped forward slowly on to the bridge, and suddenly it drew itself up to a great height, and its wings were spread from wall to wall; but still Gandalf could be seen, glimmering in the gloom; he seemed small, and altogether alone: grey and bent, like a wizened tree before the onset of a storm.

From out of the shadow a red sword leaped flaming.

Glamdring glittered white in answer.

There was a ringing clash and a stab of white fire. The Balrog fell back, and its sword flew up in molten fragments. The wizard swayed on the bridge, stepped back a pace, and then again stood still.

‘You cannot pass!’ he said.

With a bound the Balrog leaped full upon the bridge. Its whip whirled and hissed.

‘He cannot stand alone!’ cried Aragorn suddenly and ran back along the bridge. ‘*Elendil!*’ he shouted. ‘I am with you, Gandalf!’

‘Gondor!’ cried Boromir and leaped after him.

At that moment Gandalf lifted his staff, and crying aloud he smote the bridge before him. The staff broke asunder and fell from his hand. A blinding sheet of white flame sprang up. The bridge cracked. Right at the Balrog’s feet it broke, and the stone upon which it stood crashed into the gulf, while the rest remained, poised, quivering like a tongue of rock thrust out into emptiness.

With a terrible cry the Balrog fell forward, and its shadow plunged down and vanished. But even as it fell it swung its whip, and the thongs lashed and curled about the wizard’s knees, dragging him to the brink. He staggered and fell, grasped vainly at the stone, and slid into the abyss. ‘Fly, you fools!’ he cried, and was gone.

The fires went out, and blank darkness fell. The Company stood rooted with horror staring into the pit. Even as Aragorn and Boromir came flying back, the rest of the bridge cracked and fell. With a cry Aragorn roused them.

‘Come! I will lead you now!’ he called. ‘We must obey his last command. Follow me!’

They stumbled wildly up the great stairs beyond the door, Aragorn leading, Boromir at the rear. At the top was a wide echoing passage. Along this they fled. Frodo heard Sam at his side weeping, and then he found that he himself was weeping as he ran. *Doom, doom, doom* the drum-beats rolled behind, mournful now and slow; *doom!*

They ran on. The light grew before them; great shafts pierced the roof. They ran swifter. They passed into a hall, bright with daylight from its high windows in the east. They fled across it. Through its huge broken doors they passed, and suddenly before them the Great Gates opened, an arch of blazing light.

There was a guard of orcs crouching in the shadows behind the great door-posts towering on either side, but the gates were shattered and cast down. Aragorn smote to the ground the captain that stood in his path, and the rest fled in terror of his wrath. The Company swept past them and took no heed of them. Out of the Gates they ran and sprang down the huge and age-worn steps, the threshold of Moria.

Thus, at last, they came beyond hope under the sky and felt the wind on their faces.

They did not halt until they were out of bowshot from the walls. Dimrill Dale lay about them. The shadow of the Misty Mountains lay upon it, but eastwards there was a golden light on the land. It was but one hour after noon. The sun was shining; the clouds were white and high.

They looked back. Dark yawned the archway of the Gates under the mountain-shadow. Faint and far beneath the earth rolled the slow drum-beats: *doom*. A thin black smoke trailed out. Nothing else was to be seen; the dale all around was empty. *Doom*. Grief at last wholly overcame them, and they wept long: some standing and silent, some cast upon the ground. *Doom, doom*. The drum-beats faded.



## Chapter 6: Lothlórien

‘Alas! I fear we cannot stay here longer,’ said Aragorn. He looked towards the mountains and held up his sword. ‘Farewell, Gandalf!’ he cried. ‘Did I not say to you: *if you pass the doors of Moria, beware?* Alas that I spoke true! What hope have we without you?’

He turned to the Company. ‘We must do without hope,’ he said. ‘At least we may yet be avenged. Let us gird ourselves and weep no more! Come! We have a long road, and much to do.’

They rose and looked about them. Northward the dale ran up into a glen of shadows between two great arms of the mountains, above which three white peaks were shining: Celebdil, Fanuidhol, Caradhras, the Mountains of Moria. At the head of the glen a torrent flowed like a white lace over an endless ladder of short falls, and a mist of foam hung in the air about the mountains’ feet.

‘Yonder is the Dimrill Stair,’ said Aragorn, pointing to the falls. ‘Down the deep-cloven way that climbs beside the torrent we should have come, if fortune had been kinder.’

‘Or Caradhras less cruel,’ said Gimli. ‘There he stands smiling in the sun!’ He shook his fist at the furthest of the snow-capped peaks and turned away.

To the east the outflung arm of the mountains marched to a sudden end, and far lands could be descried beyond them, wide and vague. To the south the Misty Mountains receded endlessly as far as sight could reach. Less than a mile away, and a little below them, for they still stood high up on the west side of the dale, there lay a mere. It was long and oval, shaped like a great spear-head thrust deep into the northern glen; but its southern end was beyond the shadows under the sunlit sky. Yet its waters were dark: a deep blue like clear evening sky seen from a lamp-lit room. Its face was still and unruffled. About it lay a smooth sward, shelving down on all sides to its bare unbroken rim.

‘There lies the Mirrormere, deep Kheled-zâram!’ said Gimli sadly. ‘I remember that he said: “May you have joy of the sight! But we cannot linger there.” Now long shall I journey ere I have joy again. It is I that must hasten away, and he that must remain.’

The Company now went down the road from the Gates. It was rough and broken, fading to a winding track between heather and whin that thrust amid the cracking stones. But still it could be seen that once long ago a great paved way had wound upwards from the lowlands to the Dwarf-kingdom. In places there were ruined works of stone beside the path, and mounds of green topped with slender birches, or fir-trees sighing in the wind. An eastward bend led them hard by the sward of Mirrormere, and there not far from the roadside stood a single column broken at the top.

‘That is Durin’s Stone!’ cried Gimli. ‘I cannot pass without turning aside for a moment to look at the wonder of the dale!’

‘Be swift then!’ said Aragorn, looking back towards the Gates. ‘The Sun sinks early. The Orcs will not, maybe, come out till after dusk, but we must be far away before nightfall. The Moon is almost spent, and it will be dark tonight.’

‘Come with me, Frodo!’ cried the dwarf, springing from the road. ‘I would not have you go without seeing Kheled-zâram.’ He ran down the long green slope. Frodo followed slowly, drawn by the still blue water in spite of hurt and weariness; Sam came up behind.

Beside the standing stone Gimli halted and looked up. It was cracked and weather-worn, and the faint runes upon its side could not be read. 'This pillar marks the spot where Durin first looked in the Mirrormere,' said the dwarf. 'Let us look ourselves once, ere we go!'

They stooped over the dark water. At first they could see nothing. Then slowly they saw the forms of the encircling mountains mirrored in a profound blue, and the peaks were like plumes of white flame above them; beyond there was a space of sky. There like jewels sunk in the deep shone glinting stars, though sunlight was in the sky above. Of their own stooping forms no shadow could be seen.

'O Kheled-zâram fair and wonderful!' said Gimli. 'There lies the Crown of Durin till he wakes. Farewell!' He bowed, and turned away, and hastened back up the greensward to the road again.

'What did you see?' said Pippin to Sam, but Sam was too deep in thought to answer.

The road now turned south and went quickly downwards, running out from between the arms of the dale. Some way below the mere they came on a deep well of water, clear as crystal, from which a freshet fell over a stone lip and ran glistening and gurgling down a steep rocky channel.

'Here is the spring from which the Silverlode rises,' said Gimli. 'Do not drink of it! It is icy cold.'

'Soon it becomes a swift river, and it gathers water from many other mountain-streams,' said Aragorn. 'Our road leads beside it for many miles. For I shall take you by the road that Gandalf chose, and first I hope to come to the woods where the Silverlode flows into the Great River—out yonder.' They looked as he pointed, and before them they could see the stream leaping down to the trough of the valley, and then running on and away into the lower lands, until it was lost in a golden haze.

'There lie the woods of Lothlórien!' said Legolas. 'That is the fairest of all the dwellings of my people. There are no trees like the trees of that land. For in the autumn their leaves fall not, but turn to gold. Not till the spring<sup>390</sup> comes and the new green opens do they fall, and then the boughs are laden with yellow flowers; and the floor of the wood is golden, and golden is the roof, and its pillars are of silver, for the bark of the trees is smooth and grey. So still our songs in Mirkwood say. My heart would be glad if I were beneath the eaves of that wood, and it were springtime!'

'My heart will be glad, even in the winter,' said Aragorn. 'But it lies many miles away. Let us hasten!'

For some time Frodo and Sam managed to keep up with the others; but Aragorn was leading them at a great pace, and after a while they lagged behind. They had eaten nothing since the early morning. Sam's cut was burning like fire, and his head felt light. In spite of the shining sun the wind seemed chill after the warm darkness of Moria. He shivered. Frodo felt every step more painful and he gasped for breath.

At last Legolas turned, and seeing them now far behind, he spoke to Aragorn. The others halted, and Aragorn ran back, calling to Boromir to come with him.

'I am sorry, Frodo!' he cried, full of concern. 'So much has happened this day and we have such need of haste, that I have forgotten that you were hurt; and Sam too. You should have spoken. We have done nothing to ease you, as we ought, though all the orcs of Moria were after us. Come now! A little further on there is a place where we can rest for a little. There I will do what I can for you. Come, Boromir! We will carry them.'

Soon afterwards they came upon another stream that ran down from the west, and joined its bubbling water with the hurrying Silverlode. Together they plunged over a fall of green-hued stone, and foamed down into a dell. About it stood fir-trees, short and bent, and its sides were steep and clothed with harts-tongue and shrubs of whortle-berry. At the bottom there was a level space through which the stream flowed noisily over shining pebbles. Here they rested. It was now nearly three hours after noon, and they had come only a few miles from the Gates. Already the sun was westering.

While Gimli and the two younger hobbits kindled a fire of brush-and fir-wood, and drew water, Aragorn tended Sam and Frodo. Sam's wound was not deep, but it looked ugly, and Aragorn's face was grave as he examined it. After a moment he looked up with relief.

‘Good luck, Sam!’ he said. ‘Many have received worse than this in payment for the slaying of their first orc. The cut is not poisoned, as the wounds of orc-blades too often are. It should heal well when I have tended it. Bathe it when Gimli has heated water.’

He opened his pouch and drew out some withered leaves. ‘They are dry, and some of their virtue has gone,’ he said, ‘but here I have still some of the leaves of *athelas* that I gathered near Weathertop. Crush one in the water, and wash the wound clean, and I will bind it. Now it is your turn, Frodo!’

‘I am all right,’ said Frodo, reluctant to have his garments touched. ‘All I needed was some food and a little rest.’

‘No!’ said Aragorn. ‘We must have a look and see what the hammer and the anvil have done to you. I still marvel that you are alive at all.’ Gently he stripped off Frodo’s old jacket and worn tunic, and gave a gasp of wonder. Then he laughed. The silver corslet shimmered before his eyes like the light upon a rippling sea. Carefully he took it off and held it up, and the gems on it glittered like stars, and the sound of the shaken rings was like the tinkle of rain in a pool.

‘Look, my friends!’ he called. ‘Here’s a pretty hobbit-skin to wrap an elven-princeling in! If it were known that hobbits had such hides, all the hunters of Middle-earth would be riding to the Shire.’

‘And all the arrows of all the hunters in the world would be in vain,’ said Gimli, gazing at the mail in wonder. ‘It is a mithril-coat. Mithril! I have never seen or heard tell of one so fair. Is this the coat that Gandalf spoke of? Then he undervalued it. But it was well given!’

‘I have often wondered what you and Bilbo were doing, so close in his little room,’ said Merry. ‘Bless the old hobbit! I love him more than ever. I hope we get a chance of telling him about it!’

There was a dark and blackened bruise on Frodo’s right side and breast. Under the mail there was a shirt of soft leather, but at one point the rings had been driven through it into the flesh. Frodo’s left side also was scored and bruised where he had been hurled against the wall. While the others set the food ready, Aragorn bathed the hurts with water in which *athelas* was steeped. The pungent fragrance filled the dell, and all those who stooped over the steaming water felt refreshed and strengthened. Soon Frodo felt the pain leave him, and his breath grew easy: though he was stiff and sore to the touch for many days. Aragorn bound some soft pads of cloth at his side.

‘The mail is marvellously light,’ he said. ‘Put it on again, if you can bear it. My heart is glad to know that you have such a coat. Do not lay it aside, even in sleep, unless fortune brings you where you are safe for a while; and that will seldom chance while your quest lasts.’

When they had eaten, the Company got ready to go on. They put out the fire and hid all traces of it. Then climbing out of the dell they took to the road again. They had not gone far before the sun sank behind the westward heights and great shadows crept down the mountain-sides. Dusk veiled their feet, and mist rose in the hollows. Away in the east the evening light lay pale upon the dim lands of distant plain and wood. Sam and Frodo now feeling eased and greatly refreshed were able to go at a fair pace, and with only one brief halt Aragorn led the Company on for nearly three more hours.

It was dark. Deep night had fallen. There were many clear stars, but the fast-waning moon would not be seen till late. Gimli and Frodo were at the rear, walking softly and not speaking, listening for any sound upon the road behind. At length Gimli broke the silence.

‘Not a sound but the wind,’ he said. ‘There are no goblins near, or my ears are made of wood. It is to be hoped that the Orcs will be content with driving us from Moria. And maybe that was all their purpose, and they had nothing else to do with us—with the Ring. Though Orcs will often pursue foes for many leagues into the plain, if they have a fallen captain to avenge.’

Frodo did not answer. He looked at Sting, and the blade was dull. Yet he had heard something, or thought he had. As soon as the shadows had fallen about them and the road behind was dim, he had heard again the quick patter of feet. Even now he heard it. He turned swiftly. There were two tiny gleams of light behind, or for a moment he thought he saw them, but at once they slipped aside and vanished.

‘What is it?’ said the dwarf.

‘I don’t know,’ answered Frodo. ‘I thought I heard feet, and I thought I saw a light—like eyes. I have thought so often, since we first entered Moria.’

Gimli halted and stooped to the ground. ‘I hear nothing but the night-speech of plant and stone,’ he said. ‘Come! Let us hurry! The others are out of sight.’

The night-wind blew chill up the valley to meet them. Before them a wide grey shadow loomed, and they heard an endless rustle of leaves like poplars in the breeze.

‘Lothlórien!’ cried Legolas. ‘Lothlórien! We have come to the eaves of the Golden Wood. Alas that it is winter!’

Under the night the trees stood tall before them, arched over the road and stream that ran suddenly beneath their spreading boughs. In the dim light of the stars their stems were grey, and their quivering leaves a hint of fallow gold.

‘Lothlórien!’ said Aragorn. ‘Glad I am to hear again the wind in the trees! We are still little more than five leagues from the Gates, but we can go no further. Here let us hope that the virtue of the Elves will keep us tonight from the peril that comes behind.’

‘If Elves indeed still dwell here in the darkening world,’ said Gimli.

‘It is long since any of my own folk journeyed hither back to the land whence we wandered in ages long ago,’ said Legolas, ‘but we hear that Lórien is not yet deserted, for there is a secret power here that holds evil from the land. Nevertheless its folk are seldom seen, and maybe they dwell now deep in the woods and far from the northern border.’

‘Indeed deep in the wood they dwell,’ said Aragorn, and sighed as if some memory stirred in him. ‘We must fend for ourselves tonight. We will go forward a short way, until the trees are all about us, and then we will turn aside from the path and seek a place to rest in.’

He stepped forward; but Boromir stood irresolute and did not follow. ‘Is there no other way?’ he said.

‘What other fairer way would you desire?’ said Aragorn.

‘A plain road, though it led through a hedge of swords,’ said Boromir. ‘By strange paths has this Company been led, and so far to evil fortune. Against my will we passed under the shades of Moria, to our loss. And now we must enter the Golden Wood, you say. But of that perilous land we have heard in Gondor, and it is said that few come out who once go in; and of that few none have escaped unscathed.’

‘Say not *unscathed*, but if you say *unchanged*, then maybe you will speak the truth,’ said Aragorn. ‘But lore wanes in Gondor, Boromir, if in the city of those who once were wise they now speak evil of Lothlórien. Believe what you will, there is no other way for us—unless you would go back to Moria-gate, or scale the pathless mountains, or swim the Great River all alone.’

‘Then lead on!’ said Boromir. ‘But it is perilous.’

‘Perilous indeed,’ said Aragorn, ‘fair and perilous; but only evil need fear it, or those who bring some evil with them. Follow me!’

They had gone little more than a mile into the forest when they came upon another stream flowing down swiftly from the tree-clad slopes that climbed back westward towards the mountains. They heard it splashing over a fall away among the shadows on their right. Its dark hurrying waters ran across the path before them, and joined the Silverlode in a swirl of dim pools among the roots of trees.

‘Here is Nimrodel!’ said Legolas. ‘Of this stream the Silvan Elves made many songs long ago, and still we sing them in the North, remembering the rainbow on its falls, and the golden flowers that floated in its foam. All is dark now and the Bridge of Nimrodel is broken down. I will bathe my feet, for it is said that the water is healing to the weary.’ He went forward and climbed down the deep-cloven bank and stepped into the stream.



‘Follow me!’ he cried. ‘The water is not deep. Let us wade across! On the further bank we can rest, and the sound of the falling water may bring us sleep and forgetfulness of grief.’

One by one they climbed down and followed Legolas. For a moment Frodo stood near the brink and let the water flow over his tired feet. It was cold but its touch was clean, and as he went on and it mounted to his knees, he felt that the stain of travel and all weariness was washed from his limbs.

When all the Company had crossed, they sat and rested and ate a little food; and Legolas told them tales of Lothlórien that the Elves of Mirkwood still kept in their hearts, of sunlight and starlight upon the meadows by the Great River before the world was grey.

At length a silence fell, and they heard the music of the waterfall running sweetly in the shadows. Almost Frodo fancied that he could hear a voice singing, mingled with the sound of the water.

‘Do you hear the voice of Nimrodel?’ asked Legolas. ‘I will sing you a song of the maiden Nimrodel, who bore the same name as the stream beside which she lived long ago. It is a fair song in our woodland tongue; but this is how it runs in the Westron Speech, as some in Rivendell now sing it.’ In a soft voice hardly to be heard amid the rustle of the leaves above them he began:

*An Elven-maid there was of old,  
A shining star by day:  
Her mantle white was hemmed with gold,  
Her shoes of silver-grey.*

*A star was bound upon her brows,  
A light was on her hair  
As sun upon the golden boughs  
In Lórien the fair.*

*Her hair was long, her limbs were white,  
And fair she was and free;  
And in the wind she went as light  
As leaf of linden-tree.*

*Beside the falls of Nimrodel,  
By water clear and cool,  
Her voice as falling silver fell  
Into the shining pool.*

*Where now she wanders none can tell,  
In sunlight or in shade;  
For lost of yore was Nimrodel  
And in the mountains strayed.*

*The elven-ship in haven grey  
Beneath the mountain-lee  
Awaited her for many a day  
Beside the roaring sea.*

*A wind by night in Northern lands  
Arose, and loud it cried,  
And drove the ship from elven-strands  
Across the streaming tide.*

*When dawn came dim the land was lost,*

*The mountains sinking grey  
Beyond the heaving waves that tossed  
Their plumes of blinding spray.*

*Amroth beheld the fading shore  
Now low beyond the swell,  
And cursed the faithless ship that bore  
Him far from Nimrodel.*

*Of old he was an Elven-king,  
A lord of tree and glen,  
When golden were the boughs in spring  
In fair Lothlórien.*

*From helm to sea they saw him leap,  
As arrow from the string,  
And dive into the water deep,  
As mew upon the wing.*

*The wind was in his flowing hair,  
The foam about him shone;  
Afar they saw him strong and fair  
Go riding like a swan.*

*But from the West has come no word,  
And on the Hither Shore  
No tidings Elven-folk have heard  
Of Amroth evermore.*

The voice of Legolas faltered, and the song ceased. ‘I cannot sing any more,’ he said. ‘That is but a part, for I have forgotten much. It is long and sad, for it tells how sorrow came upon Lothlórien, Lórien of the Blossom, when the Dwarves awakened evil in the mountains.’

‘But the Dwarves did not make the evil,’ said Gimli.

‘I said not so; yet evil came,’ answered Legolas sadly. ‘Then many of the Elves of Nimrodel’s kindred left their dwellings and departed, and she was lost far in the South, in the passes of the White Mountains; and she came not to the ship where Amroth her lover waited for her. But in the spring when the wind is in the new leaves the echo of her voice may still be heard by the falls that bear her name. And when the wind is in the South the voice of Amroth comes up from the sea; for Nimrodel flows into Silverlode, that Elves call Celebrant, and Celebrant into Anduin the Great, and Anduin flows into the Bay of Belfalas whence the Elves of Lórien set sail. But neither Nimrodel nor Amroth came ever back.

‘It is told that she had a house built in the branches of a tree that grew near the falls; for that was the custom of the Elves of Lórien, to dwell in the trees, and maybe it is so still. Therefore they were called the Galadhrim, the Tree-people. Deep in their forest the trees are very great. The people of the woods did not delve in the ground like Dwarves, nor build strong places of stone before the Shadow came.’

‘And even in these latter days dwelling in the trees might be thought safer than sitting on the ground,’ said Gimli. He looked across the stream to the road that led back to Dimrill Dale, and then up into the roof of dark boughs above.

‘Your words bring good counsel, Gimli,’ said Aragorn. ‘We cannot build a house, but tonight we will do as the Galadhrim and seek refuge in the tree-tops, if we can. We have sat here beside the road already longer than was wise.’

The Company now turned aside from the path, and went into the shadow of the deeper woods, westward along the mountain-stream away from Silverlode. Not far from the falls of Nimrodel they found a cluster of trees, some of which overhung the stream. Their great grey trunks were of mighty girth, but their height could not be guessed.

‘I will climb up,’ said Legolas. ‘I am at home among trees, by root or bough, though these trees are of a kind strange to me, save as a name in song. *Mellyrn* they are called, and are those that bear the yellow blossom, but I have never climbed in one. I will see now what is their shape and way of growth.’

‘Whatever it may be,’ said Pippin, ‘they will be marvellous trees indeed if they can offer any rest at night, except to birds. I cannot sleep on a perch!’

‘Then dig a hole in the ground,’ said Legolas, ‘if that is more after the fashion of your kind. But you must dig swift and deep, if you wish to hide from Orcs.’ He sprang lightly up from the ground and caught a branch that grew from the trunk high above his head. But even as he swung there for a moment, a voice spoke suddenly from the tree-shadows above him.

‘*Daro!*’ it said in commanding tone, and Legolas dropped back to earth in surprise and fear. He shrank against the bole of the tree.

‘Stand still!’ he whispered to the others. ‘Do not move or speak!’

There was a sound of soft laughter over their heads, and then another clear voice spoke in an elven-tongue. Frodo could understand little of what was said, for the speech that the Silvan folk east of the mountains used among themselves was unlike that of the West. Legolas looked up and answered in the same language.<sup>25</sup>

‘Who are they, and what do they say?’ asked Merry.

‘They’re Elves,’ said Sam. ‘Can’t you hear their voices?’

‘Yes, they are Elves,’ said Legolas; ‘and they say that you breathe so loud that they could shoot you in the dark.’ Sam hastily put his hand over his mouth. ‘But they say also that you need have no fear. They have been aware of us for a long while. They heard my voice across the Nimrodel, and knew that I was one of their Northern kindred, and therefore they did not hinder our crossing; and afterwards they heard my song. Now they bid me climb up with Frodo; for they seem to have had some tidings of him and of our journey. The others they ask to wait a little, and to keep watch at the foot of the tree, until they have decided what is to be done.’

Out of the shadows a ladder was let down: it was made of rope, silver-grey and glimmering in the dark, and though it looked slender it proved strong enough to bear many men. Legolas ran lightly up, and Frodo followed slowly; behind came Sam trying not to breathe loudly. The branches of the mallorn-tree grew out nearly straight from the trunk, and then swept upward; but near the top the main stem divided into a crown of many boughs, and among these they found that there had been built a wooden platform, or *flet* as such things were called in those days: the Elves called it a *talan*. It was reached by a round hole in the centre through which the ladder passed.

When Frodo came at last up on to the flet he found Legolas seated with three other Elves. They were clad in shadowy-grey, and could not be seen among the tree-stems, unless they moved suddenly. They stood up, and one of them uncovered a small lamp that gave out a slender silver beam. He held it up, looking at Frodo’s face, and Sam’s. Then he shut off the light again, and spoke words of welcome in his elven-tongue. Frodo spoke haltingly in return.

‘Welcome!’ the Elf then said again in the Common Language, speaking slowly. ‘We seldom use any tongue but our own; for we dwell now in the heart of the forest, and do not willingly have dealings with any other folk. Even our own kindred in the North are sundered from us. But there are some of us still who go abroad for the

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<sup>25</sup> See note in Appendix F: *Of the Elves*.

gathering of news and the watching of our enemies, and they speak the languages of other lands. I am one. Haldir is my name. My brothers, Rúmil and Orophin, speak little of your tongue.

‘But we have heard rumours of your coming, for the messengers of Elrond passed by Lórien on their way home up the Dimrill Stair. We had not heard of—hobbits, of halflings, for many a long year, and did not know that any yet dwelt in Middle-earth. You do not look evil! And since you come with an Elf of our kindred, we are willing to befriend you, as Elrond asked; though it is not our custom to lead strangers through our land. But you must stay here tonight. How many are you?’

‘Eight,’ said Legolas. ‘Myself, four hobbits; and two men, one of whom, Aragorn, is an Elf-friend of the folk of Westerosse.’

‘The name of Aragorn son of Arathorn is known in Lórien,’ said Haldir, ‘and he has the favour of the Lady. All then is well. But you have yet spoken only of seven.’

‘The eighth is a dwarf,’ said Legolas.

‘A dwarf!’ said Haldir. ‘That is not well. We have not had dealings with the Dwarves since the Dark Days. They are not permitted in our land. I cannot allow him to pass.’

‘But he is from the Lonely Mountain, one of Dáin’s trusty people, and friendly to Elrond,’ said Frodo. ‘Elrond himself chose him to be one of our companions, and he has been brave and faithful.’

The Elves spoke together in soft voices, and questioned Legolas in their own tongue. ‘Very good,’ said Haldir at last. ‘We will do this, though it is against our liking. If Aragorn and Legolas will guard him, and answer for him, he shall pass; but he must go blindfold through Lothlórien.’

‘But now we must debate no longer. Your folk must not remain on the ground. We have been keeping watch on the rivers, ever since we saw a great troop of Orcs going north towards Moria, along the skirts of the mountains, many days ago. Wolves are howling on the wood’s borders. If you have indeed come from Moria, the peril cannot be far behind. Tomorrow early you must go on.’

‘The four hobbits shall climb up here and stay with us—we do not fear them! There is another *talan* in the next tree. There the others must take refuge. You, Legolas, must answer to us for them. Call us, if anything is amiss! And have an eye on that dwarf!’

Legolas at once went down the ladder to take Haldir’s message; and soon afterwards Merry and Pippin clambered up on to the high flet. They were out of breath and seemed rather scared.

‘There!’ said Merry panting. ‘We have lugged up your blankets as well as our own. Strider has hidden all the rest of our baggage in a deep drift of leaves.’

‘You had no need of your burdens,’ said Haldir. ‘It is cold in the tree-tops in winter, though the wind tonight is in the South; but we have food and drink to give you that will drive away the night-chill, and we have skins and cloaks to spare.’

The hobbits accepted this second (and far better) supper very gladly. Then they wrapped themselves warmly, not only in the fur-cloaks of the Elves, but in their own blankets as well, and tried to go to sleep. But weary as they were only Sam found that easy to do. Hobbits do not like heights, and do not sleep upstairs, even when they have any stairs. The flet was not at all to their liking as a bedroom. It had no walls, not even a rail; only on one side was there a light plaited screen, which could be moved and fixed in different places according to the wind.

Pippin went on talking for a while. ‘I hope, if I do go to sleep in this bird-loft, that I shan’t roll off,’ he said.

‘Once I do get to sleep,’ said Sam, ‘I shall go on sleeping, whether I roll off or no. And the less said, the sooner I’ll drop off, if you take my meaning.’

Frodo lay for some time awake, and looked up at the stars glinting through the pale roof of quivering leaves. Sam was snoring at his side long before he himself closed his eyes. He could dimly see the grey forms of two elves sitting motionless with their arms about their knees, speaking in whispers. The other had gone down to

take up his watch on one of the lower branches. At last lulled by the wind in the boughs above, and the sweet murmur of the falls of Nimrodel below, Frodo fell asleep with the song of Legolas running in his mind.

Late in the night he woke. The other hobbits were asleep. The Elves were gone. The sickle Moon was gleaming dimly among the leaves. The wind was still. A little way off he heard a harsh laugh and the tread of many feet on the ground below. There was a ring of metal. The sounds died slowly away, and seemed to go southward, on into the wood.

A head appeared suddenly through the hole in the flet. Frodo sat up in alarm and saw that it was a grey-hooded Elf. He looked towards the hobbits.

‘What is it?’ said Frodo.

‘*Yrch!*’ said the Elf in a hissing whisper, and cast on to the flet the rope-ladder rolled up.

‘Orcs!’ said Frodo. ‘What are they doing?’ But the Elf had gone.

There were no more sounds. Even the leaves were silent, and the very falls seemed to be hushed. Frodo sat and shivered in his wraps. He was thankful that they had not been caught on the ground; but he felt that the trees offered little protection, except concealment. Orcs were as keen as hounds on a scent, it was said, but they could also climb. He drew out Sting: it flashed and glittered like a blue flame; and then slowly faded again and grew dull. In spite of the fading of his sword the feeling of immediate danger did not leave Frodo, rather it grew stronger. He got up and crawled to the opening and peered down. He was almost certain that he could hear stealthy movements at the tree’s foot far below.

Not Elves; for the woodland folk were altogether noiseless in their movements. Then he heard faintly a sound like sniffing; and something seemed to be scrabbling on the bark of the tree-trunk. He stared down into the dark, holding his breath.

Something was now climbing slowly, and its breath came like a soft hissing through closed teeth. Then coming up, close to the stem, Frodo saw two pale eyes. They stopped and gazed upward unwinking. Suddenly they turned away, and a shadowy figure slipped round the trunk of the tree and vanished.

Immediately afterwards Haldir came climbing swiftly up through the branches. ‘There was something in this tree that I have never seen before,’ he said. ‘It was not an orc. It fled as soon as I touched the tree-stem. It seemed to be wary, and to have some skill in trees, or I might have thought that it was one of you hobbits.

‘I did not shoot, for I dared not arouse any cries: we cannot risk battle. A strong company of Orcs has passed. They crossed the Nimrodel—curse their foul feet in its clean water!—and went on down the old road beside the river. They seemed to pick up some scent, and they searched the ground for a while near the place where you halted. The three of us could not challenge a hundred, so we went ahead and spoke with feigned voices, leading them on into the wood.

‘Orophin has now gone in haste back to our dwellings to warn our people. None of the Orcs will ever return out of Lórien. And there will be many Elves hidden on the northern border before another night falls. But you must take the road south as soon as it is fully light.’

Day came pale from the East. As the light grew it filtered through the yellow leaves of the mallorn, and it seemed to the hobbits that the early sun of a cool summer’s morning was shining. Pale-blue sky peeped among the moving branches. Looking through an opening on the south side of the flet Frodo saw all the valley of the Silverlode lying like a sea of fallow gold tossing gently in the breeze.

The morning was still young and cold when the Company set out again, guided now by Haldir and his brother Rúmil. ‘Farewell, sweet Nimrodel!’ cried Legolas. Frodo looked back and caught a gleam of white foam among the grey tree-stems. ‘Farewell,’ he said. It seemed to him that he would never hear again a running water so beautiful, for ever blending its innumerable notes in an endless changeful music.

They went back to the path that still went on along the west side of the Silverlode, and for some way they followed it southward. There were the prints of orc-feet in the earth. But soon Haldir turned aside into the trees and halted on the bank of the river under their shadows.

‘There is one of my people yonder across the stream,’ he said, ‘though you may not see him.’ He gave a call like the low whistle of a bird, and out of a thicket of young trees an Elf stepped, clad in grey, but with his hood thrown back; his hair glinted like gold in the morning sun. Haldir skilfully cast over the stream a coil of grey rope, and he caught it and bound the end about a tree near the bank.

‘Celebrant is already a strong stream here, as you see,’ said Haldir, ‘and it runs both swift and deep, and is very cold. We do not set foot in it so far north, unless we must. But in these days of watchfulness we do not make bridges. This is how we cross! Follow me!’ He made his end of the rope fast about another tree, and then ran lightly along it, over the river and back again, as if he were on a road.

‘I can walk this path,’ said Legolas; ‘but the others have not this skill. Must they swim?’

‘No!’ said Haldir. ‘We have two more ropes. We will fasten them above the other, one shoulder-high, and another half-high, and holding these the strangers should be able to cross with care.’

When this slender bridge had been made, the Company passed over, some cautiously and slowly, others more easily. Of the hobbits Pippin proved the best for he was sure-footed, and he walked over quickly, holding only with one hand; but he kept his eyes on the bank ahead and did not look down. Sam shuffled along, clutching hard, and looking down into the pale eddying water as if it was a chasm in the mountains.

He breathed with relief when he was safely across. ‘Live and learn! as my gaffer used to say. Though he was thinking of gardening, not of roosting like a bird, nor of trying to walk like a spider. Not even my uncle Andy ever did a trick like that!’

When at length all the Company was gathered on the east bank of the Silverlode, the Elves untied the ropes and coiled two of them. Rúmil, who had remained on the other side, drew back the last one, slung it on his shoulder, and with a wave of his hand went away, back to Nimrodel to keep watch.

‘Now, friends,’ said Haldir, ‘you have entered the Naith of Lórien, or the Gore, as you would say, for it is the land that lies like a spearhead between the arms of Silverlode and Anduin the Great. We allow no strangers to spy out the secrets of the Naith. Few indeed are permitted even to set foot there.

‘As was agreed, I shall here blindfold the eyes of Gimli the Dwarf. The others may walk free for a while, until we come nearer to our dwellings, down in Egladil, in the Angle between the waters.’

This was not at all to the liking of Gimli. ‘The agreement was made without my consent,’ he said. ‘I will not walk blindfold, like a beggar or a prisoner. And I am no spy. My folk have never had dealings with any of the servants of the Enemy. Neither have we done harm to the Elves. I am no more likely to betray you than Legolas, or any other of my companions.’

‘I do not doubt you,’ said Haldir. ‘Yet this is our law. I am not the master of the law, and cannot set it aside. I have done much in letting you set foot over Celebrant.’

Gimli was obstinate. He planted his feet firmly apart, and laid his hand upon the haft of his axe. ‘I will go forward free,’ he said, ‘or I will go back and seek my own land, where I am known to be true of word, though I perish alone in the wilderness.’

‘You cannot go back,’ said Haldir sternly. ‘Now you have come thus far, you must be brought before the Lord and the Lady. They shall judge you, to hold you or to give you leave, as they will. You cannot cross the rivers again, and behind you there are now secret sentinels that you cannot pass. You would be slain before you saw them.’

Gimli drew his axe from his belt. Haldir and his companion bent their bows. ‘A plague on Dwarves and their stiff necks!’ said Legolas.

‘Come!’ said Aragorn. ‘If I am still to lead this Company, you must do as I bid. It is hard upon the Dwarf to be thus singled out. We will all be blindfold, even Legolas. That will be best, though it will make the journey slow and dull.’

Gimli laughed suddenly. ‘A merry troop of fools we shall look! Will Haldir lead us all on a string, like many blind beggars with one dog? But I will be content, if only Legolas here shares my blindness.’

‘I am an Elf and a kinsman here,’ said Legolas, becoming angry in his turn.

‘Now let us cry: “a plague on the stiff necks of Elves!”’ said Aragorn. ‘But the Company shall all fare alike. Come, bind our eyes, Haldir!’

‘I shall claim full amends for every fall and stubbed toe, if you do not lead us well,’ said Gimli as they bound a cloth about his eyes.

‘You will have no claim,’ said Haldir. ‘I shall lead you well, and the paths are smooth and straight.’

‘Alas for the folly of these days!’ said Legolas. ‘Here all are enemies of the one Enemy, and yet I must walk blind, while the sun is merry in the woodland under leaves of gold!’

‘Folly it may seem,’ said Haldir. ‘Indeed in nothing is the power of the Dark Lord more clearly shown than in the estrangement that divides all those who still oppose him. Yet so little faith and trust do we find now in the world beyond Lothlórien, unless maybe in Rivendell, that we dare not by our own trust endanger our land. We live now upon an island amid many perils, and our hands are more often upon the bowstring than upon the harp.

‘The rivers long defended us, but they are a sure guard no more; for the Shadow has crept northward all about us. Some speak of departing, yet for that it already seems too late. The mountains to the west are growing evil; to the east the lands are waste, and full of Sauron’s creatures; and it is rumoured that we cannot now safely pass southward through Rohan, and the mouths of the Great River are watched by the Enemy. Even if we could come to the shores of the Sea, we should find no longer any shelter there. It is said that there are still havens of the High Elves, but they are far north and west, beyond the land of the Halflings. But where that may be, though the Lord and Lady may know, I do not.’

‘You ought at least to guess, since you have seen us,’ said Merry. ‘There are Elf-havens west of my land, the Shire, where Hobbits live.’

‘Happy folk are Hobbits to dwell near the shores of the sea!’ said Haldir. ‘It is long indeed since any of my folk have looked on it, yet still we remember it in song. Tell me of these havens as we walk.’

‘I cannot,’ said Merry. ‘I have never seen them. I have never been out of my own land before. And if I had known what the world outside was like, I don’t think I should have had the heart to leave it.’

‘Not even to see fair Lothlórien?’ said Haldir. ‘The world is indeed full of peril, and in it there are many dark places; but still there is much that is fair, and though in all lands love is now mingled with grief, it grows perhaps the greater.

‘Some there are among us who sing that the Shadow will draw back, and peace shall come again. Yet I do not believe that the world about us will ever again be as it was of old, or the light of the Sun as it was aforetime. For the Elves, I fear, it will prove at best a truce, in which they may pass to the Sea unhindered and leave the Middle-earth for ever. Alas for Lothlórien that I love! It would be a poor life in a land where no mallorn grew. But if there are mallorn-trees beyond the Great Sea, none have reported it.’

As they spoke thus, the Company filed slowly along the paths in the wood, led by Haldir, while the other Elf walked behind. They felt the ground beneath their feet smooth and soft, and after a while they walked more freely, without fear of hurt or fall. Being deprived of sight, Frodo found his hearing and other senses sharpened. He could smell the trees and the trodden grass. He could hear many different notes in the rustle of the leaves overhead, the river murmuring away on his right, and the thin clear voices of birds high in the sky. He felt the sun upon his face and hands when they passed through an open glade.

As soon as he set foot upon the far bank of Silverlode a strange feeling had come upon him, and it deepened as he walked on into the Naith: it seemed to him that he had stepped over a bridge of time into a corner of the Elder Days, and was now walking in a world that was no more. In Rivendell there was memory of ancient things; in Lórien the ancient things still lived on in the waking world. Evil had been seen and heard there, sorrow had been known; the Elves feared and distrusted the world outside: wolves were howling on the wood’s borders: but on the land of Lórien no shadow lay.

All that day the Company marched on, until they felt the cool evening come and heard the early night-wind whispering among many leaves. Then they rested and slept without fear upon the ground; for their guides would not permit them to unbind their eyes, and they could not climb. In the morning they went on again, walking without haste. At noon they halted, and Frodo was aware that they had passed out under the shining Sun. Suddenly he heard the sound of many voices all around him.

A marching host of Elves had come up silently: they were hastening towards the northern borders to guard against any attack from Moria; and they brought news, some of which Haldir reported. The marauding orcs had been waylaid and almost all destroyed; the remnant had fled westward towards the mountains, and were being pursued. A strange creature also had been seen, running with bent back and with hands near the ground, like a beast and yet not of beast-shape. It had eluded capture, and they had not shot it, not knowing whether it was good or ill, and it had vanished down the Silverlode southward.

‘Also,’ said Haldir, ‘they bring me a message from the Lord and Lady of the Galadhrim. You are all to walk free, even the dwarf Gimli. It seems that the Lady knows who and what is each member of your Company. New messages have come from Rivendell perhaps.’

He removed the bandage first from Gimli’s eyes. ‘Your pardon!’ he said, bowing low. ‘Look on us now with friendly eyes! Look and be glad, for you are the first dwarf to behold the trees of the Naith of Lórien since Durin’s Day!’

When his eyes were in turn uncovered, Frodo looked up and caught his breath. They were standing in an open space. To the left stood a great mound, covered with a sward of grass as green as Springtime in the Elder Days. Upon it, as a double crown, grew two circles of trees: the outer had bark of snowy white, and were leafless but beautiful in their shapely nakedness; the inner were mallorn-trees of great height, still arrayed in pale gold. High amid the branches of a towering tree that stood in the centre of all there gleamed a white flet. At the feet of the trees, and all about the green hillsides the grass was studded with small golden flowers shaped like stars. Among them, nodding on slender stalks, were other flowers, white and palest green: they glimmered as a mist amid the rich hue of the grass. Over all the sky was blue, and the sun of afternoon glowed upon the hill and cast long green shadows beneath the trees.

‘Behold! You are come to Cerin Amroth,’ said Haldir. ‘For this is the heart of the ancient realm as it was long ago, and here is the mound of Amroth, where in happier days his high house was built. Here ever bloom the winter flowers in the unfading grass: the yellow *elanor*, and the pale *niphredil*. Here we will stay awhile, and come to the city of the Galadhrim at dusk.’

The others cast themselves down upon the fragrant grass, but Frodo stood awhile still lost in wonder. It seemed to him that he had stepped through a high window that looked on a vanished world. A light was upon it for which his language had no name. All that he saw was shapely, but the shapes seemed at once clear cut, as if they had been first conceived and drawn at the uncovering of his eyes, and ancient as if they had endured for ever. He saw no colour but those he knew, gold and white and blue and green, but they were fresh and poignant, as if he had at that moment first perceived them and made for them names new and wonderful. In winter here no heart could mourn for summer or for spring. No blemish or sickness or deformity could be seen in anything that grew upon the earth. On the land of Lórien there was no stain.

He turned and saw that Sam was now standing beside him, looking round with a puzzled expression, and rubbing his eyes as if he was not sure that he was awake. ‘It’s sunlight and bright day, right enough,’ he said. ‘I thought that Elves were all for moon and stars: but this is more Elvish than anything I ever heard tell of. I feel as if I was *inside* a song, if you take my meaning.’

Haldir looked at them, and he seemed indeed to take the meaning of both thought and word. He smiled. ‘You feel the power of the Lady of the Galadhrim,’ he said. ‘Would it please you to climb with me up Cerin Amroth?’

They followed him as he stepped lightly up the grass-clad slopes. Though he walked and breathed, and about him living leaves and flowers were stirred by the same cool wind as fanned his face, Frodo felt that he was in a timeless land that did not fade or change or fall into forgetfulness. When he had gone and passed again into the



outer world, still Frodo the wanderer from the Shire would walk there, upon the grass among *elanor* and *niphredil* in fair Lothlórien.

They entered the circle of white trees. As they did so the South Wind blew upon Cerin Amroth and sighed among the branches. Frodo stood still, hearing far off great seas upon beaches that had long ago been washed away, and sea-birds crying whose race had perished from the earth.

Haldir had gone on and was now climbing to the high flet. As Frodo prepared to follow him, he laid his hand upon the tree beside the ladder: never before had he been so suddenly and so keenly aware of the feel and texture of a tree's skin and of the life within it. He felt a delight in wood and the touch of it, neither as forester nor as carpenter; it was the delight of the living tree itself.

As he stepped out at last upon the lofty platform, Haldir took his hand and turned him towards the South. 'Look this way first!' he said.

Frodo looked and saw, still at some distance, a hill of many mighty trees, or a city of green towers: which it was he could not tell. Out of it, it seemed to him that the power and light came that held all the land in sway. He longed suddenly to fly like a bird to rest in the green city. Then he looked eastward and saw all the land of Lórien running down to the pale gleam of Anduin, the Great River. He lifted his eyes across the river and all the light went out, and he was back again in the world he knew. Beyond the river the land appeared flat and empty, formless and vague, until far away it rose again like a wall, dark and drear. The sun that lay on Lothlórien had no power to enlighten the shadow of that distant height.

'There lies the fastness of Southern Mirkwood,' said Haldir. 'It is clad in a forest of dark fir, where the trees strive one against another and their branches rot and wither. In the midst upon a stony height stands Dol Guldur, where long the hidden Enemy had his dwelling. We fear that now it is inhabited again, and with power sevenfold. A black cloud lies often over it of late. In this high place you may see the two powers that are opposed one to another; and ever they strive now in thought, but whereas the light perceives the very heart of the darkness, its own secret has not been discovered. Not yet.' He turned and climbed swiftly down, and they followed him.

At the hill's foot Frodo found Aragorn, standing still and silent as a tree; but in his hand was a small golden bloom of *elanor*, and a light was in his eyes. He was wrapped in some fair memory: and as Frodo looked at him he knew that he beheld things as they once had been in this same place. For the grim years were removed from the face of Aragorn, and he seemed clothed in white, a young lord tall and fair; and he spoke words in the Elvish tongue to one whom Frodo could not see. *Arwen vanimelda, namárië!* he said, and then he drew a breath, and returning out of his thought he looked at Frodo and smiled.

'Here is the heart of Elvendom on earth,' he said, 'and here my heart dwells ever, unless there be a light beyond the dark roads that we still must tread, you and I. Come with me!' And taking Frodo's hand in his, he left the hill of Cerin Amroth and came there never again as living man.



## Chapter 7: The Mirror Of Galadriel

The sun was sinking behind the mountains, and the shadows were deepening in the woods, when they went on again. Their paths now went into thickets where the dusk had already gathered. Night came beneath the trees as they walked, and the Elves uncovered their silver lamps.

Suddenly they came out into the open again and found themselves under a pale evening sky pricked by a few early stars. There was a wide treeless space before them, running in a great circle and bending away on either hand. Beyond it was a deep fosse lost in soft shadow, but the grass upon its brink was green, as if it glowed still in memory of the sun that had gone. Upon the further side there rose to a great height a green wall encircling a green hill thronged with mallorn-trees taller than any they had yet seen in all the land. Their height could not be guessed, but they stood up in the twilight like living towers. In their many-tiered branches and amid their ever-moving leaves countless lights were gleaming, green and gold and silver. Haldir turned towards the Company.

‘Welcome to Caras Galadhon!’ he said. ‘Here is the city of the Galadhrim where dwell the Lord Celeborn and Galadriel the Lady of Lórien. But we cannot enter here, for the gates do not look northward. We must go round to the southern side, and the way is not short, for the city is great.’

There was a road paved with white stone running on the outer brink of the fosse. Along this they went westward, with the city ever climbing up like a green cloud upon their left; and as the night deepened more lights sprang forth, until all the hill seemed afire with stars. They came at last to a white bridge, and crossing found the great gates of the city: they faced south-west, set between the ends of the encircling wall that here overlapped, and they were tall and strong, and hung with many lamps.

Haldir knocked and spoke, and the gates opened soundlessly; but of guards Frodo could see no sign. The travellers passed within, and the gates shut behind them. They were in a deep lane between the ends of the wall, and passing quickly through it they entered the City of the Trees. No folk could they see, nor hear any feet upon the paths; but there were many voices, about them, and in the air above. Far away up on the hill they could hear the sound of singing falling from on high like soft rain upon leaves.

They went along many paths and climbed many stairs, until they came to the high places and saw before them amid a wide lawn a fountain shimmering. It was lit by silver lamps that swung from the boughs of trees, and it fell into a basin of silver, from which a white stream spilled. Upon the south side of the lawn there stood the mightiest of all the trees; its great smooth bole gleamed like grey silk, and up it towered, until its first branches, far above, opened their huge limbs under shadowy clouds of leaves. Beside it a broad white ladder stood, and at its foot three Elves were seated. They sprang up as the travellers approached, and Frodo saw that they were tall and clad in grey mail, and from their shoulders hung long white cloaks.

‘Here dwell Celeborn and Galadriel,’ said Haldir. ‘It is their wish that you should ascend and speak with them.’

One of the Elf-wardens then blew a clear note on a small horn, and it was answered three times from far above. ‘I will go first,’ said Haldir. ‘Let Frodo come next and with him Legolas. The others may follow as they wish. It is a long climb for those that are not accustomed to such stairs, but you may rest upon the way.’

As he climbed slowly up Frodo passed many flets: some on one side, some on another, and some set about the bole of the tree, so that the ladder passed through them. At a great height above the ground he came to a wide *talán*, like the deck of a great ship. On it was built a house, so large that almost it would have served for a hall of Men upon the earth. He entered behind Haldir, and found that he was in a chamber of oval shape, in the midst of which grew the trunk of the great mallorn, now tapering towards its crown, and yet making still a pillar of wide girth.

The chamber was filled with a soft light; its walls were green and silver and its roof of gold. Many Elves were seated there. On two chairs beneath the bole of the tree and canopied by a living bough there sat, side by side, Celeborn and Galadriel. They stood up to greet their guests, after the manner of Elves, even those who were accounted mighty kings. Very tall they were, and the Lady no less tall than the Lord; and they were grave and beautiful. They were clad wholly in white; and the hair of the Lady was of deep gold, and the hair of the Lord Celeborn was of silver long and bright; but no sign of age was upon them, unless it were in the depths of their eyes; for these were keen as lances in the starlight, and yet profound, the wells of deep memory.

Haldir led Frodo before them, and the Lord welcomed him in his own tongue. The Lady Galadriel said no word but looked long upon his face.

‘Sit now beside my chair, Frodo of the Shire!’ said Celeborn. ‘When all have come we will speak together.’

Each of the companions he greeted courteously by name as they entered. ‘Welcome Aragorn son of Arathorn!’ he said. ‘It is eight and thirty years of the world outside since you came to this land; and those years lie heavy on you. But the end is near, for good or ill. Here lay aside your burden for a while!’

‘Welcome son of Thranduil! Too seldom do my kindred journey hither from the North.’

‘Welcome Gimli son of Glóin! It is long indeed since we saw one of Durin’s folk in Caras Galadhon. But today we have broken our long law. May it be a sign that though the world is now dark better days are at hand, and that friendship shall be renewed between our peoples.’ Gimli bowed low.

When all the guests were seated before his chair the Lord looked at them again. ‘Here there are eight,’ he said. ‘Nine were to set out: so said the messages. But maybe there has been some change of counsel that we have not heard. Elrond is far away, and darkness gathers between us, and all this year the shadows have grown longer.’

‘Nay, there was no change of counsel,’ said the Lady Galadriel, speaking for the first time. Her voice was clear and musical, but deeper than woman’s wont. ‘Gandalf the Grey set out with the Company, but he did not pass the borders of this land. Now tell us where he is; for I much desired to speak with him again. But I cannot see him from afar, unless he comes within the fences of Lothlórien: a grey mist is about him, and the ways of his feet and of his mind are hidden from me.’

‘Alas!’ said Aragorn. ‘Gandalf the Grey fell into shadow. He remained in Moria and did not escape.’

At these words all the Elves in the hall cried aloud in grief and amazement. ‘These are evil tidings,’ said Celeborn, ‘the most evil that have been spoken here in long years full of grievous deeds.’ He turned to Haldir. ‘Why has nothing of this been told to me before?’ he asked in the elven-tongue.

‘We have not spoken to Haldir of our deeds or our purpose,’ said Legolas. ‘At first we were weary and danger was too close behind; and afterwards we almost forgot our grief for a time, as we walked in gladness on the fair paths of Lórien.’

‘Yet our grief is great and our loss cannot be mended,’ said Frodo. ‘Gandalf was our guide, and he led us through Moria; and when our escape seemed beyond hope he saved us, and he fell.’

‘Tell us now the full tale!’ said Celeborn.

Then Aragorn recounted all that had happened upon the pass of Caradhras, and in the days that followed; and he spoke of Balin and his book, and the fight in the Chamber of Mazarbul, and the fire, and the narrow bridge, and the coming of the Terror. ‘An evil of the Ancient World it seemed, such as I have never seen before,’ said Aragorn. ‘It was both a shadow and a flame, strong and terrible.’

‘It was a Balrog of Morgoth,’ said Legolas; ‘of all elf-banes the most deadly, save the One who sits in the Dark Tower.’

‘Indeed I saw upon the bridge that which haunts our darkest dreams, I saw Durin’s Bane,’ said Gimli in a low voice, and dread was in his eyes.

‘Alas!’ said Celeborn. ‘We long have feared that under Caradhras a terror slept. But had I known that the Dwarves had stirred up this evil in Moria again, I would have forbidden you to pass the northern borders, you

and all that went with you. And if it were possible, one would say that at the last Gandalf fell from wisdom into folly, going needlessly into the net of Moria.'

'He would be rash indeed that said that thing,' said Galadriel gravely. 'Needless were none of the deeds of Gandalf in life. Those that followed him knew not his mind and cannot report his full purpose. But however it may be with the guide, the followers are blameless. Do not repent of your welcome to the Dwarf. If our folk had been exiled long and far from Lothlórien, who of the Galadhrim, even Celeborn the Wise, would pass nigh and would not wish to look upon their ancient home, though it had become an abode of dragons?

'Dark is the water of Kheled-zâram, and cold are the springs of Kibil-nâla, and fair were the many-pillared halls of Khazad-dûm in Elder Days before the fall of mighty kings beneath the stone.' She looked upon Gimli, who sat glowering and sad, and she smiled. And the Dwarf, hearing the names given in his own ancient tongue, looked up and met her eyes; and it seemed to him that he looked suddenly into the heart of an enemy and saw there love and understanding. Wonder came into his face, and then he smiled in answer.

He rose clumsily and bowed in dwarf-fashion, saying: 'Yet more fair is the living land of Lórien, and the Lady Galadriel is above all the jewels that lie beneath the earth!'

There was a silence. At length Celeborn spoke again. 'I did not know that your plight was so evil,' he said. 'Let Gimli forget my harsh words: I spoke in the trouble of my heart. I will do what I can to aid you, each according to his wish and need, but especially that one of the little folk who bears the burden.'

'Your quest is known to us,' said Galadriel, looking at Frodo. 'But we will not here speak of it more openly. Yet not in vain will it prove, maybe, that you came to this land seeking aid, as Gandalf himself plainly purposed. For the Lord of the Galadhrim is accounted the wisest of the Elves of Middle-earth, and a giver of gifts beyond the power of kings. He has dwelt in the West since the days of dawn, and I have dwelt with him years uncounted; for ere the fall of Nargothrond or Gondolin I passed over the mountains, and together through ages of the world we have fought the long defeat.

'I it was who first summoned the White Council. And if my designs had not gone amiss, it would have been governed by Gandalf the Grey, and then mayhap things would have gone otherwise. But even now there is hope left. I will not give you counsel, saying do this, or do that. For not in doing or contriving, nor in choosing between this course and another, can I avail; but only in knowing what was and is, and in part also what shall be. But this I will say to you: your Quest stands upon the edge of a knife. Stray but a little and it will fail, to the ruin of all. Yet hope remains while all the Company is true.'

And with that word she held them with her eyes, and in silence looked searchingly at each of them in turn. None save Legolas and Aragorn could long endure her glance. Sam quickly blushed and hung his head.

At length the Lady Galadriel released them from her eyes, and she smiled. 'Do not let your hearts be troubled,' she said. 'Tonight you shall sleep in peace.' Then they sighed and felt suddenly weary, as those who have been questioned long and deeply, though no words had been spoken openly.

'Go now!' said Celeborn. 'You are worn with sorrow and much toil. Even if your Quest did not concern us closely, you should have refuge in this City, until you were healed and refreshed. Now you shall rest, and we will not speak of your further road for a while.'

That night the Company slept upon the ground, much to the satisfaction of the hobbits. The Elves spread for them a pavilion among the trees near the fountain, and in it they laid soft couches; then speaking words of peace with fair Elvish voices they left them. For a little while the travellers talked of their night before in the tree-tops, and of their day's journey, and of the Lord and Lady; for they had not yet the heart to look further back.

'What did you blush for, Sam?' said Pippin. 'You soon broke down. Anyone would have thought you had a guilty conscience. I hope it was nothing worse than a wicked plot to steal one of my blankets.'

'I never thought no such thing,' answered Sam, in no mood for jest. 'If you want to know, I felt as if I hadn't got nothing on, and I didn't like it. She seemed to be looking inside me and asking me what I would do if she gave me the chance of flying back home to the Shire to a nice little hole with—with a bit of garden of my own.'

‘That’s funny,’ said Merry. ‘Almost exactly what I felt myself; only, only well, I don’t think I’ll say any more,’ he ended lamely.

All of them, it seemed, had fared alike: each had felt that he was offered a choice between a shadow full of fear that lay ahead, and something that he greatly desired: clear before his mind it lay, and to get it he had only to turn aside from the road and leave the Quest and the war against Sauron to others.

‘And it seemed to me, too,’ said Gimli, ‘that my choice would remain secret and known only to myself.’

‘To me it seemed exceedingly strange,’ said Boromir. ‘Maybe it was only a test, and she thought to read our thoughts for her own good purpose; but almost I should have said that she was tempting us, and offering what she pretended to have the power to give. It need not be said that I refused to listen. The Men of Minas Tirith are true to their word.’ But what he thought that the Lady had offered him Boromir did not tell.

And as for Frodo, he would not speak, though Boromir pressed him with questions. ‘She held you long in her gaze, Ring-bearer,’ he said.

‘Yes,’ said Frodo; ‘but whatever came into my mind then I will keep there.’

‘Well, have a care!’ said Boromir. ‘I do not feel too sure of this Elvish Lady and her purposes.’

‘Speak no evil of the Lady Galadriel!’ said Aragorn sternly. ‘You know not what you say. There is in her and in this land no evil, unless a man bring it hither himself. Then let him beware! But tonight I shall sleep without fear for the first time since I left Rivendell. And may I sleep deep, and forget for a while my grief! I am weary in body and in heart.’ He cast himself down upon his couch and fell at once into a long sleep.

The others soon did the same, and no sound or dream disturbed their slumber. When they woke they found that the light of day was broad upon the lawn before the pavilion, and the fountain rose and fell glittering in the sun.

They remained some days in Lothlórien, so far as they could tell or remember. All the while that they dwelt there the sun shone clear, save for a gentle rain that fell at times, and passed away leaving all things fresh and clean. The air was cool and soft, as if it were early spring, yet they felt about them the deep and thoughtful quiet of winter. It seemed to them that they did little but eat and drink and rest, and walk among the trees; and it was enough.

They had not seen the Lord and Lady again, and they had little speech with the Elven-folk; for few of these knew or would use the Westron tongue. Haldir had bidden them farewell and gone back again to the fences of the North, where great watch was now kept since the tidings of Moria that the Company had brought. Legolas was away much among the Galadhrim, and after the first night he did not sleep with the other companions, though he returned to eat and talk with them. Often he took Gimli with him when he went abroad in the land, and the others wondered at this change.

Now as the companions sat or walked together they spoke of Gandalf, and all that each had known and seen of him came clear before their minds. As they were healed of hurt and weariness of body the grief of their loss grew more keen. Often they heard nearby Elvish voices singing, and knew that they were making songs of lamentation for his fall, for they caught his name among the sweet sad words that they could not understand.

*Mithrandir, Mithrandir* sang the Elves, *O Pilgrim Grey!* For so they loved to call him. But if Legolas was with the Company, he would not interpret the songs for them, saying that he had not the skill, and that for him the grief was still too near, a matter for tears and not yet for song.

It was Frodo who first put something of his sorrow into halting words. He was seldom moved to make song or rhyme; even in Rivendell he had listened and had not sung himself, though his memory was stored with many things that others had made before him. But now as he sat beside the fountain in Lórien and heard about him the voices of the Elves, his thought took shape in a song that seemed fair to him; yet when he tried to repeat it to Sam only snatches remained, faded as a handful of withered leaves.

*When evening in the Shire was grey  
his footsteps on the Hill were heard;  
before the dawn he went away*

*on journey long without a word.*

*From Wilderland to Western shore,  
from northern waste to southern hill,  
through dragon-lair and hidden door  
and darkling woods he walked at will.*

*With Dwarf and Hobbit, Elves and Men,  
with mortal and immortal folk,  
with bird on bough and beast in den,  
in their own secret tongues he spoke.*

*A deadly sword, a healing hand,  
a back that bent beneath its load;  
a trumpet-voice, a burning brand,  
a weary pilgrim on the road.*

*A lord of wisdom throned he sat,  
swift in anger, quick to laugh;  
an old man in a battered hat  
who leaned upon a thorny staff.*

*He stood upon the bridge alone  
and Fire and Shadow both defied;  
his staff was broken on the stone,  
in Khazad-dûm his wisdom died.*

‘Why, you’ll be beating Mr. Bilbo next!’ said Sam.

‘No, I am afraid not,’ said Frodo. ‘But that is the best I can do yet.’

‘Well, Mr. Frodo, if you do have another go, I hope you’ll say a word about his fireworks,’ said Sam. ‘Something like this:

*The finest rockets ever seen:  
they burst in stars of blue and green,  
or after thunder golden showers  
came falling like a rain of flowers.*

Though that doesn’t do them justice by a long road.’

‘No, I’ll leave that to you, Sam. Or perhaps to Bilbo. But—well, I can’t talk of it any more. I can’t bear to think of bringing the news to him.’

One evening Frodo and Sam were walking together in the cool twilight. Both of them felt restless again. On Frodo suddenly the shadow of parting had fallen: he knew somehow that the time was very near when he must leave Lothlórien.

‘What do you think of Elves now, Sam?’ he said. ‘I asked you the same question once before—it seems a very long while ago; but you have seen more of them since then.’

‘I have indeed!’ said Sam. ‘And I reckon there’s Elves and Elves. They’re all Elvish enough, but they’re not all the same. Now these folk aren’t wanderers or homeless, and seem a bit nearer to the likes of us: they seem to belong here, more even than Hobbits do in the Shire. Whether they’ve made the land, or the land’s made them, it’s hard to say, if you take my meaning. It’s wonderfully quiet here. Nothing seems to be going on, and nobody seems to want it to. If there’s any magic about, it’s right down deep, where I can’t lay my hands on it, in a manner of speaking.’

‘You can see and feel it everywhere,’ said Frodo.

‘Well,’ said Sam, ‘you can’t see nobody working it. No fireworks like poor old Gandalf used to show. I wonder we don’t see nothing of the Lord and Lady in all these days. I fancy now that *she* could do some wonderful things, if she had a mind. I’d dearly love to see some Elf-magic, Mr. Frodo!’

‘I wouldn’t,’ said Frodo. ‘I am content. And I don’t miss Gandalf’s fireworks, but his bushy eyebrows, and his quick temper, and his voice.’

‘You’re right,’ said Sam. ‘And don’t think I’m finding fault. I’ve often wanted to see a bit of magic like what it tells of in old tales, but I’ve never heard of a better land than this. It’s like being at home and on a holiday at the same time, if you understand me. I don’t want to leave. All the same, I’m beginning to feel that if we’ve got to go on, then we’d best get it over.’

*‘It’s the job that’s never started as takes longest to finish,* as my old gaffer used to say. And I don’t reckon that these folk can do much more to help us, magic or no. It’s when we leave this land that we shall miss Gandalf worse, I’m thinking.’

‘I am afraid that’s only too true, Sam,’ said Frodo. ‘Yet I hope very much that before we leave we shall see the Lady of the Elves again.’

Even as he spoke, they saw, as if she came in answer to their words, the Lady Galadriel approaching. Tall and white and fair she walked beneath the trees. She spoke no word, but beckoned to them.

Turning aside, she led them towards the southern slopes of the hill of Caras Galadhon, and passing through a high green hedge they came into an enclosed garden. No trees grew there, and it lay open to the sky. The evening star<sup>365</sup> had risen and was shining with white fire above the western woods. Down a long flight of steps the Lady went into the deep green hollow, through which ran murmuring the silver stream that issued from the fountain on the hill. At the bottom, upon a low pedestal carved like a branching tree, stood a basin of silver, wide and shallow, and beside it stood a silver ewer.

With water from the stream Galadriel filled the basin to the brim, and breathed on it, and when the water was still again she spoke. ‘Here is the Mirror of Galadriel,’ she said. ‘I have brought you here so that you may look in it, if you will.’

The air was very still, and the dell was dark, and the Elf-lady beside him was tall and pale. ‘What shall we look for, and what shall we see?’ asked Frodo, filled with awe.

‘Many things I can command the Mirror to reveal,’ she answered, ‘and to some I can show what they desire to see. But the Mirror will also show things unbidden, and those are often stranger and more profitable than things which we wish to behold. What you will see, if you leave the Mirror free to work, I cannot tell. For it shows things that were, and things that are, and things that yet may be. But which it is that he sees, even the wisest cannot always tell. Do you wish to look?’

Frodo did not answer.

‘And you?’ she said, turning to Sam. ‘For this is what your folk would call magic, I believe; though I do not understand clearly what they mean; and they seem to use the same word of the deceits of the Enemy. But this, if you will, is the magic of Galadriel. Did you not say that you wished to see Elf-magic?’

‘I did,’ said Sam, trembling a little between fear and curiosity. ‘I’ll have a peep, Lady, if you’re willing.’

‘And I’d not mind a glimpse of what’s going on at home,’ he said in an aside to Frodo. ‘It seems a terrible long time that I’ve been away. But there, like as not I’ll only see the stars, or something that I won’t understand.’

‘Like as not,’ said the Lady with a gentle laugh. ‘But come, you shall look and see what you may. Do not touch the water!’

Sam climbed up on the foot of the pedestal and leaned over the basin. The water looked hard and dark. Stars were reflected in it.

‘There’s only stars, as I thought,’ he said. Then he gave a low gasp, for the stars went out. As if a dark veil had been withdrawn, the Mirror grew grey, and then clear. There was sun shining, and the branches of trees were waving and tossing in the wind. But before Sam could make up his mind what it was that he saw, the light faded; and now he thought he saw Frodo with a pale face lying fast asleep under a great dark cliff. Then he seemed to see himself going along a dim passage, and climbing an endless winding stair. It came to him suddenly that he was looking urgently for something, but what it was he did not know. Like a dream the vision shifted and went back, and he saw the trees again. But this time they were not so close, and he could see what was going on: they were not waving in the wind, they were falling, crashing to the ground.

‘Hi!’ cried Sam in an outraged voice. ‘There’s that Ted Sandyman a-cutting down trees as he shouldn’t. They didn’t ought to be felled: it’s that avenue beyond the Mill that shades the road to Bywater. I wish I could get at Ted, and I’d fell *him*!’

But now Sam noticed that the Old Mill had vanished, and a large red-brick building was being put up where it had stood. Lots of folk were busily at work. There was a tall red chimney nearby. Black smoke seemed to cloud the surface of the Mirror.

‘There’s some devilry at work in the Shire,’ he said. ‘Elrond knew what he was about when he wanted to send Mr. Merry back.’ Then suddenly Sam gave a cry and sprang away. ‘I can’t stay here,’ he said wildly. ‘I must go home. They’ve dug up Bagshot Row, and there’s the poor old Gaffer going down the Hill with his bits of things on a barrow. I must go home!’

‘You cannot go home alone,’ said the Lady. ‘You did not wish to go home without your master before you looked in the Mirror, and yet you knew that evil things might well be happening in the Shire. Remember that the Mirror shows many things, and not all have yet come to pass. Some never come to be, unless those that behold the visions turn aside from their path to prevent them. The Mirror is dangerous as a guide of deeds.’

Sam sat on the ground and put his head in his hands. ‘I wish I had never come here, and I don’t want to see no more magic,’ he said and fell silent. After a moment he spoke again thickly, as if struggling with tears. ‘No, I’ll go home by the long road with Mr. Frodo, or not at all,’ he said. ‘But I hope I do get back some day. If what I’ve seen turns out true, somebody’s going to catch it hot!’

‘Do you now wish to look, Frodo?’ said the Lady Galadriel. ‘You did not wish to see Elf-magic and were content.’

‘Do you advise me to look?’ asked Frodo.

‘No,’ she said. ‘I do not counsel you one way or the other. I am not a counsellor. You may learn something, and whether what you see be fair or evil, that may be profitable, and yet it may not. Seeing is both good and perilous. Yet I think, Frodo, that you have courage and wisdom enough for the venture, or I would not have brought you here. Do as you will!’

‘I will look,’ said Frodo, and he climbed on the pedestal and bent over the dark water. At once the Mirror cleared and he saw a twilight land. Mountains loomed dark in the distance against a pale sky. A long grey road wound back out of sight. Far away a figure came slowly down the road, faint and small at first, but growing larger and clearer as it approached. Suddenly Frodo realized that it reminded him of Gandalf. He almost called aloud the wizard’s name, and then he saw that the figure was clothed not in grey but in white, in a white that shone faintly in the dusk; and in its hand there was a white staff. The head was so bowed that he could see no face, and presently the figure turned aside round a bend in the road and went out of the Mirror’s view. Doubt came into Frodo’s mind: was this a vision of Gandalf on one of his many lonely journeys long ago, or was it Saruman?

The vision now changed. Brief and small but very vivid he caught a glimpse of Bilbo walking restlessly about his room. The table was littered with disordered papers; rain was beating on the windows.

Then there was a pause, and after it many swift scenes followed that Frodo in some way knew to be parts of a great history in which he had become involved. The mist cleared and he saw a sight which he had never seen before but knew at once: the Sea. Darkness fell. The sea rose and raged in a great storm. Then he saw against the Sun, sinking blood-red into a wrack of clouds, the black outline of a tall ship with torn sails riding up out of



the West. Then a wide river flowing through a populous city. Then a white fortress with seven towers. And then again a ship with black sails, but now it was morning again, and the water rippled with light, and a banner bearing the emblem of a white tree shone in the sun. A smoke as of fire and battle arose, and again the sun went down in a burning red that faded into a grey mist; and into the mist a small ship passed away, twinkling with lights. It vanished, and Frodo sighed and prepared to draw away.

But suddenly the Mirror went altogether dark, as dark as if a hole had opened in the world of sight, and Frodo looked into emptiness. In the black abyss there appeared a single Eye that slowly grew, until it filled nearly all the Mirror. So terrible was it that Frodo stood rooted, unable to cry out or to withdraw his gaze. The Eye was rimmed with fire, but was itself glazed, yellow as a cat's, watchful and intent, and the black slit of its pupil opened on a pit, a window into nothing.

Then the Eye began to rove, searching this way and that; and Frodo knew with certainty and horror that among the many things that it sought he himself was one. But he also knew that it could not see him—not yet, not unless he willed it. The Ring that hung upon its chain about his neck grew heavy, heavier than a great stone, and his head was dragged downwards. The Mirror seemed to be growing hot and curls of steam were rising from the water. He was slipping forward.

‘Do not touch the water!’ said the Lady Galadriel softly. The vision faded, and Frodo found that he was looking at the cool stars twinkling in the silver basin. He stepped back shaking all over and looked at the Lady.

‘I know what it was that you last saw,’ she said; ‘for that is also in my mind. Do not be afraid! But do not think that only by singing amid the trees, nor even by the slender arrows of elven-bows, is this land of Lothlórien maintained and defended against its Enemy. I say to you, Frodo, that even as I speak to you, I perceive the Dark Lord and know his mind, or all of his mind that concerns the Elves. And he gropes ever to see me and my thought. But still the door is closed!’

She lifted up her white arms, and spread out her hands towards the East in a gesture of rejection and denial. Eärendil, the Evening Star, most beloved of the Elves, shone clear above. So bright was it that the figure of the Elven-lady cast a dim shadow on the ground. Its rays glanced upon a ring about her finger; it glittered like polished gold overlaid with silver light, and a white stone in it twinkled as if the Even-star had come down to rest upon her hand. Frodo gazed at the ring with awe; for suddenly it seemed to him that he understood.<sup>365</sup>

‘Yes,’ she said, divining his thought, ‘it is not permitted to speak of it, and Elrond could not do so. But it cannot be hidden from the Ring-bearer, and one who has seen the Eye. Verily it is in the land of Lórien upon the finger of Galadriel that one of the Three remains. This is Nenya, the Ring of Adamant, and I am its keeper.

‘He suspects, but he does not know—not yet. Do you not see now wherefore your coming is to us as the footstep of Doom? For if you fail, then we are laid bare to the Enemy. Yet if you succeed, then our power is diminished, and Lothlórien will fade, and the tides of Time will sweep it away. We must depart into the West, or dwindle to a rustic folk of dell and cave, slowly to forget and to be forgotten.’

Frodo bent his head. ‘And what do you wish?’ he said at last.

‘That what should be shall be,’ she answered. ‘The love of the Elves for their land and their works is deeper than the deeps of the Sea, and their regret is undying and cannot ever wholly be assuaged. Yet they will cast all away rather than submit to Sauron: for they know him now. For the fate of Lothlórien you are not answerable, but only for the doing of your own task. Yet I could wish, were it of any avail, that the One Ring had never been wrought, or had remained for ever lost.’

‘You are wise and fearless and fair, Lady Galadriel,’ said Frodo. ‘I will give you the One Ring, if you ask for it. It is too great a matter for me.’

Galadriel laughed with a sudden clear laugh. ‘Wise the Lady Galadriel may be,’ she said, ‘yet here she has met her match in courtesy. Gently are you revenged for my testing of your heart at our first meeting. You begin to see with a keen eye. I do not deny that my heart has greatly desired to ask what you offer. For many long years I had pondered what I might do, should the Great Ring come into my hands, and behold! it was brought within my grasp. The evil that was devised long ago works on in many ways, whether Sauron himself stands or falls.

Would not that have been a noble deed to set to the credit of his Ring, if I had taken it by force or fear from my guest?

‘And now at last it comes. You will give me the Ring freely! In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen. And I shall not be dark, but beautiful and terrible as the Morning and the Night! Fair as the Sea and the Sun and the Snow upon the Mountain! Dreadful as the Storm and the Lightning! Stronger than the foundations of the earth. All shall love me and despair!’

She lifted up her hand and from the ring that she wore there issued a great light that illumined her alone and left all else dark. She stood before Frodo seeming now tall beyond measurement, and beautiful beyond enduring, terrible and worshipful. Then she let her hand fall, and the light faded, and suddenly she laughed again, and lo! she was shrunken: a slender elf-woman, clad in simple white, whose gentle voice was soft and sad.

‘I pass the test,’ she said. ‘I will diminish, and go into the West, and remain Galadriel.’

They stood for a long while in silence. At length the Lady spoke again. ‘Let us return!’ she said. ‘In the morning you must depart, for now we have chosen, and the tides of fate are flowing.’

‘I would ask one thing before we go,’ said Frodo, ‘a thing which I often meant to ask Gandalf in Rivendell. I am permitted to wear the One Ring: why cannot *I* see all the others and know the thoughts of those that wear them?’

‘You have not tried,’ she said. ‘Only thrice have you set the Ring upon your finger since you knew what you possessed. Do not try! It would destroy you. Did not Gandalf tell you that the rings give power according to the measure of each possessor? Before you could use that power you would need to become far stronger, and to train your will to the domination of others. Yet even so, as Ring-bearer and as one that has borne it on finger and seen that which is hidden, your sight is grown keener. You have perceived my thought more clearly than many that are accounted wise. You saw the Eye of him that holds the Seven and the Nine. And did you not see and recognize the ring upon my finger? Did you see my ring?’ she asked turning again to Sam.

‘No, Lady,’ he answered. ‘To tell you the truth, I wondered what you were talking about. I saw a star through your fingers. But if you’ll pardon my speaking out, I think my master was right. I wish you’d take his Ring. You’d put things to rights. You’d stop them digging up the Gaffer and turning him adrift. You’d make some folk pay for their dirty work.’

‘I would,’ she said. ‘That is how it would begin. But it would not stop with that, alas! We will not speak more of it. Let us go!’



## Chapter 8: Farewell To Lórien

That night the Company was again summoned to the chamber of Celeborn, and there the Lord and Lady greeted them with fair words. At length Celeborn spoke of their departure.

‘Now is the time,’ he said, ‘when those who wish to continue the Quest must harden their hearts to leave this land. Those who no longer wish to go forward may remain here, for a while. But whether they stay or go, none can be sure of peace. For we are come now to the edge of doom. Here those who wish may await the oncoming of the hour till either the ways of the world lie open again, or we summon them to the last need of Lórien. Then they may return to their own lands, or else go to the long home of those that fall in battle.’

There was a silence. ‘They all resolved to go forward,’ said Galadriel looking in their eyes.

‘As for me,’ said Boromir, ‘my way home lies onward and not back.’

‘That is true,’ said Celeborn, ‘but is all this Company going with you to Minas Tirith?’

‘We have not decided our course,’ said Aragorn. ‘Beyond Lothlórien I do not know what Gandalf intended to do. Indeed I do not think that even he had any clear purpose.’

‘Maybe not,’ said Celeborn, ‘yet when you leave this land, you can no longer forget the Great River. As some of you know well, it cannot be crossed by travellers with baggage between Lórien and Gondor, save by boat. And are not the bridges of Osgiliath broken down and all the landings held now by the Enemy?’

‘On which side will you journey? The way to Minas Tirith lies upon this side, upon the west; but the straight road of the Quest lies east of the River, upon the darker shore. Which shore will you now take?’

‘If my advice is heeded, it will be the western shore, and the way to Minas Tirith,’ answered Boromir. ‘But I am not the leader of the Company.’ The others said nothing, and Aragorn looked doubtful and troubled.

‘I see that you do not yet know what to do,’ said Celeborn. ‘It is not my part to choose for you; but I will help you as I may. There are some among you who can handle boats: Legolas, whose folk know the swift Forest River; and Boromir of Gondor; and Aragorn the traveller.’

‘And one Hobbit!’ cried Merry. ‘Not all of us look on boats as wild horses. My people live by the banks of the Brandywine.’

‘That is well,’ said Celeborn. ‘Then I will furnish your Company with boats. They must be small and light, for if you go far by water, there are places where you will be forced to carry them. You will come to the rapids of Sarn Gebir, and maybe at last to the great falls of Rauros where the River thunders down from Nen Hithoel; and there are other perils. Boats may make your journey less toilsome for a while. Yet they will not give you counsel: in the end you must leave them and the River, and turn west—or east.’

Aragorn thanked Celeborn many times. The gift of boats comforted him much, not least because there would now be no need to decide his course for some days. The others, too, looked more hopeful. Whatever perils lay ahead, it seemed better to float down the broad tide of Anduin to meet them than to plod forward with bent backs. Only Sam was doubtful: he at any rate still thought boats as bad as wild horses, or worse, and not all the dangers that he had survived made him think better of them.

‘All shall be prepared for you and await you at the haven before noon tomorrow,’ said Celeborn. ‘I will send my people to you in the morning to help you make ready for the journey. Now we will wish you all a fair night and untroubled sleep.’

‘Good night, my friends!’ said Galadriel. ‘Sleep in peace! Do not trouble your hearts overmuch with thought of the road tonight. Maybe the paths that you each shall tread are already laid before your feet, though you do not see them. Good night!’

The Company now took their leave and returned to their pavilion. Legolas went with them, for this was to be their last night in Lothlórien, and in spite of the words of Galadriel they wished to take counsel together.

For a long time they debated what they should do, and how it would be best to attempt the fulfilling of their purpose with the Ring; but they came to no decision. It was plain that most of them desired to go first to Minas Tirith, and to escape at least for a while from the terror of the Enemy. They would have been willing to follow a leader over the River and into the shadow of Mordor; but Frodo spoke no word, and Aragorn was still divided in his mind.

His own plan, while Gandalf remained with them, had been to go with Boromir, and with his sword help to deliver Gondor. For he believed that the message of the dreams was a summons, and that the hour had come at last when the heir of Elendil should come forth and strive with Sauron for the mastery. But in Moria the burden of Gandalf had been laid on him; and he knew that he could not now forsake the Ring, if Frodo refused in the end to go with Boromir. And yet what help could he or any of the Company give to Frodo, save to walk blindly with him into the darkness?

‘I shall go to Minas Tirith, alone if need be, for it is my duty,’ said Boromir; and after that he was silent for a while, sitting with his eyes fixed on Frodo, as if he was trying to read the Halfling’s thoughts. At length he spoke again, softly, as if he was debating with himself. ‘If you wish only to destroy the Ring,’ he said, ‘then there is little use in war and weapons; and the Men of Minas Tirith cannot help. But if you wish to destroy the armed might of the Dark Lord, then it is folly to go without force into his domain; and folly to throw away.’ He paused suddenly, as if he had become aware that he was speaking his thoughts aloud. ‘It would be folly to throw lives away, I mean,’ he ended. ‘It is a choice between defending a strong place and walking openly into the arms of death. At least, that is how I see it.’

Frodo caught something new and strange in Boromir’s glance, and he looked hard at him. Plainly Boromir’s thought was different from his final words. It would be folly to throw away: what? The Ring of Power? He had said something like this at the Council, but then he had accepted the correction of Elrond. Frodo looked at Aragorn, but he seemed deep in his own thought and made no sign that he had heeded Boromir’s words. And so their debate ended. Merry and Pippin were already asleep, and Sam was nodding. The night was growing old.

In the morning, as they were beginning to pack their slender goods, Elves that could speak their tongue came to them and brought them many gifts of food and clothing for the journey. The food was mostly in the form of very thin cakes, made of a meal that was baked a light brown on the outside, and inside was the colour of cream. Gimli took up one of the cakes and looked at it with a doubtful eye.

‘*Cram*,’ he said under his breath, as he broke off a crisp corner and nibbled at it. His expression quickly changed, and he ate all the rest of the cake with relish.

‘No more, no more!’ cried the Elves laughing. ‘You have eaten enough already for a long day’s march.’

‘I thought it was only a kind of *cram*, such as the Dale-men make for journeys in the wild,’ said the Dwarf.

‘So it is,’ they answered. ‘But we call it *lembas* or waybread, and it is more strengthening than any food made by Men, and it is more pleasant than *cram*, by all accounts.’

‘Indeed it is,’ said Gimli. ‘Why, it is better than the honey-cakes of the Beornings, and that is great praise, for the Beornings are the best bakers that I know of; but they are none too willing to deal out their cakes to travellers in these days. You are kindly hosts!’

‘All the same, we bid you spare the food,’ they said. ‘Eat little at a time, and only at need. For these things are given to serve you when all else fails. The cakes will keep sweet for many many days, if they are unbroken and left in their leaf-wrappings, as we have brought them. One will keep a traveller on his feet for a day of long labour, even if he be one of the tall Men of Minas Tirith.’

The Elves next unwrapped and gave to each of the Company the clothes they had brought. For each they had provided a hood and cloak, made according to his size, of the light but warm silken stuff that the Galadhrim wove. It was hard to say of what colour they were: grey with the hue of twilight under the trees they seemed to be; and yet if they were moved, or set in another light, they were green as shadowed leaves, or brown as fallow fields by night, dusk-silver as water under the stars. Each cloak was fastened about the neck with a brooch like a green leaf veined with silver.

‘Are these magic cloaks?’ asked Pippin, looking at them with wonder.

‘I do not know what you mean by that,’ answered the leader of the Elves. ‘They are fair garments, and the web is good, for it was made in this land. They are Elvish robes certainly, if that is what you mean. Leaf and branch, water and stone: they have the hue and beauty of all these things under the twilight of Lórien that we love; for we put the thought of all that we love into all that we make. Yet they are garments, not armour, and they will not turn shaft or blade. But they should serve you well: they are light to wear, and warm enough or cool enough at need. And you will find them a great aid in keeping out of the sight of unfriendly eyes, whether you walk among the stones or the trees. You are indeed high in the favour of the Lady! For she herself and her maidens wove this stuff; and never before have we clad strangers in the garb of our own people.’

After their morning meal the Company said farewell to the lawn by the fountain. Their hearts were heavy; for it was a fair place, and it had become like home to them, though they could not count the days and nights that they had passed there. As they stood for a moment looking at the white water in the sunlight, Haldir came walking towards them over the green grass of the glade. Frodo greeted him with delight.

‘I have returned from the Northern Fences,’ said the Elf, ‘and I am sent now to be your guide again. The Dimrill Dale is full of vapour and clouds of smoke, and the mountains are troubled. There are noises in the deeps of the earth. If any of you had thought of returning northwards to your homes, you would not have been able to pass that way. But come! Your path now goes south.’

As they walked through Caras Galadhon the green ways were empty; but in the trees above them many voices were murmuring and singing. They themselves went silently. At last Haldir led them down the southward slopes of the hill, and they came again to the great gate hung with lamps, and to the white bridge; and so they passed out and left the city of the Elves. Then they turned away from the paved road and took a path that went off into a deep thicket of mallorn-trees, and passed on, winding through rolling woodlands of silver shadow, leading them ever down, southwards and eastwards, towards the shores of the River.

They had gone some ten miles and noon was at hand when they came on a high green wall. Passing through an opening they came suddenly out of the trees. Before them lay a long lawn of shining grass, studded with golden *elanor* that glinted in the sun. The lawn ran out into a narrow tongue between bright margins: on the right and west the Silverlode flowed glittering; on the left and east the Great River rolled its broad waters, deep and dark. On the further shores the woodlands still marched on southwards as far as the eye could see, but all the banks were bleak and bare. No mallorn lifted its gold-hung boughs beyond the Land of Lórien.

On the bank of the Silverlode, at some distance up from the meeting of the streams, there was a hythe of white stones and white wood. By it were moored many boats and barges. Some were brightly painted, and shone with silver and gold and green, but most were either white or grey. Three small grey boats had been made ready for the travellers, and in these the Elves stowed their goods. And they added also coils of rope, three to each boat. Slender they looked, but strong, silken to the touch, grey of hue like the elven-cloaks.

‘What are these?’ asked Sam, handling one that lay upon the greensward.

‘Ropes indeed!’ answered an Elf from the boats. ‘Never travel far without a rope! And one that is long and strong and light. Such are these. They may be a help in many needs.’

‘You don’t need to tell me that!’ said Sam. ‘I came without any, and I’ve been worried ever since. But I was wondering what these were made of, knowing a bit about rope-making: it’s in the family as you might say.’

‘They are made of *hithlain*,’ said the Elf, ‘but there is no time now to instruct you in the art of their making. Had we known that this craft delighted you, we could have taught you much. But now alas! unless you should at some time return hither, you must be content with our gift. May it serve you well!’

‘Come!’ said Haldir. ‘All is now ready for you. Enter the boats! But take care at first!’

‘Heed the words!’ said the other Elves. ‘These boats are light-built, and they are crafty and unlike the boats of other folk. They will not sink, lade them as you will; but they are wayward if mishandled. It would be wise if you accustomed yourselves to stepping in and out, here where there is a landing-place, before you set off downstream.’

The Company was arranged in this way: Aragorn, Frodo, and Sam were in one boat; Boromir, Merry, and Pippin in another; and in the third were Legolas and Gimli, who had now become fast friends. In this last boat most of the goods and packs were stowed. The boats were moved and steered with short-handled paddles that had broad leaf-shaped blades. When all was ready Aragorn led them on a trial up the Silverlode. The current was swift and they went forward slowly. Sam sat in the bows, clutching the sides, and looking back wistfully to the shore. The sunlight glittering on the water dazzled his eyes. As they passed beyond the green field of the Tongue, the trees drew down to the river’s brink. Here and there golden leaves tossed and floated on the rippling stream. The air was very bright and still, and there was a silence, except for the high distant song of larks.

They turned a sharp bend in the river, and there, sailing proudly down the stream towards them, they saw a swan of great size. The water rippled on either side of the white breast beneath its curving neck. Its beak shone like burnished gold, and its eyes glinted like jet set in yellow stones; its huge white wings were half lifted. A music came down the river as it drew nearer; and suddenly they perceived that it was a ship, wrought and carved with elven-skill in the likeness of a bird. Two elves clad in white steered it with black paddles. In the midst of the vessel sat Celeborn, and behind him stood Galadriel, tall and white; a circlet of golden flowers was in her hair, and in her hand she held a harp, and she sang. Sad and sweet was the sound of her voice in the cool clear air:

*I sang of leaves, of leaves of gold, and leaves of gold there grew:  
Of wind I sang, a wind there came and in the branches blew.  
Beyond the Sun, beyond the Moon, the foam was on the Sea,  
And by the strand of Ilmarin there grew a golden Tree.  
Beneath the stars of Ever-eve in Eldamar it shone,  
In Eldamar beside the walls of Elven Tirion.  
There long the golden leaves have grown upon the branching years,  
While here beyond the Sundering Seas now fall the Elven-tears.  
O Lórien! The Winter comes, the bare and leafless Day;  
The leaves are falling in the stream, the River flows away.  
O Lórien! Too long I have dwelt upon this Hither Shore  
And in a fading crown have twined the golden elanor.  
But if of ships I now should sing, what ship would come to me,  
What ship would bear me ever back across so wide a Sea?*

Aragorn stayed his boat as the Swan-ship drew alongside. The Lady ended her song and greeted them. ‘We have come to bid our last farewell,’ she said, ‘and to speed you with blessings from our land.’

‘Though you have been our guests,’ said Celeborn, ‘you have not yet eaten with us, and we bid you, therefore, to a parting feast, here between the flowing waters that will bear you far from Lórien.’

The Swan passed on slowly to the hythe, and they turned their boats and followed it. There in the last end of Egladil upon the green grass the parting feast was held; but Frodo ate and drank little, heeding only the beauty of the Lady and her voice. She seemed no longer perilous or terrible, nor filled with hidden power. Already she seemed to him, as by men of later days Elves still at times are seen: present and yet remote, a living vision of that which has already been left far behind by the flowing streams of Time.

After they had eaten and drunk, sitting upon the grass, Celeborn spoke to them again of their journey, and lifting his hand he pointed south to the woods beyond the Tongue.

‘As you go down the water,’ he said, ‘you will find that the trees will fail, and you will come to a barren country. There the River flows in stony vales amid high moors, until at last after many leagues it comes to the tall island of the Tindrock, that we call Tol Brandir. There it casts its arms about the steep shores of the isle, and falls then with a great noise and smoke over the cataracts of Rauros down into the Nindalf, the Wetwang as it is called in your tongue. That is a wide region of sluggish fen where the stream becomes tortuous and much divided. There the Entwash flows in by many mouths from the Forest of Fangorn in the west. About that stream, on this side of the Great River, lies Rohan. On the further side are the bleak hills of the Eryn Muil. The wind blows from the East there, for they look out over the Dead Marshes and the Noman-lands to Cirith Gorgor and the black gates of Mordor.

‘Boromir, and any that go with him seeking Minas Tirith, will do well to leave the Great River above Rauros and cross the Entwash before it finds the marshes. Yet they should not go too far up that stream, nor risk becoming entangled in the Forest of Fangorn. That is a strange land, and is now little known. But Boromir and Aragorn doubtless do not need this warning.’

‘Indeed we have heard of Fangorn in Minas Tirith,’ said Boromir. ‘But what I have heard seems to me for the most part old wives’ tales, such as we tell to our children. All that lies north of Rohan is now to us so far away that fancy can wander freely there. Of old Fangorn lay upon the borders of our realm; but it is now many lives of men since any of us visited it, to prove or disprove the legends that have come down from distant years.

‘I have myself been at whiles in Rohan, but I have never crossed it northwards. When I was sent out as a messenger, I passed through the Gap by the skirts of the White Mountains, and crossed the Isen and the Greyflood into Northerland. A long and wearisome journey. Four hundred leagues I reckoned it, and it took me many months; for I lost my horse at Tharbad, at the fording of the Greyflood. After that journey, and the road I have trodden with this Company, I do not much doubt that I shall find a way through Rohan, and Fangorn too, if need be.’

‘Then I need say no more,’ said Celeborn. ‘But do not despise the lore that has come down from distant years; for oft it may chance that old wives keep in memory word of things that once were needful for the wise to know.’

Now Galadriel rose from the grass, and taking a cup from one of her maidens she filled it with white mead and gave it to Celeborn.

‘Now it is time to drink the cup of farewell,’ she said. ‘Drink, Lord of the Galadhrim! And let not your heart be sad, though night must follow noon, and already our evening draweth nigh.’

Then she brought the cup to each of the Company, and bade them drink and farewell. But when they had drunk she commanded them to sit again on the grass, and chairs were set for her and for Celeborn. Her maidens stood silent about her, and a while she looked upon her guests. At last she spoke again.

‘We have drunk the cup of parting,’ she said, ‘and the shadows fall between us. But before you go, I have brought in my ship gifts which the Lord and Lady of the Galadhrim now offer you in memory of Lothlórien.’ Then she called to each in turn.

‘Here is the gift of Celeborn and Galadriel to the leader of your Company,’ she said to Aragorn, and she gave him a sheath that had been made to fit his sword. It was overlaid with a tracery of flowers and leaves wrought of silver and gold, and on it were set in elven-runes formed of many gems the name Andúril and the lineage of the sword.

‘The blade that is drawn from this sheath shall not be stained or broken even in defeat,’ she said. ‘But is there aught else that you desire of me at our parting? For darkness will flow between us, and it may be that we shall not meet again, unless it be far hence upon a road that has no returning.’

And Aragorn answered: ‘Lady, you know all my desire, and long held in keeping the only treasure that I seek. Yet it is not yours to give me, even if you would; and only through darkness shall I come to it.’

‘Yet maybe this will lighten your heart,’ said Galadriel; ‘for it was left in my care to be given to you, should you pass through this land.’ Then she lifted from her lap a great stone of a clear green, set in a silver brooch that

was wrought in the likeness of an eagle with outspread wings; and as she held it up the gem flashed like the sun shining through the leaves of spring. 'This stone I gave to Celebrian my daughter, and she to hers; and now it comes to you as a token of hope. In this hour take the name that was foretold for you, Elessar, the Elfstone of the House of Elendil!'

Then Aragorn took the stone and pinned the brooch upon his breast, and those who saw him wondered; for they had not marked before how tall and kingly he stood, and it seemed to them that many years of toil had fallen from his shoulders. 'For the gifts that you have given me I thank you,' he said, 'O Lady of Lórien of whom were sprung Celebrian and Arwen Evenstar. What praise could I say more?'

The Lady bowed her head, and she turned then to Boromir, and to him she gave a belt of gold; and to Merry and Pippin she gave small silver belts, each with a clasp wrought like a golden flower. To Legolas she gave a bow such as the Galadhrim used, longer and stouter than the bows of Mirkwood, and strung with a string of elf-hair. With it went a quiver of arrows.

'For you little gardener and lover of trees,' she said to Sam, 'I have only a small gift.' She put into his hand a little box of plain grey wood, unadorned save for a single silver rune upon the lid. 'Here is set G for Galadriel,' she said; 'but also it may stand for garden in your tongue. In this box there is earth from my orchard, and such blessing as Galadriel has still to bestow is upon it. It will not keep you on your road, nor defend you against any peril; but if you keep it and see your home again at last, then perhaps it may reward you. Though you should find all barren and laid waste, there will be few gardens in Middle-earth that will bloom like your garden, if you sprinkle this earth there. Then you may remember Galadriel, and catch a glimpse far off of Lórien, that you have seen only in our winter. For our Spring and our Summer are gone by, and they will never be seen on earth again save in memory.'

Sam went red to the ears and muttered something inaudible, as he clutched the box and bowed as well as he could.

'And what gift would a Dwarf ask of the Elves?' said Galadriel, turning to Gimli.

'None, Lady,' answered Gimli. 'It is enough for me to have seen the Lady of the Galadhrim, and to have heard her gentle words.'

'Hear all ye Elves!' she cried to those about her. 'Let none say again that Dwarves are grasping and ungracious! Yet surely, Gimli son of Glóin, you desire something that I could give? Name it, I bid you! You shall not be the only guest without a gift.'

'There is nothing, Lady Galadriel,' said Gimli, bowing low and stammering. 'Nothing, unless it might be—unless it is permitted to ask, nay, to name a single strand of your hair, which surpasses the gold of the earth as the stars surpass the gems of the mine. I do not ask for such a gift. But you commanded me to name my desire.'

The Elves stirred and murmured with astonishment, and Celeborn gazed at the Dwarf in wonder, but the Lady smiled. 'It is said that the skill of the Dwarves is in their hands rather than in their tongues,' she said; 'yet that is not true of Gimli. For none have ever made to me a request so bold and yet so courteous. And how shall I refuse, since I commanded him to speak? But tell me, what would you do with such a gift?'

'Treasure it, Lady,' he answered, 'in memory of your words to me at our first meeting. And if ever I return to the smithies of my home, it shall be set in imperishable crystal to be an heirloom of my house, and a pledge of good will between the Mountain and the Wood until the end of days.'

Then the Lady unbraided one of her long tresses, and cut off three golden hairs, and laid them in Gimli's hand. 'These words shall go with the gift,' she said. 'I do not foretell, for all foretelling is now vain: on the one hand lies darkness, and on the other only hope. But if hope should not fail, then I say to you, Gimli son of Glóin, that your hands shall flow with gold, and yet over you gold shall have no dominion.'

'And you, Ring-bearer,' she said, turning to Frodo. 'I come to you last who are not last in my thoughts. For you I have prepared this.' She held up a small crystal phial: it glittered as she moved it, and rays of white light sprang from her hand. 'In this phial,' she said, 'is caught the light of Eärendil's star, set amid the waters of my



fountain. It will shine still brighter when night is about you. May it be a light to you in dark places, when all other lights go out. Remember Galadriel and her Mirror!’

Frodo took the phial, and for a moment as it shone between them, he saw her again standing like a queen, great and beautiful, but no longer terrible. He bowed, but found no words to say.

Now the Lady arose, and Celeborn led them back to the hythe. A yellow noon lay on the green land of the Tongue, and the water glittered with silver. All at last was made ready. The Company took their places in the boats as before. Crying farewell, the Elves of Lórien with long grey poles thrust them out into the flowing stream, and the rippling waters bore them slowly away. The travellers sat still without moving or speaking. On the green bank near to the very point of the Tongue the Lady Galadriel stood alone and silent. As they passed her they turned and their eyes watched her slowly floating away from them. For so it seemed to them: Lórien was slipping backward, like a bright ship masted with enchanted trees, sailing on to forgotten shores, while they sat helpless upon the margin of the grey and leafless world.

Even as they gazed, the Silverlode passed out into the currents of the Great River, and their boats turned and began to speed southward. Soon the white form of the Lady was small and distant. She shone like a window of glass upon a far hill in the westering sun, or as a remote lake seen from a mountain: a crystal fallen in the lap of the land. Then it seemed to Frodo that she lifted her arms in a final farewell, and far but piercing-clear on the following wind came the sound of her voice singing. But now she sang in the ancient tongue of the Elves beyond the Sea, and he did not understand the words: fair was the music, but it did not comfort him.

Yet as is the way of Elvish words, they remained graven in his memory, and long afterwards he interpreted them, as well as he could: the language was that of Elven-song and spoke of things little known on Middle-earth.

*Ai! laurië lantar lassí súrinen  
yéni únótimë ve rámar aldaron!  
Yéni ve lintë yuldar avánier  
mi oromardi lisse-miruvóreva  
Andúnë pella, Vardo tellumar  
nu luini yassen tintilar i eleni  
ómaryo airetári-lírinen.*

*Sí man i yulma nin enquantuva?*

*An sí Tintallë Varda Oiolossëo  
ve fanyar máryat Elentári ortanë,  
ar ilyë tier undulávë lumbulë;  
ar sindanóriello caita mornië  
i falmalinnar imbë met, ar hísie  
untûpa Calaciryo míri oialë.  
Sí vanwa ná, Rómello vanwa, Valimar!  
Namárië! Nai hiruvalyë Valimar.  
Nai elyë hiruva. Namárië!*

‘Ah! like gold fall the leaves in the wind, long years numberless as the wings of trees! The years have passed like swift draughts of the sweet mead in lofty halls beyond the West, beneath the blue vaults of Varda wherein the stars tremble in the song of her voice, holy and queenly. Who now shall refill the cup for me? For now the Kindler, Varda, the Queen of the Stars, from Mount Everwhite has uplifted her hands like clouds, and all paths are drowned deep in shadow; and out of a grey country darkness lies on the foaming waves between us, and mist covers the jewels of Calacirya for ever. Now lost, lost to those from the East is Valimar! Farewell! Maybe thou shalt find Valimar. Maybe even thou shalt find it. Farewell!’ Varda is the name of that Lady whom the Elves in these lands of exile name Elbereth.

Suddenly the River swept round a bend, and the banks rose upon either side, and the light of Lórien was hidden. To that fair land Frodo never came again.

The travellers now turned their faces to the journey; the sun was before them, and their eyes were dazzled, for all were filled with tears. Gimli wept openly.

‘I have looked the last upon that which was fairest,’ he said to Legolas his companion. ‘Henceforward I will call nothing fair, unless it be her gift.’ He put his hand to his breast.

‘Tell me, Legolas, why did I come on this Quest? Little did I know where the chief peril lay! Truly Elrond spoke, saying that we could not foresee what we might meet upon our road. Torment in the dark was the danger that I feared, and it did not hold me back. But I would not have come, had I known the danger of light and joy. Now I have taken my worst wound in this parting, even if I were to go this night straight to the Dark Lord. Alas for Gimli son of Glóin!’

‘Nay!’ said Legolas. ‘Alas for us all! And for all that walk the world in these after-days. For such is the way of it: to find and lose, as it seems to those whose boat is on the running stream. But I count you blessed, Gimli son of Glóin: for your loss you suffer of your own free will, and you might have chosen otherwise. But you have not forsaken your companions, and the least reward that you shall have is that the memory of Lothlórien shall remain ever clear and unstained in your heart, and shall neither fade nor grow stale.’

‘Maybe,’ said Gimli; ‘and I thank you for your words. True words doubtless; yet all such comfort is cold. Memory is not what the heart desires. That is only a mirror, be it clear as Kheled-zâram. Or so says the heart of Gimli the Dwarf. Elves may see things otherwise. Indeed I have heard that for them memory is more like to the waking world than to a dream. Not so for Dwarves.’

‘But let us talk no more of it. Look to the boat! She is too low in the water with all this baggage, and the Great River is swift. I do not wish to drown my grief in cold water.’ He took up a paddle, and steered towards the western bank, following Aragorn’s boat ahead, which had already moved out of the middle stream.

So the Company went on their long way, down the wide hurrying waters, borne ever southwards. Bare woods stalked along either bank, and they could not see any glimpse of the lands behind. The breeze died away and the River flowed without a sound. No voice of bird broke the silence. The sun grew misty as the day grew old, until it gleamed in a pale sky like a high white pearl. Then it faded into the West, and dusk came early, followed by a grey and starless night. Far into the dark quiet hours they floated on, guiding their boats under the overhanging shadows of the western woods. Great trees passed by like ghosts, thrusting their twisted thirsty roots through the mist down into the water. It was dreary and cold. Frodo sat and listened to the faint lap and gurgle of the River fretting among the tree-roots and driftwood near the shore, until his head nodded and he fell into an uneasy sleep.



## Chapter 9: The Great River

Frodo was roused by Sam. He found that he was lying, well wrapped, under tall grey-skinned trees in a quiet corner of the woodlands on the west bank of the Great River, Anduin. He had slept the night away, and the grey of morning was dim among the bare branches. Gimli was busy with a small fire near at hand.

They started again before the day was broad. Not that most of the Company were eager to hurry southwards: they were content that the decision, which they must make at latest when they came to Rauros and the Tindrock Isle, still lay some days ahead; and they let the River bear them on at its own pace, having no desire to hasten towards the perils that lay beyond, whichever course they took in the end. Aragorn let them drift with the stream as they wished, husbanding their strength against weariness to come. But he insisted that at least they should start early each day and journey on far into the evening; for he felt in his heart that time was pressing, and he feared that the Dark Lord had not been idle while they lingered in Lórien.

Nonetheless they saw no sign of any enemy that day, nor the next. The dull grey hours passed without event. As the third day of their voyage wore on the lands changed slowly: the trees thinned and then failed altogether. On the eastern bank to their left they saw long formless slopes stretching up and away towards the sky; brown and withered they looked, as if fire had passed over them, leaving no living blade of green: an unfriendly waste without even a broken tree or a bold stone to relieve the emptiness. They had come to the Brown Lands that lay, vast and desolate, between Southern Mirkwood and the hills of the Eryn Muir. What pestilence or war or evil deed of the Enemy had so blasted all that region even Aragorn could not tell.

Upon the west to their right the land was treeless also, but it was flat, and in many places green with wide plains of grass. On this side of the River they passed forests of great reeds, so tall that they shut out all view to the west, as the little boats went rustling by along their fluttering borders. Their dark withered plumes bent and tossed in the light cold airs, hissing softly and sadly. Here and there through openings Frodo could catch sudden glimpses of rolling meads, and far beyond them hills in the sunset, and away on the edge of sight a dark line, where marched the southernmost ranks of the Misty Mountains.

There was no sign of living moving things, save birds. Of these there were many: small fowl whistling and piping in the reeds, but they were seldom seen. Once or twice the travellers heard the rush and whine of swan-wings, and looking up they saw a great phalanx streaming along the sky.

‘Swans!’ said Sam. ‘And mighty big ones too!’

‘Yes,’ said Aragorn, ‘and they are black swans.’

‘How wide and empty and mournful all this country looks!’ said Frodo. ‘I always imagined that as one journeyed south it got warmer and merrier, until winter was left behind for ever.’

‘But we have not journeyed far south yet,’ answered Aragorn. ‘It is still winter, and we are far from the sea. Here the world is cold until the sudden spring, and we may yet have snow again. Far away down in the Bay of Belfalas, to which Anduin runs, it is warm and merry, maybe, or would be but for the Enemy. But here we are not above sixty leagues, I guess, south of the Southfarthing away in your Shire, hundreds of long miles yonder. You are looking now southwest across the north plains of the Riddermark, Rohan the land of the Horse-lords. Ere long we shall come to the mouth of the Limlight that runs down from Fangorn to join the Great River. That is the north boundary of Rohan; and of old all that lay between Limlight and the White Mountains belonged to the Rohirrim. It is a rich and pleasant land, and its grass has no rival; but in these evil days folk do not dwell by the River or ride often to its shores. Anduin is wide, yet the orcs can shoot their arrows far across the stream; and of late, it is said, they have dared to cross the water and raid the herds and studs of Rohan.’

Sam looked from bank to bank uneasily. The trees had seemed hostile before, as if they harboured secret eyes and lurking dangers; now he wished that the trees were still there. He felt that the Company was too naked, afloat in little open boats in the midst of shelterless lands, and on a river that was the frontier of war.

In the next day or two, as they went on, borne steadily southwards, this feeling of insecurity grew on all the Company. For a whole day they took to their paddles and hastened forward. The banks slid by. Soon the River broadened and grew more shallow; long stony beaches lay upon the east, and there were gravel-shoals in the water, so that careful steering was needed. The Brown Lands rose into bleak wolds, over which flowed a chill air from the East. On the other side the meads had become rolling downs of withered grass amidst a land of fen and tussock. Frodo shivered, thinking of the lawns and fountains, the clear sun and gentle rains of Lothlórien. There was little speech and no laughter in any of the boats. Each member of the Company was busy with his own thoughts.

The heart of Legolas was running under the stars of a summer night in some northern glade amid the beech-woods; Gimli was fingering gold in his mind, and wondering if it were fit to be wrought into the housing of the Lady's gift. Merry and Pippin in the middle boat were ill at ease, for Boromir sat muttering to himself, sometimes biting his nails, as if some restlessness or doubt consumed him, sometimes seizing a paddle and driving the boat close behind Aragorn's. Then Pippin, who sat in the bow looking back, caught a queer gleam in his eye, as he peered forward gazing at Frodo. Sam had long ago made up his mind that, though boats were maybe not as dangerous as he had been brought up to believe, they were far more uncomfortable than even he had imagined. He was cramped and miserable, having nothing to do but stare at the winter-lands crawling by and the grey water on either side of him. Even when the paddles were in use they did not trust Sam with one.

As dusk drew down on the fourth day, he was looking back over the bowed heads of Frodo and Aragorn and the following boats; he was drowsy and longed for camp and the feel of earth under his toes. Suddenly something caught his sight: at first he stared at it listlessly, then he sat up and rubbed his eyes; but when he looked again he could not see it any more.

That night they camped on a small eyot close to the western bank. Sam lay rolled in blankets beside Frodo. 'I had a funny dream an hour or two before we stopped, Mr. Frodo,' he said. 'Or maybe it wasn't a dream. Funny it was anyway.'

'Well, what was it?' said Frodo, knowing that Sam would not settle down until he had told his tale, whatever it was. 'I haven't seen or thought of anything to make me smile since we left Lothlórien.'

'It wasn't funny that way, Mr. Frodo. It was queer. All wrong, if it wasn't a dream. And you had best hear it. It was like this: I saw a log with eyes!'

'The log's all right,' said Frodo. 'There are many in the River. But leave out the eyes!'

'That I won't,' said Sam. 'Twas the eyes as made me sit up, so to speak. I saw what I took to be a log floating along in the half-light behind Gimli's boat; but I didn't give much heed to it. Then it seemed as if the log was slowly catching us up. And that was peculiar, as you might say, seeing as we were all floating on the stream together. Just then I saw the eyes: two pale sort of points, shiny-like, on a hump at the near end of the log. What's more, it wasn't a log, for it had paddle-feet, like a swan's almost, only they seemed bigger, and kept dipping in and out of the water.'

'That's when I sat right up and rubbed my eyes, meaning to give a shout, if it was still there when I had rubbed the drowse out of my head. For the whatever-it-was was coming along fast now and getting close behind Gimli. But whether those two lamps spotted me moving and staring, or whether I came to my senses, I don't know. When I looked again, it wasn't there. Yet I think I caught a glimpse, with the tail of my eye, as the saying is, of something dark shooting under the shadow of the bank. I couldn't see no more eyes, though.'

'I said to myself: "dreaming again, Sam Gamgee," I said; and I said no more just then. But I've been thinking since, and now I'm not so sure. What do you make of it, Mr. Frodo?'

'I should make nothing of it but a log and the dusk and sleep in your eyes, Sam,' said Frodo, 'if this was the first time that those eyes had been seen. But it isn't. I saw them away back north before we reached Lórien. And

I saw a strange creature with eyes climbing to the flet that night. Haldir saw it too. And do you remember the report of the Elves that went after the orc-band?’

‘Ah,’ said Sam, ‘I do; and I remember more too. I don’t like my thoughts; but thinking of one thing and another, and Mr. Bilbo’s stories and all, I fancy I could put a name on the creature, at a guess. A nasty name. Gollum, maybe?’

‘Yes, that is what I have feared for some time,’ said Frodo. ‘Ever since the night on the flet. I suppose he was lurking in Moria, and picked up our trail then; but I hoped that our stay in Lórien would throw him off the scent again. The miserable creature must have been hiding in the woods by the Silverlode, watching us start off!’

‘That’s about it,’ said Sam. ‘And we’d better be a bit more watchful ourselves, or we’ll feel some nasty fingers round our necks one of these nights, if we ever wake up to feel anything. And that’s what I was leading up to. No need to trouble Strider or the others tonight. I’ll keep watch. I can sleep tomorrow, being no more than luggage in a boat, as you might say.’

‘I might,’ said Frodo, ‘and I might say “luggage with eyes”. You shall watch; but only if you promise to wake me half-way towards morning, if nothing happens before then.’

In the dead hours Frodo came out of a deep dark sleep to find Sam shaking him. ‘It’s a shame to wake you,’ whispered Sam, ‘but that’s what you said. There’s nothing to tell, or not much. I thought I heard some soft plashing and a sniffing noise, a while back; but you hear a lot of such queer sounds by a river at night.’

He lay down, and Frodo sat up, huddled in his blankets, and fought off his sleep. Minutes or hours passed slowly, and nothing happened. Frodo was just yielding to the temptation to lie down again when a dark shape, hardly visible, floated close to one of the moored boats. A long whitish hand could be dimly seen as it shot out and grabbed the gunwale; two pale lamplike eyes shone coldly as they peered inside, and then they lifted and gazed up at Frodo on the eyot. They were not more than a yard or two away, and Frodo heard the soft hiss of intaken breath. He stood up, drawing Sting from its sheath, and faced the eyes. Immediately their light was shut off. There was another hiss and a splash, and the dark log-shape shot away downstream into the night. Aragorn stirred in his sleep, turned over, and sat up.

‘What is it?’ he whispered, springing up and coming to Frodo. ‘I felt something in my sleep. Why have you drawn your sword?’

‘Gollum,’ answered Frodo. ‘Or at least, so I guess.’

‘Ah!’ said Aragorn. ‘So you know about our little footpad, do you? He padded after us all through Moria and right down to Nimrodel. Since we took to boats, he has been lying on a log and paddling with hands and feet. I have tried to catch him once or twice at night; but he is slier than a fox, and as slippery as a fish. I hoped the river-voyage would beat him, but he is too clever a waterman.

‘We shall have to try going faster tomorrow. You lie down now, and I will keep watch for what is left of the night. I wish I could lay my hands on the wretch. We might make him useful. But if I cannot, we shall have to try and lose him. He is very dangerous. Quite apart from murder by night on his own account, he may put any enemy that is about on our track.’

The night passed without Gollum showing so much as a shadow again. After that the Company kept a sharp look-out, but they saw no more of Gollum while the voyage lasted. If he was still following, he was very wary and cunning. At Aragorn’s bidding they paddled now for long spells, and the banks went swiftly by. But they saw little of the country, for they journeyed mostly by night and twilight, resting by day, and lying as hidden as the land allowed. In this way the time passed without event until the seventh day.

The weather was still grey and overcast, with wind from the East, but as evening drew into night the sky away westward cleared, and pools of faint light, yellow and pale green, opened under the grey shores of cloud. There the white rind of the new Moon could be seen glimmering in the remote lakes. Sam looked at it and puckered his brows.

The next day the country on either side began to change rapidly. The banks began to rise and grow stony. Soon they were passing through a hilly rocky land, and on both shores there were steep slopes buried in deep brakes

of thorn and sloe, tangled with brambles and creepers. Behind them stood low crumbling cliffs, and chimneys of grey weathered stone dark with ivy; and beyond these again there rose high ridges crowned with wind-writhen firs. They were drawing near to the grey hill-country of the Eryn Muir, the southern march of Wilderland.

There were many birds about the cliffs and the rock-chimneys, and all day high in the air flocks of birds had been circling, black against the pale sky. As they lay in their camp that day Aragorn watched the flights doubtfully, wondering if Gollum had been doing some mischief and the news of their voyage was now moving in the wilderness. Later as the sun was setting, and the Company was stirring and getting ready to start again, he descried a dark spot against the fading light: a great bird high and far off, now wheeling, now flying on slowly southwards.

‘What is that, Legolas?’ he asked, pointing to the northern sky. ‘Is it, as I think, an eagle?’

‘Yes,’ said Legolas. ‘It is an eagle, a hunting eagle. I wonder what that forebodes. It is far from the mountains.’

‘We will not start until it is fully dark,’ said Aragorn.

The eighth night of their journey came. It was silent and windless; the grey east wind had passed away. The thin crescent of the Moon had fallen early into the pale sunset, but the sky was clear above, and though far away in the South there were great ranges of cloud that still shone faintly, in the West stars glinted bright.

‘Come!’ said Aragorn. ‘We will venture one more journey by night. We are coming to reaches of the River that I do not know well; for I have never journeyed by water in these parts before, not between here and the rapids of Sarn Gebir. But if I am right in my reckoning, those are still many miles ahead. Still there are dangerous places even before we come there: rocks and stony eyots in the stream. We must keep a sharp watch and not try to paddle swiftly.’

To Sam in the leading boat was given the task of watchman. He lay forward peering into the gloom. The night grew dark, but the stars above were strangely bright, and there was a glimmer on the face of the River. It was close on midnight, and they had been drifting for some while, hardly using the paddles, when suddenly Sam cried out. Only a few yards ahead dark shapes loomed up in the stream and he heard the swirl of racing water. There was a swift current which swung left, towards the eastern shore where the channel was clear. As they were swept aside the travellers could see, now very close, the pale foam of the River lashing against sharp rocks that were thrust out far into the stream like a ridge of teeth. The boats were all huddled together.

‘Hoy there, Aragorn!’ shouted Boromir, as his boat bumped into the leader. ‘This is madness! We cannot dare the Rapids by night! But no boat can live in Sarn Gebir, be it night or day.’

‘Back, back!’ cried Aragorn. ‘Turn! Turn if you can!’ He drove his paddle into the water, trying to hold the boat and bring it round.

‘I am out of my reckoning,’ he said to Frodo. ‘I did not know that we had come so far: Anduin flows faster than I thought. Sarn Gebir must be close at hand already.’

With great efforts they checked the boats and slowly brought them about; but at first they could make only small headway against the current, and all the time they were carried nearer and nearer to the eastern bank. Now dark and ominous it loomed up in the night.

‘All together, paddle!’ shouted Boromir. ‘Paddle! Or we shall be driven on the shoals.’ Even as he spoke Frodo felt the keel beneath him grate upon stone.

At that moment there was a twang of bowstrings: several arrows whistled over them, and some fell among them. One smote Frodo between the shoulders and he lurched forward with a cry, letting go his paddle: but the arrow fell back, foiled by his hidden coat of mail. Another passed through Aragorn’s hood; and a third stood fast in the gunwale of the second boat, close by Merry’s hand. Sam thought he could glimpse black figures running to and fro upon the long shingle-banks that lay under the eastern shore. They seemed very near.

‘*Yrch!*’ said Legolas, falling into his own tongue.

‘Orcs!’ cried Gimli.

‘Gollum’s doing, I’ll be bound,’ said Sam to Frodo. ‘And a nice place to choose, too. The River seems set on taking us right into their arms!’

They all leaned forward straining at the paddles: even Sam took a hand. Every moment they expected to feel the bite of black-feathered arrows. Many whined overhead or struck the water nearby; but there were no more hits. It was dark, but not too dark for the night-eyes of Orcs, and in the star-glimmer they must have offered their cunning foes some mark, unless it was that the grey cloaks of Lórien and the grey timber of the elf-wrought boats defeated the malice of the archers of Mordor.

Stroke by stroke they laboured on. In the darkness it was hard to be sure that they were indeed moving at all; but slowly the swirl of the water grew less, and the shadow of the eastern bank faded back into the night. At last, as far as they could judge, they had reached the middle of the stream again and had driven their boats back some distance above the jutting rocks. Then half turning they thrust them with all their strength towards the western shore. Under the shadow of bushes leaning out over the water they halted and drew breath.

Legolas laid down his paddle and took up the bow that he had brought from Lórien. Then he sprang ashore and climbed a few paces up the bank. Stringing the bow and fitting an arrow he turned, peering back over the River into the darkness. Across the water there were shrill cries, but nothing could be seen.

Frodo looked up at the Elf standing tall above him, as he gazed into the night, seeking a mark to shoot at. His head was dark, crowned with sharp white stars that glittered in the black pools of the sky behind. But now rising and sailing up from the South the great clouds advanced, sending out dark outriders into the starry fields. A sudden dread fell on the Company.

‘*Elbereth Gilthoniel!*’ sighed Legolas as he looked up. Even as he did so, a dark shape, like a cloud and yet not a cloud, for it moved far more swiftly, came out of the blackness in the South, and sped towards the Company, blotting out all light as it approached. Soon it appeared as a great winged creature, blacker than the pits in the night. Fierce voices rose up to greet it from across the water. Frodo felt a sudden chill running through him and clutching at his heart; there was a deadly cold, like the memory of an old wound, in his shoulder. He crouched down, as if to hide.

Suddenly the great bow of Lórien sang. Shrill went the arrow from the elven-string. Frodo looked up. Almost above him the winged shape swerved. There was a harsh croaking scream, as it fell out of the air, vanishing down into the gloom of the eastern shore. The sky was clean again. There was a tumult of many voices far away, cursing and wailing in the darkness, and then silence. Neither shaft nor cry came again from the east that night.

After a while Aragorn led the boats back upstream. They felt their way along the water’s edge for some distance, until they found a small shallow bay. A few low trees grew there close to the water, and behind them rose a steep rocky bank. Here the Company decided to stay and await the dawn: it was useless to attempt to move further by night. They made no camp and lit no fire, but lay huddled in the boats, moored close together.

‘Praised be the bow of Galadriel, and the hand and eye of Legolas!’ said Gimli, as he munched a wafer of *lembas*. ‘That was a mighty shot in the dark, my friend!’

‘But who can say what it hit?’ said Legolas.

‘I cannot,’ said Gimli. ‘But I am glad that the shadow came no nearer. I liked it not at all. Too much it reminded me of the shadow in Moria—the shadow of the Balrog,’ he ended in a whisper.

‘It was not a Balrog,’ said Frodo, still shivering with the chill that had come upon him. ‘It was something colder. I think it was—’ Then he paused and fell silent.

‘What do you think?’ asked Boromir eagerly, leaning from his boat, as if he was trying to catch a glimpse of Frodo’s face.

‘I think—No, I will not say,’ answered Frodo. ‘Whatever it was, its fall has dismayed our enemies.’

‘So it seems,’ said Aragorn. ‘Yet where they are, and how many, and what they will do next, we do not know. This night we must all be sleepless! Dark hides us now. But what the day will show who can tell? Have your weapons close to hand!’

Sam sat tapping the hilt of his sword as if he were counting on his fingers, and looking up at the sky. ‘It’s very strange,’ he murmured. ‘The Moon’s the same in the Shire and in Wilderland, or it ought to be. But either it’s out of its running, or I’m all wrong in my reckoning. You’ll remember, Mr. Frodo, the Moon was waning as we lay on the flet up in that tree: a week from the full, I reckon. And we’d been a week on the way last night, when up pops a New Moon as thin as a nail-paring, as if we had never stayed no time in the Elvish country.’

‘Well, I can remember three nights there for certain, and I seem to remember several more, but I would take my oath it was never a whole month. Anyone would think that time did not count in there!’

‘And perhaps that was the way of it,’ said Frodo. ‘In that land, maybe, we were in a time that has elsewhere long gone by. It was not, I think, until Silverlode bore us back to Anduin that we returned to the time that flows through mortal lands to the Great Sea. And I don’t remember any moon, either new or old, in Caras Galadhon: only stars by night and sun by day.’

Legolas stirred in his boat. ‘Nay, time does not tarry ever,’ he said; ‘but change and growth is not in all things and places alike. For the Elves the world moves, and it moves both very swift and very slow. Swift, because they themselves change little, and all else fleets by: it is a grief to them. Slow, because they need not count the running years, not for themselves. The passing seasons are but ripples ever repeated in the long long stream. Yet beneath the Sun all things must wear to an end at last.’

‘But the wearing is slow in Lórien,’ said Frodo. ‘The power of the Lady is on it. Rich are the hours, though short they seem, in Caras Galadhon, where Galadriel wields the Elven-ring.’

‘That should not have been said outside Lórien, not even to me,’ said Aragorn. ‘Speak no more of it! But so it is, Sam: in that land you lost your count. There time flowed swiftly by us, as for the Elves. The old moon passed, and a new moon waxed and waned in the world outside, while we tarried there. And yestereve a new moon came again. Winter is nearly gone. Time flows on to a spring of little hope.’

The night passed silently. No voice or call was heard again across the water. The travellers huddled in their boats felt the changing of the weather. The air grew warm and very still under the great moist clouds that had floated up from the South and the distant seas. The rushing of the River over the rocks of the rapids seemed to grow louder and closer. The twigs of the trees above them began to drip.

When the day came the mood of the world about them had become soft and sad. Slowly the dawn grew to a pale light, diffused and shadowless. There was mist on the River, and white fog swathed the shore; the far bank could not be seen.

‘I can’t abide fog,’ said Sam; ‘but this seems to be a lucky one. Now perhaps we can get away without those cursed goblins seeing us.’

‘Perhaps so,’ said Aragorn. ‘But it will be hard to find the path unless the fog lifts a little later on. And we must find the path, if we are to pass Sarn Gebir and come to the Eryn Muil.’

‘I do not see why we should pass the Rapids or follow the River any further,’ said Boromir. ‘If the Eryn Muil lie before us, then we can abandon these cockle-boats, and strike westward and southward, until we come to the Entwash and cross into my own land.’

‘We can, if we are making for Minas Tirith,’ said Aragorn, ‘but that is not yet agreed. And such a course may be more perilous than it sounds. The vale of Entwash is flat and fenny, and fog is a deadly peril there for those on foot and laden. I would not abandon our boats until we must. The River is at least a path that cannot be missed.’

‘But the Enemy holds the eastern bank,’ objected Boromir. ‘And even if you pass the Gates of Argonath and come unmolested to the Tindrock, what will you do then? Leap down the Falls and land in the marshes?’



‘No!’ answered Aragorn. ‘Say rather that we will bear our boats by the ancient way to Rauros-foot, and there take to the water again. Do you not know, Boromir, or do you choose to forget the North Stair, and the high seat upon Amon Hen, that were made in the days of the great kings? I at least have a mind to stand in that high place again, before I decide my further course. There, maybe, we shall see some sign that will guide us.’

Boromir held out long against this choice; but when it became plain that Frodo would follow Aragorn, wherever he went, he gave in. ‘It is not the way of the Men of Minas Tirith to desert their friends at need,’ he said, ‘and you will need my strength, if ever you are to reach the Tindrock. To the tall isle I will go, but no further. There I shall turn to my home, alone if my help has not earned the reward of any companionship.’

The day was now growing, and the fog had lifted a little. It was decided that Aragorn and Legolas should at once go forward along the shore, while the others remained by the boats. Aragorn hoped to find some way by which they could carry both their boats and their baggage to the smoother water beyond the Rapids.

‘Boats of the Elves would not sink, maybe,’ he said, ‘but that does not say that we should come through Sarn Gebir alive. None have ever done so yet. No road was made by the Men of Gondor in this region, for even in their great days their realm did not reach up Anduin beyond the Emyrn Muil; but there is a portage-way somewhere on the western shore, if I can find it. It cannot yet have perished; for light boats used to journey out of Wilderland down to Osgiliath, and still did so until a few years ago, when the Orcs of Mordor began to multiply.’

‘Seldom in my life has any boat come out of the North, and the Orcs prowl on the east-shore,’ said Boromir. ‘If you go forward, peril will grow with every mile, even if you find a path.’

‘Peril lies ahead on every southward road,’ answered Aragorn. ‘Wait for us one day. If we do not return in that time, you will know that evil has indeed befallen us. Then you must take a new leader and follow him as best you can.’

It was with a heavy heart that Frodo saw Aragorn and Legolas climb the steep bank and vanish into the mists; but his fears proved groundless. Only two or three hours had passed, and it was barely mid-day, when the shadowy shapes of the explorers appeared again.

‘All is well,’ said Aragorn, as he clambered down the bank. ‘There is a track, and it leads to a good landing that is still serviceable. The distance is not great: the head of the Rapids is but half a mile below us, and they are little more than a mile long. Not far beyond them the stream becomes clear and smooth again, though it runs swiftly. Our hardest task will be to get our boats and baggage to the old portage-way. We have found it, but it lies well back from the waterside here, and runs under the lee of a rock-wall, a furlong or more from the shore. We did not find where the northward landing lies. If it still remains, we must have passed it yesterday night. We might labour far upstream and yet miss it in the fog. I fear we must leave the River now, and make for the portage-way as best we can from here.’

‘That would not be easy, even if we were all Men,’ said Boromir.

‘Yet such as we are we will try it,’ said Aragorn.

‘Aye, we will,’ said Gimli. ‘The legs of Men will lag on a rough road, while a Dwarf goes on, be the burden twice his own weight, Master Boromir!’

The task proved hard indeed, yet in the end it was done. The goods were taken out of the boats and brought to the top of the bank, where there was a level space. Then the boats were drawn out of the water and carried up. They were far less heavy than any had expected. Of what tree growing in the Elvish country they were made not even Legolas knew; but the wood was tough and yet strangely light. Merry and Pippin alone could carry their boat with ease along the flat. Nonetheless it needed the strength of the two Men to lift and haul them over the ground that the Company now had to cross. It sloped up away from the River, a tumbled waste of grey limestone-boulders, with many hidden holes shrouded with weeds and bushes; there were thickets of brambles, and sheer dells; and here and there boggy pools fed by waters trickling from the terraces further inland.

One by one Boromir and Aragorn carried the boats, while the others toiled and scrambled after them with the baggage. At last all was removed and laid on the portage-way. Then with little further hindrance, save from

sprawling briars and many fallen stones, they moved forward all together. Fog still hung in veils upon the crumbling rock-wall, and to their left mist shrouded the River: they could hear it rushing and foaming over the sharp shelves and stony teeth of Sarn Gebir, but they could not see it. Twice they made the journey, before all was brought safe to the southern landing.

There the portage-way, turning back to the water-side, ran gently down to the shallow edge of a little pool. It seemed to have been scooped in the river-side, not by hand, but by the water swirling down from Sarn Gebir against a low pier of rock that jutted out some way into the stream. Beyond it the shore rose sheer into a grey cliff, and there was no further passage for those on foot.

Already the short afternoon was past, and a dim cloudy dusk was closing in. They sat beside the water listening to the confused rush and roar of the Rapids hidden in the mist; they were tired and sleepy, and their hearts were as gloomy as the dying day.

‘Well, here we are, and here we must pass another night,’ said Boromir. ‘We need sleep, and even if Aragorn had a mind to pass the Gates of Argonath by night, we are all too tired—except, no doubt, our sturdy dwarf.’

Gimli made no reply: he was nodding as he sat.

‘Let us rest as much as we can now,’ said Aragorn. ‘Tomorrow we must journey by day again. Unless the weather changes once more and cheats us, we shall have a good chance of slipping through, unseen by any eyes on the eastern shore. But tonight two must watch together in turns: three hours off and one on guard.’

Nothing happened that night worse than a brief drizzle of rain an hour before dawn. As soon as it was fully light they started. Already the fog was thinning. They kept as close as they could to the western side, and they could see the dim shapes of the low cliffs rising ever higher, shadowy walls with their feet in the hurrying river. In the mid-morning the clouds drew down lower, and it began to rain heavily. They drew the skin-covers over their boats to prevent them from being flooded, and drifted on; little could be seen before them or about them through the grey falling curtains.

The rain, however, did not last long. Slowly the sky above grew lighter, and then suddenly the clouds broke, and their draggled fringes trailed away northward up the River. The fogs and mists were gone. Before the travellers lay a wide ravine, with great rocky sides to which clung, upon shelves and in narrow crevices, a few thrawn trees. The channel grew narrower and the River swifter. Now they were speeding along with little hope of stopping or turning, whatever they might meet ahead. Over them was a lane of pale-blue sky, around them the dark overshadowed River, and before them black, shutting out the sun, the hills of Emyr Muil, in which no opening could be seen.

Frodo peering forward saw in the distance two great rocks approaching: like great pinnacles or pillars of stone they seemed. Tall and sheer and ominous they stood upon either side of the stream. A narrow gap appeared between them, and the River swept the boats towards it.

‘Behold the Argonath, the Pillars of the Kings!’ cried Aragorn. ‘We shall pass them soon. Keep the boats in line, and as far apart as you can! Hold the middle of the stream!’

As Frodo was borne towards them the great pillars rose like towers to meet him. Giants they seemed to him, vast grey figures silent but threatening. Then he saw that they were indeed shaped and fashioned: the craft and power of old had wrought upon them, and still they preserved through the suns and rains of forgotten years the mighty likenesses in which they had been hewn. Upon great pedestals founded in the deep waters stood two great kings of stone: still with blurred eyes and crannied brows they frowned upon the North. The left hand of each was raised palm outwards in gesture of warning; in each right hand there was an axe; upon each head there was a crumbling helm and crown. Great power and majesty they still wore, the silent wardens of a long-vanished kingdom. Awe and fear fell upon Frodo, and he cowered down, shutting his eyes and not daring to look up as the boat drew near. Even Boromir bowed his head as the boats whirled by, frail and fleeting as little leaves, under the enduring shadow of the sentinels of Númenor. So they passed into the dark chasm of the Gates.

Sheer rose the dreadful cliffs to unguessed heights on either side. Far off was the dim sky. The black waters roared and echoed, and a wind screamed over them. Frodo crouching over his knees heard Sam in front

muttering and groaning: 'What a place! What a horrible place! Just let me get out of this boat, and I'll never wet my toes in a puddle again, let alone a river!'

'Fear not!' said a strange voice behind him. Frodo turned and saw Strider, and yet not Strider; for the weatherworn Ranger was no longer there. In the stern sat Aragorn son of Arathorn, proud and erect, guiding the boat with skilful strokes; his hood was cast back, and his dark hair was blowing in the wind, a light was in his eyes: a king returning from exile to his own land.

'Fear not!' he said. 'Long have I desired to look upon the likenesses of Isildur and Anárion, my sires of old. Under their shadow Elessar, the Elfstone son of Arathorn of the House of Vandalil Isildur's son, heir of Elendil, has naught to dread!'

Then the light of his eyes faded, and he spoke to himself: 'Would that Gandalf were here! How my heart yearns for Minas Anor and the walls of my own city! But whither now shall I go?'

The chasm was long and dark, and filled with the noise of wind and rushing water and echoing stone. It bent somewhat towards the west so that at first all was dark ahead; but soon Frodo saw a tall gap of light before him, ever growing. Swiftly it drew near, and suddenly the boats shot through, out into a wide clear light.

The sun, already long fallen from the noon, was shining in a windy sky. The pent waters spread out into a long oval lake, pale Nen Hithoel, fenced by steep grey hills whose sides were clad with trees, but their heads were bare, cold-gleaming in the sunlight. At the far southern end rose three peaks. The midmost stood somewhat forward from the others and sundered from them, an island in the waters, about which the flowing River flung pale shimmering arms. Distant but deep there came up on the wind a roaring sound like the roll of thunder heard far away.

'Behold Tol Brandir!' said Aragorn, pointing south to the tall peak. 'Upon the left stands Amon Lhaw, and upon the right is Amon Hen, the Hills of Hearing and of Sight. In the days of the great kings there were high seats upon them, and watch was kept there. But it is said that no foot of man or beast has ever been set upon Tol Brandir. Ere the shade of night falls we shall come to them. I hear the endless voice of Rauros calling.'

The Company rested now for a while, drifting south on the current that flowed through the middle of the lake. They ate some food, and then they took to their paddles and hastened on their way. The sides of the westward hills fell into shadow, and the Sun grew round and red. Here and there a misty star peered out. The three peaks loomed before them, darkling in the twilight. Rauros was roaring with a great voice. Already night was laid on the flowing waters when the travellers came at last under the shadow of the hills.

The tenth day of their journey was over. Wilderland was behind them. They could go no further without choice between the east-way and the west. The last stage of the Quest was before them.



## Chapter 10: The Breaking Of The Fellowship

Aragorn led them to the right arm of the River. Here upon its western side under the shadow of Tol Brandir a green lawn ran down to the water from the feet of Amon Hen. Behind it rose the first gentle slopes of the hill clad with trees, and trees marched away westward along the curving shores of the lake. A little spring fell tumbling down and fed the grass.

‘Here we will rest tonight,’ said Aragorn. ‘This is the lawn of Parth Galen: a fair place in the summer days of old. Let us hope that no evil has yet come here.’

They drew up their boats on the green banks, and beside them they made their camp. They set a watch, but had no sight nor sound of their enemies. If Gollum had contrived to follow them, he remained unseen and unheard. Nonetheless as the night wore on Aragorn grew uneasy, tossing often in his sleep and waking. In the small hours he got up and came to Frodo, whose turn it was to watch.

‘Why are you waking?’ asked Frodo. ‘It is not your watch.’

‘I do not know,’ answered Aragorn; ‘but a shadow and a threat has been growing in my sleep. It would be well to draw your sword.’

‘Why?’ said Frodo. ‘Are enemies at hand?’

‘Let us see what Sting may show,’ answered Aragorn.

Frodo then drew the elf-blade from its sheath. To his dismay the edges gleamed dimly in the night. ‘Orcs!’ he said. ‘Not very near, and yet too near, it seems.’

‘I feared as much,’ said Aragorn. ‘But maybe they are not on this side of the River. The light of Sting is faint, and it may point to no more than spies of Mordor roaming on the slopes of Amon Lhaw. I have never heard before of Orcs upon Amon Hen. Yet who knows what may happen in these evil days, now that Minas Tirith no longer holds secure the passages of Anduin. We must go warily tomorrow.’

The day came like fire and smoke. Low in the East there were black bars of cloud like the fumes of a great burning. The rising sun lit them from beneath with flames of murky red; but soon it climbed above them into a clear sky. The summit of Tol Brandir was tipped with gold. Frodo looked out eastward and gazed at the tall island. Its sides sprang sheer out of the running water. High up above the tall cliffs were steep slopes upon which trees climbed, mounting one head above another; and above them again were grey faces of inaccessible rock, crowned by a great spire of stone. Many birds were circling about it, but no sign of other living things could be seen.

When they had eaten, Aragorn called the Company together. ‘The day has come at last,’ he said: ‘the day of choice which we have long delayed. What shall now become of our Company that has travelled so far in fellowship? Shall we turn west with Boromir and go to the wars of Gondor; or turn east to the Fear and Shadow; or shall we break our fellowship and go this way and that as each may choose? Whatever we do must be done soon. We cannot long halt here. The enemy is on the eastern shore, we know; but I fear that the Orcs may already be on this side of the water.’

There was a long silence in which no-one spoke or moved.

‘Well, Frodo,’ said Aragorn at last. ‘I fear that the burden is laid upon you. You are the Bearer appointed by the Council. Your own way you alone can choose. In this matter I cannot advise you. I am not Gandalf, and though I have tried to bear his part, I do not know what design or hope he had for this hour, if indeed he had any. Most likely it seems that if he were here now the choice would still wait on you. Such is your fate.’

Frodo did not answer at once. Then he spoke slowly. 'I know that haste is needed, yet I cannot choose. The burden is heavy. Give me an hour longer, and I will speak. Let me be alone!'

Aragorn looked at him with kindly pity. 'Very well, Frodo son of Drogo,' he said. 'You shall have an hour, and you shall be alone. We will stay here for a while. But do not stray far or out of call.'

Frodo sat for a moment with his head bowed. Sam, who had been watching his master with great concern, shook his head and muttered: 'Plain as a pikestaff it is, but it's no good Sam Gamgee putting in his spoke just now.'

Presently Frodo got up and walked away; and Sam saw that while the others restrained themselves and did not stare at him, the eyes of Boromir followed Frodo intently, until he passed out of sight in the trees at the foot of Amon Hen.

Wandering aimlessly at first in the wood, Frodo found that his feet were leading him up towards the slopes of the hill. He came to a path, the dwindling ruins of a road of long ago. In steep places stairs of stone had been hewn, but now they were cracked and worn, and split by the roots of trees. For some while he climbed, not caring which way he went, until he came to a grassy place. Rowan-trees grew about it, and in the midst was a wide flat stone. The little upland lawn was open upon the East and was filled now with the early sunlight. Frodo halted and looked out over the River, far below him, to Tol Brandir and the birds wheeling in the great gulf of air between him and the untrodden isle. The voice of Rauros was a mighty roaring mingled with a deep throbbing boom.

He sat down upon the stone and cupped his chin in his hands, staring eastwards but seeing little with his eyes. All that had happened since Bilbo left the Shire was passing through his mind, and he recalled and pondered everything that he could remember of Gandalf's words. Time went on, and still he was no nearer to a choice.

Suddenly he awoke from his thoughts: a strange feeling came to him that something was behind him, that unfriendly eyes were upon him. He sprang up and turned; but all that he saw to his surprise was Boromir, and his face was smiling and kind.

'I was afraid for you, Frodo,' he said, coming forward. 'If Aragorn is right and Orcs are near, then none of us should wander alone, and you least of all: so much depends on you. And my heart too is heavy. May I stay now and talk for a while, since I have found you? It would comfort me. Where there are so many, all speech becomes a debate without end. But two together may perhaps find wisdom.'

'You are kind,' answered Frodo. 'But I do not think that any speech will help me. For I know what I should do, but I am afraid of doing it, Boromir: afraid.'

Boromir stood silent. Rauros roared endlessly on. The wind murmured in the branches of the trees. Frodo shivered.

Suddenly Boromir came and sat beside him. 'Are you sure that you do not suffer needlessly?' he said. 'I wish to help you. You need counsel in your hard choice. Will you not take mine?'

'I think I know already what counsel you would give, Boromir,' said Frodo. 'And it would seem like wisdom but for the warning of my heart.'

'Warning? Warning against what?' said Boromir sharply.

'Against delay. Against the way that seems easier. Against refusal of the burden that is laid on me. Against—well, if it must be said, against trust in the strength and truth of Men.'

'Yet that strength has long protected you far away in your little country, though you knew it not.'

'I do not doubt the valour of your people. But the world is changing. The walls of Minas Tirith may be strong, but they are not strong enough. If they fail, what then?'

'We shall fall in battle valiantly. Yet there is still hope that they will not fail.'

'No hope while the Ring lasts,' said Frodo.

‘Ah! The Ring!’ said Boromir, his eyes lighting. ‘The Ring! Is it not a strange fate that we should suffer so much fear and doubt for so small a thing? So small a thing! And I have seen it only for an instant in the house of Elrond. Could I not have a sight of it again?’

Frodo looked up. His heart went suddenly cold. He caught the strange gleam in Boromir’s eyes, yet his face was still kind and friendly. ‘It is best that it should lie hidden,’ he answered.

‘As you wish. I care not,’ said Boromir. ‘Yet may I not even speak of it? For you seem ever to think only of its power in the hands of the Enemy: of its evil uses not of its good. The world is changing, you say. Minas Tirith will fall, if the Ring lasts. But why? Certainly, if the Ring were with the Enemy. But why, if it were with us?’

‘Were you not at the Council?’ answered Frodo. ‘Because we cannot use it, and what is done with it turns to evil.’

Boromir got up and walked about impatiently. ‘So you go on,’ he cried. ‘Gandalf, Elrond—all these folk have taught you to say so. For themselves they may be right. These elves and half-elves and wizards, they would come to grief perhaps. Yet often I doubt if they are wise and not merely timid. But each to his own kind. True-hearted Men, they will not be corrupted. We of Minas Tirith have been staunch through long years of trial. We do not desire the power of wizard-lords, only strength to defend ourselves, strength in a just cause. And behold! in our need chance brings to light the Ring of Power. It is a gift, I say; a gift to the foes of Mordor. It is mad not to use it, to use the power of the Enemy against him. The fearless, the ruthless, these alone will achieve victory. What could not a warrior do in this hour, a great leader? What could not Aragorn do? Or if he refuses, why not Boromir? The Ring would give me power of Command. How I would drive the hosts of Mordor, and all men would flock to my banner!’

Boromir strode up and down, speaking ever more loudly. Almost he seemed to have forgotten Frodo, while his talk dwelt on walls and weapons, and the mustering of men; and he drew plans for great alliances and glorious victories to be; and he cast down Mordor, and became himself a mighty king, benevolent and wise. Suddenly he stopped and waved his arms.

‘And they tell us to throw it away!’ he cried. ‘I do not say *destroy* it. That might be well, if reason could show any hope of doing so. It does not. The only plan that is proposed to us is that a halfling should walk blindly into Mordor and offer the Enemy every chance of recapturing it for himself. Folly!’

‘Surely you see it, my friend?’ he said, turning now suddenly to Frodo again. ‘You say that you are afraid. If it is so, the boldest should pardon you. But is it not really your good sense that revolts?’

‘No, I am afraid,’ said Frodo. ‘Simply afraid. But I am glad to have heard you speak so fully. My mind is clearer now.’

‘Then you will come to Minas Tirith?’ cried Boromir. His eyes were shining and his face eager.

‘You misunderstand me,’ said Frodo.

‘But you will come, at least for a while?’ Boromir persisted. ‘My city is not far now; and it is little further from there to Mordor than from here. We have been long in the wilderness, and you need news of what the Enemy is doing before you make a move. Come with me, Frodo,’ he said. ‘You need rest before your venture, if go you must.’ He laid his hand on the hobbit’s shoulder in friendly fashion; but Frodo felt the hand trembling with suppressed excitement. He stepped quickly away, and eyed with alarm the tall Man, nearly twice his height and many times his match in strength.

‘Why are you so unfriendly?’ said Boromir. ‘I am a true man, neither thief nor tracker. I need your Ring: that you know now; but I give you my word that I do not desire to keep it. Will you not at least let me make trial of my plan? Lend me the Ring!’

‘No! no!’ cried Frodo. ‘The Council laid it upon me to bear it.’

‘It is by our own folly that the Enemy will defeat us,’ cried Boromir. ‘How it angers me! Fool! Obstinate fool! Running wilfully to death and ruining our cause. If any mortals have claim to the Ring, it is the men of

Númenor, and not Halflings. It is not yours save by unhappy chance. It might have been mine. It should be mine. Give it to me!’

Frodo did not answer, but moved away till the great flat stone stood between them. ‘Come, come, my friend!’ said Boromir in a softer voice. ‘Why not get rid of it? Why not be free of your doubt and fear? You can lay the blame on me, if you will. You can say that I was too strong and took it by force. For I am too strong for you, halfling,’ he cried; and suddenly he sprang over the stone and leaped at Frodo. His fair and pleasant face was hideously changed; a raging fire was in his eyes.

Frodo dodged aside and again put the stone between them. There was only one thing he could do: trembling he pulled out the Ring upon its chain and quickly slipped it on his finger, even as Boromir sprang at him again. The Man gasped, stared for a moment amazed, and then ran wildly about, seeking here and there among the rocks and trees.

‘Miserable trickster!’ he shouted. ‘Let me get my hands on you! Now I see your mind. You will take the Ring to Sauron and sell us all. You have only waited your chance to leave us in the lurch. Curse you and all halflings to death and darkness!’ Then, catching his foot on a stone, he fell sprawling and lay upon his face. For a while he was as still as if his own curse had struck him down; then suddenly he wept.

He rose and passed his hand over his eyes, dashing away the tears. ‘What have I said?’ he cried. ‘What have I done? Frodo, Frodo!’ he called. ‘Come back! A madness took me, but it has passed. Come back!’

There was no answer. Frodo did not even hear his cries. He was already far away, leaping blindly up the path to the hill-top. Terror and grief shook him, seeing in his thought the mad fierce face of Boromir, and his burning eyes.

Soon he came out alone on the summit of Amon Hen, and halted, gasping for breath. He saw as through a mist a wide flat circle, paved with mighty flags, and surrounded with a crumbling battlement; and in the middle, set upon four carven pillars, was a high seat, reached by a stair of many steps. Up he went and sat upon the ancient chair, feeling like a lost child that had clambered upon the throne of mountain-kings.

At first he could see little. He seemed to be in a world of mist in which there were only shadows: the Ring was upon him. Then here and there the mist gave way and he saw many visions: small and clear as if they were under his eyes upon a table, and yet remote. There was no sound, only bright living images. The world seemed to have shrunk and fallen silent. He was sitting upon the Seat of Seeing, on Amon Hen, the Hill of the Eye of the Men of Númenor. Eastward he looked into wide uncharted lands, nameless plains, and forests unexplored. Northward he looked, and the Great River lay like a ribbon beneath him, and the Misty Mountains stood small and hard as broken teeth. Westward he looked and saw the broad pastures of Rohan; and Orthanc, the pinnacle of Isengard, like a black spike. Southward he looked, and below his very feet the Great River curled like a toppling wave and plunged over the falls of Rauros into a foaming pit; a glimmering rainbow played upon the fume. And Ethir Anduin he saw, the mighty delta of the River, and myriads of sea-birds whirling like a white dust in the sun, and beneath them a green and silver sea, rippling in endless lines.

But everywhere he looked he saw the signs of war. The Misty Mountains were crawling like anthills: orcs were issuing out of a thousand holes. Under the boughs of Mirkwood there was deadly strife of Elves and Men and fell beasts. The land of the Beornings was aflame; a cloud was over Moria; smoke rose on the borders of Lórien.

Horsemen were galloping on the grass of Rohan; wolves poured from Isengard. From the havens of Harad ships of war put out to sea; and out of the East Men were moving endlessly: swordsmen, spearmen, bowmen upon horses, chariots of chieftains and laden wains. All the power of the Dark Lord was in motion. Then turning south again he beheld Minas Tirith. Far away it seemed, and beautiful: white-walled, many-towered, proud and fair upon its mountain-seat; its battlements glittered with steel, and its turrets were bright with many banners. Hope leaped in his heart. But against Minas Tirith was set another fortress, greater and more strong. Thither, eastward, unwilling his eye was drawn. It passed the ruined bridges of Osgiliath, the grinning gates of Minas Morgul, and the haunted Mountains, and it looked upon Gorgoroth, the valley of terror in the Land of Mordor. Darkness lay there under the Sun. Fire glowed amid the smoke. Mount Doom was burning, and a great reek

rising. Then at last his gaze was held: wall upon wall, battlement upon battlement, black, immeasurably strong, mountain of iron, gate of steel, tower of adamant, he saw it: Barad-dûr, Fortress of Sauron. All hope left him.

And suddenly he felt the Eye. There was an eye in the Dark Tower that did not sleep. He knew that it had become aware of his gaze. A fierce eager will was there. It leaped towards him; almost like a finger he felt it, searching for him. Very soon it would nail him down, know just exactly where he was. Amon Lhaw it touched. It glanced upon Tol Brandir—he threw himself from the seat, crouching, covering his head with his grey hood.

He heard himself crying out: *Never, never!* Or was it: *Verily I come, I come to you?* He could not tell. Then as a flash from some other point of power there came to his mind another thought: *Take it off! Take it off! Fool, take it off! Take off the Ring!*

The two powers strove in him. For a moment, perfectly balanced between their piercing points, he writhed, tormented. Suddenly he was aware of himself again, Frodo, neither the Voice nor the Eye: free to choose, and with one remaining instant in which to do so. He took the Ring off his finger. He was kneeling in clear sunlight before the high seat. A black shadow seemed to pass like an arm above him; it missed Amon Hen and groped out west, and faded. Then all the sky was clean and blue and birds sang in every tree.

Frodo rose to his feet. A great weariness was on him, but his will was firm and his heart lighter. He spoke aloud to himself. ‘I will do now what I must,’ he said. ‘This at least is plain: the evil of the Ring is already at work even in the Company, and the Ring must leave them before it does more harm. I will go alone. Some I cannot trust, and those I can trust are too dear to me: poor old Sam, and Merry and Pippin. Strider, too: his heart yearns for Minas Tirith, and he will be needed there, now Boromir has fallen into evil. I will go alone. At once.’

He went quickly down the path and came back to the lawn where Boromir had found him. Then he halted, listening. He thought he could hear cries and calls from the woods near the shore below.

‘They’ll be hunting for me,’ he said. ‘I wonder how long I have been away. Hours, I should think.’ He hesitated. ‘What can I do?’ he muttered. ‘I must go now or I shall never go. I shan’t get a chance again. I hate leaving them, and like this without any explanation. But surely they will understand. Sam will. And what else can I do?’

Slowly he drew out the Ring and put it on once more. He vanished and passed down the hill, less than a rustle of the wind.

The others remained long by the river-side. For some time they had been silent, moving restlessly about; but now they were sitting in a circle, and they were talking. Every now and again they made efforts to speak of other things, of their long road and many adventures; they questioned Aragorn concerning the realm of Gondor and its ancient history, and the remnants of its great works that could still be seen in this strange border-land of the Eryn Muil: the stone kings and the seats of Lhaw and Hen, and the great Stair beside the falls of Rauros. But always their thoughts and words strayed back to Frodo and the Ring. What would Frodo choose to do? Why was he hesitating?

‘He is debating which course is the most desperate, I think,’ said Aragorn. ‘And well he may. It is now more hopeless than ever for the Company to go east, since we have been tracked by Gollum, and must fear that the secret of our journey is already betrayed. But Minas Tirith is no nearer to the Fire and the destruction of the Burden.’

‘We may remain there for a while and make a brave stand; but the Lord Denethor and all his men cannot hope to do what even Elrond said was beyond his power: either to keep the Burden secret, or to hold off the full might of the Enemy when he comes to take it. Which way would any of us choose in Frodo’s place? I do not know. Now indeed we miss Gandalf most.’

‘Grievous is our loss,’ said Legolas. ‘Yet we must needs make up our minds without his aid. Why cannot we decide, and so help Frodo? Let us call him back and then vote! I should vote for Minas Tirith.’

‘And so should I,’ said Gimli. ‘We, of course, were only sent to help the Bearer along the road, to go no further than we wished; and none of us is under any oath or command to seek Mount Doom. Hard was my parting from



Lothlórien. Yet I have come so far, and I say this: now we have reached the last choice, it is clear to me that I cannot leave Frodo. I would choose Minas Tirith, but if he does not, then I follow him.'

'And I too will go with him,' said Legolas. 'It would be faithless now to say farewell.'

'It would indeed be a betrayal, if we all left him,' said Aragorn. 'But if he goes east, then all need not go with him; nor do I think that all should. That venture is desperate: as much so for eight as for three or two, or one alone. If you would let me choose, then I should appoint three companions: Sam, who could not bear it otherwise; and Gimli; and myself. Boromir will return to his own city, where his father and his people need him; and with him the others should go, or at least Meriadoc and Peregrin, if Legolas is not willing to leave us.'

'That won't do at all!' cried Merry. 'We can't leave Frodo! Pippin and I always intended to go wherever he went, and we still do. But we did not realize what that would mean. It seemed different so far away, in the Shire or in Rivendell. It would be mad and cruel to let Frodo go to Mordor. Why can't we stop him?'

'We must stop him,' said Pippin. 'And that is what he is worrying about, I am sure. He knows we shan't agree to his going east. And he doesn't like to ask anyone to go with him, poor old fellow. Imagine it: going off to Mordor alone!' Pippin shuddered. 'But the dear silly old hobbit, he ought to know that he hasn't got to ask. He ought to know that if we can't stop him, we shan't leave him.'

'Begging your pardon,' said Sam. 'I don't think you understand my master at all. He isn't hesitating about which way to go. Of course not! What's the good of Minas Tirith anyway? To him, I mean, begging your pardon, Master Boromir,' he added, and turned. It was then that they discovered that Boromir, who at first had been sitting silent on the outside of the circle, was no longer there.

'Now where's he got to?' cried Sam, looking worried. 'He's been a bit queer lately, to my mind. But anyway he's not in this business. He's off to his home, as he always said; and no blame to him. But Mr. Frodo, he knows he's got to find the Cracks of Doom, if he can. But he's *afraid*. Now it's come to the point, he's just plain terrified. That's what his trouble is. Of course he's had a bit of schooling, so to speak—we all have—since we left home, or he'd be so terrified he'd just fling the Ring in the River and bolt. But he's still too frightened to start. And he isn't worrying about us either: whether we'll go along with him or no. He knows we mean to. That's another thing that's bothering him. If he screws himself up to go, he'll want to go alone. Mark my words! We're going to have trouble when he comes back. For he'll screw himself up all right, as sure as his name's Baggins.'

'I believe you speak more wisely than any of us, Sam,' said Aragorn. 'And what shall we do, if you prove right?'

'Stop him! Don't let him go!' cried Pippin.

'I wonder?' said Aragorn. 'He is the Bearer, and the fate of the Burden is on him. I do not think that it is our part to drive him one way or the other. Nor do I think that we should succeed, if we tried. There are other powers at work far stronger.'

'Well, I wish Frodo would "screw himself up" and come back, and let us get it over,' said Pippin. 'This waiting is horrible! Surely the time is up?'

'Yes,' said Aragorn. 'The hour is long passed. The morning is wearing away. We must call for him.'

At that moment Boromir reappeared. He came out from the trees and walked towards them without speaking. His face looked grim and sad. He paused as if counting those that were present, and then sat down aloof, with his eyes on the ground.

'Where have you been, Boromir?' asked Aragorn. 'Have you seen Frodo?'

Boromir hesitated for a second. 'Yes, and no,' he answered slowly. 'Yes: I found him some way up the hill, and I spoke to him. I urged him to come to Minas Tirith and not to go east. I grew angry and he left me. He vanished. I have never seen such a thing happen before, though I have heard of it in tales. He must have put the Ring on. I could not find him again. I thought he would return to you.'

'Is that all that you have to say?' said Aragorn, looking hard and not too kindly at Boromir.

‘Yes,’ he answered. ‘I will say no more yet.’

‘This is bad!’ cried Sam, jumping up. ‘I don’t know what this Man has been up to. Why should Mr. Frodo put the thing on? He didn’t ought to have; and if he has, goodness knows what may have happened!’

‘But he wouldn’t keep it on,’ said Merry. ‘Not when he had escaped the unwelcome visitor, like Bilbo used to.’

‘But where did he go? Where is he?’ cried Pippin. ‘He’s been away ages now.’

‘How long is it since you saw Frodo last, Boromir?’ asked Aragorn.

‘Half an hour, maybe,’ he answered. ‘Or it might be an hour. I have wandered for some time since. I do not know! I do not know!’ He put his head in his hands, and sat as if bowed with grief.

‘An hour since he vanished!’ shouted Sam. ‘We must try and find him at once. Come on!’

‘Wait a moment!’ cried Aragorn. ‘We must divide up into pairs, and arrange—here, hold on! Wait!’

It was no good. They took no notice of him. Sam had dashed off first. Merry and Pippin had followed, and were already disappearing westward into the trees by the shore, shouting: *Frodo! Frodo!* in their clear, high, hobbit-voices. Legolas and Gimli were running. A sudden panic or madness seemed to have fallen on the Company.

‘We shall all be scattered and lost,’ groaned Aragorn. ‘Boromir! I do not know what part you have played in this mischief, but help now! Go after those two young hobbits, and guard them at the least, even if you cannot find Frodo. Come back to this spot, if you find him, or any traces of him. I shall return soon.’

Aragorn sprang swiftly away and went in pursuit of Sam. Just as he reached the little lawn among the rowans he overtook him, toiling uphill, panting and calling, *Frodo!*

‘Come with me, Sam!’ he said. ‘None of us should be alone. There is mischief about. I feel it. I am going to the top, to the Seat of Amon Hen, to see what may be seen. And look! It is as my heart guessed, Frodo went this way. Follow me, and keep your eyes open!’ He sped up the path.

Sam did his best, but he could not keep up with Strider the Ranger, and soon fell behind. He had not gone far before Aragorn was out of sight ahead. Sam stopped and puffed. Suddenly he clapped his hand to his head.

‘Whoa, Sam Gamgee!’ he said aloud. ‘Your legs are too short, so use your head! Let me see now! Boromir isn’t lying, that’s not his way; but he hasn’t told us everything. Something scared Mr. Frodo badly. He screwed himself up to the point, sudden. He made up his mind at last—to go. Where to? Off East. Not without Sam? Yes, without even his Sam. That’s hard, cruel hard.’

Sam passed his hand over his eyes, brushing away the tears. ‘Steady, Gamgee!’ he said. ‘Think, if you can! He can’t fly across rivers, and he can’t jump waterfalls. He’s got no gear. So he’s got to get back to the boats. Back to the boats! Back to the boats, Sam, like lightning!’

Sam turned and bolted back down the path. He fell and cut his knees. Up he got and ran on. He came to the edge of the lawn of Parth Galen by the shore, where the boats were drawn up out of the water. No-one was there. There seemed to be cries in the woods behind, but he did not heed them. He stood gazing for a moment, stock-still, gaping. A boat was sliding down the bank all by itself. With a shout Sam raced across the grass. The boat slipped into the water.

‘Coming, Mr. Frodo! Coming!’ called Sam, and flung himself from the bank, clutching at the departing boat. He missed it by a yard. With a cry and a splash he fell face downward into deep swift water. Gurgling he went under, and the River closed over his curly head.

An exclamation of dismay came from the empty boat. A paddle swirled and the boat put about. Frodo was just in time to grasp Sam by the hair as he came up, bubbling and struggling. Fear was staring in his round brown eyes.

‘Up you come, Sam my lad!’ said Frodo. ‘Now take my hand!’

‘Save me, Mr. Frodo!’ gasped Sam. ‘I’m drowned. I can’t see your hand.’

‘Here it is. Don’t pinch, lad! I won’t let you go. Tread water and don’t flounder, or you’ll upset the boat. There now, get hold of the side, and let me use the paddle!’

With a few strokes Frodo brought the boat back to the bank, and Sam was able to scramble out, wet as a water-rat. Frodo took off the Ring and stepped ashore again.

‘Of all the confounded nuisances you are the worst, Sam!’ he said.

‘Oh, Mr. Frodo, that’s hard!’ said Sam shivering. ‘That’s hard, trying to go without me and all. If I hadn’t guessed right, where would you be now?’

‘Safely on my way.’

‘Safely!’ said Sam. ‘All alone and without me to help you? I couldn’t have borne it, it’d have been the death of me.’

‘It would be the death of you to come with me, Sam,’ said Frodo, ‘and I could not have borne that.’

‘Not as certain as being left behind,’ said Sam.

‘But I am going to Mordor.’

‘I know that well enough, Mr. Frodo. Of course you are. And I’m coming with you.’

‘Now, Sam,’ said Frodo, ‘don’t hinder me! The others will be coming back at any minute. If they catch me here, I shall have to argue and explain, and I shall never have the heart or the chance to get off. But I must go at once. It’s the only way.’

‘Of course it is,’ answered Sam. ‘But not alone. I’m coming too, or neither of us isn’t going. I’ll knock holes in all the boats first.’

Frodo actually laughed. A sudden warmth and gladness touched his heart. ‘Leave one!’ he said. ‘We’ll need it. But you can’t come like this without your gear or food or anything.’

‘Just hold on a moment, and I’ll get my stuff!’ cried Sam eagerly. ‘It’s all ready. I thought we should be off today.’ He rushed to the camping place, fished out his pack from the pile where Frodo had laid it when he emptied the boat of his companions’ goods, grabbed a spare blanket, and some extra packages of food, and ran back.

‘So all my plan is spoilt!’ said Frodo. ‘It is no good trying to escape you. But I’m glad, Sam. I cannot tell you how glad. Come along! It is plain that we were meant to go together. We will go, and may the others find a safe road! Strider will look after them. I don’t suppose we shall see them again.’

‘Yet we may, Mr. Frodo. We may,’ said Sam.

So Frodo and Sam set off on the last stage of the Quest together. Frodo paddled away from the shore, and the River bore them swiftly away, down the western arm, and past the frowning cliffs of Tol Brandir. The roar of the great falls drew nearer. Even with such help as Sam could give, it was hard work to pass across the current at the southward end of the island and drive the boat eastward towards the far shore.

At length they came to land again upon the southern slopes of Amon Lhaw. There they found a shelving shore, and they drew the boat out, high above the water, and hid it as well as they could behind a great boulder. Then shouldering their burdens, they set off, seeking a path that would bring them over the grey hills of the Emyrn Muil, and down into the Land of Shadow.







## Chapter 1: The Departure Of Boromir

Aragorn sped on up the hill. Every now and again he bent to the ground. Hobbits go light, and their footprints are not easy even for a Ranger to read, but not far from the top a spring crossed the path, and in the wet earth he saw what he was seeking.

‘I read the signs aright,’ he said to himself. ‘Frodo ran to the hill-top. I wonder what he saw there? But he returned by the same way, and went down the hill again.’

Aragorn hesitated. He desired to go to the high seat himself, hoping to see there something that would guide him in his perplexities; but time was pressing. Suddenly he leaped forward, and ran to the summit, across the great flag-stones, and up the steps. Then sitting in the high seat he looked out. But the sun seemed darkened, and the world dim and remote. He turned from the North back again to North, and saw nothing save the distant hills, unless it were that far away he could see again a great bird like an eagle high in the air, descending slowly in wide circles down towards the earth.

Even as he gazed his quick ears caught sounds in the woodlands below, on the west side of the River. He stiffened. There were cries, and among them, to his horror, he could distinguish the harsh voices of Orcs. Then suddenly with a deep-throated call a great horn blew, and the blasts of it smote the hills and echoed in the hollows, rising in a mighty shout above the roaring of the falls.

‘The horn of Boromir!’ he cried. ‘He is in need!’ He sprang down the steps and away, leaping down the path. ‘Alas! An ill fate is on me this day, and all that I do goes amiss. Where is Sam?’

As he ran the cries came louder, but fainter now and desperately the horn was blowing. Fierce and shrill rose the yells of the Orcs, and suddenly the horn-calls ceased. Aragorn raced down the last slope, but before he could reach the hill’s foot, the sounds died away; and as he turned to the left and ran towards them they retreated, until at last he could hear them no more. Drawing his bright sword and crying *Elendil! Elendil!* he crashed through the trees.

A mile, maybe, from Parth Galen in a little glade not far from the lake he found Boromir. He was sitting with his back to a great tree, as if he was resting. But Aragorn saw that he was pierced with many black-feathered arrows; his sword was still in his hand, but it was broken near the hilt; his horn cloven in two was at his side. Many Orcs lay slain, piled all about him and at his feet.

Aragorn knelt beside him. Boromir opened his eyes and strove to speak. At last slow words came. ‘I tried to take the Ring from Frodo,’ he said. ‘I am sorry. I have paid.’ His glance strayed to his fallen enemies; twenty at least lay there. ‘They have gone: the Halflings: the Orcs have taken them. I think they are not dead. Orcs bound them.’ He paused and his eyes closed wearily. After a moment he spoke again.

‘Farewell, Aragorn! Go to Minas Tirith and save my people! I have failed.’

‘No!’ said Aragorn, taking his hand and kissing his brow. ‘You have conquered. Few have gained such a victory. Be at peace! Minas Tirith shall not fall!’

Boromir smiled.

‘Which way did they go? Was Frodo there?’ said Aragorn.

But Boromir did not speak again.

‘Alas!’ said Aragorn. ‘Thus passes the heir of Denethor, Lord of the Tower of Guard! This is a bitter end. Now the Company is all in ruin. It is I that have failed. Vain was Gandalf’s trust in me. What shall I do now?’

Boromir has laid it on me to go to Minas Tirith, and my heart desires it; but where are the Ring and the Bearer? How shall I find them and save the Quest from disaster?’

He knelt for a while, bent with weeping, still clasping Boromir’s hand. So it was that Legolas and Gimli found him. They came from the western slopes of the hill, silently, creeping through the trees as if they were hunting. Gimli had his axe in hand, and Legolas his long knife: all his arrows were spent. When they came into the glade they halted in amazement; and then they stood a moment with heads bowed in grief, for it seemed to them plain what had happened.

‘Alas!’ said Legolas, coming to Aragorn’s side. ‘We have hunted and slain many Orcs in the woods, but we should have been of more use here. We came when we heard the horn—but too late, it seems. I fear you have taken deadly hurt.’

‘Boromir is dead,’ said Aragorn. ‘I am unscathed, for I was not here with him. He fell defending the hobbits, while I was away upon the hill.’

‘The hobbits!’ cried Gimli. ‘Where are they then? Where is Frodo?’

‘I do not know,’ answered Aragorn wearily. ‘Before he died Boromir told me that the Orcs had bound them; he did not think that they were dead. I sent him to follow Merry and Pippin; but I did not ask him if Frodo or Sam were with him: not until it was too late. All that I have done today has gone amiss. What is to be done now?’

‘First we must tend the fallen,’ said Legolas. ‘We cannot leave him lying like carrion among these foul Orcs.’

‘But we must be swift,’ said Gimli. ‘He would not wish us to linger. We must follow the Orcs, if there is hope that any of our Company are living prisoners.’

‘But we do not know whether the Ring-bearer is with them or not,’ said Aragorn. ‘Are we to abandon him? Must we not seek him first? An evil choice is now before us!’

‘Then let us do first what we must do,’ said Legolas. ‘We have not the time or the tools to bury our comrade fitly, or to raise a mound over him. A cairn we might build.’

‘The labour would be hard and long: there are no stones that we could use nearer than the water-side,’ said Gimli.

‘Then let us lay him in a boat with his weapons, and the weapons of his vanquished foes,’ said Aragorn. ‘We will send him to the Falls of Rauros and give him to Anduin. The River of Gondor will take care at least that no evil creature dishonours his bones.’

Quickly they searched the bodies of the Orcs, gathering their swords and cloven helms and shields into a heap.

‘See!’ cried Aragorn. ‘Here we find tokens!’ He picked out from the pile of grim weapons two knives, leaf-bladed, damasked in gold and red; and searching further he found also the sheaths, black, set with small red gems. ‘No orc-tools these!’ he said. ‘They were borne by the hobbits. Doubtless the Orcs despoiled them, but feared to keep the knives, knowing them for what they are: work of Westeros, wound about with spells for the bane of Mordor. Well, now, if they still live, our friends are weaponless. I will take these things, hoping against hope, to give them back.’

‘And I,’ said Legolas, ‘will take all the arrows that I can find, for my quiver is empty.’ He searched in the pile and on the ground about and found not a few that were undamaged and longer in the shaft than such arrows as the Orcs were accustomed to use. He looked at them closely.

And Aragorn looked on the slain, and he said: ‘Here lie many that are not folk of Mordor. Some are from the North, from the Misty Mountains, if I know anything of Orcs and their kinds. And here are others strange to me. Their gear is not after the manner of Orcs at all!’

There were four goblin-soldiers of greater stature, swart, slant-eyed, with thick legs and large hands. They were armed with short broad-bladed swords, not with the curved scimitars usual with Orcs; and they had bows of yew, in length and shape like the bows of Men. Upon their shields they bore a strange device: a small white

hand in the centre of a black field; on the front of their iron helmets was set an S-rune, wrought of some white metal.

‘I have not seen these tokens before,’ said Aragorn. ‘What do they mean?’

‘S is for Sauron,’ said Gimli. ‘That is easy to read.’

‘Nay!’ said Legolas. ‘Sauron does not use the elf-runes.’

‘Neither does he use his right name, nor permit it to be spelt or spoken,’ said Aragorn. ‘And he does not use white. The Orcs in the service of Barad-dûr use the sign of the Red Eye.’ He stood for a moment in thought. ‘S is for Saruman, I guess,’ he said at length. ‘There is evil afoot in Isengard, and the West is no longer safe. It is as Gandalf feared: by some means the traitor Saruman has had news of our journey. It is likely too that he knows of Gandalf’s fall. Pursuers from Moria may have escaped the vigilance of Lórien, or they may have avoided that land and come to Isengard by other paths. Orcs travel fast. But Saruman has many ways of learning news. Do you remember the birds?’

‘Well, we have no time to ponder riddles,’ said Gimli. ‘Let us bear Boromir away!’

‘But after that we must guess the riddles, if we are to choose our course rightly,’ answered Aragorn.

‘Maybe there is no right choice,’ said Gimli.

Taking his axe the Dwarf now cut several branches. These they lashed together with bowstrings, and spread their cloaks upon the frame. Upon this rough bier they carried the body of their companion to the shore, together with such trophies of his last battle as they chose to send forth with him. It was only a short way, yet they found it no easy task, for Boromir was a man both tall and strong.

At the water-side Aragorn remained, watching the bier, while Legolas and Gimli hastened back on foot to Parth Galen. It was a mile or more, and it was some time before they came back, paddling two boats swiftly along the shore.

‘There is a strange tale to tell!’ said Legolas. ‘There are only two boats upon the bank. We could find no trace of the other.’

‘Have Orcs been there?’ asked Aragorn.

‘We saw no signs of them,’ answered Gimli. ‘And Orcs would have taken or destroyed all the boats, and the baggage as well.’

‘I will look at the ground when we come there,’ said Aragorn.

Now they laid Boromir in the middle of the boat that was to bear him away. The grey hood and elven-cloak they folded and placed beneath his head. They combed his long dark hair and arrayed it upon his shoulders. The golden belt of Lórien gleamed about his waist. His helm they set beside him, and across his lap they laid the cloven horn and the hilt and shards of his sword; beneath his feet they put the swords of his enemies. Then fastening the prow to the stern of the other boat, they drew him out into the water. They rowed sadly along the shore, and turning into the swift-running channel they passed the green sward of Parth Galen. The steep sides of Tol Brandir were glowing: it was now mid-afternoon. As they went south the fume of Rauros rose and shimmered before them, a haze of gold. The rush and thunder of the falls shook the windless air.

Sorrowfully they cast loose the funeral boat: there Boromir lay, restful, peaceful, gliding upon the bosom of the flowing water. The stream took him while they held their own boat back with their paddles. He floated by them, and slowly his boat departed, waning to a dark spot against the golden light; and then suddenly it vanished. Rauros roared on unchanging. The River had taken Boromir son of Denethor, and he was not seen again in Minas Tirith, standing as he used to stand upon the White Tower in the morning. But in Gondor in after-days it long was said that the elven-boat rode the falls and the foaming pool, and bore him down through Osgiliath, and past the many mouths of Anduin, out into the Great Sea at night under the stars.



For a while the three companions remained silent, gazing after him. Then Aragorn spoke. 'They will look for him from the White Tower,' he said, 'but he will not return from mountain or from sea.' Then slowly he began to sing:

*Through Rohan over fen and field where the long grass grows  
The West Wind comes walking, and about the walls it goes.  
'What news from the West, O wandering wind, do you bring to me tonight?  
Have you seen Boromir the Tall by moon or by starlight?'  
'I saw him ride over seven streams, over waters wide and grey;  
I saw him walk in empty lands, until he passed away  
Into the shadows of the North. I saw him then no more.  
The North Wind may have heard the horn of the son of Denethor.'  
'O Boromir! From the high walls westward I looked afar,  
But you came not from the empty lands where no men are.'*

Then Legolas sang:

*From the mouths of the Sea the South Wind flies, from the sandhills and the stones;  
The wailing of the gulls it bears, and at the gate it moans.  
'What news from the South, O sighing wind, do you bring to me at eve?  
Where now is Boromir the Fair? He tarries and I grieve.'  
'Ask not of me where he doth dwell—so many bones there lie  
On the white shores and the dark shores under the stormy sky;  
So many have passed down Anduin to find the flowing Sea.  
Ask of the North Wind news of them the North Wind sends to me!'  
'O Boromir! Beyond the gate the seaward road runs south,  
But you came not with the wailing gulls from the grey sea's mouth.'*

Then Aragorn sang again:

*From the Gate of Kings the North Wind rides, and past the roaring falls;  
And clear and cold about the tower its loud horn calls.  
'What news from the North, O mighty wind, do you bring to me today?  
What news of Boromir the Bold? For he is long away.'  
'Beneath Amon Hen I heard his cry. There many foes he fought.  
His cloven shield, his broken sword, they to the water brought.  
His head so proud, his face so fair, his limbs they laid to rest;  
And Rauros, golden Rauros-falls, bore him upon its breast.'  
'O Boromir! The Tower of Guard shall ever northward gaze  
To Rauros, golden Rauros-falls, until the end of days.'*

So they ended. Then they turned their boat and drove it with all the speed they could against the stream back to Parth Galen.

'You left the East Wind to me,' said Gimli, 'but I will say naught of it.'

'That is as it should be,' said Aragorn. 'In Minas Tirith they endure the East Wind, but they do not ask it for tidings. But now Boromir has taken his road, and we must make haste to choose our own.'

He surveyed the green lawn, quickly but thoroughly, stooping often to the earth. 'No Orcs have been on this ground,' he said. 'Otherwise nothing can be made out for certain. All our footprints are here, crossing and re-crossing. I cannot tell whether any of the hobbits have come back since the search for Frodo began.' He returned to the bank, close to where the rill from the spring trickled out into the River. 'There are some clear prints here,' he said. 'A hobbit waded out into the water and back; but I cannot say how long ago.'

'How then do you read this riddle?' asked Gimli.

Aragorn did not answer at once, but went back to the camping-place and looked at the baggage. 'Two packs are missing,' he said, 'and one is certainly Sam's: it was rather large and heavy. This then is the answer: Frodo has gone by boat, and his servant has gone with him. Frodo must have returned while we were all away. I met Sam going up the hill and told him to follow me; but plainly he did not do so. He guessed his master's mind and came back here before Frodo had gone. He did not find it easy to leave Sam behind!'

'But why should he leave us behind, and without a word?' said Gimli. 'That was a strange deed!'

'And a brave deed,' said Aragorn. 'Sam was right, I think. Frodo did not wish to lead any friend to death with him in Mordor. But he knew that he must go himself. Something happened after he left us that overcame his fear and doubt.'

'Maybe hunting Orcs came on him and he fled,' said Legolas.

'He fled, certainly,' said Aragorn, 'but not, I think, from Orcs.' What he thought was the cause of Frodo's sudden resolve and flight Aragorn did not say. The last words of Boromir he long kept secret.

'Well, so much at least is now clear,' said Legolas: 'Frodo is no longer on this side of the River: only he can have taken the boat. And Sam is with him; only he would have taken his pack.'

'Our choice then,' said Gimli, 'is either to take the remaining boat and follow Frodo, or else to follow the Orcs on foot. There is little hope either way. We have already lost precious hours.'

'Let me think!' said Aragorn. 'And now may I make a right choice, and change the evil fate of this unhappy day!' He stood silent for a moment. 'I will follow the Orcs,' he said at last. 'I would have guided Frodo to Mordor and gone with him to the end; but if I seek him now in the wilderness, I must abandon the captives to torment and death. My heart speaks clearly at last: the fate of the Bearer is in my hands no longer. The Company has played its part. Yet we that remain cannot forsake our companions while we have strength left. Come! We will go now. Leave all that can be spared behind! We will press on by day and dark!'

They drew up the last boat and carried it to the trees. They laid beneath it such of their goods as they did not need and could not carry away. Then they left Parth Galen. The afternoon was fading as they came back to the glade where Boromir had fallen. There they picked up the trail of the Orcs. It needed little skill to find.

'No other folk make such a trampling,' said Legolas. 'It seems their delight to slash and beat down growing things that are not even in their way.'

'But they go with a great speed for all that,' said Aragorn, 'and they do not tire. And later we may have to search for our path in hard bare lands.'

'Well, after them!' said Gimli. 'Dwarves too can go swiftly, and they do not tire sooner than Orcs. But it will be a long chase: they have a long start.'

'Yes,' said Aragorn, 'we shall all need the endurance of Dwarves. But come! With hope or without hope we will follow the trail of our enemies. And woe to them, if we prove the swifter! We will make such a chase as shall be accounted a marvel among the Three Kindreds: Elves, Dwarves, and Men. Forth the Three Hunters!'

Like a deer he sprang away. Through the trees he sped. On and on he led them, tireless and swift, now that his mind was at last made up. The woods about the lake they left behind. Long slopes they climbed, dark, hard-edged against the sky already red with sunset. Dusk came. They passed away, grey shadows in a stony land.



## Chapter 2: The Riders Of Rohan

Dusk deepened. Mist lay behind them among the trees below, and brooded on the pale margins of the Anduin, but the sky was clear. Stars came out. The waxing moon was riding in the West, and the shadows of the rocks were black. They had come to the feet of stony hills, and their pace was slower, for the trail was no longer easy to follow. Here the highlands of the Emyrn Muil ran from North to South in two long tumbled ridges. The western side of each ridge was steep and difficult, but the eastward slopes were gentler, furrowed with many gullies and narrow ravines. All night the three companions scrambled in this bony land, climbing to the crest of the first and tallest ridge, and down again into the darkness of a deep winding valley on the other side.

There in the still cool hour before dawn they rested for a brief space. The moon had long gone down before them, the stars glittered above them; the first light of day had not yet come over the dark hills behind. For the moment Aragorn was at a loss: the orc-trail had descended into the valley, but there it had vanished.

‘Which way would they turn, do you think?’ said Legolas. ‘Northward to take a straighter road to Isengard, or Fangorn, if that is their aim as you guess? Or southward to strike the Entwash?’

‘They will not make for the river, whatever mark they aim at,’ said Aragorn. ‘And unless there is much amiss in Rohan and the power of Saruman is greatly increased, they will take the shortest way that they can find over the fields of the Rohirrim. Let us search northwards!’

The dale ran like a stony trough between the ridged hills, and a trickling stream flowed among the boulders at the bottom. A cliff frowned upon their right; to their left rose grey slopes, dim and shadowy in the late night. They went on for a mile or more northwards. Aragorn was searching, bent towards the ground, among the folds and gullies leading up into the western ridge. Legolas was some way ahead. Suddenly the Elf gave a cry and the others came running towards him.

‘We have already overtaken some of those that we are hunting,’ he said. ‘Look!’ He pointed, and they saw that what they had at first taken to be boulders lying at the foot of the slope were huddled bodies. Five dead Orcs lay there. They had been hewn with many cruel strokes, and two had been beheaded. The ground was wet with their dark blood.

‘Here is another riddle!’ said Gimli. ‘But it needs the light of day, and for that we cannot wait.’

‘Yet however you read it, it seems not unhopeful,’ said Legolas. ‘Enemies of the Orcs are likely to be our friends. Do any folk dwell in these hills?’

‘No,’ said Aragorn. ‘The Rohirrim seldom come here, and it is far from Minas Tirith. It might be that some company of Men were hunting here for reasons that we do not know. Yet I think not.’

‘What do you think?’ said Gimli.

‘I think that the enemy brought his own enemy with him,’ answered Aragorn. ‘These are Northern Orcs from far away. Among the slain are none of the great Orcs with the strange badges. There was a quarrel, I guess: it is no uncommon thing with these foul folk. Maybe there was some dispute about the road.’

‘Or about the captives,’ said Gimli. ‘Let us hope that they, too, did not meet their end here.’

Aragorn searched the ground in a wide circle, but no other traces of the fight could be found. They went on. Already the eastward sky was turning pale; the stars were fading, and a grey light was slowly growing. A little further north they came to a fold in which a tiny stream, falling and winding, had cut a stony path down into the valley. In it some bushes grew, and there were patches of grass upon its sides.

‘At last!’ said Aragorn. ‘Here are the tracks that we seek! Up this water-channel: this is the way that the Orcs went after their debate.’

Swiftly now the pursuers turned and followed the new path. As if fresh from a night’s rest they sprang from stone to stone. At last they reached the crest of the grey hill, and a sudden breeze blew in their hair and stirred their cloaks: the chill wind of dawn.

Turning back they saw across the River the far hills kindled. Day leaped into the sky. The red rim of the sun rose over the shoulders of the dark land. Before them in the West the world lay still, formless and grey; but even as they looked, the shadows of night melted, the colours of the waking earth returned: green flowed over the wide meads of Rohan; the white mists shimmered in the water-vales; and far off to the left, thirty leagues or more, blue and purple stood the White Mountains, rising into peaks of jet, tipped with glimmering snows, flushed with the rose of morning.

‘Gondor! Gondor!’ cried Aragorn. ‘Would that I looked on you again in happier hour! Not yet does my road lie southward to your bright streams.’

*Gondor! Gondor, between the Mountains and the Sea!  
West Wind blew there; the light upon the Silver Tree  
Fell like bright rain in gardens of the Kings of old.  
O proud walls! White towers! O wingéd crown and throne of gold!  
O Gondor, Gondor! Shall Men behold the Silver Tree,  
Or West Wind blow again between the Mountains and the Sea?*

Now let us go!’ he said, drawing his eyes away from the South, and looking out west and north to the way that he must tread.

The ridge upon which the companions stood went down steeply before their feet. Below it twenty fathoms or more, there was a wide and rugged shelf which ended suddenly in the brink of a sheer cliff: the East Wall of Rohan. So ended the Emyr Muil, and the green plains of the Rohirrim stretched away before them to the edge of sight.

‘Look!’ cried Legolas, pointing up into the pale sky above them. ‘There is the eagle again! He is very high. He seems to be flying now away, from this land back to the North. He is going with great speed. Look!’

‘No, not even my eyes can see him, my good Legolas,’ said Aragorn. ‘He must be far aloft indeed. I wonder what is his errand, if he is the same bird that I have seen before. But look! I can see something nearer at hand and more urgent; there is something moving over the plain!’

‘Many things,’ said Legolas. ‘It is a great company on foot; but I cannot say more, nor see what kind of folk they may be. They are many leagues away: twelve, I guess; but the flatness of the plain is hard to measure.’

‘I think, nonetheless, that we no longer need any trail to tell us which way to go,’ said Gimli. ‘Let us find a path down to the fields as quick as may be.’

‘I doubt if you will find a path quicker than the one that the Orcs chose,’ said Aragorn.

They followed their enemies now by the clear light of day. It seemed that the Orcs had pressed on with all possible speed. Every now and again the pursuers found things that had been dropped or cast away: food-bags, the rinds and crusts of hard grey bread, a torn black cloak, a heavy iron-nailed shoe broken on the stones. The trail led them north along the top of the escarpment, and at length they came to a deep cleft carved in the rock by a stream that splashed noisily down. In the narrow ravine a rough path descended like a steep stair into the plain.

At the bottom they came with a strange suddenness on the grass of Rohan. It swelled like a green sea up to the very foot of the Emyr Muil. The falling stream vanished into a deep growth of cresses and water-plants, and they could hear it tinkling away in green tunnels, down long gentle slopes towards the fens of Entwash Vale far away. They seemed to have left winter clinging to the hills behind. Here the air was softer and warmer, and

faintly scented, as if spring was already stirring and the sap was flowing again in herb and leaf. Legolas took a deep breath, like one that drinks a great draught after long thirst in barren places.

‘Ah! the green smell!’ he said. ‘It is better than much sleep. Let us run!’

‘Light feet may run swiftly here,’ said Aragorn. ‘More swiftly, maybe, than iron-shod Orcs. Now we have a chance to lessen their lead!’

They went in single file, running like hounds on a strong scent, and an eager light was in their eyes. Nearly due west the broad swath of the marching Orcs tramped its ugly slot; the sweet grass of Rohan had been bruised and blackened as they passed. Presently Aragorn gave a cry and turned aside.

‘Stay!’ he shouted. ‘Do not follow me yet!’ He ran quickly to the right, away from the main trail; for he had seen footprints that went that way, branching off from the others, the marks of small unshod feet. These, however, did not go far before they were crossed by orc-prints, also coming out from the main trail behind and in front, and then they curved sharply back again and were lost in the trampling. At the furthest point Aragorn stooped and picked up something from the grass; then he ran back.

‘Yes,’ he said, ‘they are quite plain: a hobbit’s footprints. Pippin’s, I think. He is smaller than the others. And look at this!’ He held up a thing that glittered in the sunlight. It looked like the new-opened leaf of a beech-tree, fair and strange in that treeless plain.

‘The brooch of an elven-cloak!’ cried Legolas and Gimli together.

‘Not idly do the leaves of Lórien fall,’ said Aragorn. ‘This did not drop by chance: it was cast away as a token to any that might follow. I think Pippin ran away from the trail for that purpose.’

‘Then he at least was alive,’ said Gimli. ‘And he had the use of his wits, and of his legs too. That is heartening. We do not pursue in vain.’

‘Let us hope that he did not pay too dearly for his boldness,’ said Legolas. ‘Come! Let us go on! The thought of those merry young folk driven like cattle burns my heart.’

The sun climbed to the noon and then rode slowly down the sky. Light clouds came up out of the sea in the distant South and were blown away upon the breeze. The sun sank. Shadows rose behind and reached out long arms from the East. Still the hunters held on. One day now had passed since Boromir fell, and the Orcs were yet far ahead. No longer could any sight of them be seen in the level plains.

As nightshade was closing about them Aragorn halted. Only twice in the day’s march had they rested for a brief while, and twelve leagues now lay between them and the eastern wall where they had stood at dawn.

‘We have come at last to a hard choice,’ he said. ‘Shall we rest by night, or shall we go on while our will and strength hold?’

‘Unless our enemies rest also, they will leave us far behind, if we stay to sleep,’ said Legolas.

‘Surely even Orcs must pause on the march?’ said Gimli.

‘Seldom will Orcs journey in the open under the sun, yet these have done so,’ said Legolas. ‘Certainly they will not rest by night.’

‘But if we walk by night, we cannot follow their trail,’ said Gimli.

‘The trail is straight, and turns neither right nor left, as far as my eyes can see,’ said Legolas.

‘Maybe, I could lead you at guess in the darkness and hold to the line,’ said Aragorn; ‘but if we strayed, or they turned aside, then when light came there might be long delay before the trail was found again.’

‘And there is this also,’ said Gimli: ‘only by day can we see if any tracks lead away. If a prisoner should escape, or if one should be carried off, eastward, say, to the Great River, towards Mordor, we might pass the signs and never know it.’

‘That is true,’ said Aragorn. ‘But if I read the signs back yonder rightly, the Orcs of the White Hand prevailed, and the whole company is now bound for Isengard. Their present course bears me out.’

‘Yet it would be rash to be sure of their counsels,’ said Gimli. ‘And what of escape? In the dark we should have passed the signs that led you to the brooch.’

‘The Orcs will be doubly on their guard since then, and the prisoners even wearier,’ said Legolas. ‘There will be no escape again, if we do not contrive it. How that is to be done cannot be guessed, but first we must overtake them.’

‘And yet even I, Dwarf of many journeys, and not the least hardy of my folk, cannot run all the way to Isengard without any pause,’ said Gimli. ‘My heart burns me too, and I would have started sooner; but now I must rest a little to run the better. And if we rest, then the blind night is the time to do so.’

‘I said that it was a hard choice,’ said Aragorn. ‘How shall we end this debate?’

‘You are our guide,’ said Gimli, ‘and you are skilled in the chase. You shall choose.’

‘My heart bids me go on,’ said Legolas. ‘But we must hold together. I will follow your counsel.’

‘You give the choice to an ill chooser,’ said Aragorn. ‘Since we passed through the Argonath my choices have gone amiss.’ He fell silent, gazing north and west into the gathering night for a long while.

‘We will not walk in the dark,’ he said at length. ‘The peril of missing the trail or signs of other coming and going seems to me the greater. If the Moon gave enough light, we would use it, but alas! he sets early and is yet young and pale.’

‘And tonight he is shrouded anyway,’ Gimli murmured. ‘Would that the Lady had given us a light, such a gift as she gave to Frodo!’

‘It will be more needed where it is bestowed,’ said Aragorn. ‘With him lies the true Quest. Ours is but a small matter in the great deeds of this time. A vain pursuit from its beginning, maybe, which no choice of mine can mar or mend. Well, I have chosen. So let us use the time as best we may!’

He cast himself on the ground and fell at once into sleep, for he had not slept since their night under the shadow of Tol Brandir. Before dawn was in the sky he woke and rose. Gimli was still deep in slumber, but Legolas was standing, gazing northwards into the darkness, thoughtful and silent as a young tree in a windless night.

‘They are far far away,’ he said sadly, turning to Aragorn. ‘I know in my heart that they have not rested this night. Only an eagle could overtake them now.’

‘Nonetheless we will still follow as we may,’ said Aragorn. Stooping he roused the Dwarf. ‘Come! We must go,’ he said. ‘The scent is growing cold.’

‘But it is still dark,’ said Gimli. ‘Even Legolas on a hill-top could not see them till the Sun is up.’

‘I fear they have passed beyond my sight from hill or plain, under moon or sun,’ said Legolas.

‘Where sight fails the earth may bring us rumour,’ said Aragorn. ‘The land must groan under their hated feet.’ He stretched himself upon the ground with his ear pressed against the turf. He lay there motionless, for so long a time that Gimli wondered if he had swooned or fallen asleep again. Dawn came glimmering, and slowly a grey light grew about them. At last he rose, and now his friends could see his face: it was pale and drawn, and his look was troubled.

‘The rumour of the earth is dim and confused,’ he said. ‘Nothing walks upon it for many miles about us. Faint and far are the feet of our enemies. But loud are the hoofs of the horses. It comes to my mind that I heard them, even as I lay on the ground in sleep, and they troubled my dreams: horses galloping, passing in the West. But now they are drawing ever further from us, riding northward. I wonder what is happening in this land!’ ‘Let us go!’ said Legolas.

So the third day of their pursuit began. During all its long hours of cloud and fitful sun they hardly paused, now striding, now running, as if no weariness could quench the fire that burned them. They seldom spoke. Over the wide solitude they passed and their elven-cloaks faded against the background of the grey-green fields; even in the cool sunlight of mid-day few but Elvish eyes would have marked them, until they were close at hand. Often

in their hearts they thanked the Lady of Lórien for the gift of *lembas*, for they could eat of it and find new strength even as they ran.

All day the track of their enemies led straight on, going north-west without a break or turn. As once again the day wore to its end they came to long treeless slopes, where the land rose, swelling up towards a line of low humpbacked downs ahead. The orc-trail grew fainter as it bent north towards them, for the ground became harder and the grass shorter. Far away to the left the river Entwash wound, a silver thread in a green floor. No moving thing could be seen. Often Aragorn wondered that they saw no sign of beast or man. The dwellings of the Rohirrim were for the most part many leagues away to the South, under the wooded eaves of the White Mountains, now hidden in mist and cloud; yet the Horse-lords had formerly kept many herds and studs in the Eastemnet, this easterly region of their realm, and there the herdsmen had wandered much, living in camp and tent, even in winter-time. But now all the land was empty, and there was a silence that did not seem to be the quiet of peace.

At dusk they halted again. Now twice twelve leagues they had passed over the plains of Rohan and the wall of the Emyr Muil was lost in the shadows of the East. The young moon was glimmering in a misty sky, but it gave small light, and the stars were veiled.

‘Now do I most grudge a time of rest or any halt in our chase,’ said Legolas. ‘The Orcs have run before us, as if the very whips of Sauron were behind them. I fear they have already reached the forest and the dark hills, and even now are passing into the shadows of the trees.’

Gimli ground his teeth. ‘This is a bitter end to our hope and to all our toil!’ he said.

‘To hope, maybe, but not to toil,’ said Aragorn. ‘We shall not turn back here. Yet I am weary.’ He gazed back along the way that they had come towards the night gathering in the East. ‘There is something strange at work in this land. I distrust the silence. I distrust even the pale Moon. The stars are faint; and I am weary as I have seldom been before, weary as no Ranger should be with a clear trail to follow. There is some will that lends speed to our foes and sets an unseen barrier before us: a weariness that is in the heart more than in the limb.’

‘Truly!’ said Legolas. ‘That I have known since first we came down from the Emyr Muil. For the will is not behind us but before us.’ He pointed away over the land of Rohan into the darkling West under the sickle moon.

‘Saruman!’ muttered Aragorn. ‘But he shall not turn us back! Halt we must once more; for, see! even the Moon is falling into gathering cloud. But north lies our road between down and fen when day returns.’

As before Legolas was first afoot, if indeed he had ever slept. ‘Awake! Awake!’ he cried. ‘It is a red dawn. Strange things await us by the eaves of the forest. Good or evil, I do not know; but we are called. Awake!’

The others sprang up, and almost at once they set off again. Slowly the downs drew near. It was still an hour before noon when they reached them: green slopes rising to bare ridges that ran in a line straight towards the North. At their feet the ground was dry and the turf short, but a long strip of sunken land, some ten miles wide, lay between them and the river wandering deep in dim thickets of reed and rush. Just to the West of the southernmost slope there was a great ring, where the turf had been torn and beaten by many trampling feet. From it the orc-trail ran out again, turning north along the dry skirts of the hills. Aragorn halted and examined the tracks closely.

‘They rested here a while,’ he said, ‘but even the outward trail is already old. I fear that your heart spoke truly, Legolas: it is thrice twelve hours, I guess, since the Orcs stood where we now stand. If they held to their pace, then at sundown yesterday they would reach the borders of Fangorn.’

‘I can see nothing away north or west but grass dwindling into mist,’ said Gimli. ‘Could we see the forest, if we climbed the hills?’

‘It is still far away,’ said Aragorn. ‘If I remember rightly, these downs run eight leagues or more to the north, and then north-west to the issuing of the Entwash there lies still a wide land, another fifteen leagues it may be.’

‘Well, let us go on,’ said Gimli. ‘My legs must forget the miles. They would be more willing, if my heart were less heavy.’

The sun was sinking when at last they drew near to the end of the line of downs. For many hours they had marched without rest. They were going slowly now, and Gimli's back was bent. Stone-hard are the Dwarves in labour or journey, but this endless chase began to tell on him, as all hope failed in his heart. Aragorn walked behind him, grim and silent, stooping now and again to scan some print or mark upon the ground. Only Legolas still stepped as lightly as ever, his feet hardly seeming to press the grass, leaving no footprints as he passed; but in the waybread of the Elves he found all the sustenance that he needed, and he could sleep, if sleep it could be called by Men, resting his mind in the strange paths of Elvish dreams, even as he walked open-eyed in the light of this world.

'Let us go up on to this green hill!' he said. Wearily they followed him, climbing the long slope, until they came out upon the top. It was a round hill smooth and bare, standing by itself, the most northerly of the downs. The sun sank and the shadows of evening fell like a curtain. They were alone in a grey formless world without mark or measure. Only far away north-west there was a deeper darkness against the dying light: the Mountains of Mist and the forest at their feet.

'Nothing can we see to guide us here,' said Gimli. 'Well, now we must halt again and wear the night away. It is growing cold!'

'The wind is north from the snows,' said Aragorn.

'And ere morning it will be in the East,' said Legolas. 'But rest, if you must. Yet do not cast all hope away. Tomorrow is unknown. Rede oft is found at the rising of the Sun.'

'Three suns already have risen on our chase and brought no counsel,' said Gimli.

The night grew ever colder. Aragorn and Gimli slept fitfully, and whenever they awoke they saw Legolas standing beside them, or walking to and fro, singing softly to himself in his own tongue, and as he sang the white stars opened in the hard black vault above. So the night passed. Together they watched the dawn grow slowly in the sky, now bare and cloudless, until at last the sunrise came. It was pale and clear. The wind was in the East and all the mists had rolled away; wide lands lay bleak about them in the bitter light.

Ahead and eastward they saw the windy uplands of the Wold of Rohan that they had already glimpsed many days ago from the Great River. North-westward stalked the dark forest of Fangorn; still ten leagues away stood its shadowy eaves, and its further slopes faded into the distant blue. Beyond there glimmered far away, as if floating on a grey cloud, the white head of tall Methedras, the last peak of the Misty Mountains. Out of the forest the Entwash flowed to meet them, its stream now swift and narrow, and its banks deep-cloven. The orc-trail turned from the downs towards it.

Following with his keen eyes the trail to the river, and then the river back towards the forest, Aragorn saw a shadow on the distant green, a dark swift-moving blur. He cast himself upon the ground and listened again intently. But Legolas stood beside him, shading his bright elven-eyes with his long slender hand, and he saw not a shadow, nor a blur, but the small figures of horsemen, many horsemen, and the glint of morning on the tips of their spears was like the twinkle of minute stars beyond the edge of mortal sight. Far behind them a dark smoke rose in thin curling threads.

There was a silence in the empty fields, and Gimli could hear the air moving in the grass.

'Riders!' cried Aragorn, springing to his feet. 'Many riders on swift steeds are coming towards us!'

'Yes,' said Legolas, 'there are one hundred and five. Yellow is their hair, and bright are their spears. Their leader is very tall.'

Aragorn smiled. 'Keen are the eyes of the Elves,' he said.

'Nay! The riders are little more than five leagues distant,' said Legolas.

'Five leagues or one,' said Gimli, 'we cannot escape them in this bare land. Shall we wait for them here or go on our way?'

'We will wait,' said Aragorn. 'I am weary, and our hunt has failed. Or at least others were before us; for these horsemen are riding back down the orc-trail. We may get news from them.'



‘Or spears,’ said Gimli.

‘There are three empty saddles, but I see no hobbits,’ said Legolas.

‘I did not say that we should hear good news,’ said Aragorn. ‘But evil or good we will await it here.’

The three companions now left the hill-top, where they might be an easy mark against the pale sky, and they walked slowly down the northward slope. A little above the hill’s foot they halted, and wrapping their cloaks about them, they sat huddled together upon the faded grass. The time passed slowly and heavily. The wind was thin and searching. Gimli was uneasy.

‘What do you know of these horsemen, Aragorn?’ he said. ‘Do we sit here waiting for sudden death?’

‘I have been among them,’ answered Aragorn. ‘They are proud and wilful, but they are true-hearted, generous in thought and deed; bold but not cruel; wise but unlearned, writing no books but singing many songs, after the manner of the children of Men before the Dark Years. But I do not know what has happened here of late, nor in what mind the Rohirrim may now be between the traitor Saruman and the threat of Sauron. They have long been the friends of the people of Gondor, though they are not akin to them. It was in forgotten years long ago that Eorl the Young brought them out of the North, and their kinship is rather with the Bardings of Dale, and with the Beornings of the Wood, among whom may still be seen many men tall and fair, as are the Riders of Rohan. At least they will not love the Orcs.’

‘But Gandalf spoke of a rumour that they pay tribute to Mordor,’ said Gimli.

‘I believe it no more than did Boromir,’ answered Aragorn.

‘You will soon learn the truth,’ said Legolas. ‘Already they approach.’

At length even Gimli could hear the distant beat of galloping hoofs. The horsemen, following the trail, had turned from the river, and were drawing near the downs. They were riding like the wind.

Now the cries of clear strong voices came ringing over the fields. Suddenly they swept up with a noise like thunder, and the foremost horseman swerved, passing by the foot of the hill, and leading the host back southward along the western skirts of the downs. After him they rode: a long line of mail-clad men, swift, shining, fell and fair to look upon.

Their horses were of great stature, strong and clean-limbed; their grey coats glistened, their long tails flowed in the wind, their manes were braided on their proud necks. The Men that rode them matched them well: tall and long-limbed; their hair, flaxen-pale, flowed under their light helms, and streamed in long braids behind them; their faces were stern and keen. In their hands were tall spears of ash, painted shields were slung at their backs, long swords were at their belts, their burnished shirts of mail hung down upon their knees.

In pairs they galloped by, and though every now and then one rose in his stirrups and gazed ahead and to either side, they appeared not to perceive the three strangers sitting silently and watching them. The host had almost passed when suddenly Aragorn stood up, and called in a loud voice:

‘What news from the North, Riders of Rohan?’

With astonishing speed and skill they checked their steeds, wheeled, and came charging round. Soon the three companions found themselves in a ring of horsemen moving in a running circle, up the hill-slope behind them and down, round and round them, and drawing ever inwards. Aragorn stood silent, and the other two sat without moving, wondering what way things would turn.

Without a word or cry, suddenly, the Riders halted. A thicket of spears were pointed towards the strangers; and some of the horsemen had bows in hand, and their arrows were already fitted to the string. Then one rode forward, a tall man, taller than all the rest; from his helm as a crest a white horsetail flowed. He advanced until the point of his spear was within a foot of Aragorn’s breast. Aragorn did not stir.

‘Who are you, and what are you doing in this land?’ said the Rider, using the Common Speech of the West, in manner and tone like to the speech of Boromir, Man of Gondor.

‘I am called Strider,’ answered Aragorn. ‘I came out of the North. I am hunting Orcs.’

The Rider leaped from his horse. Giving his spear to another who rode up and dismounted at his side, he drew his sword and stood face to face with Aragorn, surveying him keenly, and not without wonder. At length he spoke again.

‘At first I thought that you yourselves were Orcs,’ he said; ‘but now I see that it is not so. Indeed you know little of Orcs, if you go hunting them in this fashion. They were swift and well-armed, and they were many. You would have changed from hunters to prey, if ever you had overtaken them. But there is something strange about you, Strider.’ He bent his clear bright eyes again upon the Ranger. ‘That is no name for a Man that you give. And strange too is your raiment. Have you sprung out of the grass? How did you escape our sight? Are you Elvish folk?’

‘No,’ said Aragorn. ‘One only of us is an Elf, Legolas from the Woodland Realm in distant Mirkwood. But we have passed through Lothlórien, and the gifts and favour of the Lady go with us.’

The Rider looked at them with renewed wonder, but his eyes hardened. ‘Then there is a Lady in the Golden Wood, as old tales tell!’ he said. ‘Few escape her nets, they say. These are strange days! But if you have her favour, then you also are net-weavers and sorcerers, maybe.’ He turned a cold glance suddenly upon Legolas and Gimli. ‘Why do you not speak, silent ones?’ he demanded.

Gimli rose and planted his feet firmly apart: his hand gripped the handle of his axe, and his dark eyes flashed. ‘Give me your name, horse-master, and I will give you mine, and more besides,’ he said.

‘As for that,’ said the Rider, staring down at the Dwarf, ‘the stranger should declare himself first. Yet I am named Éomer son of Éomund, and am called the Third Marshal of Riddermark.’

‘Then Éomer son of Éomund, Third Marshal of Riddermark, let Gimli the Dwarf Glóin’s son warn you against foolish words. You speak evil of that which is fair beyond the reach of your thought, and only little wit can excuse you.’

Éomer’s eyes blazed, and the Men of Rohan murmured angrily, and closed in, advancing their spears. ‘I would cut off your head, beard and all, Master Dwarf, if it stood but a little higher from the ground,’ said Éomer.

‘He stands not alone,’ said Legolas, bending his bow and fitting an arrow with hands that moved quicker than sight. ‘You would die before your stroke fell.’

Éomer raised his sword, and things might have gone ill, but Aragorn sprang between them, and raised his hand. ‘Your pardon, Éomer!’ he cried. ‘When you know more you will understand why you have angered my companions. We intend no evil to Rohan, nor to any of its folk, neither to man nor to horse. Will you not hear our tale before you strike?’

‘I will,’ said Éomer lowering his blade. ‘But wanderers in the Riddermark would be wise to be less haughty in these days of doubt. First tell me your right name.’

‘First tell me whom you serve,’ said Aragorn. ‘Are you friend or foe of Sauron, the Dark Lord of Mordor?’

‘I serve only the Lord of the Mark, Théoden King son of Thengel,’ answered Éomer. ‘We do not serve the Power of the Black Land far away, but neither are we yet at open war with him; and if you are fleeing from him, then you had best leave this land. There is trouble now on all our borders, and we are threatened; but we desire only to be free, and to live as we have lived, keeping our own, and serving no foreign lord, good or evil. We welcomed guests kindly in the better days, but in these times the unbidden stranger finds us swift and hard. Come! Who are you? Whom do *you* serve? At whose command do you hunt Orcs in our land?’

‘I serve no man,’ said Aragorn; ‘but the servants of Sauron I pursue into whatever land they may go. There are few among mortal Men who know more of Orcs; and I do not hunt them in this fashion out of choice. The Orcs whom we pursued took captive two of my friends. In such need a man that has no horse will go on foot, and he will not ask for leave to follow the trail. Nor will he count the heads of the enemy save with a sword. I am not weaponless.’

Aragorn threw back his cloak. The elven-sheath glittered as he grasped it, and the bright blade of Andúril shone like a sudden flame as he swept it out. ‘Elendil!’ he cried. ‘I am Aragorn son of Arathorn, and am called

Ellessar, the Elfstone, Dúnadan, the heir of Isildur Elendil's son of Gondor. Here is the Sword that was Broken and is forged again! Will you aid me or thwart me? Choose swiftly!

Gimli and Legolas looked at their companion in amazement, for they had not seen him in this mood before. He seemed to have grown in stature while Éomer had shrunk; and in his living face they caught a brief vision of the power and majesty of the kings of stone. For a moment it seemed to the eyes of Legolas that a white flame flickered on the brows of Aragorn like a shining crown.

Éomer stepped back and a look of awe was in his face. He cast down his proud eyes. 'These are indeed strange days,' he muttered. 'Dreams and legends spring to life out of the grass.'

'Tell me, lord,' he said, 'what brings you here? And what was the meaning of the dark words? Long has Boromir son of Denethor been gone seeking an answer, and the horse that we lent him came back riderless. What doom do you bring out of the North?'

'The doom of choice,' said Aragorn. 'You may say this to Théoden son of Thengel: open war lies before him, with Sauron or against him. None may live now as they have lived, and few shall keep what they call their own. But of these great matters we will speak later. If chance allows, I will come myself to the king. Now I am in great need, and I ask for help, or at least for tidings. You heard that we are pursuing an orc-host that carried off our friends. What can you tell us?'

'That you need not pursue them further,' said Éomer. 'The Orcs are destroyed.'

'And our friends?'

'We found none but Orcs.'

'But that is strange indeed,' said Aragorn. 'Did you search the slain? Were there no bodies other than those of orc-kind? They would be small, only children to your eyes, unshod but clad in grey.'

'There were no dwarves nor children,' said Éomer. 'We counted all the slain and despoiled them, and then we piled the carcasses and burned them, as is our custom. The ashes are smoking still.'

'We do not speak of dwarves or children,' said Gimli. 'Our friends were hobbits.'

'Hobbits?' said Éomer. 'And what may they be? It is a strange name.'

'A strange name for a strange folk,' said Gimli. 'But these were very dear to us. It seems that you have heard in Rohan of the words that troubled Minas Tirith. They spoke of the Halfling. These hobbits are Halflings.'

'Halflings!' laughed the Rider that stood beside Éomer. 'Halflings! But they are only a little people in old songs and children's tales out of the North. Do we walk in legends or on the green earth in the daylight?'

'A man may do both,' said Aragorn. 'For not we but those who come after will make the legends of our time. The green earth, say you? That is a mighty matter of legend, though you tread it under the light of day!'

'Time is pressing,' said the Rider, not heeding Aragorn. 'We must hasten south, lord. Let us leave these wild folk to their fancies. Or let us bind them and take them to the king.'

'Peace, Éothain!' said Éomer in his own tongue. 'Leave me a while. Tell the *éored* to assemble on the path, and make ready to ride to the Entwade.'

Muttering Éothain retired, and spoke to the others. Soon they drew off and left Éomer alone with the three companions.

'All that you say is strange, Aragorn,' he said. 'Yet you speak the truth, that is plain: the Men of the Mark do not lie, and therefore they are not easily deceived. But you have not told all. Will you not now speak more fully of your errand, so that I may judge what to do?'

'I set out from Imladris, as it is named in the rhyme, many weeks ago,' answered Aragorn. 'With me went Boromir of Minas Tirith. My errand was to go to that city with the son of Denethor, to aid his folk in their war against Sauron. But the Company that I journeyed with had other business. Of that I cannot speak now. Gandalf the Grey was our leader.'

‘Gandalf!’ Éomer exclaimed. ‘Gandalf Greyhame is known in the Mark; but his name, I warn you, is no longer a pass-word to the king’s favour. He has been a guest in the land many times in the memory of men, coming as he will, after a season, or after many years. He is ever the herald of strange events: a bringer of evil, some now say.’

‘Indeed since his last coming in the summer all things have gone amiss. At that time our trouble with Saruman began. Until then we counted Saruman our friend, but Gandalf came then and warned us that sudden war was preparing in Isengard. He said that he himself had been a prisoner in Orthanc and had hardly escaped, and he begged for help. But Théoden would not listen to him, and he went away. Speak not the name of Gandalf loudly in Théoden’s ears! He is wroth. For Gandalf took the horse that is called Shadowfax, the most precious of all the king’s steeds, chief of the *Mearas*, which only the Lord of the Mark may ride. For the sire of their race was the great horse of Eorl that knew the speech of Men. Seven nights ago Shadowfax returned; but the king’s anger is not less, for now the horse is wild and will let no man handle him.’

‘Then Shadowfax has found his way alone from the far North,’ said Aragorn; ‘for it was there that he and Gandalf parted. But alas! Gandalf will ride no longer. He fell into darkness in the Mines of Moria and comes not again.’

‘That is heavy tidings,’ said Éomer. ‘At least to me, and to many; though not to all, as you may find, if you come to the king.’

‘It is tidings more grievous than any in this land can understand, though it may touch them sorely ere the year is much older,’ said Aragorn. ‘But when the great fall, the less must lead. My part it has been to guide our Company on the long road from Moria. Through Lórien we came—of which it were well that you should learn the truth ere you speak of it again—and thence down the leagues of the Great River to the falls of Rauros. There Boromir was slain by the same Orcs whom you destroyed.’

‘Your news is all of woe!’ cried Éomer in dismay. ‘Great harm is this death to Minas Tirith, and to us all. That was a worthy man! All spoke his praise. He came seldom to the Mark, for he was ever in the wars on the East-borders; but I have seen him. More like to the swift sons of Eorl than to the grave Men of Gondor he seemed to me, and likely to prove a great captain of his people when his time came. But we have had no word of this grief out of Gondor. When did he fall?’

‘It is now the fourth day since he was slain,’ answered Aragorn; ‘and since the evening of that day we have journeyed from the shadow of Tol Brandir.’

‘On foot?’ cried Éomer.

‘Yes, even as you see us.’

Wide wonder came into Éomer’s eyes. ‘Strider is too poor a name, son of Arathorn,’ he said. ‘Wingfoot I name you. This deed of the three friends should be sung in many a hall. Forty leagues and five you have measured ere the fourth day is ended! Hardy is the race of Elendil!

‘But now, lord, what would you have me do! I must return in haste to Théoden. I spoke warily before my men. It is true that we are not yet at open war with the Black Land, and there are some, close to the king’s ear, that speak craven counsels; but war is coming. We shall not forsake our old alliance with Gondor, and while they fight we shall aid them: so say I and all who hold with me. The East-mark is my charge, the ward of the Third Marshal, and I have removed all our herds and herdfolk, withdrawing them beyond Entwash, and leaving none here but guards and swift scouts.’

‘Then you do not pay tribute to Sauron?’ said Gimli.

‘We do not and we never have,’ said Éomer with a flash of his eyes; ‘though it comes to my ears that that lie has been told. Some years ago the Lord of the Black Land wished to purchase horses of us at great price, but we refused him, for he puts beasts to evil use. Then he sent plundering Orcs, and they carry off what they can, choosing always the black horses: few of these are now left. For that reason our feud with the Orcs is bitter.’

‘But at this time our chief concern is with Saruman. He has claimed lordship over all this land, and there has been war between us for many months. He has taken Orcs into his service, and Wolf-riders, and evil Men, and he has closed the Gap against us, so that we are likely to be beset both east and west.

‘It is ill dealing with such a foe: he is a wizard both cunning and dwimmer-crafty, having many guises. He walks here and there, they say, as an old man hooded and cloaked, very like to Gandalf, as many now recall. His spies slip through every net, and his birds of ill omen are abroad in the sky. I do not know how it will all end, and my heart misgives me; for it seems to me that his friends do not all dwell in Isengard. But if you come to the king’s house, you shall see for yourself. Will you not come? Do I hope in vain that you have been sent to me for a help in doubt and need?’

‘I will come when I may,’ said Aragorn.

‘Come now!’ said Éomer. ‘The Heir of Elendil would be a strength indeed to the Sons of Eorl in this evil tide. There is battle even now upon the Westemnet, and I fear that it may go ill for us.

‘Indeed in this riding north I went without the king’s leave, for in my absence his house is left with little guard. But scouts warned me of the orc-host coming down out of the East Wall four nights ago, and among them they reported that some bore the white badges of Saruman. So suspecting what I most fear, a league between Orthanc and the Dark Tower, I led forth my *éored*, men of my own household; and we overtook the Orcs at nightfall two days ago, near to the borders of the Entwood. There we surrounded them, and gave battle yesterday at dawn. Fifteen of my men I lost, and twelve horses alas! For the Orcs were greater in number than we counted on. Others joined them, coming out of the East across the Great River: their trail is plain to see a little north of this spot. And others, too, came out of the forest. Great Orcs, who also bore the White Hand of Isengard: that kind is stronger and more fell than all others.

‘Nonetheless we put an end to them. But we have been too long away. We are needed south and west. Will you not come? There are spare horses as you see. There is work for the Sword to do. Yes, and we could find a use for Gimli’s axe and the bow of Legolas, if they will pardon my rash words concerning the Lady of the Wood. I spoke only as do all men in my land, and I would gladly learn better.’

‘I thank you for your fair words,’ said Aragorn, ‘and my heart desires to come with you; but I cannot desert my friends while hope remains.’

‘Hope does not remain,’ said Éomer. ‘You will not find your friends on the North-borders.’

‘Yet my friends are not behind. We found a clear token not far from the East Wall that one at least of them was still alive there. But between the wall and the downs we have found no other trace of them, and no trail has turned aside, this way or that, unless my skill has wholly left me.’

‘Then what do you think has become of them?’

‘I do not know. They may have been slain and burned among the Orcs; but that you will say cannot be, and I do not fear it. I can only think that they were carried off into the forest before the battle, even before you encircled your foes, maybe. Can you swear that none escaped your net in such a way?’

‘I would swear that no Orc escaped after we sighted them,’ said Éomer. ‘We reached the forest-eaves before them, and if after that any living thing broke through our ring, then it was no Orc and had some Elvish power.’

‘Our friends were attired even as we are,’ said Aragorn; ‘and you passed us by under the full light of day.’

‘I had forgotten that,’ said Éomer. ‘It is hard to be sure of anything among so many marvels. The world is all grown strange. Elf and Dwarf in company walk in our daily fields; and folk speak with the Lady of the Wood and yet live; and the Sword comes back to war that was broken in the long ages ere the fathers of our fathers rode into the Mark! How shall a man judge what to do in such times?’

‘As he ever has judged,’ said Aragorn. ‘Good and ill have not changed since yesteryear; nor are they one thing among Elves and Dwarves and another among Men. It is a man’s part to discern them, as much in the Golden Wood as in his own house.’

‘True indeed,’ said Éomer. ‘But I do not doubt you, nor the deed which my heart would do. Yet I am not free to do all as I would. It is against our law to let strangers wander at will in our land, until the king himself shall give them leave, and more strict is the command in these days of peril. I have begged you to come back willingly with me, and you will not. Loth am I to begin a battle of one hundred against three.’

‘I do not think your law was made for such a chance,’ said Aragorn. ‘Nor indeed am I a stranger; for I have been in this land before, more than once, and ridden with the host of the Rohirrim, though under other name and in other guise. You I have not seen before, for you are young, but I have spoken with Éomund your father, and with Théoden son of Thengel. Never in former days would any high lord of this land have constrained a man to abandon such a quest as mine. My duty at least is clear, to go on. Come now, son of Éomund, the choice must be made at last. Aid us, or at the worst let us go free. Or seek to carry out your law. If you do so there will be fewer to return to your war or to your king.’

Éomer was silent for a moment, then he spoke. ‘We both have need of haste,’ he said. ‘My company chafes to be away, and every hour lessens your hope. This is my choice. You may go; and what is more, I will lend you horses. This only I ask: when your quest is achieved, or is proved vain, return with the horses over the Entwade to Meduseld, the high house in Edoras where Théoden now sits. Thus you shall prove to him that I have not misjudged. In this I place myself, and maybe my very life, in the keeping of your good faith. Do not fail.’

‘I will not,’ said Aragorn.

There was great wonder, and many dark and doubtful glances, among his men, when Éomer gave orders that the spare horses were to be lent to the strangers; but only Éothain dared to speak openly.

‘It may be well enough for this lord of the race of Gondor, as he claims,’ he said, ‘but who has heard of a horse of the Mark being given to a Dwarf?’

‘No-one,’ said Gimli. ‘And do not trouble: no-one will ever hear of it. I would sooner walk than sit on the back of any beast so great, free or begrudged.’

‘But you must ride now, or you will hinder us,’ said Aragorn.

‘Come, you shall sit behind me, friend Gimli,’ said Legolas. ‘Then all will be well, and you need neither borrow a horse nor be troubled by one.’

A great dark-grey horse was brought to Aragorn, and he mounted it. ‘Hasufel is his name,’ said Éomer. ‘May he bear you well and to better fortune than Gáruulf, his late master!’

A smaller and lighter horse, but restive and fiery, was brought to Legolas. Arod was his name. But Legolas asked them to take off saddle and rein. ‘I need them not,’ he said, and leaped lightly up, and to their wonder Arod was tame and willing beneath him, moving here and there with but a spoken word: such was the Elvish way with all good beasts. Gimli was lifted up behind his friend, and he clung to him, not much more at ease than Sam Gamgee in a boat.

‘Farewell, and may you find what you seek!’ cried Éomer. ‘Return with what speed you may, and let our swords hereafter shine together!’

‘I will come,’ said Aragorn.

‘And I will come, too,’ said Gimli. ‘The matter of the Lady Galadriel lies still between us. I have yet to teach you gentle speech.’

‘We shall see,’ said Éomer. ‘So many strange things have chanced that to learn the praise of a fair lady under the loving strokes of a Dwarf’s axe will seem no great wonder. Farewell!’

With that they parted. Very swift were the horses of Rohan. When after a little Gimli looked back, the company of Éomer were already small and far away. Aragorn did not look back: he was watching the trail as they sped on their way, bending low with his head beside the neck of Hasufel. Before long they came to the borders of the Entwash, and there they met the other trail of which Éomer had spoken, coming down from the East out of the Wold.

Aragorn dismounted and surveyed the ground, then leaping back into the saddle, he rode away for some distance eastward, keeping to one side and taking care not to override the footprints. Then he again dismounted and examined the ground, going backwards and forwards on foot.

‘There is little to discover,’ he said when he returned. ‘The main trail is all confused with the passage of the horsemen as they came back; their outward course must have lain nearer the river. But this eastward trail is fresh and clear. There is no sign there of any feet going the other way, back towards Anduin. Now we must ride slower, and make sure that no trace or footstep branches off on either side. The Orcs must have been aware from this point that they were pursued; they may have made some attempt to get their captives away before they were overtaken.’

As they rode forward the day was overcast. Low grey clouds came over the Wold. A mist shrouded the sun. Ever nearer the tree-clad slopes of Fangorn loomed, slowly darkling as the sun went west. They saw no sign of any trail to right or left, but here and there they passed single Orcs, fallen in their tracks as they ran, with grey-feathered arrows sticking in back or throat.

At last as the afternoon was waning they came to the eaves of the forest, and in an open glade among the first trees they found the place of the great burning: the ashes were still hot and smoking. Beside it was a great pile of helms and mail, cloven shields, and broken swords, bows and darts and other gear of war. Upon a stake in the middle was set a great goblin head; upon its shattered helm the white badge could still be seen. Further away, not far from the river, where it came streaming out from the edge of the wood, there was a mound. It was newly raised: the raw earth was covered with fresh-cut turves: about it were planted fifteen spears.

Aragorn and his companions searched far and wide about the field of battle, but the light faded, and evening soon drew down, dim and misty. By nightfall they had discovered no trace of Merry and Pippin.

‘We can do no more,’ said Gimli sadly. ‘We have been set many riddles since we came to Tol Brandir, but this is the hardest to unravel. I would guess that the burned bones of the hobbits are now mingled with the Orcs’. It will be hard news for Frodo, if he lives to hear it; and hard too for the old hobbit who waits in Rivendell. Elrond was against their coming.’

‘But Gandalf was not,’ said Legolas.

‘But Gandalf chose to come himself, and he was the first to be lost,’ answered Gimli. ‘His foresight failed him.’

‘The counsel of Gandalf was not founded on foreknowledge of safety, for himself or for others,’ said Aragorn. ‘There are some things that it is better to begin than to refuse, even though the end may be dark. But I shall not depart from this place yet. In any case we must here await the morning-light.’

A little way beyond the battle-field they made their camp under a spreading tree: it looked like a chestnut, and yet it still bore many broad brown leaves of a former year, like dry hands with long splayed fingers; they rattled mournfully in the night-breeze.

Gimli shivered. They had brought only one blanket apiece. ‘Let us light a fire,’ he said. ‘I care no longer for the danger. Let the Orcs come as thick as summer-moths round a candle!’

‘If those unhappy hobbits are astray in the woods, it might draw them hither,’ said Legolas.

‘And it might draw other things, neither Orc nor Hobbit,’ said Aragorn. ‘We are near to the mountain-marches of the traitor Saruman. Also we are on the very edge of Fangorn, and it is perilous to touch the trees of that wood, it is said.’

‘But the Rohirrim made a great burning here yesterday,’ said Gimli, ‘and they felled trees for the fire, as can be seen. Yet they passed the night after safely here, when their labour was ended.’

‘They were many,’ said Aragorn, ‘and they do not heed the wrath of Fangorn, for they come here seldom, and they do not go under the trees. But our paths are likely to lead us into the very forest itself. So have a care! Cut no living wood!’

‘There is no need,’ said Gimli. ‘The Riders have left chip and bough enough, and there is dead wood lying in plenty.’ He went off to gather fuel, and busied himself with building and kindling a fire; but Aragorn sat silent

with his back to the great tree, deep in thought; and Legolas stood alone in the open, looking towards the profound shadow of the wood, leaning forward, as one who listens to voices calling from a distance.

When the Dwarf had a small bright blaze going, the three companions drew close to it and sat together, shrouding the light with their hooded forms. Legolas looked up at the boughs of the tree reaching out above them.

‘Look!’ he said. ‘The tree is glad of the fire!’

It may have been that the dancing shadows tricked their eyes, but certainly to each of the companions the boughs appeared to be bending this way and that so as to come above the flames, while the upper branches were stooping down; the brown leaves now stood out stiff, and rubbed together like many cold cracked hands taking comfort in the warmth.

There was a silence, for suddenly the dark and unknown forest, so near at hand, made itself felt as a great brooding presence, full of secret purpose. After a while Legolas spoke again.

‘Celeborn warned us not to go far into Fangorn,’ he said. ‘Do you know why, Aragorn? What are the fables of the forest that Boromir had heard?’

‘I have heard many tales in Gondor and elsewhere,’ said Aragorn, ‘but if it were not for the words of Celeborn I should deem them only fables that Men have made as true knowledge fades. I had thought of asking you what was the truth of the matter. And if an Elf of the wood does not know, how shall a Man answer?’

‘You have journeyed further than I,’ said Legolas. ‘I have heard nothing of this in my own land, save only songs that tell how the Onodrim, that Men call Ents, dwelt there long ago; for Fangorn is old, old even as the Elves would reckon it.’

‘Yes, it is old,’ said Aragorn, ‘as old as the forest by the Barrow-downs, and it is far greater. Elrond says that the two are akin, the last strongholds of the mighty woods of the Elder Days, in which the Firstborn roamed while Men still slept. Yet Fangorn holds some secret of its own. What it is I do not know.’

‘And I do not wish to know,’ said Gimli. ‘Let nothing that dwells in Fangorn be troubled on my account!’

They now drew lots for the watches, and the lot for the first watch fell to Gimli. The others lay down. Almost at once sleep laid hold on them. ‘Gimli!’ said Aragorn drowsily. ‘Remember, it is perilous to cut bough or twig from a living tree in Fangorn. But do not stray far in search of dead wood. Let the fire die rather! Call me at need!’

With that he fell asleep. Legolas already lay motionless, his fair hands folded upon his breast, his eyes unclosed, blending living night and deep dream, as is the way with Elves. Gimli sat hunched by the fire, running his thumb thoughtfully along the edge of his axe. The tree rustled. There was no other sound.

Suddenly Gimli looked up, and there just on the edge of the firelight stood an old bent man, leaning on a staff, and wrapped in a great cloak; his wide-brimmed hat was pulled down over his eyes. Gimli sprang up, too amazed for the moment to cry out, though at once the thought flashed into his mind that Saruman had caught them. Both Aragorn and Legolas, roused by his sudden movement, sat up and stared. The old man did not speak or make a sign.

‘Well, father, what can we do for you?’ said Aragorn, leaping to his feet. ‘Come and be warm, if you are cold!’ He strode forward, but the old man was gone. There was no trace of him to be found near at hand, and they did not dare to wander far. The moon had set and the night was very dark.

Suddenly Legolas gave a cry. ‘The horses! The horses!’ The horses were gone. They had dragged their pickets and disappeared. For some time the three companions stood still and silent, troubled by this new stroke of ill fortune. They were under the eaves of Fangorn, and endless leagues lay between them and the Men of Rohan, their only friends in this wide and dangerous land. As they stood, it seemed to them that they heard, far off in the night, the sound of horses whinnying and neighing. Then all was quiet again, except for the cold rustle of the wind.



‘Well, they are gone,’ said Aragorn at last. ‘We cannot find them or catch them; so that if they do not return of their own will, we must do without. We started on our feet, and we have those still.’

‘Feet!’ said Gimli. ‘But we cannot eat them as well as walk on them.’ He threw some fuel on the fire and slumped down beside it.

‘Only a few hours ago you were unwilling to sit on a horse of Rohan,’ laughed Legolas. ‘You will make a rider yet.’

‘It seems unlikely that I shall have the chance,’ said Gimli.

‘If you wish to know what I think,’ he began again after a while, ‘I think it was Saruman. Who else? Remember the words of Éomer: *he walks about like an old man hooded and cloaked*. Those were the words. He has gone off with our horses, or scared them away, and here we are. There is more trouble coming to us, mark my words!’

‘I mark them,’ said Aragorn. ‘But I marked also that this old man had a hat not a hood. Still I do not doubt that you guess right, and that we are in peril here, by night or day. Yet in the meantime there is nothing that we can do but rest, while we may. I will watch for a while now, Gimli. I have more need of thought than of sleep.’

The night passed slowly. Legolas followed Aragorn, and Gimli followed Legolas, and their watches wore away. But nothing happened. The old man did not appear again, and the horses did not return.



## Chapter 3: The Uruk-Hai

Pippin lay in a dark and troubled dream: it seemed that he could hear his own small voice echoing in black tunnels, calling Frodo, Frodo! But instead of Frodo hundreds of hideous orc-faces grinned at him out of the shadows, hundreds of hideous arms grasped at him from every side. Where was Merry?

He woke. Cold air blew on his face. He was lying on his back. Evening was coming and the sky above was growing dim. He turned and found that the dream was little worse than the waking. His wrists, legs, and ankles were tied with cords. Beside him Merry lay, white-faced, with a dirty rag bound across his brows. All about them sat or stood a great company of Orcs.

Slowly in Pippin's aching head memory pieced itself together and became separated from dream-shadows. Of course: he and Merry had run off into the woods. What had come over them? Why had they dashed off like that, taking no notice of old Strider? They had run a long way shouting—he could not remember how far or how long; and then suddenly they had crashed right into a group of Orcs: they were standing listening, and they did not appear to see Merry and Pippin until they were almost in their arms. Then they yelled and dozens of other goblins had sprung out of the trees. Merry and he had drawn their swords, but the Orcs did not wish to fight, and had tried only to lay hold of them, even when Merry had cut off several of their arms and hands. Good old Merry!

Then Boromir had come leaping through the trees. He had made them fight. He slew many of them and the rest fled. But they had not gone far on the way back when they were attacked again, by a hundred Orcs at least, some of them very large, and they shot a rain of arrows: always at Boromir. Boromir had blown his great horn till the woods rang, and at first the Orcs had been dismayed and had drawn back; but when no answer but the echoes came, they had attacked more fiercely than ever. Pippin did not remember much more. His last memory was of Boromir leaning against a tree, plucking out an arrow; then darkness fell suddenly.

'I suppose I was knocked on the head,' he said to himself. 'I wonder if poor Merry is much hurt. What has happened to Boromir? Why didn't the Orcs kill us? Where are we, and where are we going?'

He could not answer the questions. He felt cold and sick. 'I wish Gandalf had never persuaded Elrond to let us come,' he thought.

'What good have I been? Just a nuisance: a passenger, a piece of luggage. And now I have been stolen and I am just a piece of luggage for the Orcs. I hope Strider or someone will come and claim us! But ought I to hope for it? Won't that throw out all the plans? I wish I could get free!'

He struggled a little, quite uselessly. One of the Orcs sitting near laughed and said something to a companion in their abominable tongue. 'Rest while you can, little fool!' he said then to Pippin, in the Common Speech, which he made almost as hideous as his own language. 'Rest while you can! We'll find a use for your legs before long. You'll wish you had got none before we get home.'

'If I had my way, you'd wish you were dead now,' said the other. 'I'd make you squeak, you miserable rat.' He stooped over Pippin, bringing his yellow fangs close to his face. He had a black knife with a long jagged blade in his hand. 'Lie quiet, or I'll tickle you with this,' he hissed. 'Don't draw attention to yourself, or I may forget my orders. Curse the Isengarders! *Uglúk sha pushdug Saruman-glob búbhosh skai*': he passed into a long angry speech in his own tongue that slowly died away into muttering and snarling.

Terrified Pippin lay still, though the pain at his wrists and ankles was growing, and the stones beneath him were boring into his back. To take his mind off himself he listened intently to all that he could hear. There were

many voices round about, and though orc-speech sounded at all times full of hate and anger, it seemed plain that something like a quarrel had begun, and was getting hotter.

To Pippin's surprise he found that much of the talk was intelligible; many of the Orcs were using ordinary language. Apparently the members of two or three quite different tribes were present, and they could not understand one another's orc-speech. There was an angry debate concerning what they were to do now: which way they were to take and what should be done with the prisoners.

'There's no time to kill them properly,' said one. 'No time for play on this trip.'

'That can't be helped,' said another. 'But why not kill them quick, kill them now? They're a cursed nuisance, and we're in a hurry. Evening's coming on, and we ought to get a move on.'

'Orders,' said a third voice in a deep growl. '*Kill all but NOT the Halflings; they are to be brought back ALIVE as quickly as possible.* That's my orders.'

'What are they wanted for?' asked several voices. 'Why alive? Do they give good sport?'

'No! I heard that one of them has got something, something that's wanted for the War, some Elvish plot or other. Anyway they'll both be questioned.'

'Is that all you know? Why don't we search them and find out? We might find something that we could use ourselves.'

'That is a very interesting remark,' sneered a voice, softer than the others but more evil. 'I may have to report that. The prisoners are NOT to be searched or plundered: those are *my* orders.'

'And mine too,' said the deep voice. '*Alive and as captured; no spoiling.* That's my orders.'

'Not our orders!' said one of the earlier voices. 'We have come all the way from the Mines to kill, and avenge our folk. I wish to kill, and then go back north.'

'Then you can wish again,' said the growling voice. 'I am Uglúk. I command. I return to Isengard by the shortest road.'

'Is Saruman the master or the Great Eye?' said the evil voice. 'We should go back at once to Lugbúrz.'

'If we could cross the Great River, we might,' said another voice. 'But there are not enough of us to venture down to the bridges.'

'I came across,' said the evil voice. 'A winged Nazgûl awaits us northward on the east-bank.'

'Maybe, maybe! Then you'll fly off with our prisoners, and get all the pay and praise in Lugbúrz, and leave us to foot it as best we can through the Horse-country. No, we must stick together. These lands are dangerous: full of foul rebels and brigands.'

'Aye, we must stick together,' growled Uglúk. 'I don't trust you little swine. You've no guts outside your own sties. But for us you'd all have run away. We are the fighting Uruk-hai! We slew the great warrior. We took the prisoners. We are the servants of Saruman the Wise, the White Hand: the Hand that gives us man's-flesh to eat. We came out of Isengard, and led you here, and we shall lead you back by the way we choose. I am Uglúk. I have spoken.'

'You have spoken more than enough, Uglúk,' sneered the evil voice. 'I wonder how they would like it in Lugbúrz. They might think that Uglúk's shoulders needed relieving of a swollen head. They might ask where his strange ideas came from. Did they come from Saruman, perhaps? Who does *he* think he is, setting up on his own with his filthy white badges? They might agree with me, with Grishnákh their trusted messenger; and I Grishnákh say this: Saruman is a fool, and a dirty treacherous fool. But the Great Eye is on him. "*Swine*" is it? How do you folk like being called *swine* by the muck-rakers of a dirty little wizard? It's orc-flesh they eat, I'll warrant.'

Many loud yells in orc-speech answered him, and the ringing clash of weapons being drawn. Cautiously Pippin rolled over, hoping to see what would happen. His guards had gone to join in the fray. In the twilight he saw a large black Orc, probably Uglúk, standing facing Grishnákh, a short crook-legged creature, very broad and with

long arms that hung almost to the ground. Round them were many smaller goblins. Pippin supposed that these were the ones from the North. They had drawn their knives and swords, but hesitated to attack Uglúk.

Uglúk shouted, and a number of other Orcs of nearly his own size ran up. Then suddenly, without warning, Uglúk sprang forwards, and with two swift strokes swept the heads off two of his opponents. Grishnákh stepped aside and vanished into the shadows. The others gave way, and one stepped backwards and fell over Merry's prostrate form with a curse. Yet that probably saved his life, for Uglúk's followers leaped over him and cut down another with their broad-bladed swords. It was the yellow-fanged guard. His body fell right on top of Pippin, still clutching its long saw-edged knife.

'Put up your weapons!' shouted Uglúk. 'And let's have no more nonsense! We go straight west from here, and down the stair. From there straight to the downs, then along the river to the forest. And we march day and night. That clear?'

'Now,' thought Pippin, 'if only it takes that ugly fellow a little while to get his troop under control, I've got a chance.' A gleam of hope had come to him. The edge of the black knife had snicked his arm, and then slid down to his wrist. He felt the blood trickling on to his hand, but he also felt the cold touch of steel against his skin.

The Orcs were getting ready to march again, but some of the Northerners were still unwilling, and the Isengarders slew two more before the rest were cowed. There was much cursing and confusion. For the moment Pippin was unwatched. His legs were securely bound, but his arms were only tied about the wrists, and his hands were in front of him. He could move them both together, though the bonds were cruelly tight. He pushed the dead Orc to one side, then hardly daring to breathe, he drew the knot of the wrist-cord up and down against the blade of the knife. It was sharp and the dead hand held it fast. The cord was cut! Quickly Pippin took it in his fingers and knotted it again into a loose bracelet of two loops and slipped it over his hands. Then he lay very still.

'Pick up those prisoners!' shouted Uglúk. 'Don't play any tricks with them! If they are not alive when we get back, someone else will die too.'

An Orc seized Pippin like a sack, put its head between his tied hands, grabbed his arms and dragged them down, until Pippin's face was crushed against its neck; then it jolted off with him. Another treated Merry in the same way. The Orc's clawlike hand gripped Pippin's arms like iron; the nails bit into him. He shut his eyes and slipped back into evil dreams.

Suddenly he was thrown on to the stony floor again. It was early night, but the slim moon was already falling westward. They were on the edge of a cliff that seemed to look out over a sea of pale mist. There was a sound of water falling nearby.

'The scouts have come back at last,' said an Orc close at hand.

'Well, what did you discover?' growled the voice of Uglúk.

'Only a single horseman, and he made off westwards. All's clear now.'

'Now, I daresay. But how long? You fools! You should have shot him. He'll raise the alarm. The cursed horsebreeders will hear of us by morning. Now we'll have to leg it double quick.'

A shadow bent over Pippin. It was Uglúk. 'Sit up!' said the Orc. 'My lads are tired of lugging you about. We have got to climb down, and you must use your legs. Be helpful now. No crying out, no trying to escape. We have ways of paying for tricks that you won't like, though they won't spoil your usefulness for the Master.'

He cut the thongs round Pippin's legs and ankles, picked him up by his hair and stood him on his feet. Pippin fell down, and Uglúk dragged him up by his hair again. Several Orcs laughed. Uglúk thrust a flask between his teeth and poured some burning liquid down his throat: he felt a hot fierce glow flow through him. The pain in his legs and ankles vanished. He could stand.

‘Now for the other!’ said Uglúk. Pippin saw him go to Merry, who was lying close by, and kick him. Merry groaned. Seizing him roughly Uglúk pulled him into a sitting position, and tore the bandage off his head. Then he smeared the wound with some dark stuff out of a small wooden box. Merry cried out and struggled wildly.

The Orcs clapped and hooted. ‘Can’t take his medicine,’ they jeered. ‘Doesn’t know what’s good for him. Ai! We shall have some fun later.’

But at the moment Uglúk was not engaged in sport. He needed speed and had to humour unwilling followers. He was healing Merry in orc-fashion; and his treatment worked swiftly. When he had forced a drink from his flask down the hobbit’s throat, cut his leg-bonds, and dragged him to his feet, Merry stood up, looking pale but grim and defiant, and very much alive. The gash in his forehead gave him no more trouble, but he bore a brown scar to the end of his days.

‘Hullo, Pippin!’ he said. ‘So you’ve come on this little expedition, too? Where do we get bed and breakfast?’

‘Now then!’ said Uglúk. ‘None of that! Hold your tongues. No talk to one another. Any trouble will be reported at the other end, and He’ll know how to pay you. You’ll get bed and breakfast all right: more than you can stomach.’

The orc-band began to descend a narrow ravine leading down into the misty plain below. Merry and Pippin, separated by a dozen Orcs or more, climbed down with them. At the bottom they stepped on to grass, and the hearts of the hobbits rose.

‘Now straight on!’ shouted Uglúk. ‘West and a little north. Follow Lugdush.’

‘But what are we going to do at sunrise?’ said some of the Northerners.

‘Go on running,’ said Uglúk. ‘What do you think? Sit on the grass and wait for the Whiteskins to join the picnic?’

‘But we can’t run in the sunlight.’

‘You’ll run with me behind you,’ said Uglúk. ‘Run! Or you’ll never see your beloved holes again. By the White Hand! What’s the use of sending out mountain-maggots on a trip, only half trained. Run, curse you! Run while night lasts!’

Then the whole company began to run with the long loping strides of Orcs. They kept no order, thrusting, jostling, and cursing; yet their speed was very great. Each hobbit had a guard of three. Pippin was far back in the line. He wondered how long he would be able to go on at this pace: he had had no food since the morning. One of his guards had a whip. But at present the orc-liquor was still hot in him. His wits, too, were wide-awake.

Every now and again there came into his mind unbidden a vision of the keen face of Strider bending over a dark trail, and running, running behind. But what could even a Ranger see except a confused trail of orc-feet? His own little prints and Merry’s were overwhelmed by the trampling of the iron-shod shoes before them and behind them and about them.

They had gone only a mile or so from the cliff when the land sloped down into a wide shallow depression, where the ground was soft and wet. Mist lay there, pale-glimmering in the last rays of the sickle moon. The dark shapes of the Orcs in front grew dim, and then were swallowed up.

‘Ai! Steady now!’ shouted Uglúk from the rear.

A sudden thought leaped into Pippin’s mind, and he acted on it at once. He swerved aside to the right, and dived out of the reach of his clutching guard, headfirst into the mist; he landed sprawling on the grass.

‘Halt!’ yelled Uglúk.

There was for a moment turmoil and confusion. Pippin sprang up and ran. But the Orcs were after him. Some suddenly loomed up right in front of him.

‘No hope of escape!’ thought Pippin. ‘But there is a hope that I have left some of my own marks unspoilt on the wet ground.’ He groped with his two tied hands at his throat, and unclasped the brooch of his cloak. Just as long

arms and hard claws seized him, he let it fall. 'There I suppose it will lie until the end of time,' he thought. 'I don't know why I did it. If the others have escaped, they've probably all gone with Frodo.'

A whip-thong curled round his legs, and he stifled a cry.

'Enough!' shouted Uglúk running up. 'He's still got to run a long way yet. Make 'em both run! Just use the whip as a reminder.'

'But that's not all,' he snarled, turning to Pippin. 'I shan't forget. Payment is only put off. Leg it!'

Neither Pippin nor Merry remembered much of the later part of the journey. Evil dreams and evil waking were blended into a long tunnel of misery, with hope growing ever fainter behind. They ran, and they ran, striving to keep up the pace set by the Orcs, licked every now and again with a cruel thong cunningly handled. If they halted or stumbled, they were seized and dragged for some distance.

The warmth of the orc-draught had gone. Pippin felt cold and sick again. Suddenly he fell face downward on the turf. Hard hands with rending nails gripped and lifted him. He was carried like a sack once more, and darkness grew about him: whether the darkness of another night, or a blindness of his eyes, he could not tell.

Dimly he became aware of voices clamouring: it seemed that many of the Orcs were demanding a halt. Uglúk was shouting. He felt himself flung to the ground, and he lay as he fell, till black dreams took him. But he did not long escape from pain; soon the iron grip of merciless hands was on him again. For a long time he was tossed and shaken, and then slowly the darkness gave way, and he came back to the waking world and found that it was morning. Orders were shouted and he was thrown roughly on the grass.

There he lay for a while, fighting with despair. His head swam, but from the heat in his body he guessed that he had been given another draught. An Orc stooped over him, and flung him some bread and a strip of raw dried flesh. He ate the stale grey bread hungrily, but not the meat. He was famished but not yet so famished as to eat flesh flung to him by an Orc, the flesh of he dared not guess what creature.

He sat up and looked about. Merry was not far away. They were by the banks of a swift narrow river. Ahead mountains loomed: a tall peak was catching the first rays of the sun. A dark smudge of forest lay on the lower slopes before them.

There was much shouting and debating among the Orcs; a quarrel seemed on the point of breaking out again between the Northerners and the Isengarders. Some were pointing back away south, and some were pointing eastward.

'Very well,' said Uglúk. 'Leave them to me then! No killing, as I've told you before; but if you want to throw away what we've come all the way to get, throw it away! I'll look after it. Let the fighting Uruk-hai do the work, as usual. If you're afraid of the Whiteskins, run! Run! There's the forest,' he shouted, pointing ahead. 'Get to it! It's your best hope. Off you go! And quick, before I knock a few more heads off, to put some sense into the others.'

There was some cursing and scuffling, and then most of the Northerners broke away and dashed off, over a hundred of them, running wildly along the river towards the mountains. The hobbits were left with the Isengarders: a grim dark band, four score at least of large, swart, slant-eyed Orcs with great bows and short broad-bladed swords. A few of the larger and bolder Northerners remained with them.

'Now we'll deal with Grishnákh,' said Uglúk; but some even of his own followers were looking uneasily southwards.

'I know,' growled Uglúk. 'The cursed horse-boys have got wind of us. But that's all your fault, Snaga. You and the other scouts ought to have your ears cut off. But we are the fighters. We'll feast on horseflesh yet, or something better.'

At that moment Pippin saw why some of the troop had been pointing eastward. From that direction there now came hoarse cries, and there was Grishnákh again, and at his back a couple of score of others like him: long-armed crook-legged Orcs. They had a red eye painted on their shields. Uglúk stepped forward to meet them.

'So you've come back?' he said. 'Thought better of it, eh?'

‘I’ve returned to see that Orders are carried out and the prisoners safe,’ answered Grishnákh.

‘Indeed!’ said Uglúk. ‘Waste of effort. I’ll see that orders are carried out in my command. And what else did you come back for? You went in a hurry. Did you leave anything behind?’

‘I left a fool,’ snarled Grishnákh. ‘But there were some stout fellows with him that are too good to lose. I knew you’d lead them into a mess. I’ve come to help them.’

‘Splendid!’ laughed Uglúk. ‘But unless you’ve got some guts for fighting, you’ve taken the wrong way. Lugbúrz was your road. The Whiteskins are coming. What’s happened to your precious Nazgûl? Has he had another mount shot under him? Now, if you’d brought him along, that might have been useful—if these Nazgûl are all they make out.’

‘*Nazgûl, Nazgûl,*’ said Grishnákh, shivering and licking his lips, as if the word had a foul taste that he savoured painfully. ‘You speak of what is deep beyond the reach of your muddy dreams, Uglúk,’ he said. ‘*Nazgûl!* Ah! All that they make out! One day you’ll wish that you had not said that. Ape!’ he snarled fiercely. ‘You ought to know that they’re the apple of the Great Eye. But the winged Nazgûl: not yet, not yet. He won’t let them show themselves across the Great River yet, not too soon. They’re for the War—and other purposes.’

‘You seem to know a lot,’ said Uglúk. ‘More than is good for you, I guess. Perhaps those in Lugbúrz might wonder how, and why. But in the meantime the Uruk-hai of Isengard can do the dirty work, as usual. Don’t stand slaving there! Get your rabble together! The other swine are legging it to the forest. You’d better follow. You wouldn’t get back to the Great River alive. Right off the mark! Now! I’ll be on your heels.’

The Isengarders seized Merry and Pippin again and slung them on their backs. Then the troop started off. Hour after hour they ran, pausing now and again only to sling the hobbits to fresh carriers. Either because they were quicker and hardier, or because of some plan of Grishnákh’s, the Isengarders gradually passed through the Orcs of Mordor, and Grishnákh’s folk closed in behind. Soon they were gaining also on the Northerners ahead. The forest began to draw nearer.

Pippin was bruised and torn, his aching head was grated by the filthy jowl and hairy ear of the Orc that held him. Immediately in front were bowed backs, and tough thick legs going up and down, up and down, unrelenting, as if they were made of wire and horn, beating out the nightmare seconds of an endless time.

In the afternoon Uglúk’s troop overtook the Northerners. They were flagging in the rays of the bright sun, winter sun shining in a pale cool sky though it was; their heads were down and their tongues lolling out.

‘Maggots!’ jeered the Isengarders. ‘You’re cooked. The Whiteskins will catch you and eat you. They’re coming!’

A cry from Grishnákh showed that this was not mere jest. Horsemen, riding very swiftly, had indeed been sighted: still far behind but gaining on the Orcs, gaining on them like a tide over the flats on folk straying in a quicksand.

The Isengarders began to run with a redoubled pace that astonished Pippin, a terrific spurt it seemed for the end of a race. Then he saw that the sun was sinking, falling behind the Misty Mountains; shadows reached over the land. The soldiers of Mordor lifted their heads and also began to put on speed. The forest was dark and close. Already they had passed a few outlying trees. The land was beginning to slope upwards, ever more steeply; but the Orcs did not halt. Both Uglúk and Grishnákh shouted, spurring them on to a last effort.

‘They will make it yet. They will escape,’ thought Pippin. And then he managed to twist his neck, so as to glance back with one eye over his shoulder. He saw that riders away eastward were already level with the Orcs, galloping over the plain. The sunset gilded their spears and helmets, and glinted in their pale flowing hair. They were hemming the Orcs in, preventing them from scattering, and driving them along the line of the river.

He wondered very much what kind of folk they were. He wished now that he had learned more in Rivendell, and looked more at maps and things; but in those days the plans for the journey seemed to be in more competent hands, and he had never reckoned with being cut off from Gandalf, or from Strider, and even from Frodo. All that he could remember about Rohan was that Gandalf’s horse, Shadowfax, had come from that land. That sounded hopeful, as far as it went.

‘But how will they know that we are not Orcs?’ he thought. ‘I don’t suppose they’ve ever heard of hobbits down here. I suppose I ought to be glad that the beastly Orcs look like being destroyed, but I would rather be saved myself.’ The chances were that he and Merry would be killed together with their captors, before ever the Men of Rohan were aware of them.

A few of the riders appeared to be bowmen, skilled at shooting from a running horse. Riding swiftly into range they shot arrows at the Orcs that straggled behind, and several of them fell; then the riders wheeled away out of the range of the answering bows of their enemies, who shot wildly, not daring to halt. This happened many times, and on one occasion arrows fell among the Isengarders. One of them, just in front of Pippin, stumbled and did not get up again.

Night came down without the Riders closing in for battle. Many Orcs had fallen, but fully two hundred remained. In the early darkness the Orcs came to a hillock. The eaves of the forest were very near, probably no more than three furlongs away, but they could go no further. The horsemen had encircled them. A small band disobeyed Uglúk’s command, and ran on towards the forest: only three returned.

‘Well, here we are,’ sneered Grishnákh. ‘Fine leadership! I hope the great Uglúk will lead us out again.’

‘Put those Halflings down!’ ordered Uglúk, taking no notice of Grishnákh. ‘You, Lugdush, get two others and stand guard over them! They’re not to be killed, unless the filthy Whiteskins break through. Understand? As long as I’m alive, I want ’em. But they’re not to cry out, and they’re not to be rescued. Bind their legs!’

The last part of the order was carried out mercilessly. But Pippin found that for the first time he was close to Merry. The Orcs were making a great deal of noise, shouting and clashing their weapons, and the hobbits managed to whisper together for a while.

‘I don’t think much of this,’ said Merry. ‘I feel nearly done in. Don’t think I could crawl away far, even if I was free.’

‘*Lembas!*’ whispered Pippin. ‘*Lembas*: I’ve got some. Have you? I don’t think they’ve taken anything but our swords.’

‘Yes, I had a packet in my pocket,’ answered Merry, ‘but it must be battered to crumbs. Anyway I can’t put my mouth in my pocket!’

‘You won’t have to. I’ve—’; but just then a savage kick warned Pippin that the noise had died down, and the guards were watchful.

The night was cold and still. All round the knoll on which the Orcs were gathered little watch-fires sprang up, golden-red in the darkness, a complete ring of them. They were within a long bowshot, but the riders did not show themselves against the light, and the Orcs wasted many arrows shooting at the fires, until Uglúk stopped them. The riders made no sound. Later in the night when the moon came out of the mist, then occasionally they could be seen, shadowy shapes that glinted now and again in the white light, as they moved in ceaseless patrol.

‘They’ll wait for the Sun, curse them!’ growled one of the guards. ‘Why don’t we get together and charge through? What’s old Uglúk think he’s doing, I should like to know?’

‘I daresay you would,’ snarled Uglúk stepping up from behind. ‘Meaning I don’t think at all, eh? Curse you! You’re as bad as the other rabble: the maggots and the apes of Lugbúrz. No good trying to charge with them. They’d just squeal and bolt, and there are more than enough of these filthy horse-boys to mop up our lot on the flat.’

‘There’s only one thing those maggots can do: they can see like gimlets in the dark. But these Whiteskins have better night-eyes than most Men, from all I’ve heard; and don’t forget their horses! They can see the night-breeze, or so it’s said. Still there’s one thing the fine fellows don’t know: Mauhúr and his lads are in the forest, and they should turn up any time now.’

Uglúk’s words were enough, apparently, to satisfy the Isengarders; but the other Orcs were both dispirited and rebellious. They posted a few watchers, but most of them lay on the ground, resting in the pleasant darkness. It did indeed become very dark again; for the moon passed westward into thick cloud, and Pippin could not see



anything a few feet away. The fires brought no light to the hillock. The riders were not, however, content merely to wait for the dawn and let their enemies rest. A sudden outcry on the east side of the knoll showed that something was wrong. It seemed that some of the Men had ridden in close, slipped off their horses, crawled to the edge of the camp and killed several Orcs, and then had faded away again. Uglúk dashed off to stop a stampede.

Pippin and Merry sat up. Their guards, Isengarders, had gone with Uglúk. But if the hobbits had any thought of escape, it was soon dashed. A long hairy arm took each of them by the neck and drew them close together. Dimly they were aware of Grishnákh's great head and hideous face between them; his foul breath was on their cheeks. He began to paw them and feel them. Pippin shuddered as hard cold fingers groped down his back.

'Well, my little ones!' said Grishnákh in a soft whisper. 'Enjoying your nice rest? Or not? A little awkwardly placed perhaps: swords and whips on one side, and nasty spears on the other! Little people should not meddle in affairs that are too big for them.' His fingers continued to grope. There was a light like a pale but hot fire behind his eyes.

The thought came suddenly into Pippin's mind, as if caught direct from the urgent thought of his enemy: 'Grishnákh knows about the Ring! He's looking for it, while Uglúk is busy: he probably wants it for himself.' Cold fear was in Pippin's heart, yet at the same time he was wondering what use he could make of Grishnákh's desire.

'I don't think you will find it that way,' he whispered. 'It isn't easy to find.'

'Find it?' said Grishnákh: his fingers stopped crawling and gripped Pippin's shoulder. 'Find what? What are you talking about, little one?'

For a moment Pippin was silent. Then suddenly in the darkness he made a noise in his throat: *gollum, gollum*. 'Nothing, my precious,' he added.

The hobbits felt Grishnákh's fingers twitch. 'O ho!' hissed the goblin softly. 'That's what he means, is it? O ho! Very ve-ry dangerous, my little ones.'

'Perhaps,' said Merry, now alert and aware of Pippin's guess. 'Perhaps; and not only for us. Still you know your own business best. Do you want it, or not? And what would you give for it?'

'Do I want it? Do I want it?' said Grishnákh, as if puzzled; but his arms were trembling. 'What would I give for it? What do you mean?'

'We mean,' said Pippin, choosing his words carefully, 'that it's no good groping in the dark. We could save you time and trouble. But you must untie our legs first, or we'll do nothing, and say nothing.'

'My dear tender little fools,' hissed Grishnákh, 'everything you have, and everything you know, will be got out of you in due time: everything! You'll wish there was more that you could tell to satisfy the Questioner, indeed you will: quite soon. We shan't hurry the enquiry. Oh dear no! What do you think you've been kept alive for? My dear little fellows, please believe me when I say that it was not out of kindness: that's not even one of Uglúk's faults.'

'I find it quite easy to believe,' said Merry. 'But you haven't got your prey home yet. And it doesn't seem to be going your way, whatever happens. If we come to Isengard, it won't be the great Grishnákh that benefits: Saruman will take all that he can find. If you want anything for yourself, now's the time to do a deal.'

Grishnákh began to lose his temper. The name of Saruman seemed specially to enrage him. Time was passing and the disturbance was dying down. Uglúk or the Isengarders might return at any minute. 'Have you got it—either of you?' he snarled.

'*Gollum, gollum!*' said Pippin.

'Untie our legs!' said Merry.

They felt the Orc's arms trembling violently. 'Curse you, you filthy little vermin!' he hissed. 'Untie your legs? I'll untie every string in your bodies. Do you think I can't search you to the bones? Search you! I'll cut you both to quivering shreds. I don't need the help of your legs to get you away—and have you all to myself!'

Suddenly he seized them. The strength in his long arms and shoulders was terrifying. He tucked them one under each armpit, and crushed them fiercely to his sides; a great stifling hand was clapped over each of their mouths. Then he sprang forward, stooping low. Quickly and silently he went, until he came to the edge of the knoll. There, choosing a gap between the watchers, he passed like an evil shadow out into the night, down the slope and away westward towards the river that flowed out of the forest. In that direction there was a wide open space with only one fire.

After going a dozen yards he halted, peering and listening. Nothing could be seen or heard. He crept slowly on, bent almost double. Then he squatted and listened again. Then he stood up, as if to risk a sudden dash. At that very moment the dark form of a rider loomed up right in front of him. A horse snorted and reared. A man called out.

Grishnákh flung himself on the ground flat, dragging the hobbits under him; then he drew his sword. No doubt he meant to kill his captives, rather than allow them to escape or to be rescued; but it was his undoing. The sword rang faintly, and glinted a little in the light of the fire away to his left. An arrow came whistling out of the gloom: it was aimed with skill, or guided by fate, and it pierced his right hand. He dropped the sword and shrieked. There was a quick beat of hoofs, and even as Grishnákh leaped up and ran, he was ridden down and a spear passed through him. He gave a hideous shivering cry and lay still.

The hobbits remained flat on the ground, as Grishnákh had left them. Another horseman came riding swiftly to his comrade's aid. Whether because of some special keenness of sight, or because of some other sense, the horse lifted and sprang lightly over them; but its rider did not see them, lying covered in their elven-cloaks, too crushed for the moment, and too afraid to move.

At last Merry stirred and whispered softly: 'So far so good; but how are *we* to avoid being spitted?'

The answer came almost immediately. The cries of Grishnákh had roused the Orcs. From the yells and screeches that came from the knoll the hobbits guessed that their disappearance had been discovered: Uglúk was probably knocking off a few more heads. Then suddenly the answering cries of orc-voices came from the right, outside the circle of watch-fires, from the direction of the forest and the mountains. Mauhúr had apparently arrived and was attacking the besiegers. There was the sound of galloping horses. The Riders were drawing in their ring close round the knoll, risking the orc-arrows, so as to prevent any sortie, while a company rode off to deal with the newcomers. Suddenly Merry and Pippin realized that without moving they were now outside the circle: there was nothing between them and escape.

'Now,' said Merry, 'if only we had our legs and hands free, we might get away. But I can't touch the knots, and I can't bite them.'

'No need to try,' said Pippin. 'I was going to tell you: I've managed to free my hands. These loops are only left for show. You'd better have a bit of *lembas* first.'

He slipped the cords off his wrists, and fished out a packet. The cakes were broken, but good, still in their leaf-wrappings. The hobbits each ate two or three pieces. The taste brought back to them the memory of fair faces, and laughter, and wholesome food in quiet days now far away. For a while they ate thoughtfully, sitting in the dark, heedless of the cries and sounds of battle nearby. Pippin was the first to come back to the present.

'We must be off,' he said. 'Half a moment!' Grishnákh's sword was lying close at hand, but it was too heavy and clumsy for him to use; so he crawled forward, and finding the body of the goblin he drew from its sheath a long sharp knife. With this he quickly cut their bonds.

'Now for it!' he said. 'When we've warmed up a bit, perhaps we shall be able to stand again, and walk. But in any case we had better start by crawling.'

They crawled. The turf was deep and yielding, and that helped them; but it seemed a long slow business. They gave the watch-fire a wide berth, and wormed their way forward bit by bit, until they came to the edge of the river, gurgling away in the black shadows under its deep banks. Then they looked back.

The sounds had died away. Evidently Mauhúr and his 'lads' had been killed or driven off. The Riders had returned to their silent ominous vigil. It would not last very much longer. Already the night was old. In the East, which had remained unclouded, the sky was beginning to grow pale.

'We must get under cover,' said Pippin, 'or we shall be seen. It will not be any comfort to us, if these riders discover that we are not Orcs after we are dead.' He got up and stamped his feet. 'Those cords have cut me like wires; but my feet are getting warm again. I could stagger on now. What about you, Merry?'

Merry got up. 'Yes,' he said, 'I can manage it. *Lembas* does put heart into you! A more wholesome sort of feeling, too, than the heat of that orc-draught. I wonder what it was made of. Better not to know, I expect. Let's get a drink of water to wash away the thought of it!'

'Not here, the banks are too steep,' said Pippin. 'Forward now!'

They turned and walked side by side slowly along the line of the river. Behind them the light grew in the East. As they walked they compared notes, talking lightly in hobbit-fashion of the things that had happened since their capture. No listener would have guessed from their words that they had suffered cruelly, and been in dire peril, going without hope towards torment and death; or that even now, as they knew well, they had little chance of ever finding friend or safety again.

'You seem to have been doing well, Master Took,' said Merry. 'You will get almost a chapter in old Bilbo's book, if ever I get a chance to report to him. Good work: especially guessing that hairy villain's little game, and playing up to him. But I wonder if anyone will ever pick up your trail and find that brooch. I should hate to lose mine, but I am afraid yours is gone for good.'

'I shall have to brush up my toes, if I am to get level with you. Indeed Cousin Brandybuck is going in front now. This is where he comes in. I don't suppose you have much notion where we are; but I spent my time at Rivendell rather better. We are walking west along the Entwash. The butt-end of the Misty Mountains is in front, and Fangorn Forest.'

Even as he spoke the dark edge of the forest loomed up straight before them. Night seemed to have taken refuge under its great trees, creeping away from the coming Dawn.

'Lead on, Master Brandybuck!' said Pippin. 'Or lead back! We have been warned against Fangorn. But one so knowing will not have forgotten that.'

'I have not,' answered Merry; 'but the forest seems better to me, all the same, than turning back into the middle of a battle.'

He led the way in under the huge branches of the trees. Old beyond guessing, they seemed. Great trailing beards of lichen hung from them, blowing and swaying in the breeze. Out of the shadows the hobbits peeped, gazing back down the slope: little furtive figures that in the dim light looked like elf-children in the deeps of time peering out of the Wild Wood in wonder at their first Dawn.

Far over the Great River, and the Brown Lands, leagues upon grey leagues away, the Dawn came, red as flame. Loud rang the hunting-horns to greet it. The Riders of Rohan sprang suddenly to life. Horn answered horn again.

Merry and Pippin heard, clear in the cold air, the neighing of war-horses, and the sudden singing of many men. The Sun's limb was lifted, an arc of fire, above the margin of the world. Then with a great cry the Riders charged from the East; the red light gleamed on mail and spear. The Orcs yelled and shot all the arrows that remained to them. The hobbits saw several horsemen fall; but their line held on up the hill and over it, and wheeled round and charged again. Most of the raiders that were left alive then broke and fled, this way and that, pursued one by one to the death. But one band, holding together in a black wedge, drove forward resolutely in the direction of the forest. Straight up the slope they charged towards the watchers. Now they were drawing

near, and it seemed certain that they would escape: they had already hewn down three Riders that barred their way.

‘We have watched too long,’ said Merry. ‘There’s Uglúk! I don’t want to meet him again.’ The hobbits turned and fled deep into the shadows of the wood.

So it was that they did not see the last stand, when Uglúk was overtaken and brought to bay at the very edge of Fangorn. There he was slain at last by Éomer, the Third Marshal of the Mark, who dismounted and fought him sword to sword. And over the wide fields the keen-eyed Riders hunted down the few Orcs that had escaped and still had strength to fly.

Then when they had laid their fallen comrades in a mound and had sung their praises, the Riders made a great fire and scattered the ashes of their enemies. So ended the raid, and no news of it came ever back either to Mordor or to Isengard; but the smoke of the burning rose high to heaven and was seen by many watchful eyes.



## Chapter 4: Treebeard

Meanwhile the hobbits went with as much speed as the dark and tangled forest allowed, following the line of the running stream, westward and up towards the slopes of the mountains, deeper and deeper into Fangorn. Slowly their fear of the Orcs died away, and their pace slackened. A queer stifling feeling came over them, as if the air were too thin or too scanty for breathing.

At last Merry halted. 'We can't go on like this,' he panted. 'I want some air.'

'Let's have a drink at any rate,' said Pippin. 'I'm parched.' He clambered on to a great tree-root that wound down into the stream, and stooping drew up some water in his cupped hands. It was clear and cold, and he took many draughts. Merry followed him. The water refreshed them and seemed to cheer their hearts; for a while they sat together on the brink of the stream, dabbling their sore feet and legs, and peering round at the trees that stood silently about them, rank upon rank, until they faded away into grey twilight in every direction.

'I suppose you haven't lost us already?' said Pippin, leaning back against a great tree-trunk. 'We can at least follow the course of this stream, the Entwash or whatever you call it, and get out again the way we came.'

'We could, if our legs would do it,' said Merry; 'and if we could breathe properly.'

'Yes, it is all very dim, and stuffy, in here,' said Pippin. 'It reminds me, somehow, of the old room in the Great Place of the Took away back in the Smials at Tuckborough: a huge place, where the furniture has never been moved or changed for generations. They say the Old Took lived in it year after year, while he and the room got older and shabbier together—and it has never been changed since he died, a century ago. And Old Gerontius was my great-great-grandfather: that puts it back a bit. But that is nothing to the old feeling of this wood. Look at all those weeping, trailing, beards and whiskers of lichen! And most of the trees seem to be half covered with ragged dry leaves that have never fallen. Untidy. I can't imagine what spring would look like here, if it ever comes; still less a spring-cleaning.'

'But the Sun at any rate must peep in sometimes,' said Merry. 'It does not look or feel at all like Bilbo's description of Mirkwood. That was all dark and black, and the home of dark black things. This is just dim, and frightfully tree-ish. You can't imagine *animals* living here at all, or staying for long.'

'No, nor hobbits,' said Pippin. 'And I don't like the thought of trying to get through it either. Nothing to eat for a hundred miles, I should guess. How are our supplies?'

'Low,' said Merry. 'We ran off with nothing but a couple of spare packets of *lembas*, and left everything else behind.' They looked at what remained of the elven-cakes: broken fragments for about five meagre days, that was all. 'And not a wrap or a blanket,' said Merry. 'We shall be cold tonight, whichever way we go.'

'Well, we'd better decide on the way now,' said Pippin. 'The morning must be getting on.'

Just then they became aware of a yellow light that had appeared, some way further on into the wood: shafts of sunlight seemed suddenly to have pierced the forest-roof.

'Hullo!' said Merry. 'The Sun must have run into a cloud while we've been under these trees, and now she has run out again; or else she has climbed high enough to look down through some opening. It isn't far—let's go and investigate!'

They found it was further than they thought. The ground was rising steeply still, and it was becoming increasingly stony. The light grew broader as they went on, and soon they saw that there was a rock-wall before them: the side of a hill, or the abrupt end of some long root thrust out by the distant mountains. No trees grew on it, and the sun was falling full on its stony face. The twigs of the trees at its foot were stretched out stiff and

still, as if reaching out to the warmth. Where all had looked so shabby and grey before, the wood now gleamed with rich browns, and with the smooth black-greys of bark like polished leather. The boles of the trees glowed with a soft green like young grass: early spring or a fleeting vision of it was about them.

In the face of the stony wall there was something like a stair: natural perhaps, and made by the weathering and splitting of the rock, for it was rough and uneven. High up, almost level with the tops of forest-trees, there was a shelf under a cliff. Nothing grew there but a few grasses and weeds at its edge, and one old stump of a tree with only two bent branches left: it looked almost like the figure of some gnarled old man, standing there, blinking in the morning-light.

‘Up we go!’ said Merry joyfully. ‘Now for a breath of air, and a sight of the land!’

They climbed and scrambled up the rock. If the stair had been made it was for bigger feet and longer legs than theirs. They were too eager to be surprised at the remarkable way in which the cuts and sores of their captivity had healed and their vigour had returned. They came at length to the edge of the shelf almost at the feet of the old stump; then they sprang up and turned round with their backs to the hill, breathing deep, and looking out eastward. They saw that they had only come some three or four miles into the forest: the heads of the trees marched down the slopes towards the plain. There, near the fringe of the forest, tall spires of curling black smoke went up, wavering and floating towards them.

‘The wind’s changing,’ said Merry. ‘It’s turned east again. It feels cool up here.’

‘Yes,’ said Pippin; ‘I’m afraid this is only a passing gleam, and it will all go grey again. What a pity! This shaggy old forest looked so different in the sunlight. I almost felt I liked the place.’

‘Almost felt you liked the Forest! That’s good! That’s uncommonly kind of you,’ said a strange voice. ‘Turn round and let me have a look at your faces. I almost feel that I dislike you both, but do not let us be hasty. Turn around!’ A large knob-knuckled hand was laid on each of their shoulders, and they were twisted round, gently but irresistibly; then two great arms lifted them up.

They found that they were looking at a most extraordinary face. It belonged to a large Man-like, almost Troll-like, figure, at least fourteen foot high, very sturdy, with a tall head, and hardly any neck. Whether it was clad in stuff like green and grey bark, or whether that was its hide, was difficult to say. At any rate the arms, at a short distance from the trunk, were not wrinkled, but covered with a brown smooth skin. The large feet had seven toes each. The lower part of the long face was covered with a sweeping grey beard, bushy, almost twiggy at the roots, thin and mossy at the ends. But at the moment the hobbits noted little but the eyes. These deep eyes were now surveying them, slow and solemn, but very penetrating. They were brown, shot with a green light. Often afterwards Pippin tried to describe his first impression of them.

‘One felt as if there was an enormous well behind them, filled up with ages of memory and long, slow, steady thinking; but their surface was sparkling with the present; like sun shimmering on the outer leaves of a vast tree, or on the ripples of a very deep lake. I don’t know, but it felt as if something that grew in the ground—asleep, you might say, or just feeling itself as something between root-tip and leaf-tip, between deep earth and sky had suddenly waked up, and was considering you with the same slow care that it had given to its own inside affairs for endless years.’

‘*Hrum, Hoom,*’ murmured the voice, a deep voice like a very deep woodwind instrument. ‘Very odd indeed! Do not be hasty, that is my motto. But if I had seen you, before I heard your voices—I liked them: nice little voices; they reminded me of something I cannot remember—if I had seen you before I heard you, I should have just trodden on you, taking you for little Orcs, and found out my mistake afterwards. Very odd you are, indeed. Root and twig, very odd!’

Pippin, though still amazed, no longer felt afraid. Under those eyes he felt a curious suspense, but not fear. ‘Please,’ he said, ‘who are you? And what are you?’

A queer look came into the old eyes, a kind of wariness; the deep wells were covered over. ‘*Hrum,* now,’ answered the voice; ‘well, I am an Ent, or that’s what they call me. Yes, Ent is the word. *The Ent*, I am, you might say, in your manner of speaking. *Fangorn* is my name according to some, *Treebeard* others make it. *Treebeard* will do.’

‘An *Ent*?’ said Merry. ‘What’s that? But what do you call yourself? What’s your real name?’

‘Hoo now!’ replied Treebeard. ‘Hoo! Now that would be telling! Not so hasty. And *I* am doing the asking. You are in *my* country. What are *you*, I wonder? I cannot place you. You do not seem to come in the old lists that I learned when I was young. But that was a long, long time ago, and they may have made new lists. Let me see! Let me see! How did it go?’

*Learn now the lore of Living Creatures!*  
*First name the four, the free peoples:*  
*Eldest of all, the elf-children;*  
*Dwarf the delver, dark are his houses;*  
*Ent the earthborn, old as mountains;*  
*Man the mortal, master of horses:*

Hm, hm, hm.

*Beaver the builder, buck the leaper,*  
*Bear bee-hunter, boar the fighter;*  
*Hound is hungry, hare is fearful . . .*

hm, hm.

*Eagle in eyrie, ox in pasture,*  
*Hart horn-crownéd; hawk is swiftest,*  
*Swan the whitest, serpent coldest . . .*

Hoom, hm; hoom, hm, how did it go? Room tum, room tum, roomty toom tum. It was a long list. But anyway you do not seem to fit in anywhere!’

‘We always seem to have got left out of the old lists, and the old stories,’ said Merry. ‘Yet we’ve been about for quite a long time. We’re *hobbits*.’

‘Why not make a new line?’ said Pippin.

*‘Half-grown hobbits, the hole-dwellers.*

Put us in amongst the four, next to Man (the Big People) and you’ve got it.’

‘Hm! Not bad, not bad,’ said Treebeard. ‘That would do. So you live in holes, eh? It sounds very right and proper. Who calls you *hobbits*, though? That does not sound Elvish to me. Elves made all the old words: they began it.’

‘Nobody else calls us hobbits; we call ourselves that,’ said Pippin.

‘Hoom, hmm! Come now! Not so hasty! You call *yourselves* hobbits? But you should not go telling just anybody. You’ll be letting out your own right names if you’re not careful.’

‘We aren’t careful about that,’ said Merry. ‘As a matter of fact I’m a Brandybuck, Meriadoc Brandybuck, though most people call me just Merry.’

‘And I’m a Took, Peregrin Took, but I’m generally called Pippin, or even Pip.’

‘Hm, but you *are* hasty folk, I see,’ said Treebeard. ‘I am honoured by your confidence; but you should not be too free all at once. There are Ents and Ents, you know; or there are Ents and things that look like Ents but ain’t, as you might say. I’ll call you Merry and Pippin, if you please—nice names. For I am not going to tell you *my* name, not yet at any rate.’ A queer half-knowing, half-humorous look came with a green flicker into his eyes. ‘For one thing it would take a long while: my name is growing all the time, and I’ve lived a very long, long time; so *my* name is like a story. Real names tell you the story of the things they belong to in my language, in the Old Entish as you might say. It is a lovely language, but it takes a very long time to say anything in it, because we do not say anything in it, unless it is worth taking a long time to say, and to listen to.

‘But now,’ and the eyes became very bright and ‘present’, seeming to grow smaller and almost sharp, ‘what is going on? What are you doing in it all? I can see and hear (*and smell and feel*) a great deal from this, from this, from this *a-lalla-lalla-rumba-kamanda-lind-or-burúmë*. Excuse me: that is a part of my name for it; I do not know what the word is in the outside languages: you know, the thing we are on, where I stand and look out on fine mornings, and think about the Sun, and the grass beyond the wood, and the horses, and the clouds, and the unfolding of the world. What is going on? What is Gandalf up to? And these—*burárum*,’ he made a deep rumbling noise like a discord on a great organ—‘these Orcs, and young Saruman down at Isengard? I like news. But not too quick now.’

‘There is quite a lot going on,’ said Merry; ‘and even if we tried to be quick, it would take a long time to tell. But you told us not to be hasty. Ought we to tell you anything so soon? Would you think it rude, if we asked what you are going to do with us, and which side you are on? And did you know Gandalf?’

‘Yes, I do know him: the only wizard that really cares about trees,’ said Treebeard. ‘Do you know him?’

‘Yes,’ said Pippin sadly, ‘we did. He was a great friend, and he was our guide.’

‘Then I can answer your other questions,’ said Treebeard. ‘I am not going to do anything *with* you: not if you mean by that “do something *to* you” without your leave. We might do some things together. I don’t know about *sides*. I go my own way; but your way may go along with mine for a while. But you speak of Master Gandalf, as if he was in a story that had come to an end.’

‘Yes, we do,’ said Pippin sadly. ‘The story seems to be going on, but I am afraid Gandalf has fallen out of it.’

‘Hoo, come now!’ said Treebeard. ‘Hoom, hm, ah well’ He paused, looking long at the hobbits. ‘Hoom, ah, well I do not know what to say. Come now!’

‘If you would like to hear more,’ said Merry, ‘we will tell you. But it will take some time. Wouldn’t you like to put us down? Couldn’t we sit here together in the sun, while it lasts? You must be getting tired of holding us up.’

‘Hm, *tired*? No, I am not tired. I do not easily get tired. And I do not sit down. I am not very, hm, bendable. But there, the Sun *is* going in. Let us leave this—did you say what you call it?’

‘Hill?’ suggested Pippin. ‘Shelf? Step?’ suggested Merry.

Treebeard repeated the words thoughtfully. ‘*Hill*. Yes, that was it. But it is a hasty word for a thing that has stood here ever since this part of the world was shaped. Never mind. Let us leave it, and go.’

‘Where shall we go?’ asked Merry.

‘To my home, or one of my homes,’ answered Treebeard.

‘Is it far?’

‘I do not know. You might call it far, perhaps. But what does that matter?’

‘Well, you see, we have lost all our belongings,’ said Merry. ‘We have only a little food.’

‘O! Hm! You need not trouble about that,’ said Treebeard. ‘I can give you a drink that will keep you green and growing for a long, long while. And if we decide to part company, I can set you down outside my country at any point you choose. Let us go!’

Holding the hobbits gently but firmly, one in the crook of each arm, Treebeard lifted up first one large foot and then the other, and moved them to the edge of the shelf. The rootlike toes grasped the rocks. Then carefully and solemnly, he stalked down from step to step, and reached the floor of the Forest.

At once he set off with long deliberate strides through the trees, deeper and deeper into the wood, never far from the stream, climbing steadily up towards the slopes of the mountains. Many of the trees seemed asleep, or as unaware of him as of any other creature that merely passed by; but some quivered, and some raised up their branches above his head as he approached. All the while, as he walked, he talked to himself in a long running stream of musical sounds.



The hobbits were silent for some time. They felt, oddly enough, safe and comfortable, and they had a great deal to think and wonder about. At last Pippin ventured to speak again.

‘Please, Treebeard,’ he said, ‘could I ask you something? Why did Celeborn warn us against your forest? He told us not to risk getting entangled in it.’

‘Hmm, did he now?’ rumbled Treebeard. ‘And I might have said much the same, if you had been going the other way. Do not risk getting entangled in the woods of *Laurelindórenan*! That is what the Elves used to call it, but now they make the name shorter: *Lothlórien* they call it. Perhaps they are right: maybe it is fading, not growing. Land of the Valley of Singing Gold, that was it, once upon a time. Now it is the Dreamflower. Ah well! But it is a queer place, and not for just anyone to venture in. I am surprised that you ever got out, but much more surprised that you ever got in: that has not happened to strangers for many a year. It is a queer land.

‘And so is this. Folk have come to grief here. Aye, they have, to grief. *Laurelindórenan lindelorendor malinornélión ornemalin*,’ he hummed to himself. ‘They are falling rather behind the world in there, I guess,’ he said. ‘Neither this country, nor anything else outside the Golden Wood, is what it was when Celeborn was young. Still:

*Taurelilómëa-tumbalemorna Tumbaletaurëa Lómëanor*<sup>26</sup>

that is what they used to say. Things have changed, but it is still true in places.’

‘What do you mean?’ said Pippin. ‘What is true?’

‘The trees and the Ents,’ said Treebeard. ‘I do not understand all that goes on myself, so I cannot explain it to you. Some of us are still true Ents, and lively enough in our fashion, but many are growing sleepy, going tree-ish, as you might say. Most of the trees are just trees, of course; but many are half awake. Some are quite wide awake, and a few are, well, ah, well getting *Entish*. That is going on all the time.

‘When that happens to a tree, you find that some have *bad* hearts. Nothing to do with their wood: I do not mean that. Why, I knew some good old willows down the Entwash, gone long ago, alas! They were quite hollow, indeed they were falling all to pieces, but as quiet and sweet-spoken as a young leaf. And then there are some trees in the valleys under the mountains, sound as a bell, and bad right through. That sort of thing seems to spread. There used to be some very dangerous parts in this country. There are still some very black patches.’

‘Like the Old Forest away to the north, do you mean?’ asked Merry.

‘Aye, aye, something like, but much worse. I do not doubt there is some shadow of the Great Darkness lying there still away north; and bad memories are handed down. But there are hollow dales in this land where the Darkness has never been lifted, and the trees are older than I am. Still, we do what we can. We keep off strangers and the foolhardy; and we train and we teach, we walk and we weed.

‘We are tree-herds, we old Ents. Few enough of us are left now. Sheep get like shepherd, and shepherds like sheep, it is said; but slowly, and neither have long in the world. It is quicker and closer with trees and Ents, and they walk down the ages together. For Ents are more like Elves: less interested in themselves than Men are, and better at getting inside other things. And yet again Ents are more like Men, more changeable than Elves are, and quicker at taking the colour of the outside, you might say. Or better than both: for they are steadier and keep their minds on things longer.

‘Some of my kin look just like trees now, and need something great to rouse them; and they speak only in whispers. But some of my trees are limb-lithe, and many can talk to me. Elves began it, of course, waking trees up and teaching them to speak and learning their tree-talk. They always wished to talk to everything, the old Elves did. But then the Great Darkness came, and they passed away over the Sea, or fled into far valleys, and hid themselves, and made songs about days that would never come again. Never again. Aye, aye, there was all one wood once upon a time from here to the Mountains of Lune, and this was just the East End.

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<sup>26</sup> See Appendix F under *Ents*.

‘Those were the broad days! Time was when I could walk and sing all day and hear no more than the echo of my own voice in the hollow hills. The woods were like the woods of Lothlórien, only thicker, stronger, younger. And the smell of the air! I used to spend a week just breathing.’

Treebeard fell silent, striding along, and yet making hardly a sound with his great feet. Then he began to hum again, and passed into a murmuring chant. Gradually the hobbits became aware that he was chanting to them:

*In the willow-meads of Tasarinan I walked in the Spring.  
Ah! the sight and the smell of the Spring in Nan-tasarion!  
And I said that was good.  
I wandered in Summer in the elm-woods of Ossiriand.  
Ah! the light and the music in the Summer by the Seven Rivers of Ossir!  
And I thought that was best. To the beeches of Neldoreth I came in the Autumn.  
Ah! the gold and the red and the sighing of leaves in the Autumn in Taur-na-neldor!  
It was more than my desire.  
To the pine-trees upon the highland of Dorthonion I climbed in the Winter.  
Ah! the wind and the whiteness and the black branches of Winter upon Orod-na-Thôn!  
My voice went up and sang in the sky.  
And now all those lands lie under the wave,  
And I walk in Ambaróna, in Tauremorna, in Aldalómë,  
In my own land, in the country of Fangorn,  
Where the roots are long,  
And the years lie thicker than the leaves  
In Tauremornalómë.*

He ended, and strode on silently, and in all the wood, as far as ear could reach, there was not a sound.

The day waned, and dusk was twined about the boles of the trees. At last the hobbits saw, rising dimly before them, a steep dark land: they had come to the feet of the mountains, and to the green roots of tall Methedras. Down the hillside the young Entwash, leaping from its springs high above, ran noisily from step to step to meet them. On the right of the stream there was a long slope, clad with grass, now grey in the twilight. No trees grew there and it was open to the sky; stars were shining already in lakes between shores of cloud.

Treebeard strode up the slope, hardly slackening his pace. Suddenly before them the hobbits saw a wide opening. Two great trees stood there, one on either side, like living gate-posts; but there was no gate save their crossing and interwoven boughs. As the old Ent approached, the trees lifted up their branches, and all their leaves quivered and rustled. For they were evergreen trees, and their leaves were dark and polished, and gleamed in the twilight. Beyond them was a wide level space, as though the floor of a great hall had been cut in the side of the hill. On either hand the walls sloped upwards, until they were fifty feet high or more, and along each wall stood an aisle of trees that also increased in height as they marched inwards.

At the far end the rock-wall was sheer, but at the bottom it had been hollowed back into a shallow bay with an arched roof: the only roof of the hall, save the branches of the trees, which at the inner end overshadowed all the ground leaving only a broad open path in the middle. A little stream escaped from the springs above, and leaving the main water, fell tinkling down the sheer face of the wall, pouring in silver drops, like a fine curtain in front of the arched bay. The water was gathered again into a stone basin in the floor between the trees, and thence it spilled and flowed away beside the open path, out to rejoin the Entwash in its journey through the forest.

‘Hm! Here we are!’ said Treebeard, breaking his long silence. ‘I have brought you about seventy thousand ent-rides, but what that comes to in the measurement of your land I do not know. Anyhow we are near the roots of the Last Mountain. Part of the name of this place might be Wellinghall, if it were turned into your language. I like it. We will stay here tonight.’ He set them down on the grass between the aisles of the trees, and they followed him towards the great arch. The hobbits now noticed that as he walked his knees hardly bent, but his

legs opened in a great stride. He planted his big toes (and they were indeed big, and very broad) on the ground first, before any other part of his feet.

For a moment Treebeard stood under the rain of the falling spring, and took a deep breath; then he laughed, and passed inside. A great stone table stood there, but no chairs. At the back of the bay it was already quite dark. Treebeard lifted two great vessels and stood them on the table. They seemed to be filled with water; but he held his hands over them, and immediately they began to glow, one with a golden and the other with a rich green light; and the blending of the two lights lit the bay, as if the sun of summer was shining through a roof of young leaves. Looking back, the hobbits saw that the trees in the court had also begun to glow, faintly at first, but steadily quickening, until every leaf was edged with light: some green, some gold, some red as copper; while the tree-trunks looked like pillars moulded out of luminous stone.

‘Well, well, now we can talk again,’ said Treebeard. ‘You are thirsty, I expect. Perhaps you are also tired. Drink this!’ He went to the back of the bay, and then they saw that several tall stone jars stood there, with heavy lids. He removed one of the lids, and dipped in a great ladle, and with it filled three bowls, one very large bowl, and two smaller ones.

‘This is an ent-house,’ he said, ‘and there are no seats, I fear. But you may sit on the table.’ Picking up the hobbits he set them on the great stone slab, six feet above the ground, and there they sat dangling their legs, and drinking in sips.

The drink was like water, indeed very like the taste of the draughts they had drunk from the Entwash near the borders of the forest, and yet there was some scent or savour in it which they could not describe: it was faint, but it reminded them of the smell of a distant wood borne from afar by a cool breeze at night. The effect of the draught began at the toes, and rose steadily through every limb, bringing refreshment and vigour as it coursed upwards, right to the tips of the hair. Indeed the hobbits felt that the hair on their heads was actually standing up, waving and curling and growing. As for Treebeard, he first laved his feet in the basin beyond the arch, and then he drained his bowl at one draught, one long, slow draught. The hobbits thought he would never stop.

At last he set the bowl down again. ‘Ah—ah,’ he sighed. ‘Hm, hoom, now we can talk easier. You can sit on the floor, and I will lie down; that will prevent this drink from rising to my head and sending me to sleep.’

On the right side of the bay there was a great bed on low legs, not more than a couple of feet high, covered deep in dried grass and bracken. Treebeard lowered himself slowly on to this (with only the slightest sign of bending at his middle), until he lay at full length, with his arms behind his head, looking up at the ceiling, upon which lights were flickering, like the play of leaves in the sunshine. Merry and Pippin sat beside him on pillows of grass.

‘Now tell me your tale, and do not hurry!’ said Treebeard.

The hobbits began to tell him the story of their adventures ever since they left Hobbiton. They followed no very clear order, for they interrupted one another continually, and Treebeard often stopped the speaker, and went back to some earlier point, or jumped forward asking questions about later events. They said nothing whatever about the Ring, and did not tell him why they set out or where they were going to; and he did not ask for any reasons.

He was immensely interested in everything: in the Black Riders, in Elrond, and Rivendell, in the Old Forest, and Tom Bombadil, in the Mines of Moria, and in Lothlórien and Galadriel. He made them describe the Shire and its country over and over again. He said an odd thing at this point. ‘You never see any, hm, any Ents round there, do you?’ he asked. ‘Well, not Ents, *Entwives* I should really say.’

‘*Entwives*?’ said Pippin. ‘Are they like you at all?’

‘Yes, hm, well no: I do not really know now,’ said Treebeard thoughtfully. ‘But they would like your country, so I just wondered.’

Treebeard was however especially interested in everything that concerned Gandalf; and most interested of all in Saruman’s doings. The hobbits regretted very much that they knew so little about them: only a rather vague

report by Sam of what Gandalf had told the Council. But they were clear at any rate that Uglúk troop came from Isengard, and spoke of Saruman as their master.

‘Hm, hoom!’ said Treebeard, when at last their story had wound and wandered down to the battle of the Orcs and the Riders of Rohan. ‘Well, well! That is a bundle of news and no mistake. You have not told me all, no indeed, not by a long way. But I do not doubt that you are doing as Gandalf would wish. There is something very big going on, that I can see, and what it is maybe I shall learn in good time, or in bad time. By root and twig, but it is a strange business: up sprout a little folk that are not in the old lists, and behold! the Nine forgotten Riders reappear to hunt them, and Gandalf takes them on a great journey, and Galadriel harbours them in Caras Galadhon, and Orcs pursue them down all the leagues of Wilderland: indeed they seem to be caught up in a great storm. I hope they weather it!’

‘And what about yourself?’ asked Merry.

‘Hoom, hm, I have not troubled about the Great Wars,’ said Treebeard; ‘they mostly concern Elves and Men. That is the business of Wizards: Wizards are always troubled about the future. I do not like worrying about the future. I am not altogether on anybody’s *side*, because nobody is altogether on my *side*, if you understand me: nobody cares for the woods as I care for them, not even Elves nowadays. Still, I take more kindly to Elves than to others: it was the Elves that cured us of dumbness long ago, and that was a great gift that cannot be forgotten, though our ways have parted since. And there are some things, of course, whose side I am altogether *not* on; I am against them altogether: these—*burárum*’ (he again made a deep rumble of disgust) ‘—these Orcs, and their masters.

‘I used to be anxious when the shadow lay on Mirkwood, but when it removed to Mordor, I did not trouble for a while: Mordor is a long way away. But it seems that the wind is setting East, and the withering of all woods may be drawing near. There is naught that an old Ent can do to hold back that storm: he must weather it or crack.

‘But Saruman now! Saruman is a neighbour: I cannot overlook him. I must do something, I suppose. I have often wondered lately what I should do about Saruman.’

‘Who is Saruman?’ asked Pippin. ‘Do you know anything about his history?’

‘Saruman is a Wizard,’ answered Treebeard. ‘More than that I cannot say. I do not know the history of Wizards. They appeared first after the Great Ships came over the Sea; but if they came with the Ships I never can tell. Saruman was reckoned great among them, I believe. He gave up wandering about and minding the affairs of Men and Elves, some time ago—you would call it a very long time ago; and he settled down at Angrenost, or Isengard as the Men of Rohan call it. He was very quiet to begin with, but his fame began to grow. He was chosen to be the head of the White Council, they say; but that did not turn out too well. I wonder now if even then Saruman was not turning to evil ways. But at any rate he used to give no trouble to his neighbours. I used to talk to him. There was a time when he was always walking about my woods. He was polite in those days, always asking my leave (at least when he met me); and always eager to listen. I told him many things that he would never have found out by himself; but he never repaid me in like kind. I cannot remember that he ever told me anything. And he got more and more like that; his face, as I remember it—I have not seen it for many a day—became like windows in a stone wall: windows with shutters inside.

‘I think that I now understand what he is up to. He is plotting to become a Power. He has a mind of metal and wheels; and he does not care for growing things, except as far as they serve him for the moment. And now it is clear that he is a black traitor. He has taken up with foul folk, with the Orcs. Brm, hoom! Worse than that: he has been doing something to them; something dangerous. For these Isengarders are more like wicked Men. It is a mark of evil things that came in the Great Darkness that they cannot abide the Sun; but Saruman’s Orcs can endure it, even if they hate it. I wonder what he has done? Are they Men he has ruined, or has he blended the races of Orcs and Men? That would be a black evil!’

Treebeard rumbled for a moment, as if he were pronouncing some deep, subterranean Entish malediction. ‘Some time ago I began to wonder how Orcs dared to pass through my woods so freely,’ he went on. ‘Only lately did I guess that Saruman was to blame, and that long ago he had been spying out all the ways, and

discovering my secrets. He and his foul folk are making havoc now. Down on the borders they are felling trees—good trees. Some of the trees they just cut down and leave to rot—orc-mischief that; but most are hewn up and carried off to feed the fires of Orthanc. There is always a smoke rising from Isengard these days.

‘Curse him, root and branch! Many of those trees were my friends, creatures I had known from nut and acorn; many had voices of their own that are lost for ever now. And there are wastes of stump and bramble where once there were singing groves. I have been idle. I have let things slip. It must stop!’

Treebeard raised himself from his bed with a jerk, stood up, and thumped his hand on the table. The vessels of light trembled and sent up two jets of flame. There was a flicker like green fire in his eyes, and his beard stood out stiff as a great besom.

‘I will stop it!’ he boomed. ‘And you shall come with me. You may be able to help me. You will be helping your own friends that way, too; for if Saruman is not checked Rohan and Gondor will have an enemy behind as well as in front. Our roads go together—to Isengard!’

‘We will come with you,’ said Merry. ‘We will do what we can.’

‘Yes!’ said Pippin. ‘I should like to see the White Hand overthrown. I should like to be there, even if I could not be of much use: I shall never forget Uglúk and the crossing of Rohan.’

‘Good! Good!’ said Treebeard. ‘But I spoke hastily. We must not be hasty. I have become too hot. I must cool myself and think; for it is easier to shout *stop!* than to do it.’

He strode to the archway and stood for some time under the falling rain of the spring. Then he laughed and shook himself, and wherever the drops of water fell glittering from him to the ground they glinted like red and green sparks. He came back and laid himself on the bed again and was silent.

After some time the hobbits heard him murmuring again. He seemed to be counting on his fingers. ‘Fangorn, Finglas, Fladrif, aye, aye,’ he sighed. ‘The trouble is that there are so few of us left,’ he said turning towards the hobbits. ‘Only three remain of the first Ents that walked in the woods before the Darkness: only myself, Fangorn, and Finglas and Fladrif—to give them their Elvish names; you may call them Leaflock and Skinbark if you like that better. And of us three, Leaflock and Skinbark are not much use for this business. Leaflock has grown sleepy, almost tree-ish, you might say: he has taken to standing by himself half-asleep all through the summer with the deep grass of the meadows round his knees. Covered with leafy hair he is. He used to rouse up in winter; but of late he has been too drowsy to walk far even then. Skinbark lived on the mountain-slopes west of Isengard. That is where the worst trouble has been. He was wounded by the Orcs, and many of his folk and his tree-herds have been murdered and destroyed. He has gone up into the high places, among the birches that he loves best, and he will not come down. Still, I daresay I could get together a fair company of our younger folks—if I could make them understand the need; if I could rouse them: we are not a hasty folk. What a pity there are so few of us!’

‘Why are there so few, when you have lived in this country so long?’ asked Pippin. ‘Have a great many died?’

‘Oh, no!’ said Treebeard. ‘None have died from inside, as you might say. Some have fallen in the evil chances of the long years, of course; and more have grown tree-ish. But there were never many of us and we have not increased. There have been no Entings—no children, you would say, not for a terrible long count of years. You see, we lost the Entwives.’

‘How very sad!’ said Pippin. ‘How was it that they all died?’

‘They did not *die!*’ said Treebeard. ‘I never said *died*. We lost them, I said. We lost them and we cannot find them.’ He sighed. ‘I thought most folk knew that. There were songs about the hunt of the Ents for the Entwives sung among Elves and Men from Mirkwood to Gondor. They cannot be quite forgotten.’

‘Well, I am afraid the songs have not come west over the Mountains to the Shire,’ said Merry. ‘Won’t you tell us some more, or sing us one of the songs?’

‘Yes, I will indeed,’ said Treebeard, seeming pleased with the request. ‘But I cannot tell it properly, only in short; and then we must end our talk: tomorrow we have councils to call, and work to do, and maybe a journey to begin.’

‘It is rather a strange and sad story,’ he went on after a pause. ‘When the world was young, and the woods were wide and wild, the Ents and the Entwives—and there were Entmaidens then: ah! the loveliness of Fimbrethil, of Wandlimb the lightfooted, in the days of our youth!—they walked together and they housed together. But our hearts did not go on growing in the same way: the Ents gave their love to things that they met in the world, and the Entwives gave their thought to other things, for the Ents loved the great trees, and the wild woods, and the slopes of the high hills; and they drank of the mountain-streams, and ate only such fruit as the trees let fall in their path; and they learned of the Elves and spoke with the Trees. But the Entwives gave their minds to the lesser trees, and to the meads in the sunshine beyond the feet of the forests; and they saw the sloe in the thicket, and the wild apple and the cherry blossoming in spring, and the green herbs in the waterlands in summer, and the seeding grasses in the autumn fields. They did not desire to speak with these things; but they wished them to hear and obey what was said to them. The Entwives ordered them to grow according to their wishes, and bear leaf and fruit to their liking; for the Entwives desired order, and plenty, and peace (by which they meant that things should remain where they had set them). So the Entwives made gardens to live in. But we Ents went on wandering, and we only came to the gardens now and again. Then when the Darkness came in the North, the Entwives crossed the Great River, and made new gardens, and tilled new fields, and we saw them more seldom. After the Darkness was overthrown the land of the Entwives blossomed richly, and their fields were full of corn. Many men learned the crafts of the Entwives and honoured them greatly; but we were only a legend to them, a secret in the heart of the forest. Yet here we still are, while all the gardens of the Entwives are wasted: Men call them the Brown Lands now.’

I remember it was long ago—in the time of the war between Sauron and the Men of the Sea—desire came over me to see Fimbrethil again. Very fair she was still in my eyes, when I had last seen her, though little like the Entmaiden of old. For the Entwives were bent and browned by their labour; their hair parched by the sun to the hue of ripe corn and their cheeks like red apples. Yet their eyes were still the eyes of our own people. We crossed over Anduin and came to their land; but we found a desert: it was all burned and uprooted, for war had passed over it. But the Entwives were not there. Long we called, and long we searched; and we asked all folk that we met which way the Entwives had gone. Some said they had never seen them; and some said that they had seen them walking away west, and some said east, and others south. But nowhere that we went could we find them. Our sorrow was very great. Yet the wild wood called, and we returned to it. For many years we used to go out every now and again and look for the Entwives, walking far and wide and calling them by their beautiful names. But as time passed we went more seldom and wandered less far. And now the Entwives are only a memory for us, and our beards are long and grey. The Elves made many songs concerning the Search of the Ents, and some of the songs passed into the tongues of Men. But we made no songs about it, being content to chant their beautiful names when we thought of the Entwives. We believe that we may meet again in a time to come, and perhaps we shall find somewhere a land where we can live together and both be content. But it is foreboded that that will only be when we have both lost all that we now have. And it may well be that that time is drawing near at last. For if Sauron of old destroyed the gardens, the Enemy today seems likely to wither all the woods.

‘There was an Elvish song that spoke of this, or at least so I understand it. It used to be sung up and down the Great River. It was never an Entish song, mark you: it would have been a very long song in Entish! But we know it by heart, and hum it now and again. This is how it runs in your tongue:

*ENT:—When Spring unfolds the beechen leaf, and sap is in the bough;  
When light is on the wild-wood stream, and wind is on the brow;  
When stride is long, and breath is deep, and keen the mountain-air,  
Come back to me! Come back to me, and say my land is fair!*

*ENTWIFE:—When Spring is come to garth and field, and corn is in the blade;  
When blossom like a shining snow is on the orchard laid;*

*When shower and Sun upon the Earth with fragrance fill the air,  
I'll linger here, and will not come, because my land is fair.*

*ENT:—When Summer lies upon the world, and in a noon of gold  
Beneath the roof of sleeping leaves the dreams of trees unfold;  
When woodland halls are green and cool, and wind is in the West,  
Come back to me! Come back to me, and say my land is best!*

*ENTWIFE:—When Summer warms the hanging fruit and burns the berry brown;  
When straw is gold, and ear is white, and harvest comes to town;  
When honey spills, and apple swells, though wind be in the West,  
I'll linger here beneath the Sun, because my land is best!*

*ENT:—When Winter comes, the winter wild that hill and wood shall slay;  
When trees shall fall and starless night devour the sunless day;  
When wind is in the deadly East, then in the bitter rain  
I'll look for thee, and call to thee; I'll come to thee again!*

*ENTWIFE:—When Winter comes, and singing ends; when darkness falls at last;  
When broken is the barren bough, and light and labour past;  
I'll look for thee, and wait for thee, until we meet again:  
Together we will take the road beneath the bitter rain!*

*BOTH:—Together we will take the road that leads into the West,  
And far away will find a land where both our hearts may rest.'*

Treebeard ended his song. 'That is how it goes,' he said. 'It is Elvish, of course: lighthearted, quickworded, and soon over. I daresay it is fair enough. But the Ents could say more on their side, if they had time! But now I am going to stand up and take a little sleep. Where will you stand?'

'We usually lie down to sleep,' said Merry. 'We shall be all right where we are.'

'Lie down to sleep!' said Treebeard. 'Why of course you do! Hm, hoom: I was forgetting: singing that song put me in mind of old times; almost thought that I was talking to young Entings, I did. Well, you can lie on the bed. I am going to stand in the rain. Good night!'

Merry and Pippin climbed on to the bed and curled up in the soft grass and fern. It was fresh, and sweet-scented, and warm. The lights died down, and the glow of the trees faded; but outside under the arch they could see old Treebeard standing, motionless, with his arms raised above his head. The bright stars peered out of the sky, and lit the falling water as it spilled on to his fingers and head, and dripped, dripped, in hundreds of silver drops on to his feet. Listening to the tinkling of the drops the hobbits fell asleep.

They woke to find a cool sun shining into the great court, and on to the floor of the bay. Shreds of high cloud were overhead, running on a stiff easterly wind. Treebeard was not to be seen; but while Merry and Pippin were bathing in the basin by the arch, they heard him humming and singing, as he came up the path between the trees.

'Hoo, ho! Good morning, Merry and Pippin!' he boomed, when he saw them. 'You sleep long. I have been many a hundred strides already today. Now we will have a drink, and go to Entmoot.'

He poured them out two full bowls from a stone jar; but from a different jar. The taste was not the same as it had been the night before: it was earthier and richer, more sustaining and food-like, so to speak. While the hobbits drank, sitting on the edge of the bed, and nibbling small pieces of elf-cake (more because they felt that eating was a necessary part of breakfast than because they felt hungry), Treebeard stood, humming in Entish or Elvish or some strange tongue, and looking up at the sky.

'Where is Entmoot?' Pippin ventured to ask.

‘Hoo, eh? Entmoot?’ said Treebeard, turning round. ‘It is not a place, it is a gathering of Ents—which does not often happen nowadays. But I have managed to make a fair number promise to come. We shall meet in the place where we have always met: Derndingle Men call it. It is away south from here. We must be there before noon.’

Before long they set off. Treebeard carried the hobbits in his arms as on the previous day. At the entrance to the court he turned to the right, stepped over the stream, and strode away southwards along the feet of great tumbled slopes where trees were scanty. Above these the hobbits saw thickets of birch and rowan, and beyond them dark climbing pinewoods. Soon Treebeard turned a little away from the hills and plunged into deep groves, where the trees were larger, taller, and thicker than any that the hobbits had ever seen before. For a while they felt faintly the sense of stifling which they had noticed when they first ventured into Fangorn, but it soon passed. Treebeard did not talk to them. He hummed to himself deeply and thoughtfully, but Merry and Pippin caught no proper words: it sounded like *boom, boom, rumboom, boorar, boom boom, dahrar boom boom, dahrar boom*, and so on with a constant change of note and rhythm. Now and again they thought they heard an answer, a hum or a quiver of sound, that seemed to come out of the earth, or from boughs above their heads, or perhaps from the boles of the trees; but Treebeard did not stop or turn his head to either side.

They had been going for a long while—Pippin had tried to keep count of the ‘ent-strides’ but had failed, getting lost at about three thousand—when Treebeard began to slacken his pace. Suddenly he stopped, put the hobbits down, and raised his curled hands to his mouth so that they made a hollow tube; then he blew or called through them. A great *hoom, hom* rang out like a deep-throated horn in the woods, and seemed to echo from the trees. Far off there came from several directions a similar *hoom, hom, hoom* that was not an echo but an answer.

Treebeard now perched Merry and Pippin on his shoulders and strode on again, every now and then sending out another horn-call, and each time the answers came louder and nearer. In this way they came at last to what looked like an impenetrable wall of dark evergreen trees, trees of a kind that the hobbits had never seen before: they branched out right from the roots, and were densely clad in dark glossy leaves like thornless holly, and they bore many stiff upright flower-spikes with large shining olive-coloured buds.

Turning to the left and skirting this huge hedge Treebeard came in a few strides to a narrow entrance. Through it a worn path passed and dived suddenly down a long steep slope. The hobbits saw that they were descending into a great dingle, almost as round as a bowl, very wide and deep, crowned at the rim with the high dark evergreen hedge. It was smooth and grassclad inside, and there were no trees except three very tall and beautiful silver-birches that stood at the bottom of the bowl. Two other paths led down into the dingle: from the west and from the east.

Several Ents had already arrived. More were coming in down the other paths, and some were now following Treebeard. As they drew near the hobbits gazed at them. They had expected to see a number of creatures as much like Treebeard as one hobbit is like another (at any rate to a stranger’s eye); and they were very much surprised to see nothing of the kind. The Ents were as different from one another as trees from trees: some as different as one tree is from another of the same name but quite different growth and history; and some as different as one tree-kind from another, as birch from beech, oak from fir. There were a few older Ents, bearded and gnarled like hale but ancient trees (though none looked as ancient as Treebeard); and there were tall strong Ents, clean-limbed and smooth-skinned like forest-trees in their prime; but there were no young Ents, no saplings. Altogether there were about two dozen standing on the wide grassy floor of the dingle, and as many more were marching in.

At first Merry and Pippin were struck chiefly by the variety that they saw: the many shapes, and colours, the differences in girth, and height, and length of leg and arm; and in the number of toes and fingers (anything from three to nine). A few seemed more or less related to Treebeard, and reminded them of beech-trees or oaks. But there were other kinds. Some recalled the chestnut: brown-skinned Ents with large splayfingered hands, and short thick legs. Some recalled the ash: tall straight grey Ents with many-fingered hands and long legs; some the fir (the tallest Ents), and others the birch, the rowan, and the linden. But when the Ents all gathered round Treebeard, bowing their heads slightly, murmuring in their slow musical voices, and looking long and intently at the strangers, then the hobbits saw that they were all of the same kindred, and all had the same eyes: not all



so old or so deep as Treebeard's, but all with the same slow, steady, thoughtful expression, and the same green flicker.

As soon as the whole company was assembled, standing in a wide circle round Treebeard, a curious and unintelligible conversation began. The Ents began to murmur slowly: first one joined and then another, until they were all chanting together in a long rising and falling rhythm, now louder on one side of the ring, now dying away there and rising to a great boom on the other side. Though he could not catch or understand any of the words—he supposed the language was Entish—Pippin found the sound very pleasant to listen to at first; but gradually his attention wavered. After a long time (and the chant showed no signs of slackening) he found himself wondering, since Entish was such an 'unhasty' language, whether they had yet got further than *Good Morning*; and if Treebeard was to call the roll, how many days it would take to sing all their names. 'I wonder what the Entish is for *yes* or *no*,' he thought. He yawned.

Treebeard was immediately aware of him. 'Hm, ha, hey, my Pippin!' he said, and the other Ents all stopped their chant. 'You are a hasty folk, I was forgetting; and anyway it is wearisome listening to a speech you do not understand. You may get down now. I have told your names to the Entmoot, and they have seen you, and they have agreed that you are not Orcs, and that a new line shall be put in the old lists. We have got no further yet, but that is quick work for an Entmoot. You and Merry can stroll about in the dingle, if you like. There is a well of good water, if you need refreshing, away yonder in the north bank. There are still some words to speak before the Moot really begins. I will come and see you again, and tell you how things are going.'

He put the hobbits down. Before they walked away, they bowed low. This feat seemed to amuse the Ents very much, to judge by the tone of their murmurs, and the flicker of their eyes; but they soon turned back to their own business. Merry and Pippin climbed up the path that came in from the west, and looked through the opening in the great hedge. Long tree-clad slopes rose from the lip of the dingle, and away beyond them, above the fir-trees of the furthest ridge there rose, sharp and white, the peak of a high mountain. Southwards to their left they could see the forest falling away down into the grey distance. There far away there was a pale green glimmer that Merry guessed to be a glimpse of the plains of Rohan.

'I wonder where Isengard is?' said Pippin.

'I don't know quite where we are,' said Merry; 'but that peak is probably Methedras, and as far as I can remember the ring of Isengard lies in a fork or deep cleft at the end of the mountains. It is probably down behind this great ridge. There seems to be a smoke or haze over there, left of the peak, don't you think?'

'What is Isengard like?' said Pippin. 'I wonder what Ents can do about it anyway.'

'So do I,' said Merry. 'Isengard is a sort of ring of rocks or hills, I think, with a flat space inside and an island or pillar of rock in the middle, called Orthanc. Saruman has a tower on it. There is a gate, perhaps more than one, in the encircling wall, and I believe there is a stream running through it; it comes out of the mountains, and flows on across the Gap of Rohan. It does not seem the sort of place for Ents to tackle. But I have an odd feeling about these Ents: somehow I don't think they are quite as safe and, well, funny as they seem. They seem slow, queer, and patient, almost sad; and yet I believe they *could* be roused. If that happened, I would rather not be on the other side.'

'Yes!' said Pippin. 'I know what you mean. There might be all the difference between an old cow sitting and thoughtfully chewing, and a bull charging; and the change might come suddenly. I wonder if Treebeard will rouse them. I am sure he means to try. But they don't like being roused. Treebeard got roused himself last night, and then bottled it up again.'

The hobbits turned back. The voices of the Ents were still rising and falling in their conclave. The sun had now risen high enough to look over the high hedge: it gleamed on the tops of the birches and lit the northward side of the dingle with a cool yellow light. There they saw a little glittering fountain. They walked along the rim of the great bowl at the feet of the evergreens—it was pleasant to feel cool grass about their toes again, and not to be in a hurry—and then they climbed down to the gushing water. They drank a little, a clean, cold, sharp draught, and sat down on a mossy stone, watching the patches of sun on the grass and the shadows of the sailing clouds passing over the floor of the dingle. The murmur of the Ents went on. It seemed a very strange

and remote place, outside their world, and far from everything that had ever happened to them. A great longing came over them for the faces and voices of their companions, especially for Frodo and Sam, and for Strider.

At last there came a pause in the Ent-voices; and looking up they saw Treebeard coming towards them, with another Ent at his side.

‘Hm, hoom, here I am again,’ said Treebeard. ‘Are you getting weary, or feeling impatient, hmm, eh? Well, I am afraid that you must not get impatient yet. We have finished the first stage now; but I have still got to explain things again to those that live a long way off, far from Isengard, and those that I could not get round to before the Moot, and after that we shall have to decide what to do. However, deciding what to do does not take Ents so long as going over all the facts and events that they have to make up their minds about. Still, it is no use denying, we shall be here a long time yet: a couple of days very likely. So I have brought you a companion. He has an ent-house nearby. Bregalad is his Elvish name. He says he has already made up his mind and does not need to remain at the Moot. Hm, hm, he is the nearest thing among us to a hasty Ent. You ought to get on together. Good-bye!’ Treebeard turned and left them.

Bregalad stood for some time surveying the hobbits solemnly; and they looked at him, wondering when he would show any signs of ‘hastiness’. He was tall, and seemed to be one of the younger Ents; he had smooth shining skin on his arms and legs; his lips were ruddy, and his hair was grey-green. He could bend and sway like a slender tree in the wind. At last he spoke, and his voice though resonant was higher and clearer than Treebeard’s.

‘Ha, hmm, my friends, let us go for a walk!’ he said. ‘I am Bregalad, that is Quickbeam in your language. But it is only a nickname, of course. They have called me that ever since I said *yes* to an elder Ent before he had finished his question. Also I drink quickly, and go out while some are still wetting their beards. Come with me!’

He reached down two shapely arms and gave a long-fingered hand to each of the hobbits. All that day they walked about, in the woods with him, singing, and laughing; for Quickbeam often laughed. He laughed if the sun came out from behind a cloud, he laughed if they came upon a stream or spring: then he stooped and splashed his feet and head with water; he laughed sometimes at some sound or whisper in the trees. Whenever he saw a rowan-tree he halted a while with his arms stretched out, and sang, and swayed as he sang.

At nightfall he brought them to his ent-house: nothing more than a mossy stone set upon turves under a green bank. Rowan-trees grew in a circle about it, and there was water (as in all ent-houses), a spring bubbling out from the bank. They talked for a while as darkness fell on the forest. Not far away the voices of the Entmoot could be heard still going on; but now they seemed deeper and less leisurely, and every now and again one great voice would rise in a high and quickening music, while all the others died away. But beside them Bregalad spoke gently in their own tongue, almost whispering; and they learned that he belonged to Skinbark’s people, and the country where they had lived had been ravaged. That seemed to the hobbits quite enough to explain his ‘hastiness’, at least in the matter of Orcs.

‘There were rowan-trees in my home,’ said Bregalad, softly and sadly, ‘rowan-trees that took root when I was an Enting, many many years ago in the quiet of the world. The oldest were planted by the Ents to try and please the Entwives; but they looked at them and smiled and said that they knew where whiter blossom and richer fruit were growing. Yet there are no trees of all that race, the people of the Rose, that are so beautiful to me. And these trees grew and grew, till the shadow of each was like a green hall, and their red berries in the autumn were a burden, and a beauty and a wonder. Birds used to flock there. I like birds, even when they chatter; and the rowan has enough and to spare. But the birds became unfriendly and greedy and tore at the trees, and threw the fruit down and did not eat it. Then Orcs came with axes and cut down my trees. I came and called them by their long names, but they did not quiver, they did not hear or answer: they lay dead.

*O Orofarnë Lassemista, Carnimírië!  
O rowan fair, upon your hair how white the blossom lay!  
O rowan mine, I saw you shine upon a summer’s day,  
Your rind so bright, your leaves so light, your voice so cool and soft:  
Upon your head how golden-red the crown you bore aloft!  
O rowan dead, upon your head your hair is dry and grey;*

*Your crown is spilled, your voice is stilled for ever and a day.  
O Orofarnë Lassemista, Carnimírië!*

The hobbits fell asleep to the sound of the soft singing of Bregalad, that seemed to lament in many tongues the fall of trees that he had loved.

The next day they spent also in his company, but they did not go far from his 'house'. Most of the time they sat silent under the shelter of the bank; for the wind was colder, and the clouds closer and greyer; there was little sunshine, and in the distance the voices of the Ents at the Moot still rose and fell, sometimes loud and strong, sometimes low and sad, sometimes quickening, sometimes slow and solemn as a dirge. A second night came and still the Ents held conclave under hurrying clouds and fitful stars.

The third day broke, bleak and windy. At sunrise the Ents' voices rose to a great clamour and then died down again. As the morning wore on the wind fell and the air grew heavy with expectancy. The hobbits could see that Bregalad was now listening intently, although to them, down in the dell of his ent-house, the sound of the Moot was faint.

The afternoon came, and the sun, going west towards the mountains, sent out long yellow beams between the cracks and fissures of the clouds. Suddenly they were aware that everything was very quiet; the whole forest stood in listening silence. Of course, the Ent-voices had stopped. What did that mean? Bregalad was standing up erect and tense, looking back northwards towards Derndingle.

Then with a crash came a great ringing shout: *ra-hoom-rah!* The trees quivered and bent as if a gust had struck them. There was another pause, and then a marching music began like solemn drums, and above the rolling beats and booms there welled voices singing high and strong.

*We come, we come with roll of drum: ta-runda runda runda rom!*

The Ents were coming: ever nearer and louder rose their song:

*We come, we come with horn and drum: ta-run a run a run a rom!*

Bregalad picked up the hobbits and strode from his house.

Before long they saw the marching line approaching: the Ents were swinging along with great strides down the slope towards them. Treebeard was at their head, and some fifty followers were behind him, two abreast, keeping step with their feet and beating time with their hands upon their flanks. As they drew near the flash and flicker of their eyes could be seen.

'Hoom, hom! Here we come with a boom, here we come at last!' called Treebeard when he caught sight of Bregalad and the hobbits. 'Come, join the Moot! We are off. We are off to Isengard!'

'To Isengard!' the Ents cried in many voices.

'To Isengard!'

*To Isengard! Though Isengard be ringed and barred with doors of stone;  
Though Isengard be strong and hard, as cold as stone and bare as bone,  
We go, we go, we go to war, to hew the stone and break the door;  
For bole and bough are burning now, the furnace roars—we go to war!  
To land of gloom with tramp of doom, with roll of drum, we come, we come;  
To Isengard with doom we come!  
With doom we come, with doom we come!*

So they sang as they marched southwards.

Bregalad, his eyes shining, swung into the line beside Treebeard. The old Ent now took the hobbits back, and set them on his shoulders again, and so they rode proudly at the head of the singing company with beating hearts and heads held high. Though they had expected something to happen eventually, they were amazed at the change that had come over the Ents. It seemed now as sudden as the bursting of a flood that had long been held back by a dike.

‘The Ents made up their minds rather quickly, after all, didn’t they?’ Pippin ventured to say after some time, when for a moment the singing paused, and only the beating of hands and feet was heard.

‘Quickly?’ said Treebeard. ‘Hoom! Yes, indeed. Quicker than I expected. Indeed I have not seen them roused like this for many an age. We Ents do not like being roused; and we never are roused unless it is clear to us that our trees and our lives are in great danger. That has not happened in this Forest since the wars of Sauron and the Men of the Sea. It is the orc-work, the wanton hewing—*rárum*—without even the bad excuse of feeding the fires, that has so angered us; and the treachery of a neighbour, who should have helped us. Wizards ought to know better: they do know better. There is no curse in Elvish, Entish, or the tongues of Men bad enough for such treachery. Down with Saruman!’

‘Will you really break the doors of Isengard?’ asked Merry.

‘Ho, hm, well, we could, you know! You do not know, perhaps, how strong we are. Maybe you have heard of Trolls? They are mighty strong. But Trolls are only counterfeits, made by the Enemy in the Great Darkness, in mockery of Ents, as Orcs were of Elves. We are stronger than Trolls. We are made of the bones of the earth. We can split stone like the roots of trees, only quicker, far quicker, if our minds are roused! If we are not hewn down, or destroyed by fire or blast of sorcery, we could split Isengard into splinters and crack its walls into rubble.’

‘But Saruman will try to stop you, won’t he?’

‘Hm, ah, yes, that is so. I have not forgotten it. Indeed I have thought long about it. But, you see, many of the Ents are younger than I am, by many lives of trees. They are all roused now, and their mind is all on one thing: breaking Isengard. But they will start thinking again before long; they will cool down a little, when we take our evening drink. What a thirst we shall have! But let them march now and sing! We have a long way to go, and there is time ahead for thought. It is something to have started.’

Treebeard marched on, singing with the others for a while. But after a time his voice died to a murmur and fell silent again. Pippin could see that his old brow was wrinkled and knotted. At last he looked up, and Pippin could see a sad look in his eyes, sad but not unhappy. There was a light in them, as if the green flame had sunk deeper into the dark wells of his thought.

‘Of course, it is likely enough, my friends,’ he said slowly, ‘likely enough that we are going to our doom: the last march of the Ents. But if we stayed at home and did nothing, doom would find us anyway, sooner or later. That thought has long been growing in our hearts; and that is why we are marching now. It was not a hasty resolve. Now at least the last march of the Ents may be worth a song. Aye,’ he sighed, ‘we may help the other peoples before we pass away. Still, I should have liked to see the songs come true about the Entwives. I should dearly have liked to see Fimbrelthil again. But there, my friends, songs like trees bear fruit only in their own time and their own way: and sometimes they are withered untimely.’

The Ents went striding on at a great pace. They had descended into a long fold of the land that fell away southward; now they began to climb up, and up, on to the high western ridge. The woods fell away and they came to scattered groups of birch, and then to bare slopes where only a few gaunt pine-trees grew. The sun sank behind the dark hill-back in front. Grey dusk fell.

Pippin looked behind. The number of the Ents had grown—or what was happening? Where the dim bare slopes that they had crossed should lie, he thought he saw groves of trees. But they were moving! Could it be that the trees of Fangorn were awake, and the forest was rising, marching over the hills to war? He rubbed his eyes wondering if sleep and shadow had deceived him; but the great grey shapes moved steadily onward. There was a noise like wind in many branches. The Ents were drawing near the crest of the ridge now, and all song had ceased. Night fell, and there was silence: nothing was to be heard save a faint quiver of the earth beneath the feet of the Ents, and a rustle, the shade of a whisper as of many drifting leaves. At last they stood upon the summit, and looked down into a dark pit: the great cleft at the end of the mountains: Nan Curunír, the Valley of Saruman.

‘Night lies over Isengard,’ said Treebeard.



## Chapter 5: The White Rider

‘My very bones are chilled,’ said Gimli, flapping his arms and stamping his feet. Day had come at last. At dawn the companions had made such breakfast as they could; now in the growing light they were getting ready to search the ground again for signs of the hobbits.

‘And do not forget that old man!’ said Gimli. ‘I should be happier if I could see the print of a boot.’

‘Why would that make you happy?’ said Legolas.

‘Because an old man with feet that leave marks might be no more than he seemed,’ answered the Dwarf.

‘Maybe,’ said the Elf; ‘but a heavy boot might leave no print here: the grass is deep and springy.’

‘That would not baffle a Ranger,’ said Gimli. ‘A bent blade is enough for Aragorn to read. But I do not expect him to find any traces. It was an evil phantom of Saruman that we saw last night. I am sure of it, even under the light of morning. His eyes are looking out on us from Fangorn even now, maybe.’

‘It is likely enough,’ said Aragorn; ‘yet I am not sure. I am thinking of the horses. You said last night, Gimli, that they were scared away. But I did not think so. Did you hear them, Legolas? Did they sound to you like beasts in terror?’

‘No,’ said Legolas. ‘I heard them clearly. But for the darkness and our own fear I should have guessed that they were beasts wild with some sudden gladness. They spoke as horses will when they meet a friend that they have long missed.’

‘So I thought,’ said Aragorn; ‘but I cannot read the riddle, unless they return. Come! The light is growing fast. Let us look first and guess later! We should begin here, near to our own camping-ground, searching carefully all about, and working up the slope towards the forest. To find the hobbits is our errand, whatever we may think of our visitor in the night. If they escaped by some chance, then they must have hidden in the trees, or they would have been seen. If we find nothing between here and the eaves of the wood, then we will make a last search upon the battle-field and among the ashes. But there is little hope there: the horsemen of Rohan did their work too well’

For some time the companions crawled and groped upon the ground. The tree stood mournfully above them, its dry leaves now hanging limp, and rattling in the chill easterly wind. Aragorn moved slowly away. He came to the ashes of the watch-fire near the river-bank, and then began to retrace the ground back towards the knoll where the battle had been fought. Suddenly he stooped and bent low with his face almost in the grass. Then he called to the others. They came running up.

‘Here at last we find news!’ said Aragorn. He lifted up a broken leaf for them to see, a large pale leaf of golden hue, now fading and turning brown. ‘Here is a mallorn-leaf of Lórien, and there are small crumbs on it, and a few more crumbs in the grass. And see! there are some pieces of cut cord lying nearby!’

‘And here is the knife that cut them!’ said Gimli. He stooped and drew out of a tussock, into which some heavy foot had trampled it, a short jagged blade. The haft from which it had been snapped was beside it. ‘It was an orc-weapon,’ he said, holding it gingerly, and looking with disgust at the carved handle: it had been shaped like a hideous head with squinting eyes and leering mouth.

‘Well, here is the strangest riddle that we have yet found!’ exclaimed Legolas. ‘A bound prisoner escapes both from the Orcs and from the surrounding horsemen. He then stops, while still in the open, and cuts his bonds with an orc-knife. But how and why? For if his legs were tied, how did he walk? And if his arms were tied, how did he use the knife? And if neither were tied, why did he cut the cords at all? Being pleased with his skill, he

then sat down and quietly ate some waybread! That at least is enough to show that he was a hobbit, without the mallorn-leaf. After that, I suppose, he turned his arms into wings and flew away singing into the trees. It should be easy to find him: we only need wings ourselves!’

‘There was sorcery here right enough,’ said Gimli. ‘What was that old man doing? What have you to say, Aragorn, to the reading of Legolas. Can you better it?’

‘Maybe, I could,’ said Aragorn, smiling. ‘There are some other signs near at hand that you have not considered. I agree that the prisoner was a hobbit and must have had either legs or hands free, before he came here. I guess that it was hands, because the riddle then becomes easier, and also because, as I read the marks, he was *carried* to this point by an Orc. Blood was spilled there, a few paces away, orc-blood. There are deep prints of hoofs all about this spot, and signs that a heavy thing was dragged away. The Orc was slain by horsemen, and later his body was hauled to the fire. But the hobbit was not seen: he was not “in the open”, for it was night and he still had his elven-cloak. He was exhausted and hungry, and it is not to be wondered at that, when he had cut his bonds with the knife of his fallen enemy, he rested and ate a little before he crept away. But it is a comfort to know that he had some *lembas* in his pocket, even though he ran away without gear or pack; that, perhaps, is like a hobbit. I say *he*, though I hope and guess that both Merry and Pippin were here together. There is, however, nothing to show that for certain.’

‘And how do you suppose that either of our friends came to have a hand free?’ asked Gimli.

‘I do not know how it happened,’ answered Aragorn. ‘Nor do I know why an Orc was carrying them away. Not to help them to escape, we may be sure. Nay, rather I think that I now begin to understand a matter that has puzzled me from the beginning: why when Boromir had fallen were the Orcs content with the capture of Merry and Pippin? They did not seek out the rest of us, nor attack our camp; but instead they went with all speed towards Isengard. Did they suppose they had captured the Ring-bearer and his faithful comrade? I think not. Their masters would not dare to give such plain orders to Orcs, even if they knew so much themselves; they would not speak openly to them of the Ring: they are not trusty servants. But I think the Orcs had been commanded to capture *hobbits*, alive, at all costs. An attempt was made to slip out with the precious prisoners before the battle. Treachery perhaps, likely enough with such folk; some large and bold Orc may have been trying to escape with the prize alone, for his own ends. There, that is my tale. Others might be devised. But on this we may count in any case: one at least of our friends escaped. It is our task to find him and help him before we return to Rohan. We must not be daunted by Fangorn, since need drove him into that dark place.’

‘I do not know which daunts me more: Fangorn, or the thought of the long road through Rohan on foot,’ said Gimli.

‘Then let us go to the forest,’ said Aragorn.

It was not long before Aragorn found fresh signs. At one point, near the bank of the Entwash, he came upon footprints: hobbit-prints, but too light for much to be made of them. Then again beneath the bole of a great tree on the very edge of the wood more prints were discovered. The earth was bare and dry, and did not reveal much.

‘One hobbit at least stood here for a while and looked back; and then he turned away into the forest,’ said Aragorn.

‘Then we must go in, too,’ said Gimli. ‘But I do not like the look of this Fangorn; and we were warned against it. I wish the chase had led anywhere else!’

‘I do not think the wood feels evil, whatever tales may say,’ said Legolas. He stood under the eaves of the forest, stooping forward, as if he were listening, and peering with wide eyes into the shadows. ‘No, it is not evil; or what evil is in it is far away. I catch only the faintest echoes of dark places where the hearts of the trees are black. There is no malice near us; but there is watchfulness, and anger.’

‘Well, it has no cause to be angry with me,’ said Gimli. ‘I have done it no harm.’

‘That is just as well,’ said Legolas. ‘But nonetheless it has suffered harm. There is something happening inside, or going to happen. Do you not feel the tenseness? It takes my breath.’

‘I feel the air is stuffy,’ said the Dwarf. ‘This wood is lighter than Mirkwood, but it is musty and shabby.’

‘It is old, very old,’ said the Elf. ‘So old that almost I feel young again, as I have not felt since I journeyed with you children. It is old and full of memory. I could have been happy here, if I had come in days of peace.’

‘I dare say you could,’ snorted Gimli. ‘You are a Wood-elf, anyway, though Elves of any kind are strange folk. Yet you comfort me. Where you go, I will go. But keep your bow ready to hand, and I will keep my axe loose in my belt. Not for use on trees,’ he added hastily, looking up at the tree under which they stood. ‘I do not wish to meet that old man at unawares without an argument ready to hand, that is all. Let us go!’

With that the three hunters plunged into the forest of Fangorn. Legolas and Gimli left the tracking to Aragorn. There was little for him to see. The floor of the forest was dry and covered with a drift of leaves; but guessing that the fugitives would stay near the water, he returned often to the banks of the stream. So it was that he came upon the place where Merry and Pippin had drunk and bathed their feet. There plain for all to see were the footprints of two hobbits, one somewhat smaller than the other.

‘This is good tidings,’ said Aragorn. ‘Yet the marks are two days old. And it seems that at this point the hobbits left the waterside.’

‘Then what shall we do now?’ said Gimli. ‘We cannot pursue them through the whole fastness of Fangorn. We have come ill supplied. If we do not find them soon, we shall be of no use to them, except to sit down beside them and show our friendship by starving together.’

‘If that is indeed all we can do, then we must do that,’ said Aragorn. ‘Let us go on.’

They came at length to the steep abrupt end of Treebeard’s Hill, and looked up at the rock-wall with its rough steps leading to the high shelf. Gleams of sun were striking through the hurrying clouds, and the forest now looked less grey and drear.

‘Let us go up and look about us!’ said Legolas. ‘I still feel my breath short. I should like to taste a freer air for a while.’

The companions climbed up. Aragorn came last, moving slowly: he was scanning the steps and ledges closely.

‘I am almost sure that the hobbits have been up here,’ he said. ‘But there are other marks, very strange marks, which I do not understand. I wonder if we can see anything from this ledge which will help us to guess which way they went next?’

He stood up and looked about, but he saw nothing that was of any use. The shelf faced southward and eastward; but only on the east was the view open. There he could see the heads of the trees descending in ranks towards the plain from which they had come.

‘We have journeyed a long way round,’ said Legolas. ‘We could have all come here safe together, if we had left the Great River on the second or third day and struck west. Few can foresee whither their road will lead them, till they come to its end.’

‘But we did not wish to come to Fangorn,’ said Gimli.

‘Yet here we are—and nicely caught in the net,’ said Legolas. ‘Look!’

‘Look at what?’ said Gimli.

‘There in the trees.’

‘Where? I have not elf-eyes.’

‘Hush! Speak more softly! Look!’ said Legolas pointing. ‘Down in the wood, back in the way that we have just come. It is he. Cannot you see him, passing from tree to tree?’

‘I see, I see now!’ hissed Gimli. ‘Look, Aragorn! Did I not warn you? There is the old man. All in dirty grey rags: that is why I could not see him at first.’

Aragorn looked and beheld a bent figure moving slowly. It was not far away. It looked like an old beggar-man, walking wearily, leaning on a rough staff. His head was bowed, and he did not look towards them. In other

lands they would have greeted him with kind words; but now they stood silent, each feeling a strange expectancy: something was approaching that held a hidden power—or menace.

Gimli gazed with wide eyes for a while, as step by step the figure drew nearer. Then suddenly, unable to contain himself longer, he burst out: ‘Your bow, Legolas! Bend it! Get ready! It is Saruman. Do not let him speak, or put a spell upon us! Shoot first!’

Legolas took his bow and bent it, slowly and as if some other will resisted him. He held an arrow loosely in his hand but did not fit it to the string. Aragorn stood silent, his face was watchful and intent.

‘Why are you waiting? What is the matter with you?’ said Gimli in a hissing whisper.

‘Legolas is right,’ said Aragorn quietly. ‘We may not shoot an old man so, at unawares and unchallenged, whatever fear or doubt be on us. Watch and wait!’

At that moment the old man quickened his pace and came with surprising speed to the foot of the rock-wall. Then suddenly he looked up, while they stood motionless looking down. There was no sound.

They could not see his face: he was hooded, and above the hood he wore a wide-brimmed hat, so that all his features were overshadowed, except for the end of his nose and his grey beard. Yet it seemed to Aragorn that he caught the gleam of eyes keen and bright from within the shadow of the hooded brows.

At last the old man broke the silence. ‘Well met indeed, my friends,’ he said in a soft voice. ‘I wish to speak to you. Will you come down, or shall I come up?’ Without waiting for an answer he began to climb.

‘Now!’ cried Gimli. ‘Stop him, Legolas!’

‘Did I not say that I wished to speak to you?’ said the old man. ‘Put away that bow, Master Elf!’

The bow and arrow fell from Legolas’ hands, and his arms hung loose at his sides.

‘And you, Master Dwarf, pray take your hand from your axe-haft, till I am up! You will not need such arguments.’

Gimli started and then stood still as stone, staring, while the old man sprang up the rough steps as nimbly as a goat. All weariness seemed to have left him. As he stepped up on to the shelf there was a gleam, too brief for certainty, a quick glint of white, as if some garment shrouded by the grey rags had been for an instant revealed. The intake of Gimli’s breath could be heard as a loud hiss in the silence.

‘Well met, I say again!’ said the old man, coming towards them. When he was a few feet away, he stood, stooping over his staff, with his head thrust forward, peering at them from under his hood. ‘And what may you be doing in these parts? An Elf, a Man, and a Dwarf, all clad in Elvish fashion. No doubt there is a tale worth hearing behind it all. Such things are not often seen here.’

‘You speak as one that knows Fangorn well,’ said Aragorn. ‘Is that so?’

‘Not well,’ said the old man: ‘that would be the study of many lives. But I come here now and again.’

‘Might we know your name, and then hear what it is that you have to say to us?’ said Aragorn. ‘The morning passes, and we have an errand that will not wait.’

‘As for what I wished to say, I have said it: What may you be doing, and what tale can you tell of yourselves? As for my name!’ He broke off, laughing long and softly. Aragorn felt a shudder run through him at the sound, a strange cold thrill; and yet it was not fear or terror that he felt: rather it was like the sudden bite of a keen air, or the slap of a cold rain that wakes an uneasy sleeper.

‘My name!’ said the old man again. ‘Have you not guessed it already? You have heard it before, I think. Yes, you have heard it before. But come now, what of your tale?’

The three companions stood silent and made no answer.

‘There are some who would begin to doubt whether your errand is fit to tell,’ said the old man. ‘Happily I know something of it. You are tracking the footsteps of two young hobbits, I believe. Yes, hobbits. Don’t stare, as if you had never heard the strange name before. You have, and so have I. Well, they climbed up here the day



before yesterday; and they met someone that they did not expect. Does that comfort you? And now you would like to know where they were taken? Well, well, maybe I can give you some news about that. But why are we standing? Your errand, you see, is no longer as urgent as you thought. Let us sit down and be more at ease.'

The old man turned away and went towards a heap of fallen stones and rock at the foot of the cliff behind. Immediately, as if a spell had been removed, the others relaxed and stirred. Gimli's hand went at once to his axe-haft. Aragorn drew his sword. Legolas picked up his bow.

The old man took no notice, but stooped and sat himself on a low flat stone. Then his grey cloak drew apart, and they saw, beyond doubt, that he was clothed beneath all in white.

'Saruman!' cried Gimli, springing towards him with axe in hand. 'Speak! Tell us where you have hidden our friends! What have you done with them? Speak, or I will make a dint in your hat that even a wizard will find it hard to deal with!'

The old man was too quick for him. He sprang to his feet and leaped to the top of a large rock. There he stood, grown suddenly tall, towering above them. His hood and his grey rags were flung away. His white garments shone. He lifted up his staff, and Gimli's axe leaped from his grasp and fell ringing on the ground. The sword of Aragorn, stiff in his motionless hand, blazed with a sudden fire. Legolas gave a great shout and shot an arrow high into the air: it vanished in a flash of flame.

'Mithrandir!' he cried. 'Mithrandir!'

'Well met, I say to you again, Legolas!' said the old man.

They all gazed at him. His hair was white as snow in the sunshine; and gleaming white was his robe; the eyes under his deep brows were bright, piercing as the rays of the sun; power was in his hand. Between wonder, joy, and fear they stood and found no words to say.

At last Aragorn stirred. 'Gandalf!' he said. 'Beyond all hope you return to us in our need! What veil was over my sight? Gandalf!' Gimli said nothing, but sank to his knees, shading his eyes.

'Gandalf,' the old man repeated, as if recalling from old memory a long disused word. 'Yes, that was the name. I was Gandalf.'

He stepped down from the rock, and picking up his grey cloak wrapped it about him: it seemed as if the sun had been shining, but now was hid in cloud again. 'Yes, you may still call me Gandalf,' he said, and the voice was the voice of their old friend and guide. 'Get up, my good Gimli! No blame to you, and no harm done to me. Indeed my friends, none of you have any weapon that could hurt me. Be merry! We meet again. At the turn of the tide. The great storm is coming, but the tide has turned.'

He laid his hand on Gimli's head, and the Dwarf looked up and laughed suddenly. 'Gandalf!' he said. 'But you are all in white!'

'Yes, I am white now,' said Gandalf. 'Indeed I *am* Saruman, one might almost say, Saruman as he should have been. But come now, tell me of yourselves! I have passed through fire and deep water, since we parted. I have forgotten much that I thought I knew, and learned again much that I had forgotten. I can see many things far off, but many things that are close at hand I cannot see. Tell me of yourselves!'

'What do you wish to know?' said Aragorn. 'All that has happened since we parted on the bridge would be a long tale. Will you not first give us news of the hobbits? Did you find them, and are they safe?'

'No, I did not find them,' said Gandalf. 'There was a darkness over the valleys of the Eryn Muil, and I did not know of their captivity, until the eagle told me.'

'The eagle!' said Legolas. 'I have seen an eagle high and far off: the last time was four days ago, above the Eryn Muil.'

'Yes,' said Gandalf, 'that was Gwaihir the Windlord, who rescued me from Orthanc. I sent him before me to watch the River and gather tidings. His sight is keen, but he cannot see all that passes under hill and tree. Some things he has seen, and others I have seen myself. The Ring now has passed beyond my help, or the help of any

of the Company that set out from Rivendell. Very nearly it was revealed to the Enemy, but it escaped. I had some part in that: for I sat in a high place, and I strove with the Dark Tower; and the Shadow passed. Then I was weary, very weary; and I walked long in dark thought.'

'Then you know about Frodo!' said Gimli. 'How do things go with him?'

'I cannot say. He was saved from a great peril, but many lie before him still. He resolved to go alone to Mordor, and he set out: that is all that I can say.'

'Not alone,' said Legolas. 'We think that Sam went with him.' 'Did he!' said Gandalf, and there was a gleam in his eye and a smile on his face. 'Did he indeed? It is news to me, yet it does not surprise me. Good! Very good! You lighten my heart. You must tell me more. Now sit by me and tell me the tale of your journey.'

The companions sat on the ground at his feet, and Aragorn took up the tale. For a long while Gandalf said nothing, and he asked no questions. His hands were spread upon his knees, and his eyes were closed. At last when Aragorn spoke of the death of Boromir and of his last journey upon the Great River, the old man sighed.

'You have not said all that you know or guess, Aragorn my friend,' he said quietly. 'Poor Boromir! I could not see what happened to him. It was a sore trial for such a man: a warrior, and a lord of men. Galadriel told me that he was in peril. But he escaped in the end. I am glad. It was not in vain that the young hobbits came with us, if only for Boromir's sake. But that is not the only part they have to play. They were brought to Fangorn, and their coming was like the falling of small stones that starts an avalanche in the mountains. Even as we talk here, I hear the first rumblings. Saruman had best not be caught away from home when the dam bursts!'

'In one thing you have not changed, dear friend,' said Aragorn: 'you still speak in riddles.'

'What? In riddles?' said Gandalf. 'No! For I was talking aloud to myself. A habit of the old: they choose the wisest person present to speak to; the long explanations needed by the young are wearying.' He laughed, but the sound now seemed warm and kindly as a gleam of sunshine.

'I am no longer young even in the reckoning of Men of the Ancient Houses,' said Aragorn. 'Will you not open your mind more clearly to me?'

'What then shall I say?' said Gandalf, and paused for a while in thought. 'This in brief is how I see things at the moment, if you wish to have a piece of my mind as plain as possible. The Enemy, of course, has long known that the Ring is abroad, and that it is borne by a hobbit. He knows now the number of our Company that set out from Rivendell, and the kind of each of us. But he does not yet perceive our purpose clearly. He supposes that we were all going to Minas Tirith; for that is what he would himself have done in our place. And according to his wisdom it would have been a heavy stroke against his power. Indeed he is in great fear, not knowing what mighty one may suddenly appear, wielding the Ring, and assailing him with war, seeking to cast him down and take his place. That we should wish to cast him down and have *no*-one in his place is not a thought that occurs to his mind. That we should try to destroy the Ring itself has not yet entered into his darkest dream. In which no doubt you will see our good fortune and our hope. For imagining war he has let loose war, believing that he has no time to waste; for he that strikes the first blow, if he strikes it hard enough, may need to strike no more. So the forces that he has long been preparing he is now setting in motion, sooner than he intended. Wise fool. For if he had used all his power to guard Mordor, so that none could enter, and bent all his guile to the hunting of the Ring, then indeed hope would have faded: neither Ring nor bearer could long have eluded him. But now his eye gazes abroad rather than near at home; and mostly he looks towards Minas Tirith. Very soon now his strength will fall upon it like a storm.'

'For already he knows that the messengers that he sent to waylay the Company have failed again. They have not found the Ring. Neither have they brought away any hobbits as hostages. Had they done even so much as that, it would have been a heavy blow to us, and it might have been fatal. But let us not darken our hearts by imagining the trial of their gentle loyalty in the Dark Tower. For the Enemy has failed—so far. Thanks to Saruman.'

'Then is not Saruman a traitor?' said Gimli.

‘Indeed yes,’ said Gandalf. ‘Doubly. And is not that strange? Nothing that we have endured of late has seemed so grievous as the treason of Isengard. Even reckoned as a lord and captain Saruman has grown very strong. He threatens the Men of Rohan and draws off their help from Minas Tirith, even as the main blow is approaching from the East. Yet a treacherous weapon is ever a danger to the hand. Saruman also had a mind to capture the Ring, for himself, or at least to snare some hobbits for his evil purposes. So between them our enemies have contrived only to bring Merry and Pippin with marvellous speed, and in the nick of time, to Fangorn, where otherwise they would never have come at all!’

‘Also they have filled themselves with new doubts that disturb their plans. No tidings of the battle will come to Mordor, thanks to the horsemen of Rohan; but the Dark Lord knows that two hobbits were taken in the Eryn Muil and borne away towards Isengard against the will of his own servants. He now has Isengard to fear as well as Minas Tirith. If Minas Tirith falls, it will go ill with Saruman.’

‘It is a pity that our friends lie in between,’ said Gimli. ‘If no land divided Isengard and Mordor, then they could fight while we watched and waited.’

‘The victor would emerge stronger than either, and free from doubt,’ said Gandalf. ‘But Isengard cannot fight Mordor, unless Saruman first obtains the Ring. That he will never do now. He does not yet know his peril. There is much that he does not know. He was so eager to lay his hands on his prey that he could not wait at home, and he came forth to meet and to spy on his messengers. But he came too late, for once, and the battle was over and beyond his help before he reached these parts. He did not remain here long. I look into his mind and I see his doubt. He has no woodcraft. He believes that the horsemen slew and burned all upon the field of battle; but he does not know whether the Orcs were bringing any prisoners or not. And he does not know of the quarrel between his servants and the Orcs of Mordor; nor does he know of the Winged Messenger.’

‘The Winged Messenger!’ cried Legolas. ‘I shot at him with the bow of Galadriel above Sarn Gebir, and I felled him from the sky. He filled us all with fear. What new terror is this?’

‘One that you cannot slay with arrows,’ said Gandalf. ‘You only slew his steed. It was a good deed; but the Rider was soon horsed again. For he was a Nazgûl, one of the Nine, who ride now upon winged steeds. Soon their terror will overshadow the last armies of our friends, cutting off the sun. But they have not yet been allowed to cross the River, and Saruman does not know of this new shape in which the Ringwraiths have been clad. His thought is ever on the Ring. Was it present in the battle? Was it found? What if Théoden, Lord of the Mark, should come by it and learn of its power? That is the danger that he sees, and he has fled back to Isengard to double and treble his assault on Rohan. And all the time there is another danger, close at hand, which he does not see, busy with his fiery thoughts. He has forgotten Treebeard.’

‘Now you speak to yourself again,’ said Aragorn with a smile. ‘Treebeard is not known to me. And I have guessed part of Saruman’s double treachery; yet I do not see in what way the coming of two hobbits to Fangorn has served, save to give us a long and fruitless chase.’

‘Wait a minute!’ cried Gimli. ‘There is another thing that I should like to know first. Was it you, Gandalf, or Saruman that we saw last night?’

‘You certainly did not see me,’ answered Gandalf, ‘therefore I must guess that you saw Saruman. Evidently we look so much alike that your desire to make an incurable dent in my hat must be excused.’

‘Good, good!’ said Gimli. ‘I am glad that it was not you.’

Gandalf laughed again. ‘Yes, my good Dwarf,’ he said, ‘it is a comfort not to be mistaken at all points. Do I not know it only too well! But, of course, I never blamed you for your welcome of me. How could I do so, who have so often counselled my friends to suspect even their own hands when dealing with the Enemy. Bless you, Gimli, son of Glóin! Maybe you will see us both together one day and judge between us!’

‘But the hobbits!’ Legolas broke in. ‘We have come far to seek them, and you seem to know where they are. Where are they now?’

‘With Treebeard and the Ents,’ said Gandalf.

‘The Ents!’ exclaimed Aragorn. ‘Then there is truth in the old legends about the dwellers in the deep forests and the giant shepherds of the trees? Are there still Ents in the world? I thought they were only a memory of ancient days, if indeed they were ever more than a legend of Rohan.’

‘A legend of Rohan!’ cried Legolas. ‘Nay, every Elf in Wilderland has sung songs of the old Onodrim and their long sorrow. Yet even among us they are only a memory. If I were to meet one still walking in this world, then indeed I should feel young again! But Treebeard: that is only a rendering of Fangorn into the Common Speech; yet you seem to speak of a person. Who is this Treebeard?’

‘Ah! now you are asking much,’ said Gandalf. ‘The little that I know of his long slow story would make a tale for which we have no time now. Treebeard is Fangorn, the guardian of the forest; he is the oldest of the Ents, the oldest living thing that still walks beneath the Sun upon this Middle-earth. I hope indeed, Legolas, that you may yet meet him. Merry and Pippin have been fortunate: they met him here, even where we sit. For he came here two days ago and bore them away to his dwelling far off by the roots of the mountains. He often comes here, especially when his mind is uneasy, and rumours of the world outside trouble him. I saw him four days ago striding among the trees, and I think he saw me, for he paused; but I did not speak, for I was heavy with thought, and weary after my struggle with the Eye of Mordor; and he did not speak either, nor call my name.’

‘Perhaps he also thought that you were Saruman,’ said Gimli. ‘But you speak of him as if he was a friend. I thought Fangorn was dangerous.’

‘Dangerous!’ cried Gandalf. ‘And so am I, very dangerous: more dangerous than anything you will ever meet, unless you are brought alive before the seat of the Dark Lord. And Aragorn is dangerous, and Legolas is dangerous. You are beset with dangers, Gimli son of Glóin; for you are dangerous yourself, in your own fashion. Certainly the forest of Fangorn is perilous—not least to those that are too ready with their axes; and Fangorn himself, he is perilous too; yet he is wise and kindly nonetheless. But now his long slow wrath is brimming over, and all the forest is filled with it. The coming of the hobbits and the tidings that they brought have spilled it: it will soon be running like a flood; but its tide is turned against Saruman and the axes of Isengard. A thing is about to happen which has not happened since the Elder Days: the Ents are going to wake up and find that they are strong.’

‘What will they do?’ asked Legolas in astonishment.

‘I do not know,’ said Gandalf. ‘I do not think they know themselves. I wonder.’ He fell silent, his head bowed in thought.

The others looked at him. A gleam of sun through fleeting clouds fell on his hands, which lay now upturned on his lap: they seemed to be filled with light as a cup is with water. At last he looked up and gazed straight at the sun.

‘The morning is wearing away,’ he said. ‘Soon we must go.’

‘Do we go to find our friends and to see Treebeard?’ asked Aragorn.

‘No,’ said Gandalf. ‘That is not the road that you must take. I have spoken words of hope. But only of hope. Hope is not victory. War is upon us and all our friends, a war in which only the use of the Ring could give us surety of victory. It fills me with great sorrow and great fear: for much shall be destroyed and all may be lost. I am Gandalf, Gandalf the White, but Black is mightier still.’

He rose and gazed out eastward, shading his eyes, as if he saw things far away that none of them could see. Then he shook his head. ‘No,’ he said in a soft voice, ‘it has gone beyond our reach. Of that at least let us be glad. We can no longer be tempted to use the Ring. We must go down to face a peril near despair, yet that deadly peril is removed.’

He turned. ‘Come, Aragorn son of Arathorn!’ he said. ‘Do not regret your choice in the valley of the Eryn Muil, nor call it a vain pursuit. You chose amid doubts the path that seemed right: the choice was just, and it has been rewarded. For so we have met in time, who otherwise might have met too late. But the quest of your companions is over. Your next journey is marked by your given word. You must go to Edoras and seek out

Théoden in his hall. For you are needed. The light of Andúril must now be uncovered in the battle for which it has so long waited. There is war in Rohan, and worse evil: it goes ill with Théoden.'

'Then are we not to see the merry young hobbits again?' said Legolas.

'I did not say so,' said Gandalf. 'Who knows? Have patience. Go where you must go, and hope! To Edoras! I go thither also.'

'It is a long way for a man to walk, young or old,' said Aragorn. 'I fear the battle will be over long ere I come there.'

'We shall see, we shall see,' said Gandalf. 'Will you come now with me?'

'Yes, we will set out together,' said Aragorn. 'But I do not doubt that you will come there before me, if you wish.' He rose and looked long at Gandalf. The others gazed at them in silence as they stood there facing one another. The grey figure of the Man, Aragorn son of Arathorn, was tall, and stern as stone, his hand upon the hilt of his sword; he looked as if some king out of the mists of the sea had stepped upon the shores of lesser men. Before him stooped the old figure, white, shining now as if with some light kindled within, bent, laden with years, but holding a power beyond the strength of kings.

'Do I not say truly, Gandalf,' said Aragorn at last, 'that you could go whithersoever you wished quicker than I? And this I also say: you are our captain and our banner. The Dark Lord has Nine. But we have One, mightier than they: the White Rider. He has passed through the fire and the abyss, and they shall fear him. We will go where he leads.'

'Yes, together we will follow you,' said Legolas. 'But first, it would ease my heart, Gandalf, to hear what befell you in Moria. Will you not tell us? Can you not stay even to tell your friends how you were delivered?'

'I have stayed already too long,' answered Gandalf. 'Time is short. But if there were a year to spend, I would not tell you all.'

'Then tell us what you will, and time allows!' said Gimli. 'Come, Gandalf, tell us how you fared with the Balrog!'

'Name him not!' said Gandalf, and for a moment it seemed that a cloud of pain passed over his face, and he sat silent, looking old as death. 'Long time I fell,' he said at last, slowly, as if thinking back with difficulty. 'Long I fell, and he fell with me. His fire was about me. I was burned. Then we plunged into the deep water and all was dark. Cold it was as the tide of death: almost it froze my heart.'

'Deep is the abyss that is spanned by Durin's Bridge, and none has measured it,' said Gimli.

'Yet it has a bottom, beyond light and knowledge,' said Gandalf. 'Thither I came at last, to the uttermost foundations of stone. He was with me still. His fire was quenched, but now he was a thing of slime, stronger than a strangling snake.'

'We fought far under the living earth, where time is not counted. Ever he clutched me, and ever I hewed him, till at last he fled into dark tunnels. They were not made by Durin's folk, Gimli son of Glóin. Far, far below the deepest delvings of the Dwarves, the world is gnawed by nameless things. Even Sauron knows them not. They are older than he. Now I have walked there, but I will bring no report to darken the light of day. In that despair my enemy was my only hope, and I pursued him, clutching at his heel. Thus he brought me back at last to the secret ways of Khazad-dûm: too well he knew them all. Ever up now we went, until we came to the Endless Stair.'

'Long has that been lost,' said Gimli. 'Many have said that it was never made save in legend, but others say that it was destroyed.'

'It was made, and it had not been destroyed,' said Gandalf. 'From the lowest dungeon to the highest peak it climbed, ascending in unbroken spiral in many thousand steps, until it issued at last in Durin's Tower carved in the living rock of Zirakzigil, the pinnacle of the Silvertine.'

‘There upon Celebdil was a lonely window in the snow, and before it lay a narrow space, a dizzy eyrie above the mists of the world. The sun shone fiercely there, but all below was wrapped in cloud. Out he sprang, and even as I came behind, he burst into new flame. There was none to see, or perhaps in after ages songs would still be sung of the Battle of the Peak.’ Suddenly Gandalf laughed. ‘But what would they say in song? Those that looked up from afar thought that the mountain was crowned with storm. Thunder they heard, and lightning, they said, smote upon Celebdil, and leaped back broken into tongues of fire. Is not that enough? A great smoke rose about us, vapour and steam. Ice fell like rain. I threw down my enemy, and he fell from the high place and broke the mountain-side where he smote it in his ruin. Then darkness took me, and I strayed out of thought and time, and I wandered far on roads that I will not tell.

‘Naked I was sent back—for a brief time, until my task is done. And naked I lay upon the mountain-top. The tower behind was crumbled into dust, the window gone; the ruined stair was choked with burned and broken stone. I was alone, forgotten, without escape upon the hard horn of the world. There I lay staring upward, while the stars wheeled over, and each day was as long as a life-age of the earth. Faint to my ears came the gathered rumour of all lands: the springing and the dying, the song and the weeping, and the slow everlasting groan of over-burdened stone. And so at the last Gwaihir the Windlord found me again, and he took me up and bore me away.

“‘Ever am I fated to be your burden, friend at need,” I said.

“‘A burden you have been,” he answered, “but not so now. Light as a swan’s feather in my claw you are. The Sun shines through you. Indeed I do not think you need me any more: were I to let you fall, you would float upon the wind.”

“‘Do not let me fall!” I gasped, for I felt life in me again. “Bear me to Lothlórien!”

“‘That indeed is the command of the Lady Galadriel who sent me to look for you,” he answered.

‘Thus it was that I came to Caras Galadon and found you but lately gone. I tarried there in the ageless time of that land where days bring healing not decay. Healing I found, and I was clothed in white. Counsel I gave and counsel took. Thence by strange roads I came, and messages I bring to some of you. To Aragorn I was bidden to say this:

*Where now are the Dúnedain, Elessar, Elessar?  
Why do thy kinsfolk wander afar?  
Near is the hour when the Lost should come forth,  
And the Grey Company ride from the North.  
But dark is the path appointed for thee:  
The Dead watch the road that leads to the Sea.*

To Legolas she sent this word:

*Legolas Greenleaf long under tree  
In joy thou hast lived. Beware of the Sea!  
If thou hearest the cry of the gull on the shore,  
Thy heart shall then rest in the forest no more.’*

Gandalf fell silent and shut his eyes.

‘Then she sent me no message?’ said Gimli and bent his head.

‘Dark are her words,’ said Legolas, ‘and little do they mean to those that receive them.’

‘That is no comfort,’ said Gimli.

‘What then?’ said Legolas. ‘Would you have her speak openly to you of your death?’

‘Yes, if she had naught else to say.’

‘What is that?’ said Gandalf, opening his eyes. ‘Yes, I think I can guess what her words may mean. Your pardon, Gimli! I was pondering the messages once again. But indeed she sent words to you, and neither dark nor sad.’

“‘To Gimli son of Glóin,” she said, “give his Lady’s greeting. Lockbearer, wherever thou goest my thought goes with thee. But have a care to lay thine axe to the right tree!””

‘In happy hour you have returned to us, Gandalf,’ cried the Dwarf, capering as he sang loudly in the strange dwarf-tongue. ‘Come, come!’ he shouted, swinging his axe. ‘Since Gandalf’s head is now sacred, let us find one that it is right to cleave!’

‘That will not be far to seek,’ said Gandalf, rising from his seat. ‘Come! We have spent all the time that is allowed to a meeting of parted friends. Now there is need of haste.’

He wrapped himself again in his old tattered cloak, and led the way. Following him they descended quickly from the high shelf and made their way back through the forest, down the bank of the Entwash. They spoke no more words, until they stood again upon the grass beyond the eaves of Fangorn. There was no sign of their horses to be seen.

‘They have not returned,’ said Legolas. ‘It will be a weary walk!’

‘I shall not walk. Time presses,’ said Gandalf. Then lifting up his head he gave a long whistle. So clear and piercing was the note that the others stood amazed to hear such a sound come from those old bearded lips. Three times he whistled; and then faint and far off it seemed to them that they heard the whinny of a horse borne up from the plains upon the eastern wind. They waited wondering. Before long there came the sound of hoofs, at first hardly more than a tremor of the ground perceptible only to Aragorn as he lay upon the grass, then growing steadily louder and clearer to a quick beat.

‘There is more than one horse coming,’ said Aragorn.

‘Certainly,’ said Gandalf. ‘We are too great a burden for one.’

‘There are three,’ said Legolas, gazing out over the plain. ‘See how they run! There is Hasufel, and there is my friend Arod beside him! But there is another that strides ahead: a very great horse. I have not seen his like before.’

‘Nor will you again,’ said Gandalf. ‘That is Shadowfax. He is the chief of the *Mearas*, lords of horses, and not even Théoden, King of Rohan, has ever looked on a better. Does he not shine like silver, and run as smoothly as a swift stream? He has come for me: the horse of the White Rider. We are going to battle together.’

Even as the old wizard spoke, the great horse came striding up the slope towards them; his coat was glistening and his mane flowing in the wind of his speed. The two others followed, now far behind. As soon as Shadowfax saw Gandalf, he checked his pace and whinnied loudly; then trotting gently forward he stooped his proud head and nuzzled his great nostrils against the old man’s neck.

Gandalf caressed him. ‘It is a long way from Rivendell, my friend,’ he said; ‘but you are wise and swift and come at need. Far let us ride now together, and part not in this world again!’

Soon the other horses came up and stood quietly by, as if awaiting orders. ‘We go at once to Meduseld, the hall of your master, Théoden,’ said Gandalf, addressing them gravely. They bowed their heads. ‘Time presses, so with your leave, my friends, we will ride. We beg you to use all the speed that you can. Hasufel shall bear Aragorn and Arod Legolas. I will set Gimli before me, and by his leave Shadowfax shall bear us both. We will wait now only to drink a little.’

‘Now I understand a part of last night’s riddle,’ said Legolas as he sprang lightly upon Arod’s back. ‘Whether they fled at first in fear, or not, our horses met Shadowfax, their chieftain, and greeted him with joy. Did you know that he was at hand, Gandalf?’

‘Yes, I knew,’ said the wizard. ‘I bent my thought upon him, bidding him to make haste; for yesterday he was far away in the south of this land. Swiftly may he bear me back again!’

Gandalf spoke now to Shadowfax, and the horse set off at a good pace, yet not beyond the measure of the others. After a little while he turned suddenly, and choosing a place where the banks were lower, he waded the river, and then led them away due south into a flat land, treeless and wide. The wind went like grey waves through the endless miles of grass. There was no sign of road or track, but Shadowfax did not stay or falter.

‘He is steering a straight course now for the halls of Théoden under the slopes of the White Mountains,’ said Gandalf. ‘It will be quicker so. The ground is firmer in the Eastemnet, where the chief northward track lies, across the river, but Shadowfax knows the way through every fen and hollow.’

For many hours they rode on through the meads and riverlands. Often the grass was so high that it reached above the knees of the riders, and their steeds seemed to be swimming in a grey-green sea. They came upon many hidden pools, and broad acres of sedge waving above wet and treacherous bogs; but Shadowfax found the way, and the other horses followed in his swath. Slowly the sun fell from the sky down into the West. Looking out over the great plain, far away the riders saw it for a moment like a red fire sinking into the grass. Low upon the edge of sight shoulders of the mountains glinted red upon either side. A smoke seemed to rise up and darken the sun’s disc to the hue of blood, as if it had kindled the grass as it passed down under the rim of earth.

‘There lies the Gap of Rohan,’ said Gandalf. ‘It is now almost due west of us. That way lies Isengard.’

‘I see a great smoke,’ said Legolas. ‘What may that be?’

‘Battle and war!’ said Gandalf. ‘Ride on!’





## Chapter 6: The King Of The Golden Hall

They rode on through sunset, and slow dusk, and gathering night. When at last they halted and dismounted, even Aragorn was stiff and weary. Gandalf only allowed them a few hours' rest. Legolas and Gimli slept, and Aragorn lay flat, stretched upon his back; but Gandalf stood, leaning on his staff, gazing into the darkness, east and west. All was silent, and there was no sign or sound of living thing. The night was barred with long clouds, fleeing on a chill wind, when they arose again. Under the cold moon they went on once more, as swift as by the light of day.

Hours passed and still they rode on. Gimli nodded and would have fallen from his seat, if Gandalf had not clutched and shaken him. Hasufel and Arod, weary but proud, followed their tireless leader, a grey shadow before them hardly to be seen. The miles went by. The waxing moon sank into the cloudy West.

A bitter chill came into the air. Slowly in the East the dark faded to a cold grey. Red shafts of light leapt above the black walls of the Emyrn Muil far away upon their left. Dawn came clear and bright; a wind swept across their path, rushing through the bent grasses. Suddenly Shadowfax stood still and neighed. Gandalf pointed ahead.

'Look!' he cried, and they lifted their tired eyes. Before them stood the mountains of the South: white-tipped and streaked with black. The grass-lands rolled against the hills that clustered at their feet, and flowed up into many valleys still dim and dark, untouched by the light of dawn, winding their way into the heart of the great mountains. Immediately before the travellers the widest of these glens opened like a long gulf among the hills. Far inward they glimpsed a tumbled mountain-mass with one tall peak; at the mouth of the vale there stood like a sentinel a lonely height. About its feet there flowed, as a thread of silver, the stream that issued from the dale; upon its brow they caught, still far away, a glint in the rising sun, a glimmer of gold.

'Speak, Legolas!' said Gandalf. 'Tell us what you see there before us!'

Legolas gazed ahead, shading his eyes from the level shafts of the new-risen sun. 'I see a white stream that comes down from the snows,' he said. 'Where it issues from the shadow of the vale a green hill rises upon the east. A dike and mighty wall and thorny fence encircle it. Within there rise the roofs of houses; and in the midst, set upon a green terrace, there stands aloft a great hall of Men. And it seems to my eyes that it is thatched with gold. The light of it shines far over the land. Golden, too, are the posts of its doors. There men in bright mail stand; but all else within the courts are yet asleep.'

'Edoras those courts are called,' said Gandalf, 'and Meduseld is that golden hall. There dwells Théoden son of Thengel, King of the Mark of Rohan. We are come with the rising of the day. Now the road lies plain to see before us. But we must ride more warily; for war is abroad, and the Rohirrim, the Horse-lords, do not sleep, even if it seem so from afar. Draw no weapon, speak no haughty word, I counsel you all, until we are come before Théoden's seat.'

The morning was bright and clear about them, and birds were singing, when the travellers came to the stream. It ran down swiftly into the plain, and beyond the feet of the hills turned across their path in a wide bend, flowing away east to feed the Entwash far off in its reed-choked beds. The land was green: in the wet meads and along the grassy borders of the stream grew many willow-trees. Already in this southern land they were blushing red at their fingertips, feeling the approach of spring. Over the stream there was a ford between low banks much trampled by the passage of horses. The travellers passed over and came upon a wide rutted track leading towards the uplands.

At the foot of the walled hill the way ran under the shadow of many mounds, high and green. Upon their western sides the grass was white as with a drifted snow: small flowers sprang there like countless stars amid the turf.

‘Look!’ said Gandalf. ‘How fair are the bright eyes in the grass! Evermind they are called, *simbelmynë* in this land of Men, for they blossom in all the seasons of the year, and grow where dead men rest. Behold! we are come to the great barrows where the sires of Théoden sleep.’

‘Seven mounds upon the left, and nine upon the right,’ said Aragorn. ‘Many long lives of men it is since the golden hall was built.’

‘Five hundred times have the red leaves fallen in Mirkwood in my home since then,’ said Legolas, ‘and but a little while does that seem to us.’

‘But to the Riders of the Mark it seems so long ago,’ said Aragorn, ‘that the raising of this house is but a memory of song, and the years before are lost in the mist of time. Now they call this land their home, their own, and their speech is sundered from their northern kin.’ Then he began to chant softly in a slow tongue unknown to the Elf and Dwarf; yet they listened, for there was a strong music in it.

‘That, I guess, is the language of the Rohirrim,’ said Legolas; ‘for it is like to this land itself; rich and rolling in part, and else hard and stern as the mountains. But I cannot guess what it means, save that it is laden with the sadness of Mortal Men.’

‘It runs thus in the Common Speech,’ said Aragorn, ‘as near as I can make it.

*Where now the horse and the rider? Where is the horn that was blowing?  
Where is the helm and the hauberk, and the bright hair flowing?  
Where is the hand on the harpstring, and the red fire glowing?  
Where is the spring and the harvest and the tall corn growing?  
They have passed like rain on the mountain, like a wind in the meadow;  
The days have gone down in the West behind the hills into shadow.  
Who shall gather the smoke of the dead wood burning,  
Or behold the flowing years from the Sea returning?*

Thus spoke a forgotten poet long ago in Rohan, recalling how tall and fair was Eorl the Young, who rode down out of the North; and there were wings upon the feet of his steed, Felaróf, father of horses. So men still sing in the evening.’

With these words the travellers passed the silent mounds. Following the winding way up the green shoulders of the hills, they came at last to the wide wind-swept walls and the gates of Edoras.

There sat many men in bright mail, who sprang at once to their feet and barred the way with spears. ‘Stay, strangers here unknown!’ they cried in the tongue of the Riddermark, demanding the names and errand of the strangers. Wonder was in their eyes but little friendliness; and they looked darkly upon Gandalf.

‘Well do I understand your speech,’ he answered in the same language; ‘yet few strangers do so. Why then do you not speak in the Common Tongue, as is the custom in the West, if you wish to be answered?’

‘It is the will of Théoden King that none should enter his gates, save those who know our tongue and are our friends,’ replied one of the guards. ‘None are welcome here in days of war but our own folk, and those that come from Mundburg in the land of Gondor. Who are you that come heedless over the plain thus strangely clad, riding horses like to our own horses? Long have we kept guard here, and we have watched you from afar. Never have we seen other riders so strange, nor any horse more proud than is one of these that bear you. He is one of the *Mearas*, unless our eyes are cheated by some spell. Say, are you not a wizard, some spy from Saruman, or phantoms of his craft? Speak now and be swift!’

‘We are no phantoms,’ said Aragorn, ‘nor do your eyes cheat you. For indeed these are your own horses that we ride, as you knew well ere you asked, I guess. But seldom does thief ride home to the stable. Here are Hasufel

and Arod, that Éomer, the Third Marshal of the Mark, lent to us, only two days ago. We bring them back now, even as we promised him. Has not Éomer then returned and given warning of our coming?’

A troubled look came into the guard’s eyes. ‘Of Éomer I have naught to say,’ he answered. ‘If what you tell me is truth, then doubtless Théoden will have heard of it. Maybe your coming was not wholly unlooked-for. It is but two nights ago that Wormtongue came to us and said that by the will of Théoden no stranger should pass these gates.’

‘Wormtongue?’ said Gandalf, looking sharply at the guard. ‘Say no more! My errand is not to Wormtongue, but to the Lord of the Mark himself. I am in haste. Will you not go or send to say that we are come?’ His eyes glinted under his deep brows as he bent his gaze upon the man.

‘Yes, I will go,’ he answered slowly. ‘But what names shall I report? And what shall I say of you? Old and weary you seem now, and yet you are fell and grim beneath, I deem.’

‘Well do you see and speak,’ said the wizard. ‘For I am Gandalf. I have returned. And behold! I too bring back a horse. Here is Shadowfax the Great, whom no other hand can tame. And here beside me is Aragorn son of Arathorn, the heir of Kings, and it is to Mundburg that he goes. Here also are Legolas the Elf and Gimli the Dwarf, our comrades. Go now and say to your master that we are at his gates and would have speech with him, if he will permit us to come into his hall.’

‘Strange names you give indeed! But I will report them as you bid, and learn my master’s will,’ said the guard. ‘Wait here a little while, and I will bring you such answer as seems good to him. Do not hope too much! These are dark days.’ He went swiftly away, leaving the strangers in the watchful keeping of his comrades.

After some time he returned. ‘Follow me!’ he said. ‘Théoden gives you leave to enter; but any weapon that you bear, be it only a staff, you must leave on the threshold. The doorwardens will keep them.’

The dark gates were swung open. The travellers entered, walking in file behind their guide. They found a broad path, paved with hewn stones, now winding upward, now climbing in short flights of well-laid steps. Many houses built of wood and many dark doors they passed.

Beside the way in a stone channel a stream of clear water flowed, sparkling and chattering. At length they came to the crown of the hill. There stood a high platform above a green terrace, at the foot of which a bright spring gushed from a stone carved in the likeness of a horse’s head; beneath was a wide basin from which the water spilled and fed the falling stream. Up the green terrace went a stair of stone, high and broad, and on either side of the topmost step were stone-hewn seats. There sat other guards, with drawn swords laid upon their knees. Their golden hair was braided on their shoulders; the sun was blazoned upon their green shields, their long corslets were burnished bright, and when they rose taller they seemed than mortal men.

‘There are the doors before you,’ said the guide. ‘I must return now to my duty at the gate. Farewell! And may the Lord of the Mark be gracious to you!’

He turned and went swiftly back down the road. The others climbed the long stair under the eyes of the tall watchmen. Silent they stood now above and spoke no word, until Gandalf stepped out upon the paved terrace at the stair’s head. Then suddenly with clear voices they spoke a courteous greeting in their own tongue.

‘Hail, comers from afar!’ they said, and they turned the hilts of their swords towards the travellers in token of peace. Green gems flashed in the sunlight. Then one of the guards stepped forward and spoke in the Common Speech.

‘I am the Doorward of Théoden,’ he said. ‘Háma is my name. Here I must bid you lay aside your weapons before you enter.’

Then Legolas gave into his hand his silver-hafted knife, his quiver, and his bow. ‘Keep these well,’ he said, ‘for they come from the Golden Wood and the Lady of Lothlórien gave them to me.’

Wonder came into the man’s eyes, and he laid the weapons hastily by the wall, as if he feared to handle them. ‘No man will touch them, I promise you,’ he said.

Aragorn stood a while hesitating. 'It is not my will,' he said, 'to put aside my sword or to deliver Andúril to the hand of any other man.'

'It is the will of Théoden,' said Háma.

'It is not clear to me that the will of Théoden son of Thengel, even though he be lord of the Mark, should prevail over the will of Aragorn son of Arathorn, Elendil's heir of Gondor.'

'This is the house of Théoden, not of Aragorn, even were he King of Gondor in the seat of Denethor,' said Háma, stepping swiftly before the doors and barring the way. His sword was now in his hand and the point towards the strangers.

'This is idle talk,' said Gandalf. 'Needless is Théoden's demand, but it is useless to refuse. A king will have his way in his own hall, be it folly or wisdom.'

'Truly,' said Aragorn. 'And I would do as the master of the house bade me, were this only a woodman's cot, if I bore now any sword but Andúril.'

'Whatever its name may be,' said Háma, 'here you shall lay it, if you would not fight alone against all the men in Edoras.'

'Not alone!' said Gimli, fingering the blade of his axe, and looking darkly up at the guard, as if he were a young tree that Gimli had a mind to fell. 'Not alone!'

'Come, come!' said Gandalf. 'We are all friends here. Or should be; for the laughter of Mordor will be our only reward, if we quarrel. My errand is pressing. Here at least is *my* sword, goodman Háma. Keep it well. Glamdring it is called, for the Elves made it long ago. Now let me pass. Come, Aragorn!'

Slowly Aragorn unbuckled his belt and himself set his sword upright against the wall. 'Here I set it,' he said; 'but I command you not to touch it, nor to permit any other to lay hand on it. In this Elvish sheath dwells the Blade that was Broken and has been made again. Telchar first wrought it in the deeps of time. Death shall come to any man that draws Elendil's sword save Elendil's heir.'

The guard stepped back and looked with amazement on Aragorn. 'It seems that you are come on the wings of song out of the forgotten days,' he said. 'It shall be, lord, as you command.'

'Well,' said Gimli, 'if it has Andúril to keep it company, my axe may stay here, too, without shame'; and he laid it on the floor. 'Now then, if all is as you wish, let us go and speak with your master.'

The guard still hesitated. 'Your staff,' he said to Gandalf. 'Forgive me, but that too must be left at the doors.'

'Foolishness!' said Gandalf. 'Prudence is one thing, but discourtesy is another. I am old. If I may not lean on my stick as I go, then I will sit out here, until it pleases Théoden to hobble out himself to speak with me.'

Aragorn laughed. 'Every man has something too dear to trust to another. But would you part an old man from his support? Come, will you not let us enter?'

'The staff in the hand of a wizard may be more than a prop for age,' said Háma. He looked hard at the ash-staff on which Gandalf leaned. 'Yet in doubt a man of worth will trust to his own wisdom. I believe you are friends and folk worthy of honour, who have no evil purpose. You may go in.'

The guards now lifted the heavy bars of the doors and swung them slowly inwards grumbling on their great hinges. The travellers entered. Inside it seemed dark and warm after the clear air upon the hill. The hall was long and wide and filled with shadows and half lights; mighty pillars upheld its lofty roof. But here and there bright sunbeams fell in glimmering shafts from the eastern windows, high under the deep eaves. Through the louver in the roof, above the thin wisps of issuing smoke, the sky showed pale and blue. As their eyes changed, the travellers perceived that the floor was paved with stones of many hues; branching runes and strange devices intertwined beneath their feet. They saw now that the pillars were richly carved, gleaming dully with gold and half-seen colours. Many woven cloths were hung upon the walls, and over their wide spaces marched figures of ancient legend, some dim with years, some darkling in the shade. But upon one form the sunlight fell: a young man upon a white horse. He was blowing a great horn, and his yellow hair was flying in the wind. The horse's

head was lifted, and its nostrils were wide and red as it neighed, smelling battle afar. Foaming water, green and white, rushed and curled about its knees.

‘Behold Eorl the Young!’ said Aragorn. ‘Thus he rode out of the North to the Battle of the Field of Celebrant.’

Now the four companions went forward, past the clear wood-fire burning upon the long hearth in the midst of the hall. Then they halted. At the far end of the house, beyond the hearth and facing north towards the doors, was a dais with three steps; and in the middle of the dais was a great gilded chair. Upon it sat a man so bent with age that he seemed almost a dwarf; but his white hair was long and thick and fell in great braids from beneath a thin golden circlet set upon his brow. In the centre upon his forehead shone a single white diamond. His beard was laid like snow upon his knees; but his eyes still burned with a bright light, glinting as he gazed at the strangers. Behind his chair stood a woman clad in white. At his feet upon the steps sat a wizened figure of a man, with a pale wise face and heavy-lidded eyes.

There was a silence. The old man did not move in his chair. At length Gandalf spoke. ‘Hail, Théoden son of Thengel! I have returned. For behold! the storm comes, and now all friends should gather together, lest each singly be destroyed.’

Slowly the old man rose to his feet, leaning heavily upon a short black staff with a handle of white bone; and now the strangers saw that, bent though he was, he was still tall and must in youth have been high and proud indeed.

‘I greet you,’ he said, ‘and maybe you look for welcome. But truth to tell your welcome is doubtful here, Master Gandalf. You have ever been a herald of woe. Troubles follow you like crows, and ever the oftener the worse. I will not deceive you: when I heard that Shadowfax had come back riderless, I rejoiced at the return of the horse, but still more at the lack of the rider; and when Éomer brought the tidings that you had gone at last to your long home, I did not mourn. But news from afar is seldom sooth. Here you come again! And with you come evils worse than before, as might be expected. Why should I welcome you, Gandalf Stormcrow? Tell me that.’ Slowly he sat down again in his chair.

‘You speak justly, lord,’ said the pale man sitting upon the steps of the dais. ‘It is not yet five days since the bitter tidings came that Théodred your son was slain upon the West Marches: your right-hand, Second Marshal of the Mark. In Éomer there is little trust. Few men would be left to guard your walls, if he had been allowed to rule. And even now we learn from Gondor that the Dark Lord is stirring in the East. Such is the hour in which this wanderer chooses to return. Why indeed should we welcome you, Master Stormcrow? *Láthspell* I name you, Ill-news; and ill news is an ill guest they say.’ He laughed grimly, as he lifted his heavy lids for a moment and gazed on the strangers with dark eyes.

‘You are held wise, my friend Wormtongue, and are doubtless a great support to your master,’ answered Gandalf in a soft voice. ‘Yet in two ways may a man come with evil tidings. He may be a worker of evil; or he may be such as leaves well alone, and comes only to bring aid in time of need.’

‘That is so,’ said Wormtongue; ‘but there is a third kind: pickers of bones, meddlers in other men’s sorrows, carrion-fowl that grow fat on war. What aid have you ever brought, Stormcrow? And what aid do you bring now? It was aid from us that you sought last time that you were here. Then my lord bade you choose any horse that you would and be gone; and to the wonder of all you took Shadowfax in your insolence. My lord was sorely grieved; yet to some it seemed that to speed you from the land the price was not too great. I guess that it is likely to turn out the same once more: you will seek aid rather than render it. Do you bring men? Do you bring horses, swords, spears? That I would call aid; that is our present need. But who are these that follow at your tail? Three ragged wanderers in grey, and you yourself the most beggar-like of the four!’

‘The courtesy of your hall is somewhat lessened of late, Théoden son of Thengel,’ said Gandalf. ‘Has not the messenger from your gate reported the names of my companions? Seldom has any lord of Rohan received three such guests. Weapons they have laid at your doors that are worth many a mortal man, even the mightiest. Grey is their raiment, for the Elves clad them, and thus they have passed through the shadow of great perils to your hall.’

‘Then it is true, as Éomer reported, that you are in league with the Sorceress of the Golden Wood?’ said Wormtongue. ‘It is not to be wondered at: webs of deceit were ever woven in Dwimordene.’

Gimli strode a pace forward, but felt suddenly the hand of Gandalf clutch him by the shoulder, and he halted, standing stiff as stone.

*In Dwimordene, in Lórien  
Seldom have walked the feet of Men,  
Few mortal eyes have seen the light  
That lies there ever, long and bright.  
Galadriel! Galadriel!  
Clear is the water of your well;  
White is the star in your white hand;  
Unmarred, unstained is leaf and land  
In Dwimordene, in Lórien  
More fair than thoughts of Mortal Men.*

Thus Gandalf softly sang, and then suddenly he changed. Casting his tattered cloak aside, he stood up and leaned no longer on his staff; and he spoke in a clear cold voice.

‘The wise speak only of what they know, Gríma son of Gálmód. A witless worm have you become. Therefore be silent, and keep your forked tongue behind your teeth. I have not passed through fire and death to bandy crooked words with a serving-man till the lightning falls.’

He raised his staff. There was a roll of thunder. The sunlight was blotted out from the eastern windows; the whole hall became suddenly dark as night. The fire faded to sullen embers. Only Gandalf could be seen, standing white and tall before the blackened hearth.

In the gloom they heard the hiss of Wormtongue’s voice: ‘Did I not counsel you, lord, to forbid his staff? That fool, Háma, has betrayed us!’ There was a flash as if lightning had cloven the roof. Then all was silent. Wormtongue sprawled on his face.

‘Now Théoden son of Thengel, will you hearken to me?’ said Gandalf. ‘Do you ask for help?’ He lifted his staff and pointed to a high window. There the darkness seemed to clear, and through the opening could be seen, high and far, a patch of shining sky. ‘Not all is dark. Take courage, Lord of the Mark; for better help you will not find. No counsel have I to give to those that despair. Yet counsel I could give, and words I could speak to you. Will you hear them? They are not for all ears. I bid you come out before your doors and look abroad. Too long have you sat in shadows and trusted to twisted tales and crooked promptings.’

Slowly Théoden left his chair. A faint light grew in the hall again. The woman hastened to the king’s side, taking his arm, and with faltering steps the old man came down from the dais and paced softly through the hall. Wormtongue remained lying on the floor. They came to the doors and Gandalf knocked.

‘Open!’ he cried. ‘The Lord of the Mark comes forth!’

The doors rolled back and a keen air came whistling in. A wind was blowing on the hill.

‘Send your guards down to the stairs’ foot,’ said Gandalf. ‘And you, lady, leave him a while with me. I will care for him.’

‘Go, Éowyn sister-daughter!’ said the old king. ‘The time for fear is past.’

The woman turned and went slowly into the house. As she passed the doors she turned and looked back. Grave and thoughtful was her glance, as she looked on the king with cool pity in her eyes. Very fair was her face, and her long hair was like a river of gold. Slender and tall she was in her white robe girt with silver; but strong she seemed and stern as steel, a daughter of kings. Thus Aragorn for the first time in the full light of day beheld Éowyn, Lady of Rohan, and thought her fair, fair and cold, like a morning of pale spring that is not yet come to womanhood. And she now was suddenly aware of him: tall heir of kings, wise with many winters, greycloaked, hiding a power that yet she felt. For a moment still as stone she stood, then turning swiftly she was gone.

‘Now, lord,’ said Gandalf, ‘look out upon your land! Breathe the free air again!’

From the porch upon the top of the high terrace they could see beyond the stream the green fields of Rohan fading into distant grey. Curtains of wind-blown rain were slanting down. The sky above and to the west was still dark with thunder, and lightning far away flickered among the tops of hidden hills. But the wind had shifted to the north, and already the storm that had come out of the East was receding, rolling away southward to the sea. Suddenly through a rent in the clouds behind them a shaft of sun stabbed down. The falling showers gleamed like silver, and far away the river glittered like a shimmering glass.

‘It is not so dark here,’ said Théoden.

‘No,’ said Gandalf. ‘Nor does age lie so heavily on your shoulders as some would have you think. Cast aside your prop!’

From the king’s hand the black staff fell clattering on the stones. He drew himself up, slowly, as a man that is stiff from long bending over some dull toil. Now tall and straight he stood, and his eyes were blue as he looked into the opening sky.

‘Dark have been my dreams of late,’ he said, ‘but I feel as one new-awakened. I would now that you had come before, Gandalf. For I fear that already you have come too late, only to see the last days of my house. Not long now shall stand the high hall which Brego son of Eorl built. Fire shall devour the high seat. What is to be done?’

‘Much,’ said Gandalf. ‘But first send for Éomer. Do I not guess rightly that you hold him prisoner, by the counsel of Gríma, of him that all save you name the Wormtongue?’

‘It is true,’ said Théoden. ‘He had rebelled against my commands, and threatened death to Gríma in my hall.’

‘A man may love you and yet not love Wormtongue or his counsels,’ said Gandalf.

‘That may be. I will do as you ask. Call Háma to me. Since he proved untrusty as a doorward, let him become an errand-runner. The guilty shall bring the guilty to judgement,’ said Théoden, and his voice was grim, yet he looked at Gandalf and smiled and as he did so many lines of care were smoothed away and did not return.

When Háma had been summoned and had gone, Gandalf led Théoden to a stone seat, and then sat himself before the king upon the topmost stair. Aragorn and his companions stood nearby.

‘There is no time to tell all that you should hear,’ said Gandalf. ‘Yet if my hope is not cheated, a time will come ere long when I can speak more fully. Behold! you are come into a peril greater even than the wit of Wormtongue could weave into your dreams. But see! you dream no longer. You live. Gondor and Rohan do not stand alone. The enemy is strong beyond our reckoning, yet we have a hope at which he has not guessed.’

Quickly now Gandalf spoke. His voice was low and secret, and none save the king heard what he said. But ever as he spoke the light shone brighter in Théoden’s eye, and at the last he rose from his seat to his full height, and Gandalf beside him, and together they looked out from the high place towards the East.

‘Verily,’ said Gandalf, now in a loud voice, keen and clear, ‘that way lies our hope, where sits our greatest fear. Doom hangs still on a thread. Yet hope there is still, if we can but stand unconquered for a little while.’

The others too now turned their eyes eastward. Over the sundering leagues of land, far away they gazed to the edge of sight, and hope and fear bore their thoughts still on, beyond dark mountains to the Land of Shadow. Where now was the Ring-bearer? How thin indeed was the thread upon which doom still hung! It seemed to Legolas, as he strained his farseeing eyes, that he caught a glint of white: far away perchance the sun twinkled on a pinnacle of the Tower of Guard. And further still, endlessly remote and yet a present threat, there was a tiny tongue of flame.

Slowly Théoden sat down again, as if weariness still struggled to master him against the will of Gandalf. He turned and looked at his great house. ‘Alas!’ he said, ‘that these evil days should be mine, and should come in my old age instead of that peace which I have earned. Alas for Boromir the brave! The young perish and the old linger, withering.’ He clutched his knees with his wrinkled hands.

‘Your fingers would remember their old strength better, if they grasped a sword-hilt,’ said Gandalf.

Théoden rose and put his hand to his side; but no sword hung at his belt. ‘Where has Gríma stowed it?’ he muttered under his breath.

‘Take this, dear lord!’ said a clear voice. ‘It was ever at your service.’ Two men had come softly up the stair and stood now a few steps from the top. Éomer was there. No helm was on his head, no mail was on his breast, but in his hand he held a drawn sword; and as he knelt he offered the hilt to his master.

‘How comes this?’ said Théoden sternly. He turned towards Éomer, and the men looked in wonder at him, standing now proud and erect. Where was the old man whom they had left crouching in his chair or leaning on his stick?

‘It is my doing, lord,’ said Háma, trembling. ‘I understood that Éomer was to be set free. Such joy was in my heart that maybe I have erred. Yet, since he was free again, and he a Marshal of the Mark, I brought him his sword as he bade me.’

‘To lay at your feet, my lord,’ said Éomer.

For a moment of silence Théoden stood looking down at Éomer as he knelt still before him. Neither moved.

‘Will you not take the sword?’ said Gandalf.

Slowly Théoden stretched forth his hand. As his fingers took the hilt, it seemed to the watchers that firmness and strength returned to his thin arm. Suddenly he lifted the blade and swung it shimmering and whistling in the air. Then he gave a great cry. His voice rang clear as he chanted in the tongue of Rohan a call to arms.

*Arise now, arise, Riders of Théoden!  
Dire deeds awake, dark is it eastward.  
Let horse be bridled, horn be sounded!  
Forth Eorlingas!*

The guards, thinking that they were summoned, sprang up the stair. They looked at their lord in amazement, and then as one man they drew their swords and laid them at his feet. ‘Command us!’ they said.

‘*Westu Théoden hál!*’ cried Éomer. ‘It is a joy to us to see you return into your own. Never again shall it be said, Gandalf, that you come only with grief!’

‘Take back your sword, Éomer, sister-son!’ said the king. ‘Go, Háma, and seek my own sword! Gríma has it in his keeping. Bring him to me also. Now, Gandalf, you said that you had counsel to give, if I would hear it. What is your counsel?’

‘You have yourself already taken it,’ answered Gandalf. ‘To put your trust in Éomer, rather than in a man of crooked mind. To cast aside regret and fear. To do the deed at hand. Every man that can ride should be sent west at once, as Éomer counselled you: we must first destroy the threat of Saruman, while we have time. If we fail, we fall. If we succeed—then we will face the next task. Meanwhile your people that are left, the women and the children and the old, should fly to the refuges that you have in the mountains. Were they not prepared against just such an evil day as this? Let them take provision, but delay not, nor burden themselves with treasures, great or small. It is their lives that are at stake.’

‘This counsel seems good to me now,’ said Théoden. ‘Let all my folk get ready! But you my guests—truly you said, Gandalf, that the courtesy of my hall is lessened. You have ridden through the night, and the morning wears away. You have had neither sleep nor food. A guest-house shall be made ready: there you shall sleep, when you have eaten.’

‘Nay, lord,’ said Aragorn. ‘There is no rest yet for the weary. The men of Rohan must ride forth today, and we will ride with them, axe, sword, and bow. We did not bring them to rest against your wall, Lord of the Mark. And I promised Éomer that my sword and his should be drawn together.’

‘Now indeed there is hope of victory!’ said Éomer.



‘Hope, yes,’ said Gandalf. ‘But Isengard is strong. And other perils draw ever nearer. Do not delay, Théoden, when we are gone. Lead your people swiftly to the Hold of Dunharrow in the hills!’

‘Nay, Gandalf!’ said the king. ‘You do not know your own skill in healing. It shall not be so. I myself will go to war, to fall in the front of the battle, if it must be. Thus shall I sleep better.’

‘Then even the defeat of Rohan will be glorious in song,’ said Aragorn. The armed men that stood near clashed their weapons, crying: ‘The Lord of the Mark will ride! Forth Eorlingas!’

‘But your people must not be both unarmed and shepherdless,’ said Gandalf. ‘Who shall guide them and govern them in your place?’

‘I will take thought for that ere I go,’ answered Théoden. ‘Here comes my counsellor.’

At that moment Háma came again from the hall. Behind him cringing between two other men, came Gríma the Wormtongue. His face was very white. His eyes blinked in the sunlight. Háma knelt and presented to Théoden a long sword in a scabbard clasped with gold and set with green gems.

‘Here, lord, is Herugrim, your ancient blade,’ he said. ‘It was found in his chest. Loth was he to render up the keys. Many other things are there which men have missed.’

‘You lie,’ said Wormtongue. ‘And this sword your master himself gave into my keeping.’

‘And he now requires it of you again,’ said Théoden. ‘Does that displease you?’

‘Assuredly not, lord,’ said Wormtongue. ‘I care for you and yours as best I may. But do not weary yourself, or tax too heavily your strength. Let others deal with these irksome guests. Your meat is about to be set on the board. Will you not go to it?’

‘I will,’ said Théoden. ‘And let food for my guests be set on the board beside me. The host rides today. Send the heralds forth! Let them summon all who dwell nigh! Every man and strong lad able to bear arms, all who have horses, let them be ready in the saddle at the gate ere the second hour from noon!’

‘Dear lord!’ cried Wormtongue. ‘It is as I feared. This wizard has bewitched you. Are none to be left to defend the Golden Hall of your fathers, and all your treasure? None to guard the Lord of the Mark?’

‘If this is bewitchment,’ said Théoden, ‘it seems to me more wholesome than your whisperings. Your leechcraft ere long would have had me walking on all fours like a beast. No, not one shall be left, not even Gríma. Gríma shall ride too. Go! You have yet time to clean the rust from your sword.’

‘Mercy, lord!’ whined Wormtongue, grovelling on the ground. ‘Have pity on one worn out in your service. Send me not from your side! I at least will stand by you when all others have gone. Do not send your faithful Gríma away!’

‘You have my pity,’ said Théoden. ‘And I do not send you from my side. I go myself to war with my men. I bid you come with me and prove your faith.’

Wormtongue looked from face to face. In his eyes was the hunted look of a beast seeking some gap in the ring of his enemies. He licked his lips with a long pale tongue. ‘Such a resolve might be expected from a lord of the House of Eorl, old though he be,’ he said. ‘But those who truly love him would spare his failing years. Yet I see that I come too late. Others, whom the death of my lord would perhaps grieve less, have already persuaded him. If I cannot undo their work, hear me at least in this, lord! One who knows your mind and honours your commands should be left in Edoras. Appoint a faithful steward. Let your counsellor Gríma keep all things till your return—and I pray that we may see it, though no wise man will deem it hopeful.’

Éomer laughed. ‘And if that plea does not excuse you from war, most noble Wormtongue,’ he said, ‘what office of less honour would you accept? To carry a sack of meal up into the mountains—if any man would trust you with it?’

‘Nay, Éomer, you do not fully understand the mind of Master Wormtongue,’ said Gandalf, turning his piercing glance upon him. ‘He is bold and cunning. Even now he plays a game with peril and wins a throw. Hours of my precious time he has wasted already. Down, snake!’ he said suddenly in a terrible voice. ‘Down on your belly!’

How long is it since Saruman bought you? What was the promised price? When all the men were dead, you were to pick your share of the treasure, and take the woman you desire? Too long have you watched her under your eyelids and haunted her steps.'

Éomer grasped his sword. 'That I knew already,' he muttered. 'For that reason I would have slain him before, forgetting the law of the hall. But there are other reasons.' He stepped forward, but Gandalf stayed him with his hand.

'Éowyn is safe now,' he said. 'But you, Wormtongue, you have done what you could for your true master. Some reward you have earned at least. Yet Saruman is apt to overlook his bargains. I should advise you to go quickly and remind him, lest he forget your faithful service.'

'You lie,' said Wormtongue.

'That word comes too oft and easy from your lips,' said Gandalf. 'I do not lie. See, Théoden, here is a snake! With safety you cannot take it with you, nor can you leave it behind. To slay it would be just. But it was not always as it now is. Once it was a man, and did you service in its fashion. Give him a horse and let him go at once, wherever he chooses. By his choice you shall judge him.'

'Do you hear this, Wormtongue?' said Théoden. 'This is your choice: to ride with me to war, and let us see in battle whether you are true; or to go now, whither you will. But then, if ever we meet again, I shall not be merciful.'

Slowly Wormtongue rose. He looked at them with half-closed eyes. Last of all he scanned Théoden's face and opened his mouth as if to speak. Then suddenly he drew himself up. His hands worked. His eyes glittered. Such malice was in them that men stepped back from him. He bared his teeth; and then with a hissing breath he spat before the king's feet, and darting to one side, he fled down the stair.

'After him!' said Théoden. 'See that he does no harm to any, but do not hurt him or hinder him. Give him a horse, if he wishes it.'

'And if any will bear him,' said Éomer.

One of the guards ran down the stair. Another went to the well at the foot of the terrace and in his helm drew water. With it he washed clean the stones that Wormtongue had defiled.

'Now my guests, come!' said Théoden. 'Come and take such refreshment as haste allows.'

They passed back into the great house. Already they heard below them in the town the heralds crying and the war-horns blowing. For the king was to ride forth as soon as the men of the town and those dwelling near could be armed and assembled.

At the king's board sat Éomer and the four guests, and there also waiting upon the king was the lady Éowyn. They ate and drank swiftly. The others were silent while Théoden questioned Gandalf concerning Saruman.

'How far back his treachery goes, who can guess?' said Gandalf. 'He was not always evil. Once I do not doubt that he was the friend of Rohan; and even when his heart grew colder, he found you useful still. But for long now he has plotted your ruin, wearing the mask of friendship, until he was ready. In those years Wormtongue's task was easy, and all that you did was swiftly known in Isengard; for your land was open, and strangers came and went. And ever Wormtongue's whispering was in your ears, poisoning your thought, chilling your heart, weakening your limbs, while others watched and could do nothing, for your will was in his keeping.

'But when I escaped and warned you, then the mask was torn, for those who would see. After that Wormtongue played dangerously, always seeking to delay you, to prevent your full strength being gathered. He was crafty: dulling men's wariness, or working on their fears, as served the occasion. Do you not remember how eagerly he urged that no man should be spared on a wildgoose chase northward, when the immediate peril was westward? He persuaded you to forbid Éomer to pursue the raiding Orcs. If Éomer had not defied Wormtongue's voice speaking with your mouth, those Orcs would have reached Isengard by now, bearing a great prize. Not indeed that prize which Saruman desires above all else, but at the least two members of my Company, sharers of a

secret hope, of which even to you, lord, I cannot yet speak openly. Dare you think of what they might now be suffering, or what Saruman might now have learned to our destruction?’

‘I owe much to Éomer,’ said Théoden. ‘Faithful heart may have froward tongue.’

‘Say also,’ said Gandalf, ‘that to crooked eyes truth may wear a wry face.’

‘Indeed my eyes were almost blind,’ said Théoden. ‘Most of all I owe to you, my guest. Once again you have come in time. I would give you a gift ere we go, at your own choosing. You have only to name aught that is mine. I reserve now only my sword!’

‘Whether I came in time or not is yet to be seen,’ said Gandalf. ‘But as for your gift, lord, I will choose one that will fit my need: swift and sure. Give me Shadowfax! He was only lent before, if loan we may call it. But now I shall ride him into great hazard, setting silver against black: I would not risk anything that is not my own. And already there is a bond of love between us.’

‘You choose well,’ said Théoden; ‘and I give him now gladly. Yet it is a great gift. There is none like to Shadowfax. In him one of the mighty steeds of old has returned. None such shall return again. And to you my other guests I will offer such things as may be found in my armoury. Swords you do not need, but there are helms and coats of mail of cunning work, gifts to my fathers out of Gondor. Choose from these ere we go, and may they serve you well!’

Now men came bearing raiment of war from the king’s hoard, and they arrayed Aragorn and Legolas in shining mail. Helms too they chose, and round shields: their bosses were overlaid with gold and set with gems, green and red and white. Gandalf took no armour; and Gimli needed no coat of rings, even if one had been found to match his stature, for there was no hauberk in the hoards of Edoras of better make than his short corslet forged beneath the Mountain in the North. But he chose a cap of iron and leather that fitted well upon his round head; and a small shield he also took. It bore the running horse, white upon green, that was the emblem of the House of Eorl.

‘May it keep you well!’ said Théoden. ‘It was made for me in Thengel’s day, while still I was a boy.’

Gimli bowed. ‘I am proud, Lord of the Mark, to bear your device,’ he said. ‘Indeed sooner would I bear a horse than be borne by one. I love my feet better. But, maybe, I shall come yet where I can stand and fight.’

‘It may well be so,’ said Théoden.

The king now rose, and at once Éowyn came forward bearing wine. ‘*Ferthu Théoden hál!*’ she said. ‘Receive now this cup and drink in happy hour. Health be with thee at thy going and coming!’

Théoden drank from the cup, and she then proffered it to the guests. As she stood before Aragorn she paused suddenly and looked upon him, and her eyes were shining. And he looked down upon her fair face and smiled; but as he took the cup, his hand met hers, and he knew that she trembled at the touch. ‘Hail Aragorn son of Arathorn!’ she said. ‘Hail Lady of Rohan!’ he answered, but his face now was troubled and he did not smile.

When they had all drunk, the king went down the hall to the doors. There the guards awaited him, and heralds stood, and all the lords and chiefs were gathered together that remained in Edoras or dwelt nearby.

‘Behold! I go forth, and it seems like to be my last riding,’ said Théoden. ‘I have no child. Théodred my son is slain. I name Éomer my sister-son to be my heir. If neither of us return, then choose a new lord as you will. But to someone I must now entrust my people that I leave behind, to rule them in my place. Which of you will stay?’

No man spoke.

‘Is there none whom you would name? In whom do my people trust?’

‘In the House of Eorl,’ answered Háma.

‘But Éomer I cannot spare, nor would he stay,’ said the king; ‘and he is the last of that House.’

‘I said not Éomer,’ answered Háma. ‘And he is not the last. There is Éowyn, daughter of Éomund, his sister. She is fearless and high-hearted. All love her. Let her be as lord to the Eorlingas, while we are gone.’

‘It shall be so,’ said Théoden. ‘Let the heralds announce to the folk that the Lady Éowyn will lead them!’

Then the king sat upon a seat before his doors, and Éowyn knelt before him and received from him a sword and a fair corslet. ‘Farewell sister-daughter!’ he said. ‘Dark is the hour, yet maybe we shall return to the Golden Hall. But in Dunharrow the people may long defend themselves, and if the battle go ill, thither will come all who escape.’

‘Speak not so!’ she answered. ‘A year shall I endure for every day that passes until your return.’ But as she spoke her eyes went to Aragorn who stood nearby.

‘The king shall come again,’ he said. ‘Fear not! Not West but East does our doom await us.’

The king now went down the stair with Gandalf beside him. The others followed. Aragorn looked back as they passed towards the gate. Alone Éowyn stood before the doors of the house at the stair’s head; the sword was set upright before her, and her hands were laid upon the hilt. She was clad now in mail and shone like silver in the sun.

Gimli walked with Legolas, his axe on his shoulder. ‘Well, at last we set off!’ he said. ‘Men need many words before deeds. My axe is restless in my hands. Though I doubt not that these Rohirrim are fell-handed when they come to it. Nonetheless this is not the warfare that suits me. How shall I come to the battle? I wish I could walk and not bump like a sack at Gandalf’s saddlebow.’

‘A safer seat than many, I guess,’ said Legolas. ‘Yet doubtless Gandalf will gladly put you down on your feet when blows begin; or Shadowfax himself. An axe is no weapon for a rider.’

‘And a Dwarf is no horseman. It is orc-necks I would hew, not shave the scalps of Men,’ said Gimli, patting the haft of his axe.

At the gate they found a great host of men, old and young, all ready in the saddle. More than a thousand were there mustered. Their spears were like a springing wood. Loudly and joyously they shouted as Théoden came forth. Some held in readiness the king’s horse, Snowmane, and others held the horses of Aragorn and Legolas. Gimli stood ill at ease, frowning, but Éomer came up to him, leading his horse.

‘Hail, Gimli Glóin’s son!’ he cried. ‘I have not had time to learn gentle speech under your rod, as you promised. But shall we not put aside our quarrel? At least I will speak no evil again of the Lady of the Wood.’

‘I will forget my wrath for a while, Éomer son of Éomund,’ said Gimli; ‘but if ever you chance to see the Lady Galadriel with your eyes, then you shall acknowledge her the fairest of ladies, or our friendship will end.’

‘So be it!’ said Éomer. ‘But until that time pardon me, and in token of pardon ride with me, I beg. Gandalf will be at the head with the Lord of the Mark; but Firefoot, my horse, will bear us both, if you will.’

‘I thank you indeed,’ said Gimli greatly pleased. ‘I will gladly go with you, if Legolas, my comrade, may ride beside us.’

‘It shall be so,’ said Éomer. ‘Legolas upon my left, and Aragorn upon my right, and none will dare to stand before us!’

‘Where is Shadowfax?’ said Gandalf.

‘Running wild over the grass,’ they answered. ‘He will let no man handle him. There he goes, away down by the ford, like a shadow among the willows.’

Gandalf whistled and called aloud the horse’s name, and far away he tossed his head and neighed, and turning sped towards the host like an arrow.

‘Were the breath of the West Wind to take a body visible, even so would it appear,’ said Éomer, as the great horse ran up, until he stood before the wizard.

‘The gift seems already to be given,’ said Théoden. ‘But hearken all! Here now I name my guest, Gandalf Greyhame, wisest of counsellors, most welcome of wanderers, a lord of the Mark, a chieftain of the Eorlingas while our kin shall last; and I give to him Shadowfax, prince of horses.’

‘I thank you, Théoden King,’ said Gandalf. Then suddenly he threw back his grey cloak, and cast aside his hat, and leaped to horseback. He wore no helm nor mail. His snowy hair flew free in the wind, his white robes shone dazzling in the sun.

‘Behold the White Rider!’ cried Aragorn, and all took up the words.

‘Our King and the White Rider!’ they shouted. ‘Forth Eorlingas!’

The trumpets sounded. The horses reared and neighed. Spear clashed on shield. Then the king raised his hand, and with a rush like the sudden onset of a great wind the last host of Rohan rode thundering into the West.

Far over the plain Éowyn saw the glitter of their spears, as she stood still, alone before the doors of the silent house.



## Chapter 7: Helm's Deep

The sun was already westering as they rode from Edoras, and the light of it was in their eyes, turning all the rolling fields of Rohan to a golden haze. There was a beaten way, north-westward along the foot-hills of the White Mountains, and this they followed, up and down in a green country, crossing small swift streams by many fords. Far ahead and to their right the Misty Mountains loomed; ever darker and taller they grew as the miles went by. The sun went slowly down before them. Evening came behind.

The host rode on. Need drove them. Fearing to come too late, they rode with all the speed they could, pausing seldom. Swift and enduring were the steeds of Rohan, but there were many leagues to go. Forty leagues and more it was, as a bird flies, from Edoras to the fords of the Isen, where they hoped to find the king's men that held back the hosts of Saruman.

Night closed about them. At last they halted to make their camp. They had ridden for some five hours and were far out upon the western plain, yet more than half their journey lay still before them. In a great circle, under the starry sky and the waxing moon, they now made their bivouac. They lit no fires, for they were uncertain of events; but they set a ring of mounted guards about them, and scouts rode out far ahead, passing like shadows in the folds of the land. The slow night passed without tidings or alarm. At dawn the horns sounded, and within an hour they took the road again.

There were no clouds overhead yet, but a heaviness was in the air; it was hot for the season of the year. The rising sun was hazy, and behind it, following it slowly up the sky, there was a growing darkness, as of a great storm moving out of the East. And away in the North-west there seemed to be another darkness brooding about the feet of the Misty Mountains, a shadow that crept down slowly from the Wizard's Vale.

Gandalf dropped back to where Legolas rode beside Éomer. 'You have the keen eyes of your fair kindred, Legolas,' he said; 'and they can tell a sparrow from a finch a league off. Tell me, can you see anything away yonder towards Isengard?'

'Many miles lie between,' said Legolas, gazing thither and shading his eyes with his long hand. 'I can see a darkness. There are shapes moving in it, great shapes far away upon the bank of the river; but what they are I cannot tell. It is not mist or cloud that defeats my eyes: there is a veiling shadow that some power lays upon the land, and it marches slowly down stream. It is as if the twilight under endless trees were flowing downwards from the hills.'

'And behind us comes a very storm of Mordor,' said Gandalf. 'It will be a black night.'

As the second day of their riding drew on, the heaviness in the air increased. In the afternoon the dark clouds began to overtake them: a sombre canopy with great billowing edges flecked with dazzling light. The sun went down, blood-red in a smoking haze. The spears of the Riders were tipped with fire as the last shafts of light kindled the steep faces of the peaks of Thrihyrne: now very near they stood on the northernmost arm of the White Mountains, three jagged horns staring at the sunset. In the last red glow men in the vanguard saw a black speck, a horseman riding back towards them. They halted awaiting him.

He came, a weary man with dented helm and cloven shield. Slowly he climbed from his horse and stood there a while gasping. At length he spoke. 'Is Éomer here?' he asked. 'You come at last, but too late, and with too little strength. Things have gone evilly since Théodred fell. We were driven back yesterday over the Isen with great loss; many perished at the crossing. Then at night fresh forces came over the river against our camp. All Isengard must be emptied; and Saruman has armed the wild hillmen and herd-folk of Dunland beyond the rivers, and these also he loosed upon us. We were overmastered. The shield-wall was broken. Erkenbrand of Westfold has drawn off those men he could gather towards his fastness in Helm's Deep. The rest are scattered.

‘Where is Éomer? Tell him there is no hope ahead. He should return to Edoras before the wolves of Isengard come there.’

Théoden had sat silent, hidden from the man’s sight behind his guards; now he urged his horse forward. ‘Come, stand before me, Ceorl!’ he said. ‘I am here. The last host of the Eorlingas has ridden forth. It will not return without battle.’

The man’s face lightened with joy and wonder. He drew himself up. Then he knelt, offering his notched sword to the king. ‘Command me, lord!’ he cried. ‘And pardon me! I thought—’

‘You thought I remained in Meduseld bent like an old tree under winter snow. So it was when you rode to war. But a west wind has shaken the boughs,’ said Théoden. ‘Give this man a fresh horse! Let us ride to the help of Erkenbrand!’

While Théoden was speaking, Gandalf rode a short way ahead, and he sat there alone, gazing north to Isengard and west to the setting sun. Now he came back.

‘Ride, Théoden!’ he said. ‘Ride to Helm’s Deep! Go not to the Fords of Isen, and do not tarry in the plain! I must leave you for a while. Shadowfax must bear me now on a swift errand.’ Turning to Aragorn and Éomer and the men of the king’s household, he cried: ‘Keep well the Lord of the Mark, till I return. Await me at Helm’s Gate! Farewell!’

He spoke a word to Shadowfax, and like an arrow from the bow the great horse sprang away. Even as they looked he was gone: a flash of silver in the sunset, a wind over the grass, a shadow that fled and passed from sight. Snowmane snorted and reared, eager to follow; but only a swift bird on the wing could have overtaken him.

‘What does that mean?’ said one of the guard to Háma.

‘That Gandalf Greyhame has need of haste,’ answered Háma. ‘Ever he goes and comes unlooked-for.’

‘Wormtongue, were he here, would not find it hard to explain,’ said the other.

‘True enough,’ said Háma; ‘but for myself, I will wait until I see Gandalf again.’

‘Maybe you will wait long,’ said the other.

The host turned away now from the road to the Fords of Isen and bent their course southward. Night fell, and still they rode on. The hills drew near, but the tall peaks of Thrihyrne were already dim against the darkening sky. Still some miles away, on the far side of the Westfold Vale, a great bay in the mountains, lay a green coomb, out of which a gorge opened in the hills. Men of that land called it Helm’s Deep, after a hero of old wars who had made his refuge there. Ever steeper and narrower it wound inward from the north under the shadow of the Thrihyrne, till the crowhaunted cliffs rose like mighty towers on either side, shutting out the light.

At Helm’s Gate, before the mouth of the Deep, there was a heel of rock thrust outward by the northern cliff. There upon its spur stood high walls of ancient stone, and within them was a lofty tower. Men said that in the far-off days of the glory of Gondor the sea-kings had built here this fastness with the hands of giants. The Hornburg it was called, for a trumpet sounded upon the tower echoed in the Deep behind, as if armies long-forgotten were issuing to war from caves beneath the hills. A wall, too, the men of old had made from the Hornburg to the southern cliff, barring the entrance to the gorge. Beneath it by a wide culvert the Deeping-stream passed out. About the feet of the Hornrock it wound, and flowed then in a gully through the midst of a wide green gore, sloping gently down from Helm’s Gate to Helm’s Dike. Thence it fell into the Deeping-coomb and out into the Westfold Vale. There in the Hornburg at Helm’s Gate Erkenbrand, master of Westfold on the borders of the Mark, now dwelt. As the days darkened with threat of war, being wise, he had repaired the wall and made the fastness strong.

The Riders were still in the low valley before the mouth of the Coomb, when cries and hornblasts were heard from their scouts that went in front. Out of the darkness arrows whistled. Swiftly a scout rode back and reported

that wolf-riders were abroad in the valley, and that a host of Orcs and wild men were hurrying southward from the Fords of Isen and seemed to be making for Helm's Deep.

'We have found many of our folk lying slain as they fled thither,' said the scout. 'And we have met scattered companies, going this way and that, leaderless. What has become of Erkenbrand none seem to know. It is likely that he will be overtaken ere he can reach Helm's Gate, if he has not already perished.'

'Has aught been seen of Gandalf?' asked Théoden.

'Yes, lord. Many have seen an old man in white upon a horse, passing hither and thither over the plains like wind in the grass. Some thought he was Saruman. It is said that he went away ere nightfall towards Isengard. Some say also that Wormtongue was seen earlier, going northward with a company of Orcs.'

'It will go ill with Wormtongue, if Gandalf comes upon him,' said Théoden. 'Nonetheless I miss now both my counsellors, the old and the new. But in this need we have no better choice than to go on, as Gandalf said, to Helm's Gate, whether Erkenbrand be there or no. Is it known how great is the host that comes from the North?'

'It is very great,' said the scout. 'He that flies counts every foeman twice, yet I have spoken to stouthearted men, and I do not doubt that the main strength of the enemy is many times as great as all that we have here.'

'Then let us be swift,' said Éomer. 'Let us drive through such foes as are already between us and the fastness. There are caves in Helm's Deep where hundreds may lie hid; and secret ways lead thence up on to the hills.'

'Trust not to secret ways,' said the king. 'Saruman has long spied out this land. Still in that place our defence may last long. Let us go!'

Aragorn and Legolas went now with Éomer in the van. On through the dark night they rode, ever slower as the darkness deepened and their way climbed southward, higher and higher into the dim folds about the mountains' feet. They found few of the enemy before them. Here and there they came upon roving bands of Orcs; but they fled ere the Riders could take or slay them.

'It will not be long I fear,' said Éomer, 'ere the coming of the king's host will be known to the leader of our enemies, Saruman or whatever captain he has sent forth.'

The rumour of war grew behind them. Now they could hear, borne over the dark, the sound of harsh singing. They had climbed far up into the Deeping-coomb when they looked back. Then they saw torches, countless points of fiery light upon the black fields behind, scattered like red flowers, or winding up from the lowlands in long flickering lines. Here and there a larger blaze leapt up.

'It is a great host and follows us hard,' said Aragorn.

'They bring fire,' said Théoden, 'and they are burning as they come, rick, cot, and tree. This was a rich vale and had many homesteads. Alas for my folk!'

'Would that day was here and we might ride down upon them like a storm out of the mountains!' said Aragorn. 'It grieves me to fly before them.'

'We need not fly much further,' said Éomer. 'Not far ahead now lies Helm's Dike, an ancient trench and rampart scored across the coomb, two furlongs below Helm's Gate. There we can turn and give battle.'

'Nay, we are too few to defend the Dike,' said Théoden. 'It is a mile long or more, and the breach in it is wide.'

'At the breach our rearguard must stand, if we are pressed,' said Éomer.

There was neither star nor moon when the Riders came to the breach in the Dike, where the stream from above passed out, and the road beside it ran down from the Hornburg. The rampart loomed suddenly before them, a high shadow beyond a dark pit. As they rode up a sentinel challenged them.

'The Lord of the Mark rides to Helm's Gate,' Éomer answered. 'I, Éomer son of Éomund, speak.'

'This is good tidings beyond hope,' said the sentinel. 'Hasten! The enemy is on your heels.'

The host passed through the breach and halted on the sloping sward above. They now learned to their joy that Erkenbrand had left many men to hold Helm's Gate, and more had since escaped thither.



‘Maybe, we have a thousand fit to fight on foot,’ said Gamling, an old man, the leader of those that watched the Dike. ‘But most of them have seen too many winters, as I have, or too few, as my son’s son here. What news of Erkenbrand? Word came yesterday that he was retreating hither with all that is left of the best Riders of Westfold. But he has not come.’

‘I fear that he will not come now,’ said Éomer. ‘Our scouts have gained no news of him, and the enemy fills all the valley behind us.’

‘I would that he had escaped,’ said Théoden. ‘He was a mighty man. In him lived again the valour of Helm the Hammerhand. But we cannot await him here. We must draw all our forces now behind the walls. Are you well stored? We bring little provision, for we rode forth to open battle, not to a siege.’

‘Behind us in the caves of the Deep are three parts of the folk of Westfold, old and young, children and women,’ said Gamling. ‘But great store of food, and many beasts and their fodder, have also been gathered there.’

‘That is well,’ said Éomer. ‘They are burning or despoiling all that is left in the vale.’

‘If they come to bargain for our goods at Helm’s Gate, they will pay a high price,’ said Gamling.

The king and his Riders passed on. Before the causeway that crossed the stream they dismounted. In a long file they led their horses up the ramp and passed within the gates of the Hornburg. There they were welcomed again with joy and renewed hope; for now there were men enough to man both the burg and the barrier wall.

Quickly Éomer set his men in readiness. The king and the men of his household were in the Hornburg, and there also were many of the Westfold-men. But on the Deeping Wall and its tower, and behind it, Éomer arrayed most of the strength that he had, for here the defence seemed more doubtful, if the assault were determined and in great force. The horses were led far up the Deep under such guard as could be spared.

The Deeping Wall was twenty feet high, and so thick that four men could walk abreast along the top, sheltered by a parapet over which only a tall man could look. Here and there were clefts in the stone through which men could shoot. This battlement could be reached by a stair running down from a door in the outer court of the Hornburg; three flights of steps led also up on to the wall from the Deep behind; but in front it was smooth, and the great stones of it were set with such skill that no foothold could be found at their joints, and at the top they hung over like a sea-delved cliff.

Gimli stood leaning against the breastwork upon the wall. Legolas sat above on the parapet, fingering his bow, and peering out into the gloom.

‘This is more to my liking,’ said the dwarf, stamping on the stones. ‘Ever my heart rises as we draw near the mountains. There is good rock here. This country has tough bones. I felt them in my feet as we came up from the dike. Give me a year and a hundred of my kin and I would make this a place that armies would break upon like water.’

‘I do not doubt it,’ said Legolas. ‘But you are a dwarf, and dwarves are strange folk. I do not like this place, and I shall like it no more by the light of day. But you comfort me, Gimli, and I am glad to have you standing nigh with your stout legs and your hard axe. I wish there were more of your kin among us. But even more would I give for a hundred good archers of Mirkwood. We shall need them. The Rohirrim have good bowmen after their fashion, but there are too few here, too few.’

‘It is dark for archery,’ said Gimli. ‘Indeed it is time for sleep. Sleep! I feel the need of it, as never I thought any dwarf could. Riding is tiring work. Yet my axe is restless in my hand. Give me a row of orc-necks and room to swing and all weariness will fall from me!’

A slow time passed. Far down in the valley scattered fires still burned. The hosts of Isengard were advancing in silence now. Their torches could be seen winding up the coomb in many lines.

Suddenly from the Dike yells and screams, and the fierce battlecries of men broke out. Flaming brands appeared over the brink and clustered thickly at the breach. Then they scattered and vanished. Men came

galloping back over the field and up the ramp to the gate of the Hornburg. The rearguard of the Westfolders had been driven in.

‘The enemy is at hand!’ they said. ‘We loosed every arrow that we had, and filled the Dike with Orcs. But it will not halt them long. Already they are scaling the bank at many points, thick as marching ants. But we have taught them not to carry torches.’

It was now past midnight. The sky was utterly dark, and the stillness of the heavy air foreboded storm. Suddenly the clouds were seared by a blinding flash. Branched lightning smote down upon the eastward hills. For a staring moment the watchers on the walls saw all the space between them and the Dike lit with white light: it was boiling and crawling with black shapes, some squat and broad, some tall and grim, with high helmets and sable shields. Hundreds and hundreds more were pouring over the Dike and through the breach. The dark tide flowed up to the walls from cliff to cliff. Thunder rolled in the valley. Rain came lashing down.

Arrows thick as the rain came whistling over the battlements, and fell clinking and glancing on the stones. Some found a mark. The assault on Helm’s Deep had begun, but no sound or challenge was heard within; no answering arrows came.

The assailing hosts halted, foiled by the silent menace of rock and wall. Ever and again the lightning tore aside the darkness. Then the Orcs screamed, waving spear and sword, and shooting a cloud of arrows at any that stood revealed upon the battlements; and the men of the Mark amazed looked out, as it seemed to them, upon a great field of dark corn, tossed by a tempest of war, and every ear glinted with barbed light.

Brazen trumpets sounded. The enemy surged forward, some against the Deeping Wall, others towards the causeway and the ramp that led up to the Hornburg-gates. There the hugest Orcs were mustered, and the wild men of the Dunland fells. A moment they hesitated and then on they came. The lightning flashed, and blazoned upon every helm and shield the ghastly hand of Isengard was seen. They reached the summit of the rock; they drove towards the gates.

Then at last an answer came: a storm of arrows met them, and a hail of stones. They wavered, broke, and fled back; and then charged again, broke and charged again; and each time, like the incoming sea, they halted at a higher point. Again trumpets rang, and a press of roaring men leaped forth. They held their great shields above them like a roof, while in their midst they bore two trunks of mighty trees. Behind them orc-archers crowded, sending a hail of darts against the bowmen on the walls. They gained the gates. The trees, swung by strong arms, smote the timbers with a rending boom. If any man fell, crushed by a stone hurtling from above, two others sprang to take his place. Again and again the great rams swung and crashed.

Éomer and Aragorn stood together on the Deeping Wall. They heard the roar of voices and the thudding of the rams; and then in a sudden flash of light they beheld the peril of the gates.

‘Come!’ said Aragorn. ‘This is the hour when we draw swords together!’

Running like fire, they sped along the wall, and up the steps, and passed into the outer court upon the Rock. As they ran they gathered a handful of stout swordsmen. There was a small postern-door that opened in an angle of the burg-wall on the west, where the cliff stretched out to meet it. On that side a narrow path ran round towards the great gate, between the wall and the sheer brink of the Rock. Together Éomer and Aragorn sprang through the door, their men close behind. The two swords flashed from the sheath as one.

‘Gúthwinë!’ cried Éomer. ‘Gúthwinë for the Mark!’

‘Andúril!’ cried Aragorn. ‘Andúril for the Dúnedain!’

Charging from the side, they hurled themselves upon the wild men. Andúril rose and fell, gleaming with white fire. A shout went up from wall and tower: ‘Andúril! Andúril goes to war. The Blade that was Broken shines again!’

Dismayed the rammers let fall the trees and turned to fight; but the wall of their shields was broken as by a lightning-stroke, and they were swept away, hewn down, or cast over the Rock into the stony stream below. The orc-archers shot wildly and then fled.

For a moment Éomer and Aragorn halted before the gates. The thunder was rumbling in the distance now. The lightning flickered still, far off among the mountains in the South. A keen wind was blowing from the North again. The clouds were torn and drifting, and stars peeped out; and above the hills of the Coomb-side the westering moon rode, glimmering yellow in the storm-wrack.

‘We did not come too soon,’ said Aragorn, looking at the gates. Their great hinges and iron bars were wrenched and bent; many of their timbers were cracked. ‘The doors will not withstand another such battering.’

‘Yet we cannot stay here beyond the walls to defend them,’ said Éomer. ‘Look!’ He pointed to the causeway. Already a great press of Orcs and Men were gathering again beyond the stream. Arrows whined, and skipped on the stones about them. ‘Come! We must get back and see what we can do to pile stone and beam across the gates within. Come now!’

They turned and ran. At that moment some dozen Orcs that had lain motionless among the slain leaped to their feet, and came silently and swiftly behind. Two flung themselves to the ground at Éomer’s heels, tripped him, and in a moment they were on top of him. But a small dark figure that none had observed sprang out of the shadows and gave a hoarse shout: *Baruk Khazâd! Khazâd ai-mênu!* An axe swung and swept back. Two Orcs fell headless. The rest fled.

Éomer struggled to his feet, even as Aragorn ran back to his aid.

The postern was closed again, the iron door was barred and piled inside with stones. When all were safe within, Éomer turned: ‘I thank you, Gimli son of Glóin!’ he said. ‘I did not know that you were with us in the sortie. But oft the unbidden guest proves the best company. How came you there?’

‘I followed you to shake off sleep,’ said Gimli; ‘but I looked on the hillmen and they seemed over large for me, so I sat beside a stone to see your sword-play.’

‘I shall not find it easy to repay you,’ said Éomer.

‘There may be many a chance ere the night is over,’ laughed the Dwarf. ‘But I am content. Till now I have hewn naught but wood since I left Moria.’

‘Two!’ said Gimli, patting his axe. He had returned to his place on the wall.

‘Two?’ said Legolas. ‘I have done better, though now I must grope for spent arrows; all mine are gone. Yet I make my tale twenty at the least. But that is only a few leaves in a forest.’

The sky now was quickly clearing and the sinking moon was shining brightly. But the light brought little hope to the Riders of the Mark. The enemy before them seemed to have grown rather than diminished, and still more were pressing up from the valley through the breach. The sortie upon the Rock gained only a brief respite. The assault on the gates was redoubled. Against the Deeping Wall the hosts of Isengard roared like a sea. Orcs and hillmen swarmed about its feet from end to end. Ropes with grappling hooks were hurled over the parapet faster than men could cut them or fling them back. Hundreds of long ladders were lifted up. Many were cast down in ruin, but many more replaced them, and Orcs sprang up them like apes in the dark forests of the South. Before the wall’s foot the dead and broken were piled like shingle in a storm; ever higher rose the hideous mounds, and still the enemy came on.

The men of Rohan grew weary. All their arrows were spent, and every shaft was shot; their swords were notched, and their shields were riven. Three times Aragorn and Éomer rallied them, and three times Andúril flamed in a desperate charge that drove the enemy from the wall.

Then a clamour arose in the Deep behind. Orcs had crept like rats through the culvert through which the stream flowed out. There they had gathered in the shadow of the cliffs, until the assault above was hottest and nearly all the men of the defence had rushed to the wall’s top. Then they sprang out. Already some had passed into the jaws of the Deep and were among the horses, fighting with the guards.

Down from the wall leapt Gimli with a fierce cry that echoed in the cliffs. ‘*Khazâd! Khazâd!*’ He soon had work enough.

‘Ai-oi!’ he shouted. ‘The Orcs are behind the wall. Ai-oi! Come, Legolas! There are enough for us both. *Khazâd ai-mênu!*’

Gamling the Old looked down from the Hornburg, hearing the great voice of the dwarf above all the tumult. ‘The Orcs are in the Deep!’ he cried. ‘Helm! Helm! Forth Helmingas!’ he shouted as he leaped down the stair from the Rock with many men of Westfold at his back.

Their onset was fierce and sudden, and the Orcs gave way before them. Ere long they were hemmed in in the narrows of the gorge, and all were slain or driven shrieking into the chasm of the Deep to fall before the guardians of the hidden caves.

‘Twenty-one!’ cried Gimli. He hewed a two-handed stroke and laid the last Orc before his feet. ‘Now my count passes Master Legolas again.’

‘We must stop this rat-hole,’ said Gamling. ‘Dwarves are said to be cunning folk with stone. Lend us your aid, master!’

‘We do not shape stone with battle-axes, nor with our finger-nails,’ said Gimli. ‘But I will help as I may.’

They gathered such small boulders and broken stones as they could find to hand, and under Gimli’s direction the Westfold-men blocked up the inner end of the culvert, until only a narrow outlet remained. Then the Deeping-stream, swollen by the rain, churned and fretted in its choked path, and spread slowly in cold pools from cliff to cliff.

‘It will be drier above,’ said Gimli. ‘Come, Gamling, let us see how things go on the wall!’

He climbed up and found Legolas beside Aragorn and Éomer. The elf was whetting his long knife. There was for a while a lull in the assault, since the attempt to break in through the culvert had been foiled.

‘Twenty-one!’ said Gimli.

‘Good!’ said Legolas. ‘But my count is now two dozen. It has been knife-work up here.’

Éomer and Aragorn leant wearily on their swords. Away on the left the crash and clamour of the battle on the Rock rose loud again. But the Hornburg still held fast, like an island in the sea. Its gates lay in ruin; but over the barricade of beams and stones within no enemy as yet had passed.

Aragorn looked at the pale stars, and at the moon, now sloping behind the western hills that enclosed the valley. ‘This is a night as long as years,’ he said. ‘How long will the day tarry?’

‘Dawn is not far off,’ said Gamling, who had now climbed up beside him. ‘But dawn will not help us, I fear.’

‘Yet dawn is ever the hope of men,’ said Aragorn.

‘But these creatures of Isengard, these half-orcs and goblin-men that the foul craft of Saruman has bred, they will not quail at the sun,’ said Gamling. ‘And neither will the wild men of the hills. Do you not hear their voices?’

‘I hear them,’ said Éomer; ‘but they are only the scream of birds and the bellowing of beasts to my ears.’

‘Yet there are many that cry in the Dunland tongue,’ said Gamling.

‘I know that tongue. It is an ancient speech of men, and once was spoken in many western valleys of the Mark. Hark! They hate us, and they are glad; for our doom seems certain to them. “The king, the king!” they cry. “We will take their king. Death to the Forgoil! Death to the Strawheads! Death to the robbers of the North!” Such names they have for us. Not in half a thousand years have they forgotten their grievance that the lords of Gondor gave the Mark to Eorl the Young and made alliance with him. That old hatred Saruman has inflamed. They are fierce folk when roused. They will not give way now for dusk or dawn, until Théoden is taken, or they themselves are slain.’

‘Nonetheless day will bring hope to me,’ said Aragorn. ‘Is it not said that no foe has ever taken the Hornburg, if men defended it?’

‘So the minstrels say,’ said Éomer.

‘Then let us defend it, and hope!’ said Aragorn.

Even as they spoke there came a blare of trumpets. Then there was a crash and a flash of flame and smoke. The waters of the Deeping-stream poured out hissing and foaming: they were choked no longer, a gaping hole was blasted in the wall. A host of dark shapes poured in.

‘Devilry of Saruman!’ cried Aragorn. ‘They have crept in the culvert again, while we talked, and they have lit the fire of Orthanc beneath our feet. *Elendil, Elendil!*’ he shouted, as he leaped down into the breach; but even as he did so a hundred ladders were raised against the battlements. Over the wall and under the wall the last assault came sweeping like a dark wave upon a hill of sand. The defence was swept away. Some of the Riders were driven back, further and further into the Deep, falling and fighting as they gave way, step by step, towards the caves. Others cut their way back towards the citadel.

A broad stairway climbed from the Deep up to the Rock and the rear-gate of the Hornburg. Near the bottom stood Aragorn. In his hand still Andúril gleamed, and the terror of the sword for a while held back the enemy, as one by one all who could gain the stair passed up towards the gate. Behind on the upper steps knelt Legolas. His bow was bent, but one gleaned arrow was all that he had left, and he peered out now, ready to shoot the first Orc that should dare to approach the stair.

‘All who can have now got safe within, Aragorn,’ he called. ‘Come back!’

Aragorn turned and sped up the stair; but as he ran he stumbled in his weariness. At once his enemies leapt forward. Up came the Orcs, yelling, with their long arms stretched out to seize him. The foremost fell with Legolas’ last arrow in his throat, but the rest sprang over him. Then a great boulder, cast from the outer wall above, crashed down upon the stair, and hurled them back into the Deep. Aragorn gained the door, and swiftly it clanged to behind him.

‘Things go ill, my friends,’ he said, wiping the sweat from his brow with his arm.

‘Ill enough,’ said Legolas, ‘but not yet hopeless, while we have you with us. Where is Gimli?’

‘I do not know,’ said Aragorn. ‘I last saw him fighting on the ground behind the wall, but the enemy swept us apart.’

‘Alas! That is evil news,’ said Legolas.

‘He is stout and strong,’ said Aragorn. ‘Let us hope that he will escape back to the caves. There he would be safe for a while. Safer than we. Such a refuge would be to the liking of a dwarf.’

‘That must be my hope,’ said Legolas. ‘But I wish that he had come this way. I desired to tell Master Gimli that my tale is now thirty-nine.’

‘If he wins back to the caves, he will pass your count again,’ laughed Aragorn. ‘Never did I see an axe so wielded.’

‘I must go and seek some arrows,’ said Legolas. ‘Would that this night would end, and I could have better light for shooting.’

Aragorn now passed into the citadel. There to his dismay he learned that Éomer had not reached the Hornburg.

‘Nay, he did not come to the Rock,’ said one of the Westfold-men. ‘I last saw him gathering men about him and fighting in the mouth of the Deep. Gamling was with him, and the dwarf; but I could not come to them.’

Aragorn strode on through the inner court, and mounted to a high chamber in the tower. There stood the king, dark against a narrow window, looking out upon the vale.

‘What is the news, Aragorn?’ he said.

‘The Deeping Wall is taken, lord, and all the defence swept away; but many have escaped hither to the Rock.’

‘Is Éomer here?’

‘No, lord. But many of your men retreated into the Deep; and some say that Éomer was amongst them. In the narrows they may hold back the enemy and come within the caves. What hope they may have then I do not know.’

‘More than we. Good provision, it is said. And the air is wholesome there because of the outlets through fissures in the rock far above. None can force an entrance against determined men. They may hold out long.’

‘But the Orcs have brought a devilry from Orthanc,’ said Aragorn. ‘They have a blasting fire, and with it they took the Wall. If they cannot come in the caves, they may seal up those that are inside. But now we must turn all our thought to our own defence.’

‘I fret in this prison,’ said Théoden. ‘If I could have set a spear in rest, riding before my men upon the field, maybe I could have felt again the joy of battle, and so ended. But I serve little purpose here.’

‘Here at least you are guarded in the strongest fastness of the Mark,’ said Aragorn. ‘More hope we have to defend you in the Hornburg than in Edoras, or even at Dunharrow in the mountains.’

‘It is said that the Hornburg has never fallen to assault,’ said Théoden; ‘but now my heart is doubtful. The world changes, and all that once was strong now proves unsure. How shall any tower withstand such numbers and such reckless hate? Had I known that the strength of Isengard was grown so great, maybe I should not so rashly have ridden forth to meet it, for all the arts of Gandalf. His counsel seems not now so good as it did under the morning sun.’

‘Do not judge the counsel of Gandalf, until all is over, lord,’ said Aragorn.

‘The end will not be long,’ said the king. ‘But I will not end here, taken like an old badger in a trap. Snowmane and Hasufel and the horses of my guard are in the inner court. When dawn comes, I will bid men sound Helm’s horn, and I will ride forth. Will you ride with me then, son of Arathorn? Maybe we shall cleave a road, or make such an end as will be worth a song—if any be left to sing of us hereafter.’

‘I will ride with you,’ said Aragorn.

Taking his leave, he returned to the walls, and passed round all their circuit, enheartening the men, and lending aid wherever the assault was hot. Legolas went with him. Blasts of fire leaped up from below shaking the stones. Grappling-hooks were hurled, and ladders raised. Again and again the Orcs gained the summit of the outer wall, and again the defenders cast them down.

At last Aragorn stood above the great gates, heedless of the darts of the enemy. As he looked forth he saw the eastern sky grow pale. Then he raised his empty hand, palm outward in token of parley.

The Orcs yelled and jeered. ‘Come down! Come down!’ they cried. ‘If you wish to speak to us, come down! Bring out your king! We are the fighting Uruk-hai. We will fetch him from his hole, if he does not come. Bring out your skulking king!’

‘The king stays or comes at his own will,’ said Aragorn.

‘Then what are you doing here?’ they answered. ‘Why do you look out? Do you wish to see the greatness of our army? We are the fighting Uruk-hai.’

‘I looked out to see the dawn,’ said Aragorn.

‘What of the dawn?’ they jeered. ‘We are the Uruk-hai: we do not stop the fight for night or day, for fair weather or for storm. We come to kill, by sun or moon. What of the dawn?’

‘None knows what the new day shall bring him,’ said Aragorn. ‘Get you gone, ere it turn to your evil.’

‘Get down or we will shoot you from the wall,’ they cried. ‘This is no parley. You have nothing to say.’

‘I have still this to say,’ answered Aragorn. ‘No enemy has yet taken the Hornburg. Depart, or not one of you will be spared. Not one will be left alive to take back tidings to the North. You do not know your peril.’

So great a power and royalty was revealed in Aragorn, as he stood there alone above the ruined gates before the host of his enemies, that many of the wild men paused, and looked back over their shoulders to the valley, and

some looked up doubtfully at the sky. But the Orcs laughed with loud voices; and a hail of darts and arrows whistled over the wall, as Aragorn leaped down.

There was a roar and a blast of fire. The archway of the gate above which he had stood a moment before crumbled and crashed in smoke and dust. The barricade was scattered as if by a thunderbolt. Aragorn ran to the king's tower.

But even as the gate fell, and the Orcs about it yelled, preparing to charge, a murmur arose behind them, like a wind in the distance, and it grew to a clamour of many voices crying strange news in the dawn. The Orcs upon the Rock, hearing the rumour of dismay, wavered and looked back. And then, sudden and terrible, from the tower above, the sound of the great horn of Helm rang out.

All that heard that sound trembled. Many of the Orcs cast themselves on their faces and covered their ears with their claws. Back from the Deep the echoes came, blast upon blast, as if on every cliff and hill a mighty herald stood. But on the walls men looked up, listening with wonder; for the echoes did not die. Ever the hornblasts wound on among the hills; nearer now and louder they answered one to another, blowing fierce and free.

'Helm! Helm!' the Riders shouted. 'Helm is arisen and comes back to war. Helm for Théoden King!'

And with that shout the king came. His horse was white as snow, golden was his shield, and his spear was long. At his right hand was Aragorn, Elendil's heir, behind him rode the lords of the House of Eorl the Young. Light sprang in the sky. Night departed.

'Forth Eorlingas!' With a cry and a great noise they charged. Down from the gates they roared, over the causeway they swept, and they drove through the hosts of Isengard as a wind among grass. Behind them from the Deep came the stern cries of men issuing from the caves, driving forth the enemy. Out poured all the men that were left upon the Rock. And ever the sound of blowing horns echoed in the hills.

On they rode, the king and his companions. Captains and champions fell or fled before them. Neither orc nor man withstood them. Their backs were to the swords and spears of the Riders, and their faces to the valley. They cried and wailed, for fear and great wonder had come upon them with the rising of the day.

So King Théoden rode from Helm's Gate and clove his path to the great Dike. There the company halted. Light grew bright about them. Shafts of the sun flared above the eastern hills and glimmered on their spears. But they sat silent on their horses, and they gazed down upon the Deeping-coomb.

The land had changed. Where before the green dale had lain, its grassy slopes lapping the ever-mounting hills, there now a forest loomed. Great trees, bare and silent, stood, rank on rank, with tangled bough and hoary head; their twisted roots were buried in the long green grass. Darkness was under them. Between the Dike and the eaves of that nameless wood only two open furlongs lay. There now cowered the proud hosts of Saruman, in terror of the king and in terror of the trees. They streamed down from Helm's Gate until all above the Dike was empty of them, but below it they were packed like swarming flies. Vainly they crawled and clambered about the walls of the coomb, seeking to escape. Upon the east too sheer and stony was the valley's side; upon the left, from the west, their final doom approached.

There suddenly upon a ridge appeared a rider, clad in white, shining in the rising sun. Over the low hills the horns were sounding. Behind him, hastening down the long slopes, were a thousand men on foot; their swords were in their hands. Amid them strode a man tall and strong. His shield was red. As he came to the valley's brink, he set to his lips a great black horn and blew a ringing blast.

'Erkenbrand!' the Riders shouted. 'Erkenbrand!'

'Behold the White Rider!' cried Aragorn. 'Gandalf is come again!'

'Mithrandir, Mithrandir!' said Legolas. 'This is wizardry indeed! Come! I would look on this forest, ere the spell changes.'

The hosts of Isengard roared, swaying this way and that, turning from fear to fear. Again the horn sounded from the tower. Down through the breach of the Dike charged the king's company. Down from the hills leaped Erkenbrand, lord of Westfold. Down leaped Shadowfax, like a deer that runs surefooted in the mountains. The

White Rider was upon them, and the terror of his coming filled the enemy with madness. The wild men fell on their faces before him. The Orcs reeled and screamed and cast aside both sword and spear. Like a black smoke driven by a mounting wind they fled. Wailing they passed under the waiting shadow of the trees; and from that shadow none ever came again.





## Chapter 8: The Road To Isengard

So it was that in the light of a fair morning King Théoden and Gandalf the White Rider met again upon the green grass beside the Deeping-stream. There was also Aragorn son of Arathorn, and Legolas the Elf, and Erkenbrand of Westfold, and the lords of the Golden House. About them were gathered the Rohirrim, the Riders of the Mark: wonder overcame their joy in victory, and their eyes were turned towards the wood.

Suddenly there was a great shout, and down from the Dike came those who had been driven back into the Deep. There came Gamling the Old, and Éomer son of Éomund, and beside them walked Gimli the dwarf. He had no helm, and about his head was a linen band stained with blood; but his voice was loud and strong.

‘Forty-two, Master Legolas!’ he cried. ‘Alas! My axe is notched: the forty-second had an iron collar on his neck. How is it with you?’

‘You have passed my score by one,’ answered Legolas. ‘But I do not grudge you the game, so glad am I to see you on your legs!’

‘Welcome, Éomer, sister-son!’ said Théoden. ‘Now that I see you safe, I am glad indeed.’

‘Hail, Lord of the Mark!’ said Éomer. ‘The dark night has passed, and day has come again. But the day has brought strange tidings.’ He turned and gazed in wonder, first at the wood and then at Gandalf. ‘Once more you come in the hour of need, unlooked-for,’ he said.

‘Unlooked-for?’ said Gandalf. ‘I said that I would return and meet you here.’

‘But you did not name the hour, nor foretell the manner of your coming. Strange help you bring. You are mighty in wizardry, Gandalf the White!’

‘That may be. But if so, I have not shown it yet. I have but given good counsel in peril, and made use of the speed of Shadowfax. Your own valour has done more, and the stout legs of the Westfold-men marching through the night.’

Then they all gazed at Gandalf with still greater wonder. Some glanced darkly at the wood, and passed their hands over their brows, as if they thought their eyes saw otherwise than his.

Gandalf laughed long and merrily. ‘The trees?’ he said. ‘Nay, I see the wood as plainly as do you. But that is no deed of mine. It is a thing beyond the counsel of the wise. Better than my design, and better even than my hope the event has proved.’

‘Then if not yours, whose is the wizardry?’ said Théoden. ‘Not Saruman’s, that is plain. Is there some mightier sage, of whom we have yet to learn?’

‘It is not wizardry, but a power far older,’ said Gandalf: ‘a power that walked the earth, ere elf sang or hammer rang.’

*Ere iron was found or tree was hewn,  
When young was mountain under moon;  
Ere ring was made, or wrought was woe,  
It walked the forests long ago.’*

‘And what may be the answer to your riddle?’ said Théoden.

‘If you would learn that, you should come with me to Isengard,’ answered Gandalf.

‘To Isengard?’ they cried.

‘Yes,’ said Gandalf. ‘I shall return to Isengard, and those who will may come with me. There we may see strange things.’

‘But there are not men enough in the Mark, not if they were all gathered together and healed of wounds and weariness, to assault the stronghold of Saruman,’ said Théoden.

‘Nevertheless to Isengard I go,’ said Gandalf. ‘I shall not stay there long. My way lies now eastward. Look for me in Edoras, ere the waning of the moon!’

‘Nay!’ said Théoden. ‘In the dark hour before dawn I doubted, but we will not part now. I will come with you, if that is your counsel.’

‘I wish to speak with Saruman, as soon as may be now,’ said Gandalf, ‘and since he has done you great injury, it would be fitting if you were there. But how soon and how swiftly will you ride?’

‘My men are weary with battle,’ said the King; ‘and I am weary also. For I have ridden far and slept little. Alas! My old age is not feigned nor due only to the whisperings of Wormtongue. It is an ill that no leech can wholly cure, not even Gandalf.’

‘Then let all who are to ride with me rest now,’ said Gandalf. ‘We will journey under the shadow of evening. It is as well; for it is my counsel that all our comings and goings should be as secret as may be, henceforth. But do not command many men to go with you, Théoden. We go to a parley not to a fight.’

The King then chose men that were unhurt and had swift horses, and he sent them forth with tidings of the victory into every vale of the Mark; and they bore his summons also, bidding all men, young and old, to come in haste to Edoras. There the Lord of the Mark would hold an assembly of all that could bear arms, on the third day after the full moon. To ride with him to Isengard the King chose Éomer and twenty men of his household. With Gandalf would go Aragorn, and Legolas, and Gimli. In spite of his hurt the dwarf would not stay behind.

‘It was only a feeble blow and the cap turned it,’ he said. ‘It would take more than such an orc-scratch to keep me back.’

‘I will tend it, while you rest,’ said Aragorn.

The king now returned to the Hornburg, and slept, such a sleep of quiet as he had not known for many years, and the remainder of his chosen company rested also. But the others, all that were not hurt or wounded, began a great labour; for many had fallen in the battle and lay dead upon the field or in the Deep.

No Orcs remained alive; their bodies were uncoun- ted. But a great many of the hillmen had given themselves up; and they were afraid, and cried for mercy.

The Men of the Mark took their weapons from them, and set them to work.

‘Help now to repair the evil in which you have joined,’ said Erkenbrand; ‘and afterwards you shall take an oath never again to pass the Fords of Isen in arms, nor to march with the enemies of Men; and then you shall go free back to your land. For you have been deluded by Saruman. Many of you have got death as the reward of your trust in him; but had you conquered, little better would your wages have been.’

The men of Dunland were amazed; for Saruman had told them that the men of Rohan were cruel and burned their captives alive.

In the midst of the field before the Hornburg two mounds were raised, and beneath them were laid all the Riders of the Mark who fell in the defence, those of the East Dales upon one side, and those of Westfold upon the other. But the men of Dunland were set apart in a mound below the Dike. In a grave alone under the shadow of the Hornburg lay Háma, captain of the King’s guard. He fell before the Gate.

The Orcs were piled in great heaps, away from the mounds of Men, not far from the eaves of the forest. And the people were troubled in their minds; for the heaps of carrion were too great for burial or for burning. They had little wood for firing, and none would have dared to take an axe to the strange trees, even if Gandalf had not warned them to hurt neither bark nor bough at their great peril.

‘Let the Orcs lie,’ said Gandalf. ‘The morning may bring new counsel.’

In the afternoon the King's company prepared to depart. The work of burial was then but beginning; and Théoden mourned for the loss of Háma, his captain, and cast the first earth upon his grave. 'Great injury indeed has Saruman done to me and all this land,' he said; 'and I will remember it, when we meet.'

The sun was already drawing near the hills upon the west of the Coomb, when at last Théoden and Gandalf and their companions rode down from the Dike. Behind them were gathered a great host, both of the Riders and of the people of Westfold, old and young, women and children, who had come out from the caves. A song of victory they sang with clear voices; and then they fell silent, wondering what would chance, for their eyes were on the trees and they feared them.

The Riders came to the wood, and they halted; horse and man, they were unwilling to pass in. The trees were grey and menacing, and a shadow or a mist was about them. The ends of their long sweeping boughs hung down like searching fingers, their roots stood up from the ground like the limbs of strange monsters, and dark caverns opened beneath them. But Gandalf went forward, leading the company, and where the road from the Hornburg met the trees they saw now an opening like an arched gate under mighty boughs; and through it Gandalf passed, and they followed him. Then to their amazement they found that the road ran on, and the Deeping-stream beside it; and the sky was open above and full of golden light. But on either side the great aisles of the wood were already wrapped in dusk, stretching away into impenetrable shadows; and there they heard the creaking and groaning of boughs, and far cries, and a rumour of wordless voices, murmuring angrily. No Orc or other living creature could be seen.

Legolas and Gimli were now riding together upon one horse; and they kept close beside Gandalf, for Gimli was afraid of the wood.

'It is hot in here,' said Legolas to Gandalf. 'I feel a great wrath about me. Do you not feel the air throb in your ears?'

'Yes,' said Gandalf.

'What has become of the miserable Orcs?' said Legolas.

'That, I think, no-one will ever know,' said Gandalf.

They rode in silence for a while; but Legolas was ever glancing from side to side, and would often have halted to listen to the sounds of the wood, if Gimli had allowed it.

'These are the strangest trees that ever I saw,' he said; 'and I have seen many an oak grow from acorn to ruinous age. I wish that there were leisure now to walk among them: they have voices, and in time I might come to understand their thought.'

'No, no!' said Gimli. 'Let us leave them! I guess their thought already: hatred of all that go on two legs; and their speech is of crushing and strangling.'

'Not of all that go on two legs,' said Legolas. 'There I think you are wrong. It is Orcs that they hate. For they do not belong here and know little of Elves and Men. Far away are the valleys where they sprang. From the deep dales of Fangorn, Gimli, that is whence they come, I guess.'

'Then that is the most perilous wood in Middle-earth,' said Gimli. 'I should be grateful for the part they have played, but I do not love them. You may think them wonderful, but I have seen a greater wonder in this land, more beautiful than any grove or glade that ever grew: my heart is still full of it.'

'Strange are the ways of Men, Legolas! Here they have one of the marvels of the Northern World, and what do they say of it? Caves, they say! Caves! Holes to fly to in time of war, to store fodder in! My good Legolas, do you know that the caverns of Helm's Deep are vast and beautiful? There would be an endless pilgrimage of Dwarves, merely to gaze at them, if such things were known to be. Aye indeed, they would pay pure gold for a brief glance!'

'And I would give gold to be excused,' said Legolas; 'and double to be let out, if I strayed in!'

'You have not seen, so I forgive your jest,' said Gimli. 'But you speak like a fool. Do you think those halls are fair, where your King dwells under the hill in Mirkwood, and Dwarves helped in their making long ago? They

are but hovels compared with the caverns I have seen here: immeasurable halls, filled with an everlasting music of water that tinkles into pools, as fair as Kheled-zâram in the starlight.

‘And, Legolas, when the torches are kindled and men walk on the sandy floors under the echoing domes, ah! then, Legolas, gems and crystals and veins of precious ore glint in the polished walls; and the light glows through folded marbles, shell-like, translucent as the living hands of Queen Galadriel. There are columns of white and saffron and dawn-rose, Legolas, fluted and twisted into dreamlike forms; they spring up from many-coloured floors to meet the glistening pendants of the roof: wings, ropes, curtains fine as frozen clouds; spears, banners, pinnacles of suspended palaces! Still lakes mirror them: a glimmering world looks up from dark pools covered with clear glass; cities, such as the mind of Durin could scarce have imagined in his sleep, stretch on through avenues and pillared courts, on into the dark recesses where no light can come. And plink! a silver drop falls, and the round wrinkles in the glass make all the towers bend and waver like weeds and corals in a grotto of the sea. Then evening comes: they fade and twinkle out; the torches pass on into another chamber and another dream. There is chamber after chamber, Legolas; hall opening out of hall, dome after dome, stair beyond stair; and still the winding paths lead on into the mountains’ heart. Caves! The Caverns of Helm’s Deep! Happy was the chance that drove me there! It makes me weep to leave them.’

‘Then I will wish you this fortune for your comfort, Gimli,’ said the Elf, ‘that you may come safe from war and return to see them again. But do not tell all your kindred! There seems little left for them to do, from your account. Maybe the men of this land are wise to say little: one family of busy dwarves with hammer and chisel might mar more than they made.’

‘No, you do not understand,’ said Gimli. ‘No dwarf could be unmoved by such loveliness. None of Durin’s race would mine those caves for stones or ore, not if diamonds and gold could be got there. Do you cut down groves of blossoming trees in the springtime for firewood? We would tend these glades of flowering stone, not quarry them. With cautious skill, tap by tap—a small chip of rock and no more, perhaps, in a whole anxious day—so we could work, and as the years went by, we should open up new ways, and display far chambers that are still dark, glimpsed only as a void beyond fissures in the rock. And lights, Legolas! We should make lights, such lamps as once shone in Khazad-dûm; and when we wished we would drive away the night that has lain there since the hills were made; and when we desired rest, we would let the night return.’

‘You move me, Gimli,’ said Legolas. ‘I have never heard you speak like this before. Almost you make me regret that I have not seen these caves. Come! Let us make this bargain—if we both return safe out of the perils that await us, we will journey for a while together. You shall visit Fangorn with me, and then I will come with you to see Helm’s Deep.’

‘That would not be the way of return that I should choose,’ said Gimli. ‘But I will endure Fangorn, if I have your promise to come back to the caves and share their wonder with me.’

‘You have my promise,’ said Legolas. ‘But alas! Now we must leave behind both cave and wood for a while. See! We are coming to the end of the trees. How far is it to Isengard, Gandalf?’

‘About fifteen leagues, as the crows of Saruman make it,’ said Gandalf: ‘five from the mouth of Deeping-coomb to the Fords; and ten more from there to the gates of Isengard. But we shall not ride all the way this night.’

‘And when we come there, what shall we see?’ asked Gimli. ‘You may know, but I cannot guess.’

‘I do not know myself for certain,’ answered the wizard. ‘I was there at nightfall yesterday, but much may have happened since. Yet I think that you will not say that the journey was in vain—not though the Glittering Caves of Aglarond be left behind.’

At last the company passed through the trees, and found that they had come to the bottom of the Coomb, where the road from Helm’s Deep branched, going one way east to Edoras, and the other north to the Fords of Isen. As they rode from under the eaves of the wood, Legolas halted and looked back with regret. Then he gave a sudden cry.

‘There are eyes!’ he said. ‘Eyes looking out from the shadows of the boughs! I never saw such eyes before.’

The others, surprised by his cry, halted and turned; but Legolas started to ride back.

‘No, no!’ cried Gimli. ‘Do as you please in your madness, but let me first get down from this horse! I wish to see no eyes!’

‘Stay, Legolas Greenleaf!’ said Gandalf. ‘Do not go back into the wood, not yet! Now is not your time.’

Even as he spoke, there came forward out of the trees three strange shapes. As tall as trolls they were, twelve feet or more in height; their strong bodies, stout as young trees, seemed to be clad with raiment or with hide of close-fitting grey and brown. Their limbs were long, and their hands had many fingers; their hair was stiff, and their beards grey-green as moss. They gazed out with solemn eyes, but they were not looking at the riders: their eyes were bent northwards. Suddenly they lifted their long hands to their mouths, and sent forth ringing calls, clear as notes of a horn, but more musical and various. The calls were answered; and turning again, the riders saw other creatures of the same kind approaching, striding through the grass. They came swiftly from the North, walking like wading herons in their gait, but not in their speed; for their legs in their long paces beat quicker than the heron’s wings. The riders cried aloud in wonder, and some set their hands upon their sword-hilts.

‘You need no weapons,’ said Gandalf. ‘These are but herdsmen. They are not enemies, indeed they are not concerned with us at all.’

So it seemed to be; for as he spoke the tall creatures, without a glance at the riders, strode into the wood and vanished.

‘Herdsmen!’ said Théoden. ‘Where are their flocks? What are they, Gandalf? For it is plain that to you, at any rate, they are not strange.’

‘They are the shepherds of the trees,’ answered Gandalf. ‘Is it so long since you listened to tales by the fireside? There are children in your land who, out of the twisted threads of story, could pick the answer to your question. You have seen Ents, O King, Ents out of Fangorn Forest, which in your tongue you call the Entwood. Did you think that the name was given only in idle fancy? Nay, Théoden, it is otherwise: to them you are but the passing tale; all the years from Eorl the Young to Théoden the Old are of little count to them; and all the deeds of your house but a small matter.’

The king was silent. ‘Ents!’ he said at length. ‘Out of the shadows of legend I begin a little to understand the marvel of the trees, I think. I have lived to see strange days. Long we have tended our beasts and our fields, built our houses, wrought our tools, or ridden away to help in the wars of Minas Tirith. And that we called the life of Men, the way of the world. We cared little for what lay beyond the borders of our land. Songs we have that tell of these things, but we are forgetting them, teaching them only to children, as a careless custom. And now the songs have come down among us out of strange places, and walk visible under the Sun.’

‘You should be glad, Théoden King,’ said Gandalf. ‘For not only the little life of Men is now endangered, but the life also of those things which you have deemed the matter of legend. You are not without allies, even if you know them not.’

‘Yet also I should be sad,’ said Théoden. ‘For however the fortune of war shall go, may it not so end that much that was fair and wonderful shall pass for ever out of Middle-earth?’

‘It may,’ said Gandalf. ‘The evil of Sauron cannot be wholly cured, nor made as if it had not been. But to such days we are doomed. Let us now go on with the journey we have begun!’

The company turned then away from the Coomb and from the wood and took the road towards the Fords. Legolas followed reluctantly. The sun had set, already it had sunk behind the rim of the world; but as they rode out from the shadow of the hills and looked west to the Gap of Rohan the sky was still red, and a burning light was under the floating clouds. Dark against it there wheeled and flew many black-winged birds. Some passed overhead with mournful cries, returning to their homes among the rocks.

‘The carrion-fowl have been busy about the battle-field,’ said Éomer.

They rode now at an easy pace and dark came down upon the plains about them. The slow moon mounted, now waxing towards the full, and in its cold silver light the swelling grass-lands rose and fell like a wide grey sea. They had ridden for some four hours from the branching of the roads when they drew near to the Fords. Long slopes ran swiftly down to where the river spread in stony shoals between high grassy terraces. Borne upon the wind they heard the howling of wolves. Their hearts were heavy, remembering the many men that had fallen in battle in this place.

The road dipped between rising turf-banks, carving its way through the terraces to the river's edge, and up again upon the further side. There were three lines of flat stepping-stones across the stream, and between them fords for horses, that went from either brink to a bare eyot in the midst. The riders looked down upon the crossings, and it seemed strange to them; for the Fords had ever been a place full of the rush and chatter of water upon stones; but now they were silent. The beds of the stream were almost dry, a bare waste of shingles and grey sand.

'This is become a dreary place,' said Éomer. 'What sickness has befallen the river? Many fair things Saruman has destroyed: has he devoured the springs of Isen too?'

'So it would seem,' said Gandalf.

'Alas!' said Théoden. 'Must we pass this way, where the carrion-beasts devour so many good Riders of the Mark?'

'This is our way,' said Gandalf. 'Grievous is the fall of your men; but you shall see that at least the wolves of the mountains do not devour them. It is with their friends, the Orcs, that they hold their feast: such indeed is the friendship of their kind. Come!'

They rode down to the river, and as they came the wolves ceased their howling and slunk away. Fear fell on them seeing Gandalf in the moon, and Shadowfax his horse shining like silver. The riders passed over to the islet, and glittering eyes watched them wanly from the shadows of the banks.

'Look!' said Gandalf. 'Friends have laboured here.'

And they saw that in the midst of the eyot a mound was piled, ringed with stones, and set about with many spears.

'Here lie all the Men of the Mark that fell near this place,' said Gandalf.

'Here let them rest!' said Éomer. 'And when their spears have rotted and rusted, long still may their mound stand and guard the Fords of Isen!'

'Is this your work also, Gandalf, my friend?' said Théoden. 'You accomplished much in an evening and a night!'

'With the help of Shadowfax—and others,' said Gandalf. 'I rode fast and far. But here beside the mound I will say this for your comfort: many fell in the battles of the Fords, but fewer than rumour made them. More were scattered than were slain; I gathered together all that I could find. Some men I sent with Grimbald of Westfold to join Erkenbrand. Some I set to make this burial. They have now followed your marshal, Elfhelm. I sent him with many Riders to Edoras. Saruman I knew had despatched his full strength against you, and his servants had turned aside from all other errands and gone to Helm's Deep: the lands seemed empty of enemies; yet I feared that wolf-riders and plunderers might ride nonetheless to Meduseld, while it was undefended. But now I think you need not fear: you will find your house to welcome your return.'

'And glad shall I be to see it again,' said Théoden, 'though brief now, I doubt not, shall be my abiding there.'

With that the company said farewell to the island and the mound, and passed over the river, and climbed the further bank. Then they rode on, glad to have left the mournful Fords. As they went the howling of the wolves broke out anew.

There was an ancient highway that ran down from Isengard to the crossings. For some way it took its course beside the river, bending with it east and then north; but at the last it turned away and went straight towards the gates of Isengard; and these were under the mountain-side in the west of the valley, sixteen miles or more from

its mouth. This road they followed but they did not ride upon it; for the ground beside it was firm and level, covered for many miles about with short springing turf. They rode now more swiftly, and by midnight the Fords were nearly five leagues behind. Then they halted, ending their night's journey, for the King was weary. They were come to the feet of the Misty Mountains, and the long arms of Nan Curunír stretched down to meet them. Dark lay the vale before them, for the moon had passed into the West, and its light was hidden by the hills. But out of the deep shadow of the dale rose a vast spire of smoke and vapour; as it mounted, it caught the rays of the sinking moon, and spread in shimmering billows, black and silver, over the starry sky.

‘What do you think of that, Gandalf?’ asked Aragorn. ‘One would say that all the Wizard’s Vale was burning.’

‘There is ever a fume above that valley in these days,’ said Éomer: ‘but I have never seen aught like this before. These are steams rather than smokes. Saruman is brewing some devilry to greet us. Maybe he is boiling all the waters of Isen, and that is why the river runs dry.’

‘Maybe he is,’ said Gandalf. ‘Tomorrow we shall learn what he is doing. Now let us rest for a while, if we can.’

They camped beside the bed of the Isen river; it was still silent and empty. Some of them slept a little. But late in the night the watchmen cried out, and all awoke. The moon was gone. Stars were shining above; but over the ground there crept a darkness blacker than the night. On both sides of the river it rolled towards them, going northward.

‘Stay where you are!’ said Gandalf. ‘Draw no weapons! Wait! and it will pass you by!’

A mist gathered about them. Above them a few stars still glimmered faintly; but on either side there arose walls of impenetrable gloom; they were in a narrow lane between moving towers of shadow. Voices they heard, whisperings and groanings and an endless rustling sigh; the earth shook under them. Long it seemed to them that they sat and were afraid; but at last the darkness and the rumour passed, and vanished between the mountain’s arms.

Away south upon the Hornburg, in the middle night men heard a great noise, as a wind in the valley, and the ground trembled; and all were afraid and no-one ventured to go forth. But in the morning they went out and were amazed; for the slain Orcs were gone, and the trees also. Far down into the valley of the Deep the grass was crushed and trampled brown, as if giant herdsmen had pastured great droves of cattle there; but a mile below the Dike a huge pit had been delved in the earth, and over it stones were piled into a hill. Men believed that the Orcs whom they had slain were buried there; but whether those who had fled into the wood were with them, none could say, for no man ever set foot upon that hill. The Death Down it was afterwards called, and no grass would grow there. But the strange trees were never seen in Deeping-coomb again; they had returned at night, and had gone far away to the dark dales of Fangorn. Thus they were revenged upon the Orcs.

The king and his company slept no more that night; but they saw and heard no other strange thing, save one: the voice of the river beside them suddenly awoke. There was a rush of water hurrying down among the stones; and when it had passed, the Isen flowed and bubbled in its bed again, as it had ever done.

At dawn they made ready to go on. The light came grey and pale, and they did not see the rising of the sun. The air above was heavy with fog, and a reek lay on the land about them. They went slowly, riding now upon the highway. It was broad and hard, and well-tended. Dimly through the mists they could descry the long arm of the mountains rising on their left. They had passed into Nan Curunír, the Wizard’s Vale. That was a sheltered valley, open only to the South. Once it had been fair and green, and through it the Isen flowed, already deep and strong before it found the plains; for it was fed by many springs and lesser streams among the rain-washed hills, and all about it there had lain a pleasant, fertile land.

It was not so now. Beneath the walls of Isengard there still were acres tilled by the slaves of Saruman; but most of the valley had become a wilderness of weeds and thorns. Brambles trailed upon the ground, or clambering over bush and bank, made shaggy caves where small beasts housed. No trees grew there; but among the rank grasses could still be seen the burned and axe-hewn stumps of ancient groves. It was a sad country, silent now but for the stony noise of quick waters. Smokes and steams drifted in sullen clouds and lurked in the hollows. The riders did not speak. Many doubted in their hearts, wondering to what dismal end their journey led.

After they had ridden for some miles, the highway became a wide street, paved with great flat stones, squared and laid with skill; no blade of grass was seen in any joint. Deep gutters, filled with trickling water, ran down on either side. Suddenly a tall pillar loomed up before them. It was black; and set upon it was a great stone, carved and painted in the likeness of a long White Hand. Its finger pointed north. Not far now they knew that the gates of Isengard must stand, and their hearts were heavy; but their eyes could not pierce the mists ahead.

Beneath the mountain's arm within the Wizard's Vale through years uncounted had stood that ancient place that Men called Isengard. Partly it was shaped in the making of the mountains, but mighty works the Men of Westergesse had wrought there of old; and Saruman had dwelt there long and had not been idle.

This was its fashion, while Saruman was at his height, accounted by many the chief of Wizards. A great ring-wall of stone, like towering cliffs, stood out from the shelter of the mountain-side, from which it ran and then returned again. One entrance only was there made in it, a great arch delved in the southern wall. Here through the black rock a long tunnel had been hewn, closed at either end with mighty doors of iron. They were so wrought and poised upon their huge hinges, posts of steel driven into the living stone, that when unbarred they could be moved with a light thrust of the arms, noiselessly. One who passed in and came at length out of the echoing tunnel, beheld a plain, a great circle, somewhat hollowed like a vast shallow bowl: a mile it measured from rim to rim. Once it had been green and filled with avenues, and groves of fruitful trees, watered by streams that flowed from the mountains to a lake. But no green thing grew there in the latter days of Saruman. The roads were paved with stone-flags, dark and hard; and beside their borders instead of trees there marched long lines of pillars, some of marble, some of copper and of iron, joined by heavy chains.

Many houses there were, chambers, halls, and passages, cut and tunnelled back into the walls upon their inner side, so that all the open circle was overlooked by countless windows and dark doors. Thousands could dwell there, workers, servants, slaves, and warriors with great store of arms; wolves were fed and stabled in deep dens beneath. The plain, too, was bored and delved. Shafts were driven deep into the ground; their upper ends were covered by low mounds and domes of stone, so that in the moonlight the Ring of Isengard looked like a graveyard of unquiet dead. For the ground trembled. The shafts ran down by many slopes and spiral stairs to caverns far under; there Saruman had treasures, store-houses, armouries, smithies, and great furnaces. Iron wheels revolved there endlessly, and hammers thudded. At night plumes of vapour steamed from the vents, lit from beneath with red light, or blue, or venomous green.

To the centre all the roads ran between their chains. There stood a tower of marvellous shape. It was fashioned by the builders of old, who smoothed the Ring of Isengard, and yet it seemed a thing not made by the craft of Men, but riven from the bones of the earth in the ancient torment of the hills. A peak and isle of rock it was, black and gleaming hard: four mighty piers of many-sided stone were welded into one, but near the summit they opened into gaping horns, their pinnacles sharp as the points of spears, keen-edged as knives. Between them was a narrow space, and there upon a floor of polished stone, written with strange signs, a man might stand five hundred feet above the plain. This was Orthanc, the citadel of Saruman, the name of which had (by design or chance) a twofold meaning; for in the Elvish speech *orthanc* signifies Mount Fang, but in the language of the Mark of old the Cunning Mind.

A strong place and wonderful was Isengard, and long it had been beautiful; and there great lords had dwelt, the wardens of Gondor upon the West, and wise men that watched the stars. But Saruman had slowly shaped it to his shifting purposes, and made it better, as he thought, being deceived—for all those arts and subtle devices, for which he forsook his former wisdom, and which fondly he imagined were his own, came but from Mordor; so that what he made was naught, only a little copy, a child's model or a slave's flattery, of that vast fortress, armoury, prison, furnace of great power, Barad-dûr, the Dark Tower, which suffered no rival, and laughed at flattery, biding its time, secure in its pride and its immeasurable strength.

This was the stronghold of Saruman, as fame reported it; for within living memory the men of Rohan had not passed its gates, save perhaps a few, such as Wormtongue, who came in secret and told no man what they saw.

Now Gandalf rode to the great pillar of the Hand, and passed it; and as he did so the Riders saw to their wonder that the Hand appeared no longer white. It was stained as with dried blood; and looking closer they perceived that its nails were red. Unheeding Gandalf rode on into the mist, and reluctantly they followed him. All about



them now, as if there had been a sudden flood, wide pools of water lay beside the road, filling the hollows, and rills went trickling down among the stones.

At last Gandalf halted and beckoned to them; and they came, and saw that beyond him the mists had cleared, and a pale sunlight shone. The hour of noon had passed. They were come to the doors of Isengard.

But the doors lay hurled and twisted on the ground. And all about, stone, cracked and splintered into countless jagged shards, was scattered far and wide, or piled in ruinous heaps. The great arch still stood, but it opened now upon a roofless chasm: the tunnel was laid bare, and through the cliff-like walls on either side great rents and breaches had been torn; their towers were beaten into dust. If the Great Sea had risen in wrath and fallen on the hills with storm, it could have worked no greater ruin.

The ring beyond was filled with steaming water: a bubbling cauldron, in which there heaved and floated a wreckage of beams and spars, chests and casks and broken gear. Twisted and leaning pillars reared their splintered stems above the flood, but all the roads were drowned. Far off, it seemed, half veiled in winding cloud, there loomed the island rock. Still dark and tall, unbroken by the storm, the tower of Orthanc stood. Pale waters lapped about its feet.

The king and all his company sat silent on their horses, marvelling, perceiving that the power of Saruman was overthrown; but how they could not guess. And now they turned their eyes towards the archway and the ruined gates. There they saw close beside them a great rubble-heap; and suddenly they were aware of two small figures lying on it at their ease, grey-clad, hardly to be seen among the stones. There were bottles and bowls and platters laid beside them, as if they had just eaten well, and now rested from their labour. One seemed asleep; the other, with crossed legs and arms behind his head, leaned back against a broken rock and sent from his mouth long wisps and little rings of thin blue smoke.

For a moment Théoden and Éomer and all his men stared at them in wonder. Amid all the wreck of Isengard this seemed to them the strangest sight. But before the king could speak, the small smoke-breathing figure became suddenly aware of them, as they sat there silent on the edge of the mist. He sprang to his feet. A young man he looked, or like one, though not much more than half a man in height; his head of brown curling hair was uncovered, but he was clad in a travel-stained cloak of the same hue and shape as the companions of Gandalf had worn when they rode to Edoras. He bowed very low, putting his hand upon his breast. Then, seeming not to observe the wizard and his friends, he turned to Éomer and the king.

‘Welcome, my lords, to Isengard!’ he said. ‘We are the doorwardens. Meriadoc, son of Saradoc is my name; and my companion, who, alas! is overcome with weariness’—here he gave the other a dig with his foot—‘is Peregrin, son of Paladin, of the House of Took. Far in the North is our home. The Lord Saruman is within; but at the moment he is closeted with one Wormtongue, or doubtless he would be here to welcome such honourable guests.’

‘Doubtless he would!’ laughed Gandalf. ‘And was it Saruman that ordered you to guard his damaged doors, and watch for the arrival of guests, when your attention could be spared from plate and bottle?’

‘No, good sir, the matter escaped him,’ answered Merry gravely. ‘He has been much occupied. Our orders came from Treebeard, who has taken over the management of Isengard. He commanded me to welcome the Lord of Rohan with fitting words. I have done my best.’

‘And what about your companions? What about Legolas and me?’ cried Gimli, unable to contain himself longer. ‘You rascals, you woolly-footed and wool-pated truants! A fine hunt you have led us! Two hundred leagues, through fen and forest, battle and death, to rescue you! And here we find you feasting and idling—and smoking! Smoking! Where did you come by the weed, you villains? Hammer and tongs! I am so torn between rage and joy, that if I do not burst, it will be a marvel!’

‘You speak for me, Gimli,’ laughed Legolas. ‘Though I would sooner learn how they came by the wine.’

‘One thing you have not found in your hunting, and that’s brighter wits,’ said Pippin, opening an eye. ‘Here you find us sitting on a field of victory, amid the plunder of armies, and you wonder how we came by a few well-earned comforts!’

‘Well-earned?’ said Gimli. ‘I cannot believe that!’

The Riders laughed. ‘It cannot be doubted that we witness the meeting of dear friends,’ said Théoden. ‘So these are the lost ones of your company, Gandalf? The days are fated to be filled with marvels. Already I have seen many since I left my house; and now here before my eyes stand yet another of the folk of legend. Are not these the Halflings, that some among us call the Holbytlan?’

‘Hobbits, if you please, lord,’ said Pippin.

‘Hobbits?’ said Théoden. ‘Your tongue is strangely changed; but the name sounds not unfitting so. Hobbits! No report that I have heard does justice to the truth.’

Merry bowed; and Pippin got up and bowed low. ‘You are gracious, lord; or I hope that I may so take your words,’ he said. ‘And here is another marvel! I have wandered in many lands, since I left my home, and never till now have I found people that knew any story concerning hobbits.’

‘My people came out of the North long ago,’ said Théoden. ‘But I will not deceive you: we know no tales about hobbits. All that is said among us is that far away, over many hills and rivers, live the halfling folk that dwell in holes in sand-dunes. But there are no legends of their deeds, for it is said that they do little, and avoid the sight of men, being able to vanish in a twinkling; and they can change their voices to resemble the piping of birds. But it seems that more could be said.’

‘It could indeed, lord,’ said Merry.

‘For one thing,’ said Théoden, ‘I had not heard that they spouted smoke from their mouths.’

‘That is not surprising,’ answered Merry; ‘for it is an art which we have not practised for more than a few generations. It was Tobold Hornblower, of Longbottom in the Southfarthing, who first grew the true pipe-weed in his gardens, about the year 1070 according to our reckoning. How old Toby came by the plant . . .’

‘You do not know your danger, Théoden,’ interrupted Gandalf. ‘These hobbits will sit on the edge of ruin and discuss the pleasures of the table, or the small doings of their fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, and remoter cousins to the ninth degree, if you encourage them with undue patience. Some other time would be more fitting for the history of smoking. Where is Treebeard, Merry?’

‘Away on the north side, I believe. He went to get a drink—of clean water. Most of the other Ents are with him, still busy at their work—over there.’ Merry waved his hand towards the steaming lake; and as they looked, they heard a distant rumbling and rattling, as if an avalanche was falling from the mountain-side. Far away came a *hoom-hom*, as of horns blowing triumphantly.

‘And is Orthanc then left unguarded?’ asked Gandalf.

‘There is the water,’ said Merry. ‘But Quickbeam and some others are watching it. Not all those posts and pillars in the plain are of Saruman’s planting. Quickbeam, I think, is by the rock, near the foot of the stair.’

‘Yes, a tall grey Ent is there,’ said Legolas, ‘but his arms are at his sides, and he stands as still as a door-tree.’

‘It is past noon,’ said Gandalf, ‘and we at any rate have not eaten since early morning. Yet I wish to see Treebeard as soon as may be. Did he leave me no message, or has plate and bottle driven it from your mind?’

‘He left a message,’ said Merry, ‘and I was coming to it, but I have been hindered by many other questions. I was to say that, if the Lord of the Mark and Gandalf will ride to the northern wall they will find Treebeard there, and he will welcome them. I may add that they will also find food of the best there, it was discovered and selected by your humble servants.’ He bowed.

Gandalf laughed. ‘That is better!’ he said. ‘Well, Théoden, will you ride with me to find Treebeard? We must go round about, but it is not far. When you see Treebeard, you will learn much. For Treebeard is Fangorn, and the eldest and chief of the Ents, and when you speak with him you will hear the speech of the oldest of all living things.’

‘I will come with you,’ said Théoden. ‘Farewell, my hobbits! May we meet again in my house! There you shall sit beside me and tell me all that your hearts desire: the deeds of your grandsires, as far as you can reckon them; and we will speak also of Tobold the Old and his herb-lore. Farewell!’

The hobbits bowed low. ‘So that is the King of Rohan!’ said Pippin in an undertone. ‘A fine old fellow. Very polite.’



## Chapter 9: Flotsam And Jetsam

Gandalf and the King's company rode away, turning eastward to make the circuit of the ruined walls of Isengard. But Aragorn, Gimli, and Legolas remained behind. Leaving Arod and Hasufel to stray in search of grass, they came and sat beside the hobbits.

'Well, well! The hunt is over, and we meet again at last, where none of us ever thought to come,' said Aragorn.

'And now that the great ones have gone to discuss high matters,' said Legolas, 'the hunters can perhaps learn the answers to their own small riddles. We tracked you as far as the forest, but there are still many things that I should like to know the truth of.'

'And there is a great deal, too, that we want to know about you,' said Merry. 'We have learnt a few things through Treebeard, the Old Ent, but that is not nearly enough.'

'All in good time,' said Legolas. 'We were the hunters, and you should give an account of yourselves to us first.'

'Or second,' said Gimli. 'It would go better after a meal. I have a sore head; and it is past mid-day. You truants might make amends by finding us some of the plunder that you spoke of. Food and drink would pay off some of my score against you.'

'Then you shall have it,' said Pippin. 'Will you have it here, or in more comfort in what's left of Saruman's guard-house—over there under the arch? We had to picnic out here, so as to keep an eye on the road.'

'Less than an eye!' said Gimli. 'But I will not go into any orc-house; nor touch Orcs' meat or anything that they have mauled.'

'We wouldn't ask you to,' said Merry. 'We have had enough of Orcs ourselves to last a life-time. But there were many other folk in Isengard. Saruman kept enough wisdom not to trust his Orcs. He had Men to guard his gates: some of his most faithful servants, I suppose. Anyway they were favoured and got good provisions.'

'And pipe-weed?' asked Gimli.

'No, I don't think so,' Merry laughed. 'But that is another story, which can wait until after lunch.'

'Well let us go and have lunch then!' said the Dwarf.

The hobbits led the way; and they passed under the arch and came to a wide door upon the left, at the top of a stair. It opened direct into a large chamber, with other smaller doors at the far end, and a hearth and chimney at one side. The chamber was hewn out of the stone; and it must once have been dark, for its windows looked out only into the tunnel. But light came in now through the broken roof. On the hearth wood was burning.

'I lit a bit of fire,' said Pippin. 'It cheered us up in the fogs. There were few faggots about, and most of the wood we could find was wet. But there is a great draught in the chimney: it seems to wind away up through the rock, and fortunately it has not been blocked. A fire is handy. I will make you some toast. The bread is three or four days old, I am afraid.'

Aragorn and his companions sat themselves down at one end of a long table, and the hobbits disappeared through one of the inner doors.

'Store-room in there, and above the floods, luckily,' said Pippin, as they came back laden with dishes, bowls, cups, knives, and food of various sorts.

‘And you need not turn up your nose at the provender, Master Gimli,’ said Merry. ‘This is not orc-stuff, but man-food, as Treebeard calls it. Will you have wine or beer? There’s a barrel inside there—very passable. And this is first-rate salted pork. Or I can cut you some rashers of bacon and broil them, if you like. I am sorry there is no green stuff: the deliveries have been rather interrupted in the last few days! I cannot offer you anything to follow but butter and honey for your bread. Are you content?’

‘Indeed yes,’ said Gimli. ‘The score is much reduced.’

The three were soon busy with their meal; and the two hobbits, unabashed, set to a second time. ‘We must keep our guests company,’ they said.

‘You are full of courtesy this morning,’ laughed Legolas. ‘But maybe, if we had not arrived, you would already have been keeping one another company again.’

‘Maybe; and why not?’ said Pippin. ‘We had foul fare with the Orcs, and little enough for days before that. It seems a long while since we could eat to heart’s content.’

‘It does not seem to have done you any harm,’ said Aragorn. ‘Indeed you look in the bloom of health.’

‘Aye, you do indeed,’ said Gimli, looking them up and down over the top of his cup. ‘Why, your hair is twice as thick and curly as when we parted; and I would swear that you have both grown somewhat, if that is possible for hobbits of your age. This Treebeard at any rate has not starved you.’

‘He has not,’ said Merry. ‘But Ents only drink, and drink is not enough for content. Treebeard’s draughts may be nourishing, but one feels the need of something solid. And even *lembas* is none the worse for a change.’

‘You have drunk of the waters of the Ents, have you?’ said Legolas. ‘Ah, then I think it is likely that Gimli’s eyes do not deceive him. Strange songs have been sung of the draughts of Fangorn.’

‘Many strange tales have been told about that land,’ said Aragorn. ‘I have never entered it. Come, tell me more about it, and about the Ents!’

‘Ents,’ said Pippin, ‘Ents are—well Ents are all different for one thing. But their eyes now, their eyes are very odd.’ He tried a few fumbling words that trailed off into silence. ‘Oh, well,’ he went on, ‘you have seen some at a distance, already—they saw you at any rate, and reported that you were on the way—and you will see many others, I expect, before you leave here. You must form your own ideas.’

‘Now, now!’ said Gimli. ‘We are beginning the story in the middle. I should like a tale in the right order, starting with that strange day when our fellowship was broken.’

‘You shall have it, if there is time,’ said Merry. ‘But first—if you have finished eating—you shall fill your pipes and light up. And then for a little while we can pretend that we are all back safe at Bree again, or in Rivendell.’

He produced a small leather bag full of tobacco. ‘We have heaps of it,’ he said; ‘and you can all pack as much as you wish, when we go. We did some salvage-work this morning, Pippin and I. There are lots of things floating about. It was Pippin who found two small barrels, washed up out of some cellar or store-house, I suppose. When we opened them, we found they were filled with this: as fine a pipe-weed as you could wish for, and quite unspoilt.’

Gimli took some and rubbed it in his palms and sniffed it. ‘It feels good, and it smells good,’ he said.

‘It is good!’ said Merry. ‘My dear Gimli, it is Longbottom Leaf! There were the Hornblower brandmarks on the barrels, as plain as plain. How it came here, I can’t imagine. For Saruman’s private use, I fancy. I never knew that it went so far abroad. But it comes in handy now!’

‘It would,’ said Gimli, ‘if I had a pipe to go with it. Alas, I lost mine in Moria, or before. Is there no pipe in all your plunder?’

‘No, I am afraid not,’ said Merry. ‘We have not found any, not even here in the guardrooms. Saruman kept this dainty to himself, it seems. And I don’t think it would be any use knocking on the doors of Orthanc to beg a pipe of him! We shall have to share pipes, as good friends must at a pinch.’

‘Half a moment!’ said Pippin. Putting his hand inside the breast of his jacket he pulled out a little soft wallet on a string. ‘I keep a treasure or two near my skin, as precious as Rings to me. Here’s one: my old wooden pipe. And here’s another: an unused one. I have carried it a long way, though I don’t know why. I never really expected to find any pipe-weed on the journey, when my own ran out. But now it comes in useful after all.’ He held up a small pipe with a wide flattened bowl, and handed it to Gimli. ‘Does that settle the score between us?’ he said.

‘Settle it!’ cried Gimli. ‘Most noble hobbit, it leaves me deep in your debt.’

‘Well, I am going back into the open air, to see what the wind and sky are doing!’ said Legolas.

‘We will come with you,’ said Aragorn.

They went out and seated themselves upon the piled stones before the gateway. They could see far down into the valley now; the mists were lifting and floating away upon the breeze.

‘Now let us take our ease here for a little!’ said Aragorn. ‘We will sit on the edge of ruin and talk, as Gandalf says, while he is busy elsewhere. I feel a weariness such as I have seldom felt before.’ He wrapped his grey cloak about him, hiding his mail-shirt, and stretched out his long legs. Then he lay back and sent from his lips a thin stream of smoke.

‘Look!’ said Pippin. ‘Strider the Ranger has come back!’

‘He has never been away,’ said Aragorn. ‘I am Strider and Dúnadan too, and I belong both to Gondor and the North.’

They smoked in silence for a while, and the sun shone on them; slanting into the valley from among white clouds high in the West. Legolas lay still, looking up at the sun and sky with steady eyes, and singing softly to himself. At last he sat up. ‘Come now!’ he said. ‘Time wears on, and the mists are blowing away, or would if you strange folk did not wreath yourselves in smoke. What of the tale?’

‘Well, my tale begins with waking up in the dark and finding myself all strung-up in an orc-camp,’ said Pippin. ‘Let me see, what is today?’

‘The fifth of March in the Shire-reckoning,’ said Aragorn. Pippin made some calculations on his fingers. ‘Only nine days ago!’ he said.<sup>27</sup> ‘It seems a year since we were caught. Well, though half of it was like a bad dream, I reckon that three very horrible days followed. Merry will correct me, if I forget anything important: I am not going into details: the whips and the filth and stench and all that; it does not bear remembering.’ With that he plunged into an account of Boromir’s last fight and the orc-march from Eryn Muil to the Forest. The others nodded as the various points were fitted in with their guesses.

‘Here are some treasures that you let fall,’ said Aragorn. ‘You will be glad to have them back.’ He loosened his belt from under his cloak, and took from it the two sheathed knives.

‘Well!’ said Merry. ‘I never expected to see those again! I marked a few orcs with mine; but Uglúk took them from us. How he glared! At first I thought he was going to stab me, but he threw the things away as if they burned him.’

‘And here also is your brooch, Pippin,’ said Aragorn. ‘I have kept it safe, for it is a very precious thing.’

‘I know,’ said Pippin. ‘It was a wrench to let it go; but what else could I do?’

‘Nothing else,’ answered Aragorn. ‘One who cannot cast away a treasure at need is in fetters. You did rightly.’

‘The cutting of the bands on your wrists, that was smart work!’ said Gimli. ‘Luck served you there; but you seized your chance with both hands, one might say.’

‘And set us a pretty riddle,’ said Legolas. ‘I wondered if you had grown wings!’

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<sup>27</sup> Every month in the Shire-calendar had 30 days.

‘Unfortunately not,’ said Pippin. ‘But you did not know about Grishnákh.’ He shuddered and said no more, leaving Merry to tell of those last horrible moments: the pawing hands, the hot breath, and the dreadful strength of Grishnákh’s hairy arms.

‘All this about the Orcs of Barad-dûr, Lugbúrz as they call it, makes me uneasy,’ said Aragorn. ‘The Dark Lord already knew too much, and his servants also; and Grishnákh evidently sent some message across the River after the quarrel. The Red Eye will be looking towards Isengard. But Saruman at any rate is in a cleft stick of his own cutting.’

‘Yes, whichever side wins, his outlook is poor,’ said Merry. ‘Things began to go all wrong for him from the moment his Orcs set foot in Rohan.’

‘We caught a glimpse of the old villain, or so Gandalf hints,’ said Gimli. ‘On the edge of the Forest.’

‘When was that?’ asked Pippin.

‘Five nights ago,’ said Aragorn.

‘Let me see,’ said Merry: ‘five nights ago—now we come to a part of the story you know nothing about. We met Treebeard that morning after the battle; and that night we were at Wellinghall, one of his ent-houses. The next morning we went to Entmoot, a gathering of Ents, that is, and the queerest thing I have ever seen in my life. It lasted all that day and the next; and we spent the nights with an Ent called Quickbeam. And then late in the afternoon in the third day of their moot, the Ents suddenly blew up. It was amazing. The Forest had felt as tense as if a thunderstorm was brewing inside it: then all at once it exploded. I wish you could have heard their song as they marched.’

‘If Saruman had heard it, he would be a hundred miles away by now, even if he had had to run on his own legs,’ said Pippin.

*‘Though Isengard be strong and hard, as cold as stone and bare as bone,  
We go, we go, we go to war, to hew the stone and break the door!’*

There was very much more. A great deal of the song had no words, and was like a music of horns and drums. It was very exciting. But I thought it was only marching music and no more, just a song—until I got here. I know better now.’

‘We came down over the last ridge into Nan Curunír, after night had fallen,’ Merry continued. ‘It was then that I first had the feeling that the Forest itself was moving behind us. I thought I was dreaming an entish dream, but Pippin had noticed it too. We were both frightened; but we did not find out more about it until later.

‘It was the Huorns, or so the Ents call them in “short language”. Treebeard won’t say much about them, but I think they are Ents that have become almost like trees, at least to look at. They stand here and there in the wood or under its eaves, silent, watching endlessly over the trees; but deep in the darkest dales there are hundreds and hundreds of them, I believe.

‘There is a great power in them, and they seem able to wrap themselves in shadow: it is difficult to see them moving. But they do. They can move very quickly, if they are angry. You stand still looking at the weather, maybe, or listening to the rustling of the wind, and then suddenly you find that you are in the middle of a wood with great groping trees all around you. They still have voices, and can speak with the Ents—that is why they are called Huorns, Treebeard says—but they have become queer and wild. Dangerous. I should be terrified of meeting them, if there were no true Ents about to look after them.

‘Well, in the early night we crept down a long ravine into the upper end of the Wizard’s Vale, the Ents with all their rustling Huorns behind. We could not see them, of course, but the whole air was full of creaking. It was very dark, a cloudy night. They moved at a great speed as soon as they had left the hills, and made a noise like a rushing wind. The Moon did not appear through the clouds, and not long after midnight there was a tall wood all round the north side of Isengard. There was no sign of enemies nor of any challenge. There was a light gleaming from a high window in the tower, that was all.

‘Treebeard and a few more Ents crept on, right round to within sight of the great gates. Pippin and I were with him. We were sitting on Treebeard’s shoulders, and I could feel the quivering tenseness in him. But even when they are roused, Ents can be very cautious and patient. They stood still as carved stones, breathing and listening.

‘Then all at once there was a tremendous stir. Trumpets blared, and the walls of Isengard echoed. We thought that we had been discovered, and that battle was going to begin. But nothing of the sort. All Saruman’s people were marching away. I don’t know much about this war, or about the Horsemen of Rohan, but Saruman seems to have meant to finish off the king and all his men with one final blow. He emptied Isengard. I saw the enemy go: endless lines of marching Orcs; and troops of them mounted on great wolves. And there were battalions of Men, too. Many of them carried torches, and in the flare I could see their faces. Most of them were ordinary men, rather tall and dark-haired, and grim but not particularly evil-looking. But there were some others that were horrible: man-high, but with goblin-faces, sallow, leering, squint-eyed. Do you know, they reminded me at once of that Southerner at Bree; only he was not so obviously orc-like as most of these were.’

‘I thought of him too,’ said Aragorn. ‘We had many of these half-orcs to deal with at Helm’s Deep. It seems plain now that that Southerner was a spy of Saruman’s; but whether he was working with the Black Riders, or for Saruman alone, I do not know. It is difficult with these evil folk to know when they are in league, and when they are cheating one another.’

‘Well, of all sorts together, there must have been ten thousand at the very least,’ said Merry. ‘They took an hour to pass out of the gates. Some went off down the highway to the Fords, and some turned away and went eastward. A bridge has been built down there, about a mile away, where the river runs in a very deep channel. You could see it now, if you stood up. They were all singing with harsh voices, and laughing, making a hideous din. I thought things looked very black for Rohan. But Treebeard did not move. He said: “My business is with Isengard tonight, with rock and stone.”

‘But, though I could not see what was happening in the dark, I believe that Huorns began to move south, as soon as the gates were shut again. Their business was with Orcs I think. They were far down the valley in the morning; or at any rate there was a shadow there that one couldn’t see through.

‘As soon as Saruman had sent off all his army, our turn came. Treebeard put us down, and went up to the gates, and began hammering on the doors, and calling for Saruman. There was no answer, except arrows and stones from the walls. But arrows are no use against Ents. They hurt them, of course, and infuriate them: like stinging flies. But an Ent can be stuck as full of orc-arrows as a pin-cushion, and take no serious harm. They cannot be poisoned, for one thing; and their skin seems to be very thick, and tougher than bark. It takes a very heavy axe-stroke to wound them seriously. They don’t like axes. But there would have to be a great many axe-men to one Ent: a man that hacks once at an Ent never gets a chance of a second blow. A punch from an Ent-fist crumples up iron like thin tin.

‘When Treebeard had got a few arrows in him, he began to warm up, to get positively “hasty”, as he would say. He let out a great *hoom-hom*, and a dozen more Ents came striding up. An angry Ent is terrifying. Their fingers, and their toes, just freeze on to rock; and they tear it up like bread-crust. It was like watching the work of great tree-roots in a hundred years, all packed into a few moments.

‘They pushed, pulled, tore, shook, and hammered; and *clang-bang, crash-crack*, in five minutes they had these huge gates just lying in ruin; and some were already beginning to eat into the walls, like rabbits in a sand-pit. I don’t know what Saruman thought was happening; but anyway he did not know how to deal with it. His wizardry may have been falling off lately, of course; but anyway I think he has not much grit, not much plain courage alone in a tight place without a lot of slaves and machines and things, if you know what I mean. Very different from old Gandalf. I wonder if his fame was not all along mainly due to his cleverness in settling at Isengard.’

‘No,’ said Aragorn. ‘Once he was as great as his fame made him. His knowledge was deep, his thought was subtle, and his hands marvellously skilled; and he had a power over the minds of others. The wise he could persuade, and the smaller folk he could daunt. That power he certainly still keeps. There are not many in Middle-earth that I should say were safe, if they were left alone to talk with him, even now when he has



suffered a defeat. Gandalf, Elrond, and Galadriel, perhaps, now that his wickedness has been laid bare, but very few others.'

'The Ents are safe,' said Pippin. 'He seems at one time to have got round them, but never again. And anyway he did not understand them; and he made the great mistake of leaving them out of his calculations. He had no plan for them, and there was no time to make any, once they had set to work. As soon as our attack began, the few remaining rats in Isengard started bolting through every hole that the Ents made. The Ents let the Men go, after they had questioned them, two or three dozen only down at this end. I don't think many orc-folk, of any size, escaped. Not from the Huorns: there was a wood full of them all round Isengard by that time, as well as those that had gone down the valley.'

'When the Ents had reduced a large part of the southern walls to rubbish, and what was left of his people had bolted and deserted him, Saruman fled in a panic. He seems to have been at the gates when we arrived: I expect he came to watch his splendid army march out. When the Ents broke their way in, he left in a hurry. They did not spot him at first. But the night had opened out, and there was a great light of stars, quite enough for Ents to see by, and suddenly Quickbeam gave a cry "The tree-killer, the tree-killer!" Quickbeam is a gentle creature, but he hates Saruman all the more fiercely for that: his people suffered cruelly from orc-axes. He leapt down the path from the inner gate, and he can move like a wind when he is roused. There was a pale figure hurrying away in and out of the shadows of the pillars, and it had nearly reached the stairs to the tower-door. But it was a near thing. Quickbeam was so hot after him, that he was within a step or two of being caught and strangled when he slipped in through the door.'

'When Saruman was safe back in Orthanc, it was not long before he set some of his precious machinery to work. By that time there were many Ents inside Isengard: some had followed Quickbeam, and others had burst in from the north and east; they were roaming about and doing a great deal of damage. Suddenly up came fires and foul fumes: the vents and shafts all over the plain began to spout and belch. Several of the Ents got scorched and blistered. One of them, Beechbone I think he was called, a very tall handsome Ent, got caught in a spray of some liquid fire and burned like a torch: a horrible sight.'

'That sent them mad. I thought that they had been really roused before; but I was wrong. I saw what it was like at last. It was staggering. They roared and boomed and trumpeted, until stones began to crack and fall at the mere noise of them. Merry and I lay on the ground and stuffed our cloaks into our ears. Round and round the rock of Orthanc the Ents went striding and storming like a howling gale, breaking pillars, hurling avalanches of boulders down the shafts, tossing up huge slabs of stone into the air like leaves. The tower was in the middle of a spinning whirlwind. I saw iron posts and blocks of masonry go rocketing up hundreds of feet, and smash against the windows of Orthanc. But Treebeard kept his head. He had not had any burns, luckily. He did not want his folk to hurt themselves in their fury, and he did not want Saruman to escape out of some hole in the confusion. Many of the Ents were hurling themselves against the Orthanc-rock; but that defeated them. It is very smooth and hard. Some wizardry is in it, perhaps, older and stronger than Saruman's. Anyway they could not get a grip on it, or make a crack in it; and they were bruising and wounding themselves against it.'

'So Treebeard went out into the ring and shouted. His enormous voice rose above all the din. There was a dead silence, suddenly. In it we heard a shrill laugh from a high window in the tower. That had a queer effect on the Ents. They had been boiling over; now they became cold, grim as ice, and quiet. They left the plain and gathered round Treebeard, standing quite still. He spoke to them for a little in their own language; I think he was telling them of a plan he had made in his old head long before. Then they just faded silently away in the grey light. Day was dawning by that time.'

'They set a watch on the tower, I believe, but the watchers were so well hidden in shadows and kept so still, that I could not see them. The others went away north. All that day they were busy, out of sight. Most of the time we were left alone. It was a dreary day; and we wandered about a bit, though we kept out of the view of the windows of Orthanc, as much as we could: they stared at us so threateningly. A good deal of the time we spent looking for something to eat. And also we sat and talked, wondering what was happening away south in Rohan, and what had become of all the rest of our Company. Every now and then we could hear in the distance the rattle and fall of stone, and thudding noises echoing in the hills.'

‘In the afternoon we walked round the circle, and went to have a look at what was going on. There was a great shadowy wood of Huorns at the head of the valley, and another round the northern wall. We did not dare to go in. But there was a rending, tearing noise of work going on inside. Ents and Huorns were digging great pits and trenches, and making great pools and dams, gathering all the waters of the Isen and every other spring and stream that they could find. We left them to it.

‘At dusk Treebeard came back to the gate. He was humming and booming to himself, and seemed pleased. He stood and stretched his great arms and legs and breathed deep. I asked him if he was tired.

“‘Tired?’” he said, “‘tired? Well no, not tired, but stiff. I need a good draught of Entwash. We have worked hard; we have done more stone-cracking and earth-gnawing today than we have done in many a long year before. But it is nearly finished. When night falls do not linger near this gate or in the old tunnel! Water may come through—and it will be foul water for a while, until all the filth of Saruman is washed away. Then Isen can run clean again.” He began to pull down a bit more of the walls, in a leisurely sort of way, just to amuse himself.

‘We were just wondering where it would be safe to lie and get some sleep, when the most amazing thing of all happened. There was the sound of a rider coming swiftly up the road. Merry and I lay quiet, and Treebeard hid himself in the shadows under the arch. Suddenly a great horse came striding up, like a flash of silver. It was already dark, but I could see the rider’s face clearly: it seemed to shine, and all his clothes were white. I just sat up, staring, with my mouth open. I tried to call out, and couldn’t.

‘There was no need. He halted just by us and looked down at us. “Gandalf!” I said at last, but my voice was only a whisper. Did he say: “Hullo, Pippin! This is a pleasant surprise!”? No, indeed! He said: “Get up, you tom-fool of a Took! Where, in the name of wonder, in all this ruin is Treebeard? I want him. Quick!”

‘Treebeard heard his voice and came out of the shadows at once; and there was a strange meeting. I was surprised, because neither of them seemed surprised at all. Gandalf obviously expected to find Treebeard here; and Treebeard might almost have been loitering about near the gates on purpose to meet him. Yet we had told the old Ent all about Moria. But then I remembered a queer look he gave us at the time. I can only suppose that he had seen Gandalf or had some news of him, but would not say anything in a hurry. “Don’t be hasty” is his motto; but nobody, not even Elves, will say much about Gandalf’s movements when he is not there.

“‘Hoom! Gandalf!’” said Treebeard. “I am glad you have come. Wood and water, stock and stone, I can master; but there is a Wizard to manage here.”

“‘Treebeard,’” said Gandalf. “I need your help. You have done much, but I need more. I have about ten thousand Orcs to manage.”

‘Then those two went off and had a council together in some corner. It must have seemed very hasty to Treebeard, for Gandalf was in a tremendous hurry, and was already talking at a great pace, before they passed out of hearing. They were only away a matter of minutes, perhaps a quarter of an hour. Then Gandalf came back to us, and he seemed relieved, almost merry. He did say he was glad to see us, then.

“‘But Gandalf,’” I cried, “where have you been? And have you seen the others?”

“‘Wherever I have been, I am back,’” he answered in the genuine Gandalf manner. “Yes, I have seen some of the others. But news must wait. This is a perilous night, and I must ride fast. But the dawn may be brighter; and if so, we shall meet again. Take care of yourselves, and keep away from Orthanc! Good-bye!”

‘Treebeard was very thoughtful after Gandalf had gone. He had evidently learnt a lot in a short time and was digesting it. He looked at us and said: “Hm, well, I find you are not such hasty folk as I thought. You said much less than you might, and no more than you should. Hm, this is a bundle of news and no mistake! Well, now Treebeard must get busy again.”

‘Before he went, we got a little news out of him; and it did not cheer us up at all. But for the moment we thought more about you three than about Frodo and Sam, or about poor Boromir. For we gathered that there was a great battle going on, or soon would be, and that you were in it, and might never come out of it.

“‘Huorns will help,’” said Treebeard. Then he went away and we did not see him again until this morning.

‘It was deep night. We lay on top of a pile of stone, and could see nothing beyond it. Mist or shadows blotted out everything like a great blanket all round us. The air seemed hot and heavy; and it was full of rustlings, creakings, and a murmur like voices passing. I think that hundreds more of the Huorns must have been passing by to help in the battle. Later there was a great rumble of thunder away south, and flashes of lightning far away across Rohan. Every now and then we could see mountain-peaks, miles and miles away, stab out suddenly, black and white, and then vanish. And behind us there were noises like thunder in hills, but different. At times the whole valley echoed.

‘It must have been about midnight when the Ents broke the dams and poured all the gathered waters through a gap in the northern wall, down into Isengard. The Huorn-dark had passed, and the thunder had rolled away. The Moon was sinking behind the western mountains.

‘Isengard began to fill up with black creeping streams and pools. They glittered in the last light of the Moon, as they spread over the plain. Every now and then the waters found their way down into some shaft or spouthole. Great white steams hissed up. Smoke rose in billows. There were explosions and gusts of fire. One great coil of vapour went whirling up, twisting round and round Orthanc, until it looked like a tall peak of cloud, fiery underneath and moonlit above. And still more water poured in, until at last Isengard looked like a huge flat saucepan, all steaming and bubbling.’

‘We saw a cloud of smoke and steam from the south last night, when we came to the mouth of Nan Curunír,’ said Aragorn. ‘We feared that Saruman was brewing some new devilry for us.’

‘Not he!’ said Pippin. ‘He was probably choking and not laughing any more. By the morning, yesterday morning, the water had sunk down into all the holes, and there was a dense fog. We took refuge in that guardroom over there; and we had rather a fright. The lake began to overflow and pour out through the old tunnel, and the water was rapidly rising up the steps. We thought we were going to get caught like Orcs in a hole; but we found a winding stair at the back of the store-room that brought us out on top of the arch. It was a squeeze to get out, as the passages had been cracked and half blocked with fallen stone near the top. There we sat high up above the floods and watched the drowning of Isengard. The Ents kept on pouring in more water, till all the fires were quenched and every cave filled. The fogs slowly gathered together and steamed up into a huge umbrella of cloud: it must have been a mile high. In the evening there was a great rainbow over the eastern hills; and then the sunset was blotted out by a thick drizzle on the mountain-sides. It all went very quiet. A few wolves howled mournfully, far away. The Ents stopped the inflow in the night, and sent the Isen back into its old course. And that was the end of it all.

‘Since then the water has been sinking again. There must be outlets somewhere from the caves underneath, I think. If Saruman peeps out of any of his windows, it must look an untidy, dreary mess. We felt very lonely. Not even a visible Ent to talk to in all the ruin; and no news. We spent the night up on top there above the arch, and it was cold and damp and we did not sleep. We had a feeling that anything might happen at any minute. Saruman is still in his tower. There was a noise in the night like a wind coming up the valley. I think the Ents and Huorns that had been away came back then; but where they have all gone to now, I don’t know. It was a misty, moisty morning when we climbed down and looked round again, and nobody was about. And that is about all there is to tell. It seems almost peaceful now after all the turmoil. And safer too, somehow, since Gandalf came back. I could sleep!’

They all fell silent for a while. Gimli re-filled his pipe. ‘There is one thing I wonder about,’ he said as he lit it with his flint and tinder: ‘Wormtongue. You told Théoden he was with Saruman. How did he get there?’

‘Oh yes, I forgot about him,’ said Pippin. ‘He did not get here till this morning. We had just lit the fire and had some breakfast when Treebeard appeared again. We heard him hooming and calling our names outside.

“‘I have just come round to see how you are faring, my lads,” he said; “and to give you some news. Huorns have come back. All’s well; aye very well indeed!” he laughed, and slapped his thighs. “No more Orcs in Isengard, no more axes! And there will be folk coming up from the South before the day is old; some that you may be glad to see.”

‘He had hardly said that, when we heard the sound of hoofs on the road. We rushed out before the gates, and I stood and stared, half expecting to see Strider and Gandalf come riding up at the head of an army. But out of the mist there rode a man on an old tired horse; and he looked a queer twisted sort of creature himself. There was no-one else. When he came out of the mist and suddenly saw all the ruin and wreckage in front of him, he sat and gaped, and his face went almost green. He was so bewildered that he did not seem to notice us at first. When he did, he gave a cry, and tried to turn his horse round and ride off. But Treebeard took three strides, put out a long arm, and lifted him out of the saddle. His horse bolted in terror, and he grovelled on the ground. He said he was Gríma, friend and counsellor of the king, and had been sent with important messages from Théoden to Saruman.

“No-one else would dare to ride through the open land, so full of foul Orcs,” he said, “so I was sent. And I have had a perilous journey, and I am hungry and weary. I fled far north out of my way, pursued by wolves.”

‘I caught the sidelong looks he gave to Treebeard, and I said to myself “liar”. Treebeard looked at him in his long slow way for several minutes, till the wretched man was squirming on the floor. Then at last he said: “Ha, hm, I was expecting you, Master Wormtongue.” The man started at that name. “Gandalf got here first. So I know as much about you as I need, and I know what to do with you. Put all the rats in one trap, said Gandalf; and I will. I am the master of Isengard now, but Saruman is locked in his tower; and you can go there and give him all the messages that you can think of.”

“Let me go, let me go!” said Wormtongue. “I know the way.”

“You knew the way, I don’t doubt,” said Treebeard. “But things have changed here a little. Go and see!”

‘He let Wormtongue go, and he limped off through the arch, with us close behind, until he came inside the ring and could see all the floods that lay between him and Orthanc. Then he turned to us.

“Let me go away!” he whined. “Let me go away! My messages are useless now.”

“They are indeed,” said Treebeard. “But you have only two choices: to stay with me until Gandalf and your master arrive; or to cross the water. Which will you have?”

‘The man shivered at the mention of his master, and put a foot into the water; but he drew back. “I cannot swim,” he said.

“The water is not deep,” said Treebeard. “It is dirty, but that will not harm you, Master Wormtongue. In you go now!”

‘With that the wretch floundered off into the flood. It rose up nearly to his neck before he got too far away for me to see him. The last I saw of him was clinging to some old barrel or piece of wood. But Treebeard waded after him, and watched his progress.

“Well, he has gone in,” he said when he returned. “I saw him crawling up the steps like a dragged rat. There is someone in the tower still: a hand came out and pulled him in. So there he is, and I hope the welcome is to his liking. Now I must go and wash myself clean of the slime. I’ll be away up on the north side, if anyone wants to see me. There is no clean water down here fit for an Ent to drink, or to bathe in. So I will ask you two lads to keep a watch at the gate for the folk that are coming. There’ll be the Lord of the Fields of Rohan, mark you! You must welcome him as well as you know how: his men have fought a great fight with the Orcs. Maybe, you know the right fashion of Men’s words for such a lord, better than Ents. There have been many lords in the green fields in my time, and I have never learned their speech or their names. They will be wanting man-food, and you know all about that, I guess. So find what you think is fit for a king to eat, if you can.” And that is the end of the story. Though I should like to know who this Wormtongue is. Was he really the king’s counsellor?’

‘He was,’ said Aragorn; ‘and also Saruman’s spy and servant in Rohan. Fate has not been kinder to him than he deserves. The sight of the ruin of all that he thought so strong and magnificent must have been almost punishment enough. But I fear that worse awaits him.’

‘Yes, I don’t suppose Treebeard sent him to Orthanc out of kindness,’ said Merry. ‘He seemed rather grimly delighted with the business, and was laughing to himself when he went to get his bathe and drink. We spent a busy time after that, searching the flotsam, and rummaging about. We found two or three store-rooms in

different places nearby, above the flood-level. But Treebeard sent some Ents down, and they carried off a great deal of the stuff.

““We want man-food for twenty-five,” the Ents said, so you can see that somebody had counted your company carefully before you arrived. You three were evidently meant to go with the great people. But you would not have fared any better. We kept as good as we sent, I promise you. Better, because we sent no drink.

““What about drink?” I said to the Ents.

““There is water of Isen,” they said, “and that is good enough for Ents and Men.” But I hope that the Ents may have found time to brew some of their draughts from the mountain-springs, and we shall see Gandalf’s beard curling when he returns. After the Ents had gone, we felt tired, and hungry. But we did not grumble—our labours had been well rewarded. It was through our search for man-food that Pippin discovered the prize of all the flotsam, those Hornblower barrels. “Pipe-weed is better after food,” said Pippin; that is how the situation arose.’

‘We understand it all perfectly now,’ said Gimli.

‘All except one thing,’ said Aragorn: ‘leaf from the Southfarthing in Isengard. The more I consider it, the more curious I find it. I have never been in Isengard, but I have journeyed in this land, and I know well the empty countries that lie between Rohan and the Shire. Neither goods nor folk have passed that way for many a long year, not openly. Saruman had secret dealings with someone in the Shire, I guess. Wormtongues may be found in other houses than King Théoden’s. Was there a date on the barrels?’

‘Yes,’ said Pippin. ‘It was the 1417 crop, that is last year’s; no, the year before, of course, now: a good year.’

‘Ah well, whatever evil was afoot is over now, I hope; or else it is beyond our reach at present,’ said Aragorn. ‘Yet I think I shall mention it to Gandalf, small matter though it may seem among his great affairs.’

‘I wonder what he is doing,’ said Merry. ‘The afternoon is getting on. Let us go and look round! You can enter Isengard now at any rate, Strider, if you want to. But it is not a very cheerful sight.’



## Chapter 10: The Voice Of Saruman

They passed through the ruined tunnel and stood upon a heap of stones, gazing at the dark rock of Orthanc, and its many windows, a menace still in the desolation that lay all about it. The waters had now nearly all subsided. Here and there gloomy pools remained, covered with scum and wreckage; but most of the wide circle was bare again, a wilderness of slime and tumbled rock, pitted with blackened holes, and dotted with posts and pillars leaning drunkenly this way and that. At the rim of the shattered bowl there lay vast mounds and slopes, like the shingles cast up by a great storm; and beyond them the green and tangled valley ran up into the long ravine between the dark arms of the mountains. Across the waste they saw riders picking their way; they were coming from the north side, and already they were drawing near to Orthanc.

‘There is Gandalf, and Théoden and his men!’ said Legolas. ‘Let us go and meet them!’

‘Walk warily!’ said Merry. ‘There are loose slabs that may tilt up and throw you down into a pit, if you don’t take care.’

They followed what was left of the road from the gates to Orthanc, going slowly, for the flag-stones were cracked and slimed. The riders, seeing them approach, halted under the shadow of the rock and waited for them. Gandalf rode forward to meet them.

‘Well, Treebeard and I have had some interesting discussions, and made a few plans,’ he said; ‘and we have all had some much-needed rest. Now we must be going on again. I hope you companions have all rested, too, and refreshed yourselves?’

‘We have,’ said Merry. ‘But our discussions began and ended in smoke. Still we feel less ill-disposed towards Saruman than we did.’

‘Do you indeed?’ said Gandalf. ‘Well, I do not. I have now a last task to do before I go: I must pay Saruman a farewell visit. Dangerous, and probably useless; but it must be done. Those of you who wish may come with me—but beware! And do not jest! This is not the time for it.’

‘I will come,’ said Gimli. ‘I wish to see him and learn if he really looks like you.’

‘And how will you learn that, Master Dwarf?’ said Gandalf. ‘Saruman could look like me in your eyes, if it suited his purpose with you. And are you yet wise enough to detect all his counterfeits? Well, we shall see, perhaps. He may be shy of showing himself before many different eyes together. But I have ordered all the Ents to remove themselves from sight, so perhaps we shall persuade him to come out.’

‘What’s the danger?’ asked Pippin. ‘Will he shoot at us, and pour fire out of the windows; or can he put a spell on us from a distance?’

‘The last is most likely, if you ride to his door with a light heart,’ said Gandalf. ‘But there is no knowing what he can do, or may choose to try. A wild beast cornered is not safe to approach. And Saruman has powers you do not guess. Beware of his voice!’

They came now to the foot of Orthanc. It was black, and the rock gleamed as if it were wet. The many faces of the stone had sharp edges as though they had been newly chiselled. A few scorings, and small flake-like splinters near the base, were all the marks that it bore of the fury of the Ents.

On the eastern side, in the angle of two piers, there was a great door, high above the ground; and over it was a shuttered window, opening upon a balcony hedged with iron bars. Up to the threshold of the door there mounted a flight of twenty-seven broad stairs, hewn by some unknown art of the same black stone. This was

the only entrance to the tower; but many tall windows were cut with deep embrasures in the climbing walls: far up they peered like little eyes in the sheer faces of the horns.

At the foot of the stairs Gandalf and the king dismounted. 'I will go up,' said Gandalf. 'I have been in Orthanc and I know my peril.'

'And I too will go up,' said the king. 'I am old, and fear no peril any more. I wish to speak with the enemy who has done me so much wrong. Éomer shall come with me, and see that my aged feet do not falter.'

'As you will,' said Gandalf. 'Aragorn shall come with me. Let the others await us at the foot of the stairs. They will hear and see enough, if there is anything to hear or see.'

'Nay!' said Gimli. 'Legolas and I wish for a closer view. We alone here represent our kindreds. We also will come behind.'

'Come then!' said Gandalf, and with that he climbed the steps, and Théoden went beside him.

The Riders of Rohan sat uneasily upon their horses, on either side of the stair, and looked up darkly at the great tower, fearing what might befall their lord. Merry and Pippin sat on the bottom step, feeling both unimportant and unsafe.

'Half a sticky mile from here to the gate!' muttered Pippin. 'I wish I could slip off back to the guardroom unnoticed! What did we come for? We are not wanted.'

Gandalf stood before the door of Orthanc and beat on it with his staff. It rang with a hollow sound. 'Saruman, Saruman!' he cried in a loud commanding voice. 'Saruman come forth!'

For some time there was no answer. At last the window above the door was unbarred, but no figure could be seen at its dark opening.

'Who is it?' said a voice. 'What do you wish?'

Théoden started. 'I know that voice,' he said, 'and I curse the day when I first listened to it.'

'Go and fetch Saruman, since you have become his footman, Gríma Wormtongue!' said Gandalf. 'And do not waste our time!'

The window closed. They waited. Suddenly another voice spoke, low and melodious, its very sound an enchantment. Those who listened unwarily to that voice could seldom report the words that they heard; and if they did, they wondered, for little power remained in them. Mostly they remembered only that it was a delight to hear the voice speaking, all that it said seemed wise and reasonable, and desire awoke in them by swift agreement to seem wise themselves. When others spoke they seemed harsh and uncouth by contrast; and if they gainsaid the voice, anger was kindled in the hearts of those under the spell. For some the spell lasted only while the voice spoke to them, and when it spoke to another they smiled, as men do who see through a juggler's trick while others gape at it. For many the sound of the voice alone was enough to hold them enthralled; but for those whom it conquered the spell endured when they were far away, and ever they heard that soft voice whispering and urging them. But none were unmoved; none rejected its pleas and its commands without an effort of mind and will, so long as its master had control of it.

'Well?' it said now with gentle question. 'Why must you disturb my rest? Will you give me no peace at all by night or day?' Its tone was that of a kindly heart aggrieved by injuries undeserved.

They looked up, astonished, for they had heard no sound of his coming; and they saw a figure standing at the rail, looking down upon them: an old man, swathed in a great cloak, the colour of which was not easy to tell, for it changed if they moved their eyes or if he stirred. His face was long, with a high forehead, he had deep darkling eyes, hard to fathom, though the look that they now bore was grave and benevolent, and a little weary. His hair and beard were white, but strands of black still showed about his lips and ears.

'Like, and yet unlike,' muttered Gimli.

'But come now,' said the soft voice. 'Two at least of you I know by name. Gandalf I know too well to have much hope that he seeks help or counsel here. But you, Théoden Lord of the Mark of Rohan, are declared by

your noble devices, and still more by the fair countenance of the House of Eorl. O worthy son of Thengel the Thrice-renowned! Why have you not come before, and as a friend? Much have I desired to see you, mightiest king of western lands, and especially in these latter years, to save you from the unwise and evil counsels that beset you! Is it yet too late? Despite the injuries that have been done to me, in which the men of Rohan, alas! have had some part, still I would save you, and deliver you from the ruin that draws nigh inevitably, if you ride upon this road which you have taken. Indeed I alone can aid you now.'

Théoden opened his mouth as if to speak, but he said nothing. He looked up at the face of Saruman with its dark solemn eyes bent down upon him, and then to Gandalf at his side; and he seemed to hesitate. Gandalf made no sign; but stood silent as stone, as one waiting patiently for some call that has not yet come. The Riders stirred at first, murmuring with approval of the words of Saruman; and then they too were silent, as men spell-bound. It seemed to them that Gandalf had never spoken so fair and fittingly to their lord. Rough and proud now seemed all his dealings with Théoden. And over their hearts crept a shadow, the fear of a great danger: the end of the Mark in a darkness to which Gandalf was driving them, while Saruman stood beside a door of escape, holding it half open so that a ray of light came through. There was a heavy silence.

It was Gimli the dwarf who broke in suddenly. 'The words of this wizard stand on their heads,' he growled, gripping the handle of his axe. 'In the language of Orthanc help means ruin, and saving means slaying, that is plain. But we do not come here to beg.'

'Peace!' said Saruman, and for a fleeting moment his voice was less suave, and a light flickered in his eyes and was gone. 'I do not speak to you yet, Gimli Glóin's son,' he said. 'Far away is your home and small concern of yours are the troubles of this land. But it was not by design of your own that you became embroiled in them, and so I will not blame such part as you have played—a valiant one, I doubt not. But I pray you, allow me first to speak with the King of Rohan, my neighbour, and once my friend.'

'What have you to say, Théoden King? Will you have peace with me, and all the aid that my knowledge, founded in long years, can bring? Shall we make our counsels together against evil days, and repair our injuries with such good will that our estates shall both come to fairer flower than ever before?'

Still Théoden did not answer. Whether he strove with anger or doubt none could say. Éomer spoke.

'Lord, hear me!' he said. 'Now we feel the peril that we were warned of. Have we ridden forth to victory, only to stand at last amazed by an old liar with honey on his forked tongue? So would the trapped wolf speak to the hounds, if he could. What aid can he give to you, forsooth? All he desires is to escape from his plight. But will you parley with this dealer in treachery and murder? Remember Théodred at the Fords, and the grave of Háma in Helm's Deep!'

'If we speak of poisoned tongues what shall we say of yours, young serpent?' said Saruman, and the flash of his anger was now plain to see. 'But come, Éomer, Éomund's son!' he went on in his soft voice again. 'To every man his part. Valour in arms is yours, and you win high honour thereby. Slay whom your lord names as enemies, and be content. Meddle not in policies which you do not understand. But maybe, if you become a king, you will find that he must choose his friends with care. The friendship of Saruman and the power of Orthanc cannot be lightly thrown aside, whatever grievances, real or fancied, may lie behind. You have won a battle but not a war—and that with help on which you cannot count again. You may find the Shadow of the Wood at your own door next: it is wayward, and senseless, and has no love for Men.'

'But my lord of Rohan, am I to be called a murderer, because valiant men have fallen in battle? If you go to war, needlessly, for I did not desire it, then men will be slain. But if I am a murderer on that account, then all the House of Eorl is stained with murder; for they have fought many wars, and assailed many who defied them. Yet with some they have afterwards made peace, none the worse for being politic. I say, Théoden King: shall we have peace and friendship, you and I? It is ours to command.'

'We will have peace,' said Théoden at last thickly and with an effort. Several of the Riders cried out gladly. Théoden held up his hand. 'Yes, we will have peace,' he said, now in a clear voice, 'we will have peace, when you and all your works have perished—and the works of your dark master to whom you would deliver us. You are a liar, Saruman, and a corrupter of men's hearts. You hold out your hand to me, and I perceive only a finger



of the claw of Mordor. Cruel and cold! Even if your war on me was just—as it was not, for were you ten times as wise you would have no right to rule me and mine for your own profit as you desired—even so, what will you say of your torches in Westfold and the children that lie dead there? And they hewed Háma's body before the gates of the Hornburg, after he was dead. When you hang from a gibbet at your window for the sport of your own crows, I will have peace with you and Orthanc. So much for the House of Eorl. A lesser son of great sires am I, but I do not need to lick your fingers. Turn elsewhither. But I fear your voice has lost its charm.'

The Riders gazed up at Théoden like men startled out of a dream. Harsh as an old raven's their master's voice sounded in their ears after the music of Saruman. But Saruman for a while was beside himself with wrath. He leaned over the rail as if he would smite the King with his staff. To some suddenly it seemed that they saw a snake coiling itself to strike.

'Gibbets and crows!' he hissed, and they shuddered at the hideous change. 'Dotard! What is the house of Eorl but a thatched barn where brigands drink in the reek, and their brats roll on the floor among the dogs? Too long have they escaped the gibbet themselves. But the noose comes, slow in the drawing, tight and hard in the end. Hang if you will!' Now his voice changed, as he slowly mastered himself. 'I know not why I have had the patience to speak to you. For I need you not, nor your little band of gallopers, as swift to fly as to advance, Théoden Horsemaster. Long ago I offered you a state beyond your merit and your wit. I have offered it again, so that those whom you mislead may clearly see the choice of roads. You give me brag and abuse. So be it. Go back to your huts!

'But you, Gandalf! For you at least I am grieved, feeling for your shame. How comes it that you can endure such company? For you are proud, Gandalf—and not without reason, having a noble mind and eyes that look both deep and far. Even now will you not listen to my counsel?'

Gandalf stirred, and looked up. 'What have you to say that you did not say at our last meeting?' he asked. 'Or, perhaps, you have things to unsay?'

Saruman paused. 'Unsay?' he mused, as if puzzled. 'Unsay? I endeavoured to advise you for your own good, but you scarcely listened. You are proud and do not love advice, having indeed a store of your own wisdom. But on that occasion you erred, I think, misconstruing my intentions wilfully. I fear that in my eagerness to persuade you, I lost patience. And indeed I regret it. For I bore you no ill-will; and even now I bear none, though you return to me in the company of the violent and the ignorant. How should I? Are we not both members of a high and ancient order, most excellent in Middle-earth? Our friendship would profit us both alike. Much we could still accomplish together, to heal the disorders of the world. Let us understand one another, and dismiss from thought these lesser folk! Let them wait on our decisions! For the common good I am willing to redress the past, and to receive you. Will you not consult with me? Will you not come up?'

So great was the power that Saruman exerted in this last effort that none that stood within hearing were unmoved. But now the spell was wholly different. They heard the gentle remonstrance of a kindly king with an erring but much-loved minister. But they were shut out, listening at a door to words not meant for them: ill-mannered children or stupid servants overhearing the elusive discourse of their elders, and wondering how it would affect their lot. Of loftier mould these two were made: reverend and wise. It was inevitable that they should make alliance. Gandalf would ascend into the tower, to discuss deep things beyond their comprehension in the high chambers of Orthanc. The door would be closed, and they would be left outside, dismissed to await allotted work or punishment. Even in the mind of Théoden the thought took shape, like a shadow of doubt: 'He will betray us; he will go—we shall be lost.'

Then Gandalf laughed. The fantasy vanished like a puff of smoke.

'Saruman, Saruman!' said Gandalf still laughing. 'Saruman, you missed your path in life. You should have been the king's jester and earned your bread, and stripes too, by mimicking his counsellors. Ah me!' he paused, getting the better of his mirth. 'Understand one another? I fear I am beyond your comprehension. But you, Saruman, I understand now too well. I keep a clearer memory of your arguments, and deeds, than you suppose. When last I visited you, you were the jailor of Mordor, and there I was to be sent. Nay, the guest who has escaped from the roof, will think twice before he comes back in by the door. Nay, I do not think I will come up. But listen, Saruman, for the last time! Will you not come down? Isengard has proved less strong than your hope

and fancy made it. So may other things in which you still have trust. Would it not be well to leave it for a while? To turn to new things, perhaps? Think well, Saruman! Will you not come down?’

A shadow passed over Saruman’s face; then it went deathly white. Before he could conceal it, they saw through the mask the anguish of a mind in doubt, loathing to stay and dreading to leave its refuge. For a second he hesitated, and no-one breathed. Then he spoke, and his voice was shrill and cold. Pride and hate were conquering him.

‘Will I come down?’ he mocked. ‘Does an unarmed man come down to speak with robbers out of doors? I can hear you well enough here. I am no fool, and I do not trust you, Gandalf. They do not stand openly on my stairs, but I know where the wild wood-demons are lurking, at your command.’

‘The treacherous are ever distrustful,’ answered Gandalf wearily. ‘But you need not fear for your skin. I do not wish to kill you, or hurt you, as you would know, if you really understood me. And I have the power to protect you. I am giving you a last chance. You can leave Orthanc, free—if you choose.’

‘That sounds well,’ sneered Saruman. ‘Very much in the manner of Gandalf the Grey: so condescending, and so very kind. I do not doubt that you would find Orthanc commodious, and my departure convenient. But why should I wish to leave? And what do you mean by “free”? There are conditions, I presume?’

‘Reasons for leaving you can see from your windows,’ answered Gandalf. ‘Others will occur to your thought. Your servants are destroyed and scattered; your neighbours you have made your enemies; and you have cheated your new master, or tried to do so. When his eye turns hither, it will be the red eye of wrath. But when I say “free”, I mean “free”: free from bond, of chain or command: to go where you will, even, even to Mordor, Saruman, if you desire. But you will first surrender to me the Key of Orthanc, and your staff. They shall be pledges of your conduct, to be returned later, if you merit them.’

Saruman’s face grew livid, twisted with rage, and a red light was kindled in his eyes. He laughed wildly. ‘Later!’ he cried, and his voice rose to a scream. ‘Later! Yes, when you also have the Keys of Barad-dûr itself, I suppose; and the crowns of seven kings, and the rods of the Five Wizards, and have purchased yourself a pair of boots many sizes larger than those that you wear now. A modest plan. Hardly one in which my help is needed! I have other things to do. Do not be a fool. If you wish to treat with me, while you have a chance, go away, and come back when you are sober! And leave behind these cut-throats and small rag-tag that dangle at your tail! Good day!’ He turned and left the balcony.

‘Come back, Saruman!’ said Gandalf in a commanding voice. To the amazement of the others, Saruman turned again, and as if dragged against his will, he came slowly back to the iron rail, leaning on it, breathing hard. His face was lined and shrunken. His hand clutched his heavy black staff like a claw.

‘I did not give you leave to go,’ said Gandalf sternly. ‘I have not finished. You have become a fool, Saruman, and yet pitiable. You might still have turned away from folly and evil, and have been of service. But you choose to stay and gnaw the ends of your old plots. Stay then! But I warn you, you will not easily come out again. Not unless the dark hands of the East stretch out to take you. Saruman!’ he cried, and his voice grew in power and authority. ‘Behold, I am not Gandalf the Grey, whom you betrayed. I am Gandalf the White, who has returned from death. You have no colour now, and I cast you from the order and from the Council.’

He raised his hand, and spoke slowly in a clear cold voice. ‘Saruman, your staff is broken.’ There was a crack, and the staff split asunder in Saruman’s hand, and the head of it fell down at Gandalf’s feet. ‘Go!’ said Gandalf. With a cry Saruman fell back and crawled away. At that moment a heavy shining thing came hurtling down from above. It glanced off the iron rail, even as Saruman left it, and passing close to Gandalf’s head, it smote the stair on which he stood. The rail rang and snapped. The stair cracked and splintered in glittering sparks. But the ball was unharmed: it rolled on down the steps, a globe of crystal, dark, but glowing with a heart of fire. As it bounded away towards a pool Pippin ran after it and picked it up.

‘The murderous rogue!’ cried Éomer. But Gandalf was unmoved. ‘No, that was not thrown by Saruman,’ he said; ‘nor even at his bidding, I think. It came from a window far above. A parting shot from Master Wormtongue, I fancy, but ill aimed.’

‘The aim was poor, maybe, because he could not make up his mind which he hated more, you or Saruman,’ said Aragorn.

‘That may be so,’ said Gandalf. ‘Small comfort will those two have in their companionship: they will gnaw one another with words. But the punishment is just. If Wormtongue ever comes out of Orthanc alive, it will be more than he deserves.’

‘Here, my lad, I’ll take that! I did not ask you to handle it,’ he cried, turning sharply and seeing Pippin coming up the steps, slowly, as if he were bearing a great weight. He went down to meet him and hastily took the dark globe from the hobbit, wrapping it in the folds of his cloak. ‘I will take care of this,’ he said. ‘It is not a thing, I guess, that Saruman would have chosen to cast away.’

‘But he may have other things to cast,’ said Gimli. ‘If that is the end of the debate, let us go out of stone’s throw, at least!’

‘It is the end,’ said Gandalf. ‘Let us go.’

They turned their backs on the doors of Orthanc, and went down. The riders hailed the king with joy, and saluted Gandalf. The spell of Saruman was broken: they had seen him come at call, and crawl away, dismissed.

‘Well, that is done,’ said Gandalf. ‘Now I must find Treebeard and tell him how things have gone.’

‘He will have guessed, surely?’ said Merry. ‘Were they likely to end any other way?’

‘Not likely,’ answered Gandalf, ‘though they came to the balance of a hair. But I had reasons for trying; some merciful and some less so. First Saruman was shown that the power of his voice was waning. He cannot be both tyrant and counsellor. When the plot is ripe it remains no longer secret. Yet he fell into the trap, and tried to deal with his victims piece-meal, while others listened. Then I gave him a last choice and a fair one: to renounce both Mordor and his private schemes, and make amends by helping us in our need. He knows our need, none better. Great service he could have rendered. But he has chosen to withhold it, and keep the power of Orthanc. He will not serve, only command. He lives now in terror of the shadow of Mordor, and yet he still dreams of riding the storm. Unhappy fool! He will be devoured, if the power of the East stretches out its arms to Isengard. We cannot destroy Orthanc from without, but Sauron—who knows what he can do?’

‘And what if Sauron does not conquer? What will you do to him?’ asked Pippin.

‘I? Nothing!’ said Gandalf. ‘I will do nothing to him. I do not wish for mastery. What will become of him? I cannot say. I grieve that so much that was good now festers in the tower. Still for us things have not gone badly. Strange are the turns of fortune! Often does hatred hurt itself! I guess that, even if we had entered in, we could have found few treasures in Orthanc more precious than the thing which Wormtongue threw down at us.’

A shrill shriek, suddenly cut off, came from an open window high above.

‘It seems that Saruman thinks so too,’ said Gandalf. ‘Let us leave them!’

They returned now to the ruins of the gate. Hardly had they passed out under the arch, when, from among the shadows of the piled stones where they had stood, Treebeard and a dozen other Ents came striding up. Aragorn, Gimli and Legolas gazed at them in wonder.

‘Here are three of my companions, Treebeard,’ said Gandalf. ‘I have spoken of them, but you have not yet seen them.’ He named them one by one.

The Old Ent looked at them long and searchingly, and spoke to them in turn. Last he turned to Legolas. ‘So you have come all the way from Mirkwood, my good Elf? A very great forest it used to be!’

‘And still is,’ said Legolas. ‘But not so great that we who dwell there ever tire of seeing new trees. I should dearly love to journey in Fangorn’s Wood. I scarcely passed beyond the eaves of it, and I did not wish to turn back.’

Treebeard’s eyes gleamed with pleasure. ‘I hope you may have your wish, ere the hills be much older,’ he said.

‘I will come, if I have the fortune,’ said Legolas. ‘I have made a bargain with my friend that, if all goes well, we will visit Fangorn together—by your leave.’

‘Any Elf that comes with you will be welcome,’ said Treebeard.

‘The friend I speak of is not an Elf,’ said Legolas; ‘I mean Gimli, Glóin’s son here.’ Gimli bowed low, and the axe slipped from his belt and clattered on the ground.

‘Hoom, hm! Ah now,’ said Treebeard, looking dark-eyed at him. ‘A dwarf and an axe-bearer! Hoom! I have good will to Elves; but you ask much. This is a strange friendship!’

‘Strange it may seem,’ said Legolas; ‘but while Gimli lives I shall not come to Fangorn alone. His axe is not for trees, but for orc-necks, O Fangorn, Master of Fangorn’s Wood. Forty-two he hewed in the battle.’

‘Hoo! Come now!’ said Treebeard. ‘That is a better story! Well, well, things will go as they will; and there is no need to hurry to meet them. But now we must part for a while. Day is drawing to an end, yet Gandalf says you must go ere nightfall, and the Lord of the Mark is eager for his own house.’

‘Yes, we must go, and go now,’ said Gandalf. ‘I fear that I must take your gatekeepers from you. But you will manage well enough without them.’

‘Maybe I shall,’ said Treebeard. ‘But I shall miss them. We have become friends in so short a while that I think I must be getting hasty—growing backwards towards youth, perhaps. But there, they are the first new thing under Sun or Moon that I have seen for many a long, long day. I shall not forget them. I have put their names into the Long List. Ents will remember it.

*Ents the earthborn, old as mountains,  
the wide-walkers, water drinking;  
and hungry as hunters, the Hobbit children,  
the laughing-folk, the little people,*

they shall remain friends as long as leaves are renewed. Fare you well! But if you hear news up in your pleasant land, in the Shire, send me word! You know what I mean: word or sight of the Entwives. Come yourselves if you can!’

‘We will!’ said Merry and Pippin together, and they turned away hastily. Treebeard looked at them, and was silent for a while, shaking his head thoughtfully. Then he turned to Gandalf.

‘So Saruman would not leave?’ he said. ‘I did not think he would. His heart is as rotten as a black Huorn’s. Still, if I were overcome and all my trees destroyed, I would not come while I had one dark hole left to hide in.’

‘No,’ said Gandalf. ‘But you have not plotted to cover all the world with your trees and choke all other living things. But there it is, Saruman remains to nurse his hatred and weave again such webs as he can. He has the Key of Orthanc. But he must not be allowed to escape.’

‘Indeed no! Ents will see to that,’ said Treebeard. ‘Saruman shall not set foot beyond the rock, without my leave. Ents will watch over him.’

‘Good!’ said Gandalf. ‘That is what I hoped. Now I can go and turn to other matters with one care the less. But you must be wary. The waters have gone down. It will not be enough to put sentinels round the tower, I fear. I do not doubt that there were deep ways delved under Orthanc, and that Saruman hopes to go and come unmarked, before long. If you will undertake the labour, I beg you to pour in the waters again; and do so, until Isengard remains a standing pool, or you discover the outlets. When all the underground places are drowned, and the outlets blocked, then Saruman must stay upstairs and look out of the windows.’

‘Leave it to the Ents!’ said Treebeard. ‘We shall search the valley from head to foot and peer under every pebble. Trees are coming back to live here, old trees, wild trees. The Watchwood we will call it. Not a squirrel will go here, but I shall know of it. Leave it to Ents! Until seven times the years in which he tormented us have passed, we shall not tire of watching him.’



## Chapter 11: The Palantír

The sun was sinking behind the long western arm of the mountains when Gandalf and his companions, and the king with his Riders, set out again from Isengard. Gandalf took Merry behind him, and Aragorn took Pippin. Two of the king's men went on ahead, riding swiftly, and passed soon out of sight down into the valley. The others followed at an easy pace.

Ents in a solemn row stood like statues at the gate, with their long arms uplifted, but they made no sound. Merry and Pippin looked back, when they had passed some way down the winding road. Sunlight was still shining in the sky, but long shadows reached over Isengard: grey ruins falling into darkness. Treebeard stood alone there now, like the distant stump of an old tree: the hobbits thought of their first meeting, upon the sunny ledge far away on the borders of Fangorn.

They came to the pillar of the White Hand. The pillar was still standing, but the graven hand had been thrown down and broken into small pieces. Right in the middle of the road the long forefinger lay, white in the dusk, its red nail darkening to black.

'The Ents pay attention to every detail!' said Gandalf.

They rode on, and evening deepened in the valley.

'Are we riding far tonight, Gandalf?' asked Merry after a while. 'I don't know how you feel with small rag-tag dangling behind you; but the rag-tag is tired and will be glad to stop dangling and lie down.'

'So you heard that?' said Gandalf. 'Don't let it rankle! Be thankful no longer words were aimed at you. He had his eyes on you. If it is any comfort to your pride, I should say that, at the moment, you and Pippin are more in his thoughts than all the rest of us. Who you are; how you came there, and why; what you know; whether you were captured, and if so, how you escaped when all the Orcs perished—it is with those little riddles that the great mind of Saruman is troubled. A sneer from him, Meriadoc, is a compliment, if you feel honoured by his concern.'

'Thank you!' said Merry. 'But it is a greater honour to dangle at your tail, Gandalf. For one thing, in that position one has a chance of putting a question a second time. Are we riding far tonight?'

Gandalf laughed. 'A most unquenchable hobbit! All Wizards should have a hobbit or two in their care—to teach them the meaning of the word, and to correct them. I beg your pardon. But I have given thought even to these simple matters. We will ride for a few hours, gently, until we come to the end of the valley. Tomorrow we must ride faster.'

'When we came, we meant to go straight from Isengard back to the king's house at Edoras over the plains, a ride of some days. But we have taken thought and changed the plan. Messengers have gone ahead to Helm's Deep, to warn them that the king is returning tomorrow. He will ride from there with many men to Dunharrow by paths among the hills. From now on no more than two or three together are to go openly over the land, by day or night, when it can be avoided.'

'Nothing or a double helping is your way!' said Merry. 'I am afraid I was not looking beyond tonight's bed. Where and what are Helm's Deep and all the rest of it? I don't know anything about this country.'

'Then you'd best learn something, if you wish to understand what is happening. But not just now, and not from me: I have too many pressing things to think about.'

'All right, I'll tackle Strider by the camp-fire: he's less testy. But why all this secrecy? I thought we'd won the battle!'

‘Yes, we have won, but only the first victory, and that in itself increases our danger. There was some link between Isengard and Mordor, which I have not yet fathomed. How they exchanged news I am not sure; but they did so. The Eye of Barad-dûr will be looking impatiently towards the Wizard’s Vale, I think; and towards Rohan. The less it sees the better.’

The road passed slowly, winding down the valley. Now further, and now nearer Isen flowed in its stony bed. Night came down from the mountains. All the mists were gone. A chill wind blew. The moon, now waxing round, filled the eastern sky with a pale cold sheen. The shoulders of the mountain to their right sloped down to bare hills. The wide plains opened grey before them.

At last they halted. Then they turned aside, leaving the highway and taking to the sweet upland turf again. Going westward a mile or so they came to a dale. It opened southward, leaning back into the slope of round Dol Baran, the last hill of the northern ranges, greenfooted, crowned with heather. The sides of the glen were shaggy with last year’s bracken, among which the tight-curved fronds of spring were just thrusting through the sweet-scented earth. Thornbushes grew thick upon the low banks, and under them they made their camp, two hours or so before the middle of the night. They lit a fire in a hollow, down among the roots of a spreading hawthorn, tall as a tree, writhen with age, but hale in every limb. Buds were swelling at each twig’s tip.

Guards were set, two at a watch. The rest, after they had supped, wrapped themselves in a cloak and blanket and slept. The hobbits lay in a corner by themselves upon a pile of old bracken. Merry was sleepy, but Pippin now seemed curiously restless. The bracken cracked and rustled, as he twisted and turned.

‘What’s the matter?’ asked Merry. ‘Are you lying on an ant-hill?’

‘No,’ said Pippin, ‘but I’m not comfortable. I wonder how long it is since I slept in a bed?’

Merry yawned. ‘Work it out on your fingers!’ he said. ‘But you must know how long it is since we left Lórien.’

‘Oh, that!’ said Pippin. ‘I mean a real bed in a bedroom.’

‘Well, Rivendell then,’ said Merry. ‘But I could sleep anywhere tonight.’

‘You had the luck, Merry,’ said Pippin softly, after a pause. ‘You were riding with Gandalf.’

‘Well, what of it?’

‘Did you get any news, any information out of him?’

‘Yes, a good deal. More than usual. But you heard it all or most of it; you were close by, and we were talking no secrets. But you can go with him tomorrow, if you think you can get more out of him—and if he’ll have you.’

‘Can I? Good! But he’s close, isn’t he? Not changed at all.’

‘Oh yes, he is!’ said Merry, waking up a little, and beginning to wonder what was bothering his companion. ‘He has grown, or something. He can be both kinder and more alarming, merrier and more solemn than before, I think. He has changed; but we have not had a chance to see how much, yet. But think of the last part of that business with Saruman! Remember Saruman was once Gandalf’s superior: head of the Council, whatever that may be exactly. He was Saruman the White. Gandalf is the White now. Saruman came when he was told, and his rod was taken; and then he was just told to go, and he went!’

‘Well, if Gandalf has changed at all, then he’s closer than ever, that’s all,’ Pippin argued. ‘That—glass ball, now. He seemed mighty pleased with it. He knows or guesses something about it. But does he tell us what? No, not a word. Yet I picked it up, and I saved it from rolling into a pool. *Here, I’ll take that, my lad*—that’s all. I wonder what it is? It felt so very heavy.’ Pippin’s voice fell very low, as if he was talking to himself.

‘Hullo!’ said Merry. ‘So that’s what is bothering you? Now, Pippin my lad, don’t forget Gildor’s saying—the one Sam used to quote: *Do not meddle in the affairs of Wizards, for they are subtle and quick to anger.*’

‘But our whole life for months has been one long meddling in the affairs of Wizards,’ said Pippin. ‘I should like a bit of information as well as danger. I should like a look at that ball.’

‘Go to sleep!’ said Merry. ‘You’ll get information enough, sooner or later. My dear Pippin, no Took ever beat a Brandybuck for inquisitiveness; but is this the time, I ask you?’

‘All right! What’s the harm in my telling you what I should like: a look at that stone? I know I can’t have it, with old Gandalf sitting on it, like a hen on an egg. But it doesn’t help much to get no more from you than a *you-can’t-have-it-so-go-to-sleep!*’

‘Well, what else could I say?’ said Merry. ‘I’m sorry, Pippin, but you really must wait till the morning. I’ll be as curious as you like after breakfast, and I’ll help in any way I can at wizard-wheedling. But I can’t keep awake any longer. If I yawn any more, I shall split at the ears. Good night!’

Pippin said no more. He lay still now, but sleep remained far away; and it was not encouraged by the sound of Merry breathing softly, asleep in a few minutes after saying good night. The thought of the dark globe seemed to grow stronger as all grew quiet. Pippin felt again its weight in his hands, and saw again the mysterious red depths into which he had looked for a moment. He tossed and turned and tried to think of something else.

At last he could stand it no longer. He got up and looked round. It was chilly, and he wrapped his cloak about him. The moon was shining cold and white, down into the dell, and the shadows of the bushes were black. All about lay sleeping shapes. The two guards were not in view: they were up on the hill, perhaps, or hidden in the bracken. Driven by some impulse that he did not understand, Pippin walked softly to where Gandalf lay. He looked down at him. The wizard seemed asleep, but with lids not fully closed: there was a glitter of eyes under his long lashes. Pippin stepped back hastily. But Gandalf made no sign; and drawn forward once more, half against his will, the hobbit crept up again from behind the wizard’s head. He was rolled in a blanket, with his cloak spread over the top; and close beside him, between his right side and his bent arm, there was a hummock, something round wrapped in a dark cloth; his hand seemed only just to have slipped off it to the ground.

Hardly breathing, Pippin crept nearer, foot by foot. At last he knelt down. Then he put his hands out stealthily, and slowly lifted the lump up: it did not seem quite so heavy as he had expected. ‘Only some bundle of oddments, perhaps, after all,’ he thought with a strange sense of relief; but he did not put the bundle down again. He stood for a moment clasping it. Then an idea came into his mind. He tiptoed away, found a large stone, and came back.

Quickly now he drew off the cloth, wrapped the stone in it and kneeling down, laid it back by the wizard’s hand. Then at last he looked at the thing that he had uncovered. There it was: a smooth globe of crystal, now dark and dead, lying bare before his knees. Pippin lifted it, covered it hurriedly in his own cloak, and half turned to go back to his bed. At that moment Gandalf moved in his sleep, and muttered some words: they seemed to be in a strange tongue; his hand groped out and clasped the wrapped stone, then he sighed and did not move again.

‘You idiotic fool!’ Pippin muttered to himself. ‘You’re going to get yourself into frightful trouble. Put it back quick!’ But he found now that his knees quaked, and he did not dare to go near enough to the wizard to reach the bundle. ‘I’ll never get it back now without waking him,’ he thought, ‘not till I’m a bit calmer. So I may as well have a look first. Not just here though!’ He stole away, and sat down on a green hillock not far from his bed. The moon looked in over the edge of the dell.

Pippin sat with his knees drawn up and the ball between them. He bent low over it, looking like a greedy child stooping over a bowl of food, in a corner away from others. He drew his cloak aside and gazed at it. The air seemed still and tense about him. At first the globe was dark, black as jet, with the moonlight gleaming on its surface. Then there came a faint glow and stir in the heart of it, and it held his eyes, so that now he could not look away. Soon all the inside seemed on fire; the ball was spinning, or the lights within were revolving. Suddenly the lights went out. He gave a gasp and struggled; but he remained bent, clasping the ball with both hands. Closer and closer he bent, and then became rigid; his lips moved soundlessly for a while. Then with a strangled cry he fell back and lay still.

The cry was piercing. The guards leapt down from the banks. All the camp was soon astir.

‘So this is the thief!’ said Gandalf. Hastily he cast his cloak over the globe where it lay. ‘But you, Pippin! This is a grievous turn to things!’ He knelt by Pippin’s body: the hobbit was lying on his back, rigid, with unseeing

eyes staring up at the sky. 'The devilry! What mischief has he done—to himself, and to all of us?' The wizard's face was drawn and haggard.

He took Pippin's hand and bent over his face, listening for his breath; then he laid his hands on his brow. The hobbit shuddered. His eyes closed. He cried out; and sat up, staring in bewilderment at all the faces round him, pale in the moonlight.

'It is not for you, Saruman!' he cried in a shrill and toneless voice, shrinking away from Gandalf. 'I will send for it at once. Do you understand? Say just that!' Then he struggled to get up and escape, but Gandalf held him gently and firmly.

'Peregrin Took!' he said. 'Come back!'

The hobbit relaxed and fell back, clinging to the wizard's hand. 'Gandalf!' he cried. 'Gandalf! Forgive me!'

'Forgive you?' said the wizard. 'Tell me first what you have done!'

'I, I took the ball and looked at it,' stammered Pippin; 'and I saw things that frightened me. And I wanted to go away, but I couldn't. And then he came and questioned me; and he looked at me, and, and, that is all I remember.'

'That won't do,' said Gandalf sternly. 'What did you see, and what did you say?'

Pippin shut his eyes and shivered, but said nothing. They all stared at him in silence, except Merry who turned away. But Gandalf's face was still hard. 'Speak!' he said.

In a low hesitating voice Pippin began again, and slowly his words grew clearer and stronger. 'I saw a dark sky, and tall battlements,' he said. 'And tiny stars. It seemed very far away and long ago, yet hard and clear. Then the stars went in and out—they were cut off by things with wings. Very big, I think, really; but in the glass they looked like bats wheeling round the tower. I thought there were nine of them. One began to fly straight towards me, getting bigger and bigger. It had a horrible—no, no! I can't say.

'I tried to get away, because I thought it would fly out; but when it had covered all the globe, it disappeared. Then *he* came. He did not speak so that I could hear words. He just looked, and I understood.

“So you have come back? Why have you neglected to report for so long?”

'I did not answer. He said: "Who are you?" I still did not answer, but it hurt me horribly; and he pressed me, so I said: "A hobbit."

'Then suddenly he seemed to see me, and he laughed at me. It was cruel. It was like being stabbed with knives. I struggled. But he said: "Wait a moment! We shall meet again soon. Tell Saruman that this dainty is not for him. I will send for it at once. Do you understand? Say just that!"

'Then he gloated over me. I felt I was falling to pieces. No, no! I can't say any more. I don't remember anything else.'

'Look at me!' said Gandalf.

Pippin looked up straight into his eyes. The wizard held his gaze for a moment in silence. Then his face grew gentler, and the shadow of a smile appeared. He laid his hand softly on Pippin's head.

'All right!' he said. 'Say no more! You have taken no harm. There is no lie in your eyes, as I feared. But he did not speak long with you. A fool, but an honest fool, you remain, Peregrin Took. Wiser ones might have done worse in such a pass. But mark this! You have been saved, and all your friends too, mainly by good fortune, as it is called. You cannot count on it a second time. If he had questioned you, then and there, almost certainly you would have told all that you know, to the ruin of us all. But he was too eager. He did not want information only: he wanted *you*, quickly, so that he could deal with you in the Dark Tower, slowly. Don't shudder! If you will meddle in the affairs of Wizards, you must be prepared to think of such things. But come! I forgive you. Be comforted! Things have not turned out as evilly as they might.'

He lifted Pippin gently and carried him back to his bed. Merry followed, and sat down beside him. 'Lie there and rest, if you can, Pippin!' said Gandalf. 'Trust me. If you feel an itch in your palms again, tell me of it! Such



things can be cured. But anyway, my dear hobbit, don't put a lump of rock under my elbow again! Now, I will leave you two together for a while.'

With that Gandalf returned to the others, who were still standing by the Orthanc-stone in troubled thought. 'Peril comes in the night when least expected,' he said. 'We have had a narrow escape!'

'How is the hobbit, Pippin?' asked Aragorn.

'I think all will be well now,' answered Gandalf. 'He was not held long, and hobbits have an amazing power of recovery. The memory, or the horror of it, will probably fade quickly. Too quickly, perhaps. Will you, Aragorn, take the Orthanc-stone and guard it? It is a dangerous charge.'

'Dangerous indeed, but not to all,' said Aragorn. 'There is one who may claim it by right. For this assuredly is the *palantír* of Orthanc from the treasury of Elendil, set here by the Kings of Gondor. Now my hour draws near. I will take it.'

Gandalf looked at Aragorn, and then, to the surprise of the others, he lifted the covered Stone, and bowed as he presented it.

'Receive it, lord!' he said: 'in earnest of other things that shall be given back. But if I may counsel you in the use of your own, do not use it—yet! Be wary!'

'When have I been hasty or unwary, who have waited and prepared for so many long years?' said Aragorn.

'Never yet. Do not then stumble at the end of the road,' answered Gandalf. 'But at the least keep this thing secret. You, and all others that stand here! The hobbit, Peregrin, above all should not know where it is bestowed. The evil fit may come on him again. For alas! he has handled it and looked in it, as should never have happened. He ought never to have touched it in Isengard, and there I should have been quicker. But my mind was bent on Saruman, and I did not at once guess the nature of the Stone. Then I was weary, and as I lay pondering it, sleep overcame me. Now I know!'

'Yes, there can be no doubt,' said Aragorn. 'At last we know the link between Isengard and Mordor, and how it worked. Much is explained.'

'Strange powers have our enemies, and strange weaknesses!' said Théoden. 'But it has long been said: *oft evil will shall evil mar*.'

'That many times is seen,' said Gandalf. 'But at this time we have been strangely fortunate. Maybe, I have been saved by this hobbit from a grave blunder. I had considered whether or not to probe this Stone myself to find its uses. Had I done so, I should have been revealed to him myself. I am not ready for such a trial, if indeed I shall ever be so. But even if I found the power to withdraw myself, it would be disastrous for him to see me, yet—until the hour comes when secrecy will avail no longer.'

'That hour is now come, I think,' said Aragorn.

'Not yet,' said Gandalf. 'There remains a short while of doubt, which we must use. The Enemy, it is clear, thought that the Stone was in Orthanc—why should he not? And that therefore the hobbit was captive there, driven to look in the glass for his torment by Saruman. That dark mind will be filled now with the voice and face of the hobbit and with expectation: it may take some time before he learns his error. We must snatch that time. We have been too leisurely. We must move. The neighbourhood of Isengard is no place now to linger in. I will ride ahead at once with Peregrin Took. It will be better for him than lying in the dark while others sleep.'

'I will keep Éomer and ten Riders,' said the king. 'They shall ride with me at early day. The rest may go with Aragorn and ride as soon as they have a mind.'

'As you will,' said Gandalf. 'But make all the speed you may to the cover of the hills, to Helm's Deep!'

At that moment a shadow fell over them. The bright moonlight seemed to be suddenly cut off. Several of the Riders cried out, and crouched, holding their arms above their heads, as if to ward off a blow from above: a blind fear and a deadly cold fell on them. Cowering they looked up. A vast winged shape passed over the moon

like a black cloud. It wheeled and went north, flying at a speed greater than any wind of Middle-earth. The stars faded before it. It was gone.

They stood up, rigid as stones. Gandalf was gazing up, his arms out and downwards, stiff, his hands clenched.

‘Nazgûl!’ he cried. ‘The messenger of Mordor. The storm is coming. The Nazgûl have crossed the River! Ride, ride! Wait not for the dawn! Let not the swift wait for the slow! Ride!’

He sprang away, calling Shadowfax as he ran. Aragorn followed him. Going to Pippin, Gandalf picked him up in his arms. ‘You shall come with me this time,’ he said. ‘Shadowfax shall show you his paces.’ Then he ran to the place where he had slept. Shadowfax stood there already. Slinging the small bag which was all his luggage across his shoulders, the wizard leapt upon the horse’s back. Aragorn lifted Pippin and set him in Gandalf’s arms, wrapped in cloak and blanket. ‘Farewell! Follow fast!’ cried Gandalf. ‘Away, Shadowfax!’ The great horse tossed his head. His flowing tail flicked in the moonlight. Then he leapt forward, spurning the earth, and was gone like the north wind from the mountains.

‘A beautiful, restful night!’ said Merry to Aragorn. ‘Some folk have wonderful luck. He did not want to sleep, and he wanted to ride with Gandalf—and there he goes! Instead of being turned into a stone himself to stand here for ever as a warning.’

‘If you had been the first to lift the Orthanc-stone, and not he, how would it be now?’ said Aragorn. ‘You might have done worse. Who can say? But now it is your luck to come with me, I fear. At once. Go and get ready, and bring anything that Pippin left behind. Make haste!’

Over the plains Shadowfax was flying, needing no urging and no guidance. Less than an hour had passed, and they had reached the Fords of Isen and crossed them. The Mound of the Riders and its cold spears lay grey behind them.

Pippin was recovering. He was warm, but the wind in his face was keen and refreshing. He was with Gandalf. The horror of the Stone and of the hideous shadow over the moon was fading, things left behind in the mists of the mountains or in a passing dream. He drew a deep breath.

‘I did not know you rode bare-back, Gandalf,’ he said. ‘You haven’t a saddle or a bridle!’

‘I do not ride elf-fashion, except on Shadowfax,’ said Gandalf. ‘But Shadowfax will have no harness. You do not ride Shadowfax: he is willing to carry you—or not. If he is willing, that is enough. It is then his business to see that you remain on his back, unless you jump off into the air.’

‘How fast is he going?’ asked Pippin. ‘Fast by the wind, but very smooth. And how light his footfalls are!’

‘He is running now as fast as the swiftest horse could gallop,’ answered Gandalf; ‘but that is not fast for him. The land is rising a little here, and is more broken than it was beyond the river. But see how the White Mountains are drawing near under the stars! Yonder are the Thrihyrne peaks like black spears. It will not be long before we reach the branching roads and come to the Deeping-coomb, where the battle was fought two nights ago.’

Pippin was silent again for a while. He heard Gandalf singing softly to himself, murmuring brief snatches of rhyme in many tongues, as the miles ran under them. At last the wizard passed into a song of which the hobbit caught the words: a few lines came clear to his ears through the rushing of the wind:

*Tall ships<sup>369</sup> and tall kings  
Three times three,  
What brought they from the foundered land  
Over the flowing sea?  
Seven stars and seven stones  
And one white tree.*

‘What are you saying, Gandalf?’ asked Pippin.

‘I was just running over some of the Rhymes of Lore in my mind,’ answered the wizard. ‘Hobbits, I suppose, have forgotten them, even those that they ever knew.’

‘No, not all,’ said Pippin. ‘And we have many of our own, which wouldn’t interest you, perhaps. But I have never heard this one. What is it about—the seven stars and seven stones?’

‘About the *palantíri* of the Kings of Old,’ said Gandalf.

‘And what are they?’

‘The name meant *that which looks far away*. The Orthanc-stone was one.’

‘Then it was not made, not made’—Pippin hesitated—‘by the Enemy?’

‘No,’ said Gandalf. ‘Nor by Saruman. It is beyond his art, and beyond Sauron’s too. The *palantíri* came from beyond Westernesse, from Eldamar. The Noldor<sup>409</sup> made them. Fëanor himself, maybe, wrought them, in days so long ago that the time cannot be measured in years. But there is nothing that Sauron cannot turn to evil uses. Alas for Saruman! It was his downfall, as I now perceive. Perilous to us all are the devices of an art deeper than we possess ourselves. Yet he must bear the blame. Fool! to keep it secret, for his own profit. No word did he ever speak of it to any of the Council. We had not yet given thought to the fate of the *palantíri* of Gondor in its ruinous wars. By Men they were almost forgotten. Even in Gondor they were a secret known only to a few; in Arnor they were remembered only in a rhyme of lore among the Dúnedain.’

‘What did the Men of old use them for?’ asked Pippin, delighted and astonished at getting answers to so many questions, and wondering how long it would last.

‘To see far off, and to converse in thought with one another,’ said Gandalf. ‘In that way they long guarded and united the realm of Gondor. They set up Stones at Minas Anor, and at Minas Ithil, and at Orthanc in the ring of Isengard. The chief and master of these was under the Dome of Stars at Osgiliath before its ruin. The three others were far away in the North. In the house of Elrond it is told that they were at Annúminas, and Amon Súl, and Elendil’s Stone was on the Tower Hills that look towards Mithlond in the Gulf of Lune where the grey ships lie.

‘Each *palantír* replied to each, but all those in Gondor were ever open to the view of Osgiliath. Now it appears that, as the rock of Orthanc has withstood the storms of time, so there the *palantír* of that tower has remained. But alone it could do nothing but see small images of things far off and days remote. Very useful, no doubt, that was to Saruman; yet it seems that he was not content. Further and further abroad he gazed, until he cast his gaze upon Barad-dûr. Then he was caught!

‘Who knows where the lost Stones of Arnor and Gondor now lie, buried, or drowned deep? But one at least Sauron must have obtained and mastered to his purposes. I guess that it was the Ithil-stone, for he took Minas Ithil long ago and turned it into an evil place: Minas Morgul, it has become.

‘Easy it is now to guess how quickly the roving eye of Saruman was trapped and held; and how ever since he has been persuaded from afar, and daunted when persuasion would not serve. The biter bit, the hawk under the eagle’s foot, the spider in a steel web! How long, I wonder, has he been constrained to come often to his glass for inspection and instruction, and the Orthanc-stone so bent towards Barad-dûr that, if any save a will of adamant now looks into it, it will bear his mind and sight swiftly thither? And how it draws one to itself! Have I not felt it? Even now my heart desires to test my will upon it, to see if I could not wrench it from him and turn it where I would—to look across the wide seas of water and of time to Tirion the Fair, and perceive the unimaginable hand and mind of Fëanor at their work, while both the White Tree<sup>360</sup> and the Golden were in flower!’ He sighed and fell silent.

‘I wish I had known all this before,’ said Pippin. ‘I had no notion of what I was doing.’

‘Oh yes, you had,’ said Gandalf. ‘You knew you were behaving wrongly and foolishly; and you told yourself so, though you did not listen. I did not tell you all this before, because it is only by musing on all that has happened that I have at last understood, even as we ride together. But if I had spoken sooner, it would not have lessened your desire, or made it easier to resist. On the contrary! No, the burned hand teaches best. After that advice about fire goes to the heart.’

‘It does,’ said Pippin. ‘If all the seven stones were laid out before me now, I should shut my eyes and put my hands in my pockets.’

‘Good!’ said Gandalf. ‘That is what I hoped.’

‘But I should like to know—’ Pippin began.

‘Mercy!’ cried Gandalf. ‘If the giving of information is to be the cure of your inquisitiveness, I shall spend all the rest of my days in answering you. What more do you want to know?’

‘The names of all the stars, and of all living things, and the whole history of Middle-earth and Over-heaven and of the Sundering Seas,’ laughed Pippin. ‘Of course! What less? But I am not in a hurry tonight. At the moment I was just wondering about the black shadow. I heard you shout “messenger of Mordor”. What was it? What could it do at Isengard?’

‘It was a Black Rider on wings, a Nazgûl,’ said Gandalf. ‘It could have taken you away to the Dark Tower.’

‘But it was not coming for me, was it?’ faltered Pippin. ‘I mean, it didn’t know that I had . . .’

‘Of course not,’ said Gandalf. ‘It is two hundred leagues or more in straight flight from Barad-dûr to Orthanc, and even a Nazgûl would take a few hours to fly between them. But Saruman certainly looked in the Stone since the orc-raid, and more of his secret thought, I do not doubt, has been read than he intended. A messenger has been sent to find out what he is doing. And after what has happened tonight another will come, I think, and swiftly. So Saruman will come to the last pinch of the vice that he has put his hand in. He has no captive to send. He has no Stone to see with, and cannot answer the summons. Sauron will only believe that he is withholding the captive and refusing to use the Stone. It will not help Saruman to tell the truth to the messenger. For Isengard may be ruined, yet he is still safe in Orthanc. So whether he will or no, he will appear a rebel. Yet he rejected us, so as to avoid that very thing! What he will do in such a plight, I cannot guess. He has power still, I think, while in Orthanc, to resist the Nine Riders. He may try to do so. He may try to trap the Nazgûl, or at least to slay the thing on which it now rides the air. In that case let Rohan look to its horses!

‘But I cannot tell how it will fall out, well or ill for us. It may be that the counsels of the Enemy will be confused, or hindered by his wrath with Saruman. It may be that he will learn that I was there and stood upon the stairs of Orthanc—with hobbits at my tail. Or that an heir of Elendil lives and stood beside me. If Wormtongue was not deceived by the armour of Rohan, he would remember Aragorn and the title that he claimed. That is what I fear. And so we fly—not from danger but into greater danger. Every stride of Shadowfax bears you nearer to the Land of Shadow, Peregrin Took.’

Pippin made no answer, but clutched his cloak, as if a sudden chill had struck him. Grey land passed under them.

‘See now!’ said Gandalf. ‘The Westfold dales are opening before us. Here we come back to the eastward road. The dark shadow yonder is the mouth of the Deeping-coomb. That way lies Aglarond and the Glittering Caves. Do not ask me about them. Ask Gimli, if you meet again, and for the first time you may get an answer longer than you wish. You will not see the caves yourself, not on this journey. Soon they will be far behind.’

‘I thought you were going to stop at Helm’s Deep!’ said Pippin. ‘Where are you going then?’

‘To Minas Tirith, before the seas of war surround it.’

‘Oh! And how far is that?’

‘Leagues upon leagues,’ answered Gandalf. ‘Thrice as far as the dwellings of King Théoden, and they are more than a hundred miles east from here, as the messengers of Mordor fly. Shadowfax must run a longer road. Which will prove the swifter?’

‘We shall ride now till daybreak, and that is some hours away. Then even Shadowfax must rest, in some hollow of the hills: at Edoras, I hope. Sleep, if you can! You may see the first glimmer of dawn upon the golden roof of the house of Eorl. And in three days thence you shall see the purple shadow of Mount Mindolluin and the walls of the tower of Denethor white in the morning.’

‘Away now, Shadowfax! Run, greatheart, run as you have never run before! Now we are come to the lands where you were foaled, and every stone you know. Run now! Hope is in speed!’

Shadowfax tossed his head and cried aloud, as if a trumpet had summoned him to battle. Then he sprang forward. Fire flew from his feet; night rushed over him.

As he fell slowly into sleep, Pippin had a strange feeling: he and Gandalf were still as stone, seated upon the statue of a running horse, while the world rolled away beneath his feet with a great noise of wind.

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## BOOK FOUR



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## Chapter 1: The Taming Of Sméagol

‘Well, master, we’re in a fix and no mistake,’ said Sam Gamgee. He stood despondently with hunched shoulders beside Frodo, and peered out with puckered eyes into the gloom.

It was the third evening since they had fled from the Company, as far as they could tell: they had almost lost count of the hours during which they had climbed and laboured among the barren slopes and stones of the Eryn Muil, sometimes retracing their steps because they could find no way forward, sometimes discovering that they had wandered in a circle back to where they had been hours before. Yet on the whole they had worked steadily eastward, keeping as near as they could find a way to the outer edge of this strange twisted knot of hills. But always they found its outward faces sheer, high and impassable, frowning over the plain below; beyond its tumbled skirts lay livid festering marshes where nothing moved and not even a bird was to be seen.

The hobbits stood now on the brink of a tall cliff, bare and bleak, its feet wrapped in mist; and behind them rose the broken highlands crowned with drifting cloud. A chill wind blew from the East. Night was gathering over the shapeless lands before them; the sickly green of them was fading to a sullen brown. Far away to the right the Anduin, that had gleamed fitfully in sun-breaks during the day, was now hidden in shadow. But their eyes did not look beyond the River, back to Gondor, to their friends, to the lands of Men. South and east they stared to where, at the edge of the oncoming night, a dark line hung, like distant mountains of motionless smoke. Every now and again a tiny red gleam far away flickered upwards on the rim of earth and sky.

‘What a fix!’ said Sam. ‘That’s the one place in all the lands we’ve ever heard of that we don’t want to see any closer; and that’s the one place we’re trying to get to! And that’s just where we can’t get, nohow. We’ve come the wrong way altogether, seemingly. We can’t get down; and if we did get down, we’d find all that green land a nasty bog, I’ll warrant. Phew! Can you smell it?’ He sniffed at the wind.

‘Yes, I can smell it,’ said Frodo, but he did not move, and his eyes remained fixed, staring out towards the dark line and the flickering flame. ‘Mordor!’ he muttered under his breath. ‘If I must go there, I wish I could come there quickly and make an end!’ He shuddered. The wind was chilly and yet heavy with an odour of cold decay. ‘Well,’ he said, at last withdrawing his eyes, ‘we cannot stay here all night, fix or no fix. We must find a more sheltered spot, and camp once more; and perhaps another day will show us a path.’

‘Or another and another and another,’ muttered Sam. ‘Or maybe no day. We’ve come the wrong way.’

‘I wonder,’ said Frodo. ‘It’s my doom, I think, to go to that Shadow yonder, so that a way will be found. But will good or evil show it to me? What hope we had was in speed. Delay plays into the Enemy’s hands—and here I am: delayed. Is it the will of the Dark Tower that steers us? All my choices have proved ill. I should have left the Company long before, and come down from the North, east of the River and of the Eryn Muil, and so over the hard of Battle Plain to the passes of Mordor. But now it isn’t possible for you and me alone to find a way back, and the Orcs are prowling on the east bank. Every day that passes is a precious day lost. I am tired, Sam. I don’t know what is to be done. What food have we got left?’

‘Only those, what d’you call ’em, *lembas*, Mr. Frodo. A fair supply. But they are better than naught, by a long bite. I never thought, though, when I first set tooth in them, that I should ever come to wish for a change. But I do now: a bit of plain bread, and a mug—aye, half a mug—of beer would go down proper. I’ve lugged my cooking-gear all the way from the last camp, and what use has it been? Naught to make a fire with, for a start; and naught to cook, not even grass!’

They turned away and went down into a stony hollow. The westering sun was caught into clouds, and night came swiftly. They slept as well as they could for the cold, turn and turn about, in a nook among great jagged pinnacles of weathered rock; at least they were sheltered from the easterly wind.

‘Did you see them again, Mr. Frodo?’ asked Sam, as they sat, stiff and chilled, munching wafers of *lembas*, in the cold grey of early morning.

‘No,’ said Frodo. ‘I’ve heard nothing, and seen nothing, for two nights now.’

‘Nor me,’ said Sam. ‘Grrr! Those eyes did give me a turn! But perhaps we’ve shaken him off at last, the miserable slinker. Gollum! I’ll give him *gollum* in his throat, if ever I get my hands on his neck.’

‘I hope you’ll never need to,’ said Frodo. ‘I don’t know how he followed us; but it may be that he’s lost us again, as you say. In this dry bleak land we can’t leave many footprints, nor much scent, even for his snuffling nose.’

‘I hope that’s the way of it,’ said Sam. ‘I wish we could be rid of him for good!’

‘So do I,’ said Frodo; ‘but he’s not my chief trouble. I wish we could get away from these hills! I hate them. I feel all naked on the east side, stuck up here with nothing but the dead flats between me and that Shadow yonder. There’s an Eye in it. Come on! We’ve got to get down today somehow.’

But that day wore on, and when afternoon faded towards evening they were still scrambling along the ridge and had found no way of escape.

Sometimes in the silence of that barren country they fancied that they heard faint sounds behind them, a stone falling, or the imagined step of flapping feet on the rock. But if they halted and stood still listening, they heard no more, nothing but the wind sighing over the edges of the stones—yet even that reminded them of breath softly hissing through sharp teeth.

All that day the outer ridge of the Emyn Muil had been bending gradually northward, as they struggled on. Along its brink there now stretched a wide tumbled flat of scored and weathered rock, cut every now and again by trench-like gullies that sloped steeply down to deep notches in the cliff-face. To find a path in these clefts, which were becoming deeper and more frequent, Frodo and Sam were driven to their left, well away from the edge, and they did not notice that for several miles they had been going slowly but steadily downhill: the cliff-top was sinking towards the level of the lowlands.

At last they were brought to a halt. The ridge took a sharper bend northward and was gashed by a deeper ravine. On the further side it reared up again, many fathoms at a single leap: a great grey cliff loomed before them, cut sheer down as if by a knife stroke. They could go no further forwards, and must turn now either west or east. But west would lead them only into more labour and delay, back towards the heart of the hills; east would take them to the outer precipice.

‘There’s nothing for it but to scramble down this gully, Sam,’ said Frodo. ‘Let’s see what it leads to!’

‘A nasty drop, I’ll bet,’ said Sam.

The cleft was longer and deeper than it seemed. Some way down they found a few gnarled and stunted trees, the first they had seen for days: twisted birch for the most part, with here and there a fir-tree. Many were dead and gaunt, bitten to the core by the eastern winds. Once in milder days there must have been a fair thicket in the ravine, but now, after some fifty yards, the trees came to an end, though old broken stumps straggled on almost to the cliff’s brink. The bottom of the gully, which lay along the edge of a rock-fault, was rough with broken stone and slanted steeply down. When they came at last to the end of it, Frodo stooped and leaned out.

‘Look!’ he said. ‘We must have come down a long way, or else the cliff has sunk. It’s much lower here than it was, and it looks easier too.’

Sam knelt beside him and peered reluctantly over the edge. Then he glanced up at the great cliff rising up, away on their left. ‘Easier!’ he grunted. ‘Well, I suppose it’s always easier getting down than up. Those as can’t fly can jump!’

‘It would be a big jump still,’ said Frodo. ‘About, well’—he stood for a moment measuring it with his eyes—‘about eighteen fathoms, I should guess. Not more.’



‘And that’s enough!’ said Sam. ‘Ugh! How I do hate looking down from a height! But looking’s better than climbing.’

‘All the same,’ said Frodo, ‘I think we could climb here; and I think we shall have to try. See—the rock is quite different from what it was a few miles back. It has slipped and cracked.’

The outer fall was indeed no longer sheer, but sloped outwards a little. It looked like a great rampart or sea-wall whose foundations had shifted, so that its courses were all twisted and disordered, leaving great fissures and long slanting edges that were in places almost as wide as stairs.

‘And if we’re going to try and get down, we had better try at once. It’s getting dark early. I think there’s a storm coming.’

The smoky blur of the mountains in the East was lost in a deeper blackness that was already reaching out westwards with long arms. There was a distant mutter of thunder borne on the rising breeze. Frodo sniffed the air and looked up doubtfully at the sky. He strapped his belt outside his cloak and tightened it, and settled his light pack on his back; then he stepped towards the edge. ‘I’m going to try it,’ he said.

‘Very good!’ said Sam gloomily. ‘But I’m going first.’

‘You?’ said Frodo. ‘What’s made you change your mind about climbing?’

‘I haven’t changed my mind. But it’s only sense: put the one lowest as is most likely to slip. I don’t want to come down atop of you and knock you off—no sense in killing two with one fall.’

Before Frodo could stop him, he sat down, swung his legs over the brink, and twisted round, scrabbling with his toes for a foothold. It is doubtful if he ever did anything braver in cold blood, or more unwise.

‘No, no! Sam, you old ass!’ said Frodo. ‘You’ll kill yourself for certain, going over like that without even a look to see what to make for. Come back!’ He took Sam under the armpits and hauled him up again. ‘Now, wait a bit and be patient!’ he said. Then he lay on the ground, leaning out and looking down; but the light seemed to be fading quickly, although the sun had not yet set. ‘I think we could manage this,’ he said presently. ‘I could at any rate; and you could too, if you kept your head and followed me carefully.’

‘I don’t know how you can be so sure,’ said Sam. ‘Why! You can’t see to the bottom in this light. What if you comes to a place where there’s nowhere to put your feet or your hands?’

‘Climb back, I suppose,’ said Frodo.

‘Easy said,’ objected Sam. ‘Better wait till morning and more light.’

‘No! Not if I can help it,’ said Frodo with a sudden strange vehemence. ‘I grudge every hour, every minute. I’m going down to try it out. Don’t you follow till I come back or call!’

Gripping the stony lip of the fall with his fingers he let himself gently down, until when his arms were almost at full stretch, his toes found a ledge. ‘One step down!’ he said. ‘And this ledge broadens out to the right. I could stand there without a hold. I’ll—’ his words were cut short.

The hurrying darkness, now gathering great speed, rushed up from the East and swallowed the sky. There was a dry splitting crack of thunder right overhead. Searing lightning smote down into the hills. Then came a blast of savage wind, and with it, mingling with its roar, there came a high shrill shriek. The hobbits had heard just such a cry far away in the Marish as they fled from Hobbiton, and even there in the woods of the Shire it had frozen their blood. Out here in the waste its terror was far greater: it pierced them with cold blades of horror and despair, stopping heart and breath. Sam fell flat on his face. Involuntarily Frodo loosed his hold and put his hands over his head and ears. He swayed, slipped, and slithered downwards with a wailing cry.

Sam heard him and crawled with an effort to the edge. ‘Master, master!’ he called. ‘Master!’

He heard no answer. He found he was shaking all over, but he gathered his breath, and once again he shouted: ‘Master!’ The wind seemed to blow his voice back into his throat, but as it passed, roaring up the gully and away over the hills, a faint answering cry came to his ears:

‘All right, all right! I’m here. But I can’t see.’

Frodo was calling with a weak voice. He was not actually very far away. He had slid and not fallen, and had come up with a jolt to his feet on a wider ledge not many yards lower down. Fortunately the rock-face at this point leaned well back and the wind had pressed him against the cliff, so that he had not toppled over. He steadied himself a little, laying his face against the cold stone, feeling his heart pounding. But either the darkness had grown complete, or else his eyes had lost their sight. All was black about him. He wondered if he had been struck blind. He took a deep breath.

‘Come back! Come back!’ he heard Sam’s voice out of the blackness above.

‘I can’t,’ he said. ‘I can’t see. I can’t find any hold. I can’t move yet.’

‘What can I do, Mr. Frodo? What can I do?’ shouted Sam, leaning out dangerously far. Why could not his master see? It was dim, certainly, but not as dark as all that. He could see Frodo below him, a grey forlorn figure splayed against the cliff. But he was far out of the reach of any helping hand.

There was another crack of thunder; and then the rain came. In a blinding sheet, mingled with hail, it drove against the cliff, bitter cold.

‘I’m coming down to you,’ shouted Sam, though how he hoped to help in that way he could not have said.

‘No, no! wait!’ Frodo called back, more strongly now. ‘I shall be better soon. I feel better already. Wait! You can’t do anything without a rope.’

‘Rope!’ cried Sam, talking wildly to himself in his excitement and relief. ‘Well, if I don’t deserve to be hung on the end of one as a warning to numbskulls! You’re nowt but a ninnyhammer, Sam Gamgee: that’s what the Gaffer said to me often enough, it being a word of his. Rope!’

‘Stop chattering!’ cried Frodo, now recovered enough to feel both amused and annoyed. ‘Never mind your gaffer! Are you trying to tell yourself you’ve got some rope in your pocket? If so, out with it!’

‘Yes, Mr. Frodo, in my pack and all. Carried it hundreds of miles, and I’d clean forgotten it!’

‘Then get busy and let an end down!’

Quickly Sam unslung his pack and rummaged in it. There indeed at the bottom was a coil of the silken-grey rope made by the folk of Lórien. He cast an end to his master. The darkness seemed to lift from Frodo’s eyes, or else his sight was returning. He could see the grey line as it came dangling down, and he thought it had a faint silver sheen. Now that he had some point in the darkness to fix his eyes on, he felt less giddy. Leaning his weight forward, he made the end fast round his waist, and then he grasped the line with both hands.

Sam stepped back and braced his feet against a stump a yard or two from the edge. Half hauled, half scrambling, Frodo came up and threw himself on the ground.

Thunder growled and rumbled in the distance, and the rain was still falling heavily. The hobbits crawled away back into the gully; but they did not find much shelter there. Rills of water began to run down; soon they grew to a spate that splashed and fumed on the stones, and spouted out over the cliff like the gutters of a vast roof.

‘I should have been half drowned down there, or washed clean off,’ said Frodo. ‘What a piece of luck you had that rope!’

‘Better luck if I’d thought of it sooner,’ said Sam. ‘Maybe you remember them putting the ropes in the boats, as we started off: in the Elvish country. I took a fancy to it, and I stowed a coil in my pack. Years ago, it seems. “It may be a help in many needs,” he said: Haldir, or one of those folk. And he spoke right.’

‘A pity I didn’t think of bringing another length,’ said Frodo; ‘but I left the Company in such a hurry and confusion. If only we had enough we could use it to get down. How long is your rope, I wonder?’

Sam paid it out slowly, measuring it with his arms: ‘Five, ten, twenty, thirty ells, more or less,’ he said.

‘Who’d have thought it!’ Frodo exclaimed.

‘Ah! Who would?’ said Sam. ‘Elves are wonderful folk. It looks a bit thin, but it’s tough; and soft as milk to the hand. Packs close too, and as light as light. Wonderful folk to be sure!’

‘Thirty ells!’ said Frodo considering. ‘I believe it would be enough. If the storm passes before nightfall, I’m going to try it.’

‘The rain’s nearly given over already,’ said Sam; ‘but don’t you go doing anything risky in the dim again, Mr. Frodo! And I haven’t got over that shriek on the wind yet, if you have. Like a Black Rider it sounded—but one up in the air, if they can fly. I’m thinking we’d best lay up in this crack till night’s over.’

‘And I’m thinking that I won’t spend a moment longer than I need, stuck up on this edge with the eyes of the Dark Country looking over the marshes,’ said Frodo.

With that he stood up and went down to the bottom of the gully again. He looked out. Clear sky was growing in the East once more. The skirts of the storm were lifting, ragged and wet, and the main battle had passed to spread its great wings over the Eryn Muil, upon which the dark thought of Sauron brooded for a while. Thence it turned, smiting the Vale of Anduin with hail and lightning, and casting its shadow upon Minas Tirith with threat of war. Then, lowering in the mountains, and gathering its great spires, it rolled on slowly over Gondor and the skirts of Rohan, until far away the Riders on the plain saw its black towers moving behind the sun, as they rode into the West. But here, over the desert and the reeking marshes the deep blue sky of evening opened once more, and a few pallid stars appeared, like small white holes in the canopy above the crescent moon.

‘It’s good to be able to see again,’ said Frodo, breathing deep. ‘Do you know, I thought for a bit that I had lost my sight? From the lightning or something else worse. I could see nothing, nothing at all, until the grey rope came down. It seemed to shimmer somehow.’

‘It does look sort of silver in the dark,’ said Sam. ‘Never noticed it before, though I can’t remember as I’ve ever had it out since I first stowed it. But if you’re so set on climbing, Mr. Frodo, how are you going to use it? Thirty ells, or say, about eighteen fathom: that’s no more than your guess at the height of the cliff.’

Frodo thought for a while. ‘Make it fast to that stump, Sam!’ he said. ‘Then I think you shall have your wish this time and go first. I’ll lower you, and you need do no more than use your feet and hands to fend yourself off the rock. Though, if you put your weight on some of the ledges and give me a rest, it will help. When you’re down, I’ll follow. I feel quite myself again now.’

‘Very well,’ said Sam heavily. ‘If it must be, let’s get it over!’ He took up the rope and made it fast over the stump nearest to the brink; then the other end he tied about his own waist. Reluctantly he turned and prepared to go over the edge a second time.

It did not, however, turn out half as bad as he had expected. The rope seemed to give him confidence, though he shut his eyes more than once when he looked down between his feet. There was one awkward spot, where there was no ledge and the wall was sheer and even undercut for a short space; there he slipped and swung out on the silver line. But Frodo lowered him slowly and steadily, and it was over at last. His chief fear had been that the rope-length would give out while he was still high up, but there was still a good bight in Frodo’s hands, when Sam came to the bottom and called up: ‘I’m down!’ His voice came up clearly from below, but Frodo could not see him; his grey elven-cloak had melted into the twilight.

Frodo took rather more time to follow him. He had the rope about his waist and it was fast above, and he had shortened it so that it would pull him up before he reached the ground; still he did not want to risk a fall, and he had not quite Sam’s faith in this slender grey line. He found two places, all the same, where he had to trust wholly to it: smooth surfaces where there was no hold even for his strong hobbit fingers and the ledges were far apart. But at last he too was down.

‘Well!’ he cried. ‘We’ve done it! We’ve escaped from the Eryn Muil! And now what next, I wonder? Maybe we shall soon be sighing for good hard rock under foot again.’

But Sam did not answer: he was staring back up the cliff. ‘Ninnyhammers!’ he said. ‘Noodles! My beautiful rope! There it is tied to a stump, and we’re at the bottom. Just as nice a little stair for that slinking Gollum as we could leave. Better put up a signpost to say which way we’ve gone! I thought it seemed a bit too easy.’

‘If you can think of any way we could have both used the rope and yet brought it down with us, then you can pass on to me ninnyhammer, or any other name your gaffer gave you,’ said Frodo. ‘Climb up and untie it and let yourself down, if you want to!’

Sam scratched his head. ‘No, I can’t think how, begging your pardon,’ he said. ‘But I don’t like leaving it, and that’s a fact.’ He stroked the rope’s end and shook it gently. ‘It goes hard parting with anything I brought out of the Elf-country. Made by Galadriel herself, too, maybe. Galadriel,’ he murmured, nodding his head mournfully. He looked up and gave one last pull to the rope as if in farewell.

To the complete surprise of both the hobbits it came loose. Sam fell over, and the long grey coils slithered silently down on top of him. Frodo laughed. ‘Who tied the rope?’ he said. ‘A good thing it held as long as it did! To think that I trusted all my weight to your knot!’

Sam did not laugh. ‘I may not be much good at climbing, Mr. Frodo,’ he said in injured tones, ‘but I do know something about rope and about knots. It’s in the family, as you might say. Why, my grand-dad, and my uncle Andy after him, him that was the Gaffer’s eldest brother, he had a rope-walk over by Tighfield many a year. And I put as fast a hitch over the stump as anyone could have done, in the Shire or out of it.’

‘Then the rope must have broken—frayed on the rock-edge, I expect,’ said Frodo.

‘I bet it didn’t!’ said Sam in an even more injured voice. He stooped and examined the ends. ‘Nor it hasn’t neither. Not a strand!’

‘Then I’m afraid it must have been the knot,’ said Frodo.

Sam shook his head and did not answer. He was passing the rope through his fingers thoughtfully. ‘Have it your own way, Mr. Frodo,’ he said at last, ‘but I think the rope came off itself—when I called.’ He coiled it up and stowed it lovingly in his pack.

‘It certainly came,’ said Frodo, ‘and that’s the chief thing. But now we’ve got to think of our next move. Night will be on us soon. How beautiful the stars are, and the Moon!’

‘They do cheer the heart, don’t they?’ said Sam looking up. ‘Elvish they are, somehow. And the Moon’s growing. We haven’t seen him for a night or two in this cloudy weather. He’s beginning to give quite a light.’

‘Yes,’ said Frodo; ‘but he won’t be full for some days. I don’t think we’ll try the marshes by the light of half a moon.’

Under the first shadows of night they started out on the next stage of their journey. After a while Sam turned and looked back at the way they had come. The mouth of the gully was a black notch in the dim cliff. ‘I’m glad we’ve got the rope,’ he said. ‘We’ve set a little puzzle for that footpad, anyhow. He can try his nasty flappy feet on those ledges!’

They picked their steps away from the skirts of the cliff, among a wilderness of boulders and rough stones, wet and slippery with the heavy rain. The ground still fell away sharply. They had not gone very far when they came upon a great fissure that yawned suddenly black before their feet. It was not wide, but it was too wide to jump across in the dim light. They thought they could hear water gurgling in its depths. It curved away on their left northward, back towards the hills, and so barred their road in that direction, at any rate while darkness lasted.

‘We had better try a way back southwards along the line of the cliff, I think,’ said Sam. ‘We might find some nook there, or even a cave or something.’

‘I suppose so,’ said Frodo. ‘I’m tired, and I don’t think I can scramble among stones much longer tonight—though I grudge the delay. I wish there was a clear path in front of us: then I’d go on till my legs gave way.’

They did not find the going any easier at the broken feet of the Eryn Muil. Nor did Sam find any nook or hollow to shelter in: only bare stony slopes frowned over by the cliff, which now rose again, higher and more sheer as they went back. In the end, worn out, they just cast themselves on the ground under the lee of a boulder lying not far from the foot of the precipice. There for some time they sat huddled mournfully together in the cold stony night, while sleep crept upon them in spite of all they could do to hold it off. The moon now rode

high and clear. Its thin white light lit up the faces of the rocks and drenched the cold frowning walls of the cliff, turning all the wide looming darkness into a chill pale grey scored with black shadows.

‘Well!’ said Frodo, standing up and drawing his cloak more closely round him. ‘You sleep for a bit Sam and take my blanket. I’ll walk up and down on sentry for a while.’ Suddenly he stiffened, and stooping he gripped Sam by the arm. ‘What’s that?’ he whispered. ‘Look over there on the cliff!’

Sam looked and breathed in sharply through his teeth. ‘Ssss!’ he said. ‘That’s what it is. It’s that Gollum! Snakes and adders! And to think that I thought that we’d puzzle him with our bit of a climb! Look at him! Like a nasty crawling spider on a wall.’

Down the face of a precipice, sheer and almost smooth it seemed in the pale moonlight, a small black shape was moving with its thin limbs splayed out. Maybe its soft clinging hands and toes were finding crevices and holds that no hobbit could ever have seen or used, but it looked as if it was just creeping down on sticky pads, like some large prowling thing of insect-kind. And it was coming down head first, as if it was smelling its way. Now and again it lifted its head slowly, turning it right back on its long skinny neck, and the hobbits caught a glimpse of two small pale gleaming lights, its eyes that blinked at the moon for a moment and then were quickly lidded again.

‘Do you think he can see us?’ said Sam.

‘I don’t know,’ said Frodo quietly, ‘but I think not. It is hard even for friendly eyes to see these elven-cloaks: I cannot see you in the shadow even at a few paces. And I’ve heard that he doesn’t like Sun or Moon.’

‘Then why is he coming down just here?’ asked Sam.

‘Quietly, Sam!’ said Frodo. ‘He can smell us, perhaps. And he can hear as keen as Elves, I believe. I think he has heard something now: our voices probably. We did a lot of shouting away back there; and we were talking far too loudly until a minute ago.’

‘Well, I’m sick of him,’ said Sam. ‘He’s come once too often for me, and I’m going to have a word with him, if I can. I don’t suppose we could give him the slip now anyway.’ Drawing his grey hood well over his face, Sam crept stealthily towards the cliff.

‘Careful!’ whispered Frodo coming behind. ‘Don’t alarm him! He’s much more dangerous than he looks.’

The black crawling shape was now three-quarters of the way down, and perhaps fifty feet or less above the cliff’s foot. Crouching stone-still in the shadow of a large boulder the hobbits watched him. He seemed to have come to a difficult passage or to be troubled about something. They could hear him snuffling, and now and again there was a harsh hiss of breath that sounded like a curse. He lifted his head, and they thought they heard him spit. Then he moved on again. Now they could hear his voice creaking and whistling.

‘Ach, sss! Cautious, my precious! More haste less speed. We musn’t rissk our neck, musst we, precious? No, precious—*gollum!*’ He lifted his head again, blinked at the moon, and quickly shut his eyes. ‘We hate it,’ he hissed. ‘Nassty, nassty shivery light it is—sss—it spies on us, precious—it hurts our eyes.’

He was getting lower now and the hisses became sharper and clearer. ‘Where iss it, where iss it: my Precious, my Precious? It’s ours, it is, and we wants it. The thieves, the thieves, the filthy little thieves. Where are they with my Precious? Curse them! We hates them.’

‘It doesn’t sound as if he knew we were here, does it?’ whispered Sam. ‘And what’s his Precious? Does he mean the—’

‘Hsh!’ breathed Frodo. ‘He’s getting near now, near enough to hear a whisper.’

Indeed Gollum had suddenly paused again, and his large head on its scrawny neck was lolling from side to side as if he was listening. His pale eyes were half unlidded. Sam restrained himself, though his fingers were twitching. His eyes, filled with anger and disgust, were fixed on the wretched creature as he now began to move again, still whispering and hissing to himself.

At last he was no more than a dozen feet from the ground, right above their heads. From that point there was a sheer drop, for the cliff was slightly undercut, and even Gollum could not find a hold of any kind. He seemed to be trying to twist round, so as to go legs first, when suddenly with a shrill whistling shriek he fell. As he did so, he curled his legs and arms up round him, like a spider whose descending thread is snapped.

Sam was out of his hiding in a flash and crossed the space between him and the cliff-foot in a couple of leaps. Before Gollum could get up, he was on top of him. But he found Gollum more than he bargained for, even taken like that, suddenly, off his guard after a fall. Before Sam could get a hold, long legs and arms were wound round him pinning his arms, and a clinging grip, soft but horribly strong, was squeezing him like slowly tightening cords; clammy fingers were feeling for his throat. Then sharp teeth bit into his shoulder. All he could do was to butt his hard round head sideways into the creature's face. Gollum hissed and spat, but he did not let go.

Things would have gone ill with Sam, if he had been alone. But Frodo sprang up, and drew Sting from its sheath. With his left hand he drew back Gollum's head by his thin lank hair, stretching his long neck, and forcing his pale venomous eyes to stare up at the sky.

'Let go! Gollum,' he said. 'This is Sting. You have seen it before once upon a time. Let go, or you'll feel it this time! I'll cut your throat.'

Gollum collapsed and went as loose as wet string. Sam got up, fingering his shoulder. His eyes smouldered with anger, but he could not avenge himself: his miserable enemy lay grovelling on the stones whimpering.

'Don't hurt us! Don't let them hurt us, precious! They won't hurt us will they, nice little hobbitses? We didn't mean no harm, but they jumps on us like cats on poor mices, they did, precious. And we're so lonely, *gollum*. We'll be nice to them, very nice, if they'll be nice to us, won't we, yes, yess.'

'Well, what's to be done with it?' said Sam. 'Tie it up, so as it can't come sneaking after us no more, I say.'

'But that would kill us, kill us,' whimpered Gollum. 'Cruel little hobbitses. Tie us up in the cold hard lands and leave us, *gollum*, *gollum*.' Sobs welled up in his gobbling throat.

'No,' said Frodo. 'If we kill him, we must kill him outright. But we can't do that, not as things are. Poor wretch! He has done us no harm.'

'Oh hasn't he!' said Sam rubbing his shoulder. 'Anyway he meant to, *and* he means to, I'll warrant. Throttle us in our sleep, that's his plan.'

'I daresay,' said Frodo. 'But what he means to do is another matter.' He paused for a while in thought. Gollum lay still, but stopped whimpering. Sam stood glowering over him.

It seemed to Frodo then that he heard, quite plainly but far off, voices out of the past:

*What a pity Bilbo did not stab the vile creature, when he had a chance!*

*Pity? It was Pity that stayed his hand. Pity, and Mercy: not to strike without need.*

*I do not feel any pity for Gollum. He deserves death.*

*Deserves death! I daresay he does. Many that live deserve death. And some die that deserve life. Can you give that to them? Then be not too eager to deal out death in the name of justice, fearing for your own safety. Even the wise cannot see all ends.*

'Very well,' he answered aloud, lowering his sword. 'But still I am afraid. And yet, as you see, I will not touch the creature. For now that I see him, I do pity him.'

Sam stared at his master, who seemed to be speaking to someone who was not there. Gollum lifted his head.

'Yess, wretched we are, precious,' he whined. 'Misery misery! Hobbits won't kill us, nice hobbits.'

'No, we won't,' said Frodo. 'But we won't let you go, either. You're full of wickedness and mischief, Gollum. You will have to come with us, that's all, while we keep an eye on you. But you must help us, if you can. One good turn deserves another.'

‘Yess, yes indeed,’ said Gollum sitting up. ‘Nice hobbits! We will come with them. Find them safe paths in the dark, yes we will. And where are they going in these cold hard lands, we wonders, yes we wonders?’ He looked up at them, and a faint light of cunning and eagerness flickered for a second in his pale blinking eyes.

Sam scowled at him, and sucked his teeth; but he seemed to sense that there was something odd about his master’s mood and that the matter was beyond argument. All the same he was amazed at Frodo’s reply.

Frodo looked straight into Gollum’s eyes which flinched and twisted away. ‘You know that, or you guess well enough, Sméagol,’ he said, quietly and sternly. ‘We are going to Mordor, of course. And you know the way there, I believe.’

‘Ach! sss!’ said Gollum, covering his ears with his hands, as if such frankness, and the open speaking of the names, hurt him. ‘We guessed, yes we guessed,’ he whispered; ‘and we didn’t want them to go, did we? No, precious, not the nice hobbits. Ashes, ashes, and dust, and thirst there is; and pits, pits, pits, and Orcs, thousands of Orcses. Nice hobbits mustn’t go to—sss—those places.’

‘So you have been there?’ Frodo insisted. ‘And you’re being drawn back there, aren’t you?’

‘Yess. Yess. No!’ shrieked Gollum. ‘Once, by accident it was, wasn’t it, precious? Yes, by accident. But we won’t go back, no, no!’ Then suddenly his voice and language changed, and he sobbed in his throat, and spoke but not to them. ‘Leave me alone, *gollum*! You hurt me. O my poor hands, *gollum*! I, we, I don’t want to come back. I can’t find it. I am tired. I, we can’t find it, *gollum*, *gollum*, no, nowhere. They’re always awake. Dwarves, Men, and Elves, terrible Elves with bright eyes. I can’t find it. Ach!’ He got up and clenched his long hand into a bony fleshless knot, shaking it towards the East. ‘We won’t!’ he cried. ‘Not for you.’ Then he collapsed again. ‘*Gollum*, *gollum*,’ he whimpered with his face to the ground. ‘Don’t look at us! Go away! Go to sleep!’

‘He will not go away or go to sleep at your command, Sméagol,’ said Frodo. ‘But if you really wish to be free of him again, then you must help me. And that I fear means finding us a path towards him. But you need not go all the way, not beyond the gates of his land.’

Gollum sat up again and looked at him under his eyelids. ‘He’s over there,’ he cackled. ‘Always there. Orcs will take you all the way. Easy to find Orcs east of the River. Don’t ask Sméagol. Poor, poor Sméagol, he went away long ago. They took his Precious, and he’s lost now.’

‘Perhaps we’ll find him again, if you come with us,’ said Frodo.

‘No, no, never! He’s lost his Precious,’ said Gollum.

‘Get up!’ said Frodo.

Gollum stood up and backed away against the cliff.

‘Now!’ said Frodo. ‘Can you find a path easier by day or by night? We’re tired; but if you choose the night, we’ll start tonight.’

‘The big lights hurt our eyes, they do,’ Gollum whined. ‘Not under the White Face, not yet. It will go behind the hills soon, yess. Rest a bit first, nice hobbits!’

‘Then sit down,’ said Frodo, ‘and don’t move!’

The hobbits seated themselves beside him, one on either side, with their backs to the stony wall, resting their legs. There was no need for any arrangement by word: they knew that they must not sleep for a moment. Slowly the moon went by. Shadows fell down from the hills, and all grew dark before them. The stars grew thick and bright in the sky above. No-one stirred. Gollum sat with his legs drawn up, knees under chin, flat hands and feet splayed on the ground, his eyes closed; but he seemed tense, as if thinking or listening.

Frodo looked across at Sam. Their eyes met and they understood. They relaxed, leaning their heads back, and shutting their eyes or seeming to. Soon the sound of their soft breathing could be heard. Gollum’s hands twitched a little. Hardly perceptibly his head moved to the left and the right, and first one eye and then the other opened a slit. The hobbits made no sign.

Suddenly, with startling agility and speed, straight off the ground with a jump like a grasshopper or a frog, Gollum bounded forward into the darkness. But that was just what Frodo and Sam had expected. Sam was on him before he had gone two paces after his spring. Frodo coming behind grabbed his leg and threw him.

‘Your rope might prove useful again, Sam,’ he said.

Sam got out the rope. ‘And where were you off to in the cold hard lands, Mr. Gollum?’ he growled. ‘We wonders, aye, we wonders. To find some of your orc-friends, I warrant. You nasty treacherous creature. It’s round your neck this rope ought to go, and a tight noose too.’

Gollum lay quiet and tried no further tricks. He did not answer Sam, but gave him a swift venomous look.

‘All we need is something to keep a hold on him,’ said Frodo. ‘We want him to walk, so it’s no good tying his legs—or his arms, he seems to use them nearly as much. Tie one end to his ankle, and keep a grip on the other end.’

He stood over Gollum, while Sam tied the knot. The result surprised them both. Gollum began to scream, a thin, tearing sound, very horrible to hear. He writhed, and tried to get his mouth to his ankle and bite the rope. He kept on screaming.

At last Frodo was convinced that he really was in pain; but it could not be from the knot. He examined it and found that it was not too tight, indeed hardly tight enough. Sam was gentler than his words. ‘What’s the matter with you?’ he said. ‘If you will try to run away, you must be tied; but we don’t wish to hurt you.’

‘It hurts us, it hurts us,’ hissed Gollum. ‘It freezes, it bites! Elves twisted it, curse them! Nasty cruel hobbits! That’s why we tries to escape, of course it is, precious. We guessed they were cruel hobbits. They visits Elves, fierce Elves with bright eyes. Take it off us! It hurts us.’

‘No, I will not take it off you,’ said Frodo, ‘not unless’—he paused a moment in thought—‘not unless there is any promise you can make that I can trust.’

‘We will swear to do what he wants, yes, yess,’ said Gollum, still twisting and gabbling at his ankle. ‘It hurts us.’

‘Swear?’ said Frodo.

‘Sméagol,’ said Gollum suddenly and clearly, opening his eyes wide and staring at Frodo with a strange light. ‘Sméagol will swear on the Precious.’

Frodo drew himself up, and again Sam was startled by his words and his stern voice. ‘On the Precious? How dare you?’ he said. ‘Think!

*One Ring to rule them all and in the Darkness bind them.*

Would you commit your promise to that, Sméagol? It will hold you. But it is more treacherous than you are. It may twist your words. Beware!’

Gollum cowered. ‘On the Precious, on the Precious!’ he repeated.

‘And what would you swear?’ asked Frodo.

‘To be very very good,’ said Gollum. Then crawling to Frodo’s feet he grovelled before him, whispering hoarsely: a shudder ran over him, as if the words shook his very bones with fear. ‘Sméagol will swear never, never, to let Him have it. Never! Sméagol will save it. But he must swear on the Precious.’

‘No! not on it,’ said Frodo, looking down at him with stern pity. ‘All you wish is to see it and touch it, if you can, though you know it would drive you mad. Not on it. Swear by it, if you will. For you know where it is. Yes, you know, Sméagol. It is before you.’

For a moment it appeared to Sam that his master had grown and Gollum had shrunk: a tall stern shadow, a mighty lord who hid his brightness in grey cloud, and at his feet a little whining dog. Yet the two were in some way akin and not alien: they could reach one another’s minds. Gollum raised himself and began pawing at Frodo, fawning at his knees.



‘Down! down!’ said Frodo. ‘Now speak your promise!’

‘We promises, yes I promise!’ said Gollum. ‘I will serve the master of the Precious. Good master, good Sméagol, *gollum, gollum!*’ Suddenly he began to weep and bite at his ankle again.

‘Take the rope off, Sam!’ said Frodo.

Reluctantly Sam obeyed. At once Gollum got up and began prancing about, like a whipped cur whose master has patted it. From that moment a change, which lasted for some time, came over him. He spoke with less hissing and whining, and he spoke to his companions direct, not to his precious self. He would cringe and flinch, if they stepped near him or made any sudden movement, and he avoided the touch of their elven-cloaks; but he was friendly, and indeed pitifully anxious to please. He would cackle with laughter and caper, if any jest was made, or even if Frodo spoke kindly to him, and weep if Frodo rebuked him. Sam said little to him of any sort. He suspected him more deeply than ever, and if possible liked the new Gollum, the Sméagol, less than the old.

‘Well, Gollum, or whatever it is we’re to call you,’ he said, ‘now for it! The Moon’s gone, and the night’s going. We’d better start.’

‘Yes, yes,’ agreed Gollum, skipping about. ‘Off we go! There’s only one way across between the North-end and the South-end. I found it, I did. Orcs don’t use it, Orcs don’t know it. Orcs don’t cross the Marshes, they go round for miles and miles. Very lucky you came this way. Very lucky you found Sméagol, yes. Follow Sméagol!’

He took a few steps away and looked back inquiringly, like a dog inviting them for a walk. ‘Wait a bit, Gollum!’ cried Sam. ‘Not too far ahead now! I’m going to be at your tail, and I’ve got the rope handy.’

‘No, no!’ said Gollum. ‘Sméagol promised.’

In the deep of night under hard clear stars they set off. Gollum led them back northward for a while along the way they had come; then he slanted to the right away from the steep edge of the Eryn Muil, down the broken stony slopes towards the vast fens below. They faded swiftly and softly into the darkness. Over all the leagues of waste before the gates of Mordor there was a black silence.



## Chapter 2: The Passage Of The Marshes

Gollum moved quickly, with his head and neck thrust forward, often using his hands as well as his feet. Frodo and Sam were hard put to it to keep up with him; but he seemed no longer to have any thought of escaping, and if they fell behind, he would turn and wait for them. After a time he brought them to the brink of the narrow gully that they had struck before; but they were now further from the hills.

‘Here it is!’ he cried. ‘There is a way down inside, yes. Now we follow it—out, out away over there.’ He pointed south and east towards the marshes. The reek of them came to their nostrils, heavy and foul even in the cool night air.

Gollum cast up and down along the brink, and at length he called to them. ‘Here! We can get down here. Sméagol went this way once: I went this way, hiding from Orcs.’

He led the way, and following him the hobbits climbed down into the gloom. It was not difficult, for the rift was at this point only some fifteen feet deep and about a dozen across. There was running water at the bottom: it was in fact the bed of one of the many small rivers that trickled down from the hills to feed the stagnant pools and mires beyond. Gollum turned to the right, southward more or less, and splashed along with his feet in the shallow stony stream. He seemed greatly delighted to feel the water, and chuckled to himself, sometimes even croaking in a sort of song.

*The cold hard lands  
they bites our hands,  
they gnaws our feet.  
The rocks and stones  
are like old bones  
all bare of meat.  
But stream and pool  
is wet and cool:  
so nice for feet!  
And now we wish—.*

‘Ha! ha! What does we wish?’ he said, looking sidelong at the hobbits. ‘We’ll tell you,’ he croaked. ‘He guessed it long ago, Baggins guessed it.’ A glint came into his eyes, and Sam catching the gleam in the darkness thought it far from pleasant.

*Alive without breath;  
as cold as death;  
never thirsting, ever drinking;  
clad in mail, never clinking.  
Drowns on dry land,  
thinks an island  
is a mountain;  
thinks a fountain  
is a puff of air.  
So sleek, so fair!  
What a joy to meet!  
We only wish*

*to catch a fish,  
so juicy-sweet!*

These words only made more pressing to Sam's mind a problem that had been troubling him from the moment when he understood that his master was going to adopt Gollum as a guide: the problem of food. It did not occur to him that his master might also have thought of it, but he supposed Gollum had. Indeed how had Gollum kept himself in all his lonely wandering? 'Not too well,' thought Sam. 'He looks fair famished. Not too dainty to try what hobbit tastes like, if there ain't no fish, I'll wager—supposing as he could catch us napping. Well, he won't: not Sam Gamgee for one.'

They stumbled along in the dark winding gully for a long time, or so it seemed to the tired feet of Frodo and Sam. The gully turned eastward, and as they went on it broadened and got gradually shallower. At last the sky above grew faint with the first grey of morning. Gollum had shown no signs of tiring, but now he looked up and halted.

'Day is near,' he whispered, as if Day was something that might overhear him and spring on him. 'Sméagol will stay here: I will stay here, and the Yellow Face won't see me.'

'We should be glad to see the Sun,' said Frodo, 'but we will stay here: we are too tired to go any further at present.'

'You are not wise to be glad of the Yellow Face,' said Gollum. 'It shows you up. Nice sensible hobbits stay with Sméagol. Orcs and nasty things are about. They can see a long way. Stay and hide with me!'

The three of them settled down to rest at the foot of the rocky wall of the gully. It was not much more than a tall man's height now, and at its base there were wide flat shelves of dry stone; the water ran in a channel on the other side. Frodo and Sam sat on one of the flats, resting their backs. Gollum paddled and scrabbled in the stream.

'We must take a little food,' said Frodo. 'Are you hungry, Sméagol? We have very little to share, but we will spare you what we can.'

At the word *hungry* a greenish light was kindled in Gollum's pale eyes, and they seemed to protrude further than ever from his thin sickly face. For a moment he relapsed into his old Gollum-manner. 'We are famished, yes famished we are, precious,' he said. 'What is it they eats? Have they nice fisshes?' His tongue lolled out between his sharp yellow teeth, licking his colourless lips.

'No, we have got no fish,' said Frodo. 'We have only got this'—he held up a wafer of *lembas*—'and water, if the water here is fit to drink.'

'Yess, yess, nice water,' said Gollum. 'Drink it, drink it, while we can! But what is it they've got, precious? Is it crunchable? Is it tasty?'

Frodo broke off a portion of a wafer and handed it to him on its leaf-wrapping. Gollum sniffed at the leaf and his face changed: a spasm of disgust came over it, and a hint of his old malice. 'Sméagol smells it!' he said. 'Leaves out of the Elf-country, gah! They stinks. He climbed in those trees, and he couldn't wash the smell off his hands, my nice hands.' Dropping the leaf, he took a corner of the *lembas* and nibbled it. He spat, and a fit of coughing shook him.

'Ach! No!' he spluttered. 'You try to choke poor Sméagol. Dust and ashes, he can't eat that. He must starve. But Sméagol doesn't mind. Nice hobbits! Sméagol has promised. He will starve. He can't eat hobbits' food. He will starve. Poor thin Sméagol!'

'I'm sorry,' said Frodo; 'but I can't help you, I'm afraid. I think this food would do you good, if you would try. But perhaps you can't even try, not yet anyway.'

The hobbits munched their *lembas* in silence. Sam thought that it tasted far better, somehow, than it had for a good while: Gollum's behaviour had made him attend to its flavour again. But he did not feel comfortable. Gollum watched every morsel from hand to mouth, like an expectant dog by a diner's chair. Only when they

had finished and were preparing to rest, was he apparently convinced that they had no hidden dainties that he could share in. Then he went and sat by himself a few paces away and whimpered a little.

‘Look here!’ Sam whispered to Frodo, not too softly: he did not really care whether Gollum heard him or not. ‘We’ve got to get some sleep; but not both together with that hungry villain nigh, promise or no promise. Sméagol or Gollum, he won’t change his habits in a hurry, I’ll warrant. You go to sleep, Mr. Frodo, and I’ll call you when I can’t keep my eyelids propped up. Turn and about, same as before, while he’s loose.’

‘Perhaps you’re right, Sam,’ said Frodo speaking openly. ‘There *is* a change in him, but just what kind of a change and how deep, I’m not sure yet. Seriously though, I don’t think there is any need for fear—at present. Still watch if you wish. Give me about two hours, not more, and then call me.’

So tired was Frodo that his head fell forward on his breast and he slept, almost as soon as he had spoken the words. Gollum seemed no longer to have any fears. He curled up and went quickly to sleep, quite unconcerned. Presently his breath was hissing softly through his clenched teeth, but he lay still as stone. After a while, fearing that he would drop off himself, if he sat listening to his two companions breathing, Sam got up and gently prodded Gollum. His hands uncurled and twitched, but he made no other movement. Sam bent down and said *fissh* close to his ear, but there was no response, not even a catch in Gollum’s breathing.

Sam scratched his head. ‘Must really be asleep,’ he muttered. ‘And if I was like Gollum, he wouldn’t wake up never again.’ He restrained the thoughts of his sword and the rope that sprang to his mind, and went and sat down by his master.

When he woke up the sky above was dim, not lighter but darker than when they had breakfasted. Sam leapt to his feet. Not least from his own feeling of vigour and hunger, he suddenly understood that he had slept the daylight away, nine hours at least. Frodo was still fast asleep, lying now stretched on his side. Gollum was not to be seen. Various reproachful names for himself came to Sam’s mind, drawn from the Gaffer’s large paternal word-hoard; then it also occurred to him that his master had been right: there had for the present been nothing to guard against. They were at any rate both alive and unthrottled.

‘Poor wretch!’ he said half remorsefully. ‘Now I wonder where he’s got to?’

‘Not far, not far!’ said a voice above him. He looked up and saw the shape of Gollum’s large head and ears against the evening sky.

‘Here, what are you doing?’ cried Sam, his suspicions coming back as soon as he saw that shape.

‘Sméagol is hungry,’ said Gollum. ‘Be back soon.’

‘Come back now!’ shouted Sam. ‘Hi! Come back!’ But Gollum had vanished.

Frodo woke at the sound of Sam’s shout and sat up, rubbing his eyes. ‘Hullo!’ he said. ‘Anything wrong? What’s the time?’

‘I dunno,’ said Sam. ‘After sundown, I reckon. And he’s gone off. Says he’s hungry.’

‘Don’t worry!’ said Frodo. ‘There’s no help for it. But he’ll come back, you’ll see. The promise will hold yet a while. And he won’t leave his Precious, anyway.’

Frodo made light of it when he learned that they had slept soundly for hours with Gollum, and a very hungry Gollum too, loose beside them. ‘Don’t think of any of your gaffer’s hard names,’ he said. ‘You were worn out, and it has turned out well: we are now both rested. And we have a hard road ahead, the worst road of all.’

‘About the food,’ said Sam. ‘How long’s it going to take us to do this job? And when it’s done, what are we going to do then? This waybread keeps you on your legs in a wonderful way, though it doesn’t satisfy the innards proper, as you might say: not to my feeling anyhow, meaning no disrespect to them as made it. But you have to eat some of it every day, and it doesn’t grow. I reckon we’ve got enough to last, say, three weeks or so, and that with a tight belt and a light tooth, mind you. We’ve been a bit free with it so far.’

‘I don’t know how long we shall take to—to finish,’ said Frodo. ‘We were miserably delayed in the hills. But Samwise Gamgee, my dear hobbit—indeed, Sam my dearest hobbit, friend of friends—I do not think we need

give thought to what comes after that. To *do the job* as you put it—what hope is there that we ever shall? And if we do, who knows what will come of that? If the One goes into the Fire, and we are at hand? I ask you, Sam, are we ever likely to need bread again? I think not. If we can nurse our limbs to bring us to Mount Doom, that is all we can do. More than I can, I begin to feel.’

Sam nodded silently. He took his master’s hand and bent over it. He did not kiss it, though his tears fell on it. Then he turned away, drew his sleeve over his nose, and got up, and stamped about, trying to whistle, and saying between the efforts: ‘Where’s that dratted creature?’

It was actually not long before Gollum returned; but he came so quietly that they did not hear him till he stood before them. His fingers and face were soiled with black mud. He was still chewing and slavering. What he was chewing, they did not ask or like to think.

‘Worms or beetles or something slimy out of holes,’ thought Sam. ‘Brr! The nasty creature; the poor wretch!’

Gollum said nothing to them, until he had drunk deeply and washed himself in the stream. Then he came up to them, licking his lips. ‘Better now,’ he said. ‘Are we rested? Ready to go on? Nice hobbits, they sleep beautifully. Trust Sméagol now? Very, very good.’

The next stage of their journey was much the same as the last. As they went on the gully became ever shallower and the slope of its floor more gradual. Its bottom was less stony and more earthy, and slowly its sides dwindled to mere banks. It began to wind and wander. That night drew to its end, but clouds were now over moon and star, and they knew of the coming of day only by the slow spreading of the thin grey light.

In a chill hour they came to the end of the water-course. The banks became moss-grown mounds. Over the last shelf of rotting stone the stream gurgled and fell down into a brown bog and was lost. Dry reeds hissed and rattled though they could feel no wind.

On either side and in front wide fens and mires now lay, stretching away southward and eastward into the dim half-light. Mists curled and smoked from dark and noisome pools. The reek of them hung stifling in the still air. Far away, now almost due south, the mountain-walls of Mordor loomed, like a black bar of rugged clouds floating above a dangerous fog-bound sea.

The hobbits were now wholly in the hands of Gollum. They did not know, and could not guess in that misty light, that they were in fact only just within the northern borders of the marshes, the main expanse of which lay south of them. They could, if they had known the lands, with some delay have retraced their steps a little, and then turning east have come round over hard roads to the bare plain of Dagorlad: the field of the ancient battle before the gates of Mordor. Not that there was great hope in such a course. On that stony plain there was no cover, and across it ran the highways of the Orcs and the soldiers of the Enemy. Not even the cloaks of Lórien would have concealed them there.

‘How do we shape our course now, Sméagol?’ asked Frodo. ‘Must we cross these evil-smelling fens?’

‘No need, no need at all,’ said Gollum. ‘Not if hobbits want to reach the dark mountains and go to see Him very quick. Back a little, and round a little’—his skinny arm waved north and east—‘and you can come on hard cold roads to the very gates of His country. Lots of His people will be there looking out for guests, very pleased to take them straight to Him, O yes. His Eye watches that way all the time. It caught Sméagol there, long ago.’ Gollum shuddered. ‘But Sméagol has used his eyes since then, yes, yes: I’ve used eyes and feet and nose since then. I know other ways. More difficult, not so quick; but better, if we don’t want Him to see. Follow Sméagol! He can take you through the marshes, through the mists, nice thick mists. Follow Sméagol very carefully, and you may go a long way, quite a long way, before He catches you, yes perhaps.’

It was already day, a windless and sullen morning, and the marsh-reeks lay in heavy banks. No sun pierced the low clouded sky, and Gollum seemed anxious to continue the journey at once. So after a brief rest they set out again and were soon lost in a shadowy silent world, cut off from all view of the lands about, either the hills that they had left or the mountains that they sought. They went slowly in single file: Gollum, Sam, Frodo.

Frodo seemed the most weary of the three, and slow though they went, he often lagged. The hobbits soon found that what had looked like one vast fen was really an endless network of pools, and soft mires, and winding half-

strangled water-courses. Among these a cunning eye and foot could thread a wandering path. Gollum certainly had that cunning, and needed all of it. His head on its long neck was ever turning this way and that, while he sniffed and muttered all the time to himself. Sometimes he would hold up his hand and halt them, while he went forward a little, crouching, testing the ground with fingers or toes, or merely listening with one ear pressed to the earth.

It was dreary and wearisome. Cold clammy winter still held sway in this forsaken country. The only green was the scum of livid weed on the dark greasy surfaces of the sullen waters. Dead grasses and rotting reeds loomed up in the mists like ragged shadows of long-forgotten summers.

As the day wore on the light increased a little, and the mists lifted, growing thinner and more transparent. Far above the rot and vapours of the world the Sun was riding high and golden now in a serene country with floors of dazzling foam, but only a passing ghost of her could they see below, bleared, pale, giving no colour and no warmth. But even at this faint reminder of her presence Gollum scowled and flinched. He halted their journey, and they rested, squatting like little hunted animals, in the borders of a great brown reed-thicket. There was a deep silence, only scraped on its surfaces by the faint quiver of empty seed-plumes, and broken grass-blades trembling in small air-movements that they could not feel.

‘Not a bird!’ said Sam mournfully.

‘No, no birds,’ said Gollum. ‘Nice birds!’ He licked his teeth. ‘No birds here. There are snakeses, wormses, things in the pools. Lots of things, lots of nasty things. No birds,’ he ended sadly. Sam looked at him with distaste.

So passed the third day of their journey with Gollum. Before the shadows of evening were long in happier lands, they went on again, always on and on with only brief halts. These they made not so much for rest as to help Gollum; for now even he had to go forward with great care, and he was sometimes at a loss for a while. They had come to the very midst of the Dead Marshes, and it was dark.

They walked slowly, stooping, keeping close in line, following attentively every move that Gollum made. The fens grew more wet, opening into wide stagnant meres, among which it grew more and more difficult to find the firmer places where feet could tread without sinking into gurgling mud. The travellers were light, or maybe none of them would ever have found a way through.

Presently it grew altogether dark: the air itself seemed black and heavy to breathe. When lights appeared Sam rubbed his eyes: he thought his head was going queer. He first saw one with the corner of his left eye, a wisp of pale sheen that faded away; but others appeared soon after: some like dimly shining smoke, some like misty flames flickering slowly above unseen candles; here and there they twisted like ghostly sheets unfurled by hidden hands. But neither of his companions spoke a word.

At last Sam could bear it no longer. ‘What’s all this, Gollum?’ he said in a whisper. ‘These lights? They’re all round us now. Are we trapped? Who are they?’

Gollum looked up. A dark water was before him, and he was crawling on the ground, this way and that, doubtful of the way. ‘Yes, they are all round us,’ he whispered. ‘The tricky lights. Candles of corpses, yes, yes. Don’t you heed them! Don’t look! Don’t follow them! Where’s the master?’

Sam looked back and found that Frodo had lagged again. He could not see him. He went some paces back into the darkness, not daring to move far, or to call in more than a hoarse whisper. Suddenly he stumbled against Frodo, who was standing lost in thought, looking at the pale lights. His hands hung stiff at his sides; water and slime were dripping from them.

‘Come, Mr. Frodo!’ said Sam. ‘Don’t look at them! Gollum says we mustn’t. Let’s keep up with him and get out of this cursed place as quick as we can—if we can!’

‘All right,’ said Frodo, as if returning out of a dream. ‘I’m coming. Go on!’

Hurrying forward again, Sam tripped, catching his foot in some old root or tussock. He fell and came heavily on his hands, which sank deep into sticky ooze, so that his face was brought close to the surface of the dark mere. There was a faint hiss, a noisome smell went up, the lights flickered and danced and swirled. For a moment the

water below him looked like some window, glazed with grimy glass, through which he was peering. Wrenching his hands out of the bog, he sprang back with a cry. 'There are dead things, dead faces in the water,' he said with horror. 'Dead faces!'

Gollum laughed. 'The Dead Marshes, yes, yes: that is their name,' he cackled. 'You should not look in when the candles are lit.'

'Who are they? What are they?' asked Sam shuddering, turning to Frodo, who was now behind him.

'I don't know,' said Frodo in a dreamlike voice. 'But I have seen them too. In the pools when the candles were lit. They lie in all the pools, pale faces, deep deep under the dark water. I saw them: grim faces and evil, and noble faces and sad. Many faces proud and fair, and weeds in their silver hair. But all foul, all rotting, all dead. A fell light is in them.' Frodo hid his eyes in his hands. 'I know not who they are; but I thought I saw there Men and Elves, and Orcs beside them.'

'Yes, yes,' said Gollum. 'All dead, all rotten. Elves and Men and Orcs. The Dead Marshes. There was a great battle long ago, yes, so they told him when Sméagol was young, when I was young before the Precious came. It was a great battle. Tall Men with long swords, and terrible Elves, and Orcses shrieking. They fought on the plain for days and months at the Black Gates. But the Marshes have grown since then, swallowed up the graves; always creeping, creeping.'

'But that is an age and more ago,' said Sam. 'The Dead can't be really there! Is it some devilry hatched in the Dark Land?'

'Who knows? Sméagol doesn't know,' answered Gollum. 'You cannot reach them, you cannot touch them. We tried once, yes, precious. I tried once; but you cannot reach them. Only shapes to see, perhaps, not to touch. No precious! All dead.'

Sam looked darkly at him and shuddered again, thinking that he guessed why Sméagol had tried to touch them. 'Well, I don't want to see them,' he said. 'Never again! Can't we get on and get away?'

'Yes, yes,' said Gollum. 'But slowly, very slowly. Very carefully! Or hobbits go down to join the Dead ones and light little candles. Follow Sméagol! Don't look at lights!'

He crawled away to the right, seeking for a path round the mere. They came close behind, stooping, often using their hands even as he did. 'Three precious little Gollums in a row we shall be, if this goes on much longer,' thought Sam.

At last they came to the end of the black mere, and they crossed it, perilously, crawling or hopping from one treacherous island tussock to another. Often they floundered, stepping or falling hands-first into waters as noisome as a cesspool, till they were slimed and fouled almost up to their necks and stank in one another's nostrils.

It was late in the night when at length they reached firmer ground again. Gollum hissed and whispered to himself, but it appeared that he was pleased: in some mysterious way, by some blended sense of feel, and smell, and uncanny memory for shapes in the dark, he seemed to know just where he was again, and to be sure of his road ahead.

'Now on we go!' he said. 'Nice hobbits! Brave hobbits! Very very weary, of course; so we are, my precious, all of us. But we must take master away from the wicked lights, yes, yes, we must.' With these words he started off again, almost at a trot, down what appeared to be a long lane between high reeds, and they stumbled after him as quickly as they could. But in a little while he stopped suddenly and sniffed the air doubtfully, hissing as if he was troubled or displeased again.

'What is it?' growled Sam, misinterpreting the signs. 'What's the need to sniff? The stink nearly knocks me down with my nose held. You stink, and master stinks; the whole place stinks.'

'Yes, yes, and Sam stinks!' answered Gollum. 'Poor Sméagol smells it, but good Sméagol bears it. Helps nice master. But that's no matter. The air's moving, change is coming. Sméagol wonders; he's not happy.'

He went on again, but his uneasiness grew, and every now and again he stood up to his full height, craning his neck eastward and southward. For some time the hobbits could not hear or feel what was troubling him. Then suddenly all three halted, stiffening and listening. To Frodo and Sam it seemed that they heard, far away, a long wailing cry, high and thin and cruel. They shivered. At the same moment the stirring of the air became perceptible to them; and it grew very cold. As they stood straining their ears, they heard a noise like a wind coming in the distance. The misty lights wavered, dimmed, and went out.

Gollum would not move. He stood shaking and gibbering to himself, until with a rush the wind came upon them, hissing and snarling over the marshes. The night became less dark, light enough for them to see, or half see, shapeless drifts of fog, curling and twisting as it rolled over them and passed them. Looking up they saw the clouds breaking and shredding; and then high in the south the moon glimmered out, riding in the flying wrack.

For a moment the sight of it gladdened the hearts of the hobbits; but Gollum cowered down, muttering curses on the White Face. Then Frodo and Sam staring at the sky, breathing deeply of the fresher air, saw it come: a small cloud flying from the accursed hills; a black shadow loosed from Mordor; a vast shape winged and ominous. It scudded across the moon, and with a deadly cry went away westward, outrunning the wind in its fell speed.

They fell forward, grovelling heedlessly on the cold earth. But the shadow of horror wheeled and returned, passing lower now, right above them, sweeping the fen-reek with its ghastly wings. And then it was gone, flying back to Mordor with the speed of the wrath of Sauron; and behind it the wind roared away, leaving the Dead Marshes bare and bleak. The naked waste, as far as the eye could pierce, even to the distant menace of the mountains, was dappled with the fitful moonlight.

Frodo and Sam got up, rubbing their eyes, like children wakened from an evil dream to find the familiar night still over the world. But Gollum lay on the ground as if he had been stunned. They roused him with difficulty, and for some time he would not lift his face, but knelt forward on his elbows, covering the back of his head with his large flat hands.

‘Wraiths!’ he wailed. ‘Wraiths on wings! The Precious is their master. They see everything, everything. Nothing can hide from them. Curse the White Face! And they tell Him everything. He sees, He knows. Ach, *gollum, gollum, gollum!*’ It was not until the moon had sunk, westering far away beyond Tol Brandir, that he would get up or make a move.

From that time on Sam thought that he sensed a change in Gollum again. He was more fawning and would-be friendly; but Sam surprised some strange looks in his eyes at times, especially towards Frodo; and he went back more and more into his old manner of speaking. And Sam had another growing anxiety. Frodo seemed to be weary, weary to the point of exhaustion. He said nothing, indeed he hardly spoke at all; and he did not complain, but he walked like one who carries a load, the weight of which is ever increasing; and he dragged along, slower and slower, so that Sam had often to beg Gollum to wait and not to leave their master behind.

In fact with every step towards the gates of Mordor Frodo felt the Ring on its chain about his neck grow more burdensome. He was now beginning to feel it as an actual weight dragging him earthwards. But far more he was troubled by the Eye: so he called it to himself. It was that more than the drag of the Ring that made him cower and stoop as he walked. The Eye: that horrible growing sense of a hostile will that strove with great power to pierce all shadows of cloud, and earth, and flesh, and to see you: to pin you under its deadly gaze, naked, immovable. So thin, so frail and thin, the veils were become that still warded it off. Frodo knew just where the present habitation and heart of that will now was: as certainly as a man can tell the direction of the sun with his eyes shut. He was facing it, and its potency beat upon his brow.

Gollum probably felt something of the same sort. But what went on in his wretched heart between the pressure of the Eye, and the lust of the Ring that was so near, and his grovelling promise made half in the fear of cold iron, the hobbits did not guess. Frodo gave no thought to it. Sam’s mind was occupied mostly with his master, hardly noticing the dark cloud that had fallen on his own heart. He put Frodo in front of him now, and kept a watchful eye on every movement of his, supporting him if he stumbled, and trying to encourage him with clumsy words.



When day came at last the hobbits were surprised to see how much closer the ominous mountains had already drawn. The air was now clearer and colder, and though still far off, the walls of Mordor were no longer a cloudy menace on the edge of sight, but as grim black towers they frowned across a dismal waste. The marshes were at an end, dying away into dead peats and wide flats of dry cracked mud. The land ahead rose in long shallow slopes, barren and pitiless, towards the desert that lay at Sauron's gate.

While the grey light lasted, they cowered under a black stone like worms, shrinking, lest the winged terror should pass and spy them with its cruel eyes. The remainder of that journey was a shadow of growing fear in which memory could find nothing to rest upon. For two more nights they struggled on through the weary pathless land. The air, as it seemed to them, grew harsh, and filled with a bitter reek that caught their breath and parched their mouths.

At last, on the fifth morning since they took the road with Gollum, they halted once more. Before them dark in the dawn the great mountains reached up to roofs of smoke and cloud. Out from their feet were flung huge buttresses and broken hills that were now at the nearest scarce a dozen miles away. Frodo looked round in horror. Dreadful as the Dead Marshes had been, and the arid moors of the Noman-lands, more loathsome by far was the country that the crawling day now slowly unveiled to his shrinking eyes. Even to the Mere of Dead Faces some haggard phantom of green spring would come; but here neither spring nor summer would ever come again. Here nothing lived, not even the leprous growths that feed on rottenness. The gasping pools were choked with ash and crawling muds, sickly white and grey, as if the mountains had vomited the filth of their entrails upon the lands about. High mounds of crushed and powdered rock, great cones of earth fire-blasted and poison-stained, stood like an obscene graveyard in endless rows, slowly revealed in the reluctant light.

They had come to the desolation that lay before Mordor: the lasting monument to the dark labour of its slaves that should endure when all their purposes were made void; a land defiled, diseased beyond all healing—unless the Great Sea should enter in and wash it with oblivion. 'I feel sick,' said Sam. Frodo did not speak.

For a while they stood there, like men on the edge of a sleep where nightmare lurks, holding it off, though they know that they can only come to morning through the shadows. The light broadened and hardened. The gasping pits and poisonous mounds grew hideously clear. The sun was up, walking among clouds and long flags of smoke, but even the sunlight was defiled. The hobbits had no welcome for that light; unfriendly it seemed, revealing them in their helplessness—little squeaking ghosts that wandered among the ash-heaps of the Dark Lord.

Too weary to go further they sought for some place where they could rest. For a while they sat without speaking under the shadow of a mound of slag; but foul fumes leaked out of it, catching their throats and choking them. Gollum was the first to get up. Spluttering and cursing he rose, and without a word or a glance at the hobbits he crawled away on all fours. Frodo and Sam crawled after him until they came to a wide almost circular pit, high-banked upon the west. It was cold and dead, and a foul sump of oily many-coloured ooze lay at its bottom. In this evil hole they cowered, hoping in its shadow to escape the attention of the Eye.

The day passed slowly. A great thirst troubled them, but they drank only a few drops from their bottles—last filled in the gully, which now as they looked back in thought seemed to them a place of peace and beauty. The hobbits took it in turn to watch. At first, tired as they were, neither of them could sleep at all; but as the sun far away was climbing down into slow moving cloud, Sam dozed. It was Frodo's turn to be on guard. He lay back on the slope of the pit, but that did not ease the sense of burden that was on him. He looked up at the smoke-streaked sky and saw strange phantoms, dark riding shapes, and faces out of the past. He lost count of time, hovering between sleep and waking, until forgetfulness came over him.

Suddenly Sam woke up thinking that he heard his master calling. It was evening. Frodo could not have called, for he had fallen asleep, and had slid down nearly to the bottom of the pit. Gollum was by him. For a moment Sam thought that he was trying to rouse Frodo; then he saw that it was not so. Gollum was talking to himself. Sméagol was holding a debate with some other thought that used the same voice but made it squeak and hiss. A pale light and a green light alternated in his eyes as he spoke.

'Sméagol promised,' said the first thought.

‘Yes, yes, my precious,’ came the answer, ‘we promised: to save our Precious, not to let Him have it—never. But it’s going to Him, yes, nearer every step. What’s the hobbit going to do with it, we wonders, yes we wonders.’

‘I don’t know. I can’t help it. Master’s got it. Sméagol promised to help the master.’

‘Yes, yes, to help the master: the master of the Precious. But if we was master, then we could help ourselves, yes, and still keep promises.’

‘But Sméagol said he would be very very good. Nice hobbit! He took cruel rope off Sméagol’s leg. He speaks nicely to me.’

‘Very very good, eh, my precious? Let’s be good, good as fish, sweet one, but to ourselves. Not hurt the nice hobbit, of course, no, no.’

‘But the Precious holds the promise,’ the voice of Sméagol objected.

‘Then take it,’ said the other, ‘and let’s hold it ourselves! Then we shall be master, *gollum*! Make the other hobbit, the nasty suspicious hobbit, make him crawl, yes, *gollum*!’

‘But not the nice hobbit?’

‘Oh no, not if it doesn’t please us. Still he’s a Baggins, my precious, yes, a Baggins. A Baggins stole it. He found it and he said nothing, nothing. We hates Bagginses.’

‘No, not this Baggins.’

‘Yes, every Baggins. All peoples that keep the Precious. We must have it!’

‘But He’ll see, He’ll know. He’ll take it from us!’

‘He sees. He knows. He heard us make silly promises—against His orders, yes. Must take it. The Wraiths are searching. Must take it.’

‘Not for Him!’

‘No, sweet one. See, my precious: if we has it, then we can escape, even from Him, eh? Perhaps we grows very strong, stronger than Wraiths. Lord Sméagol? Gollum the Great? *The* Gollum! Eat fish every day, three times a day, fresh from the sea. Most Precious Gollum! Must have it. We wants it, we wants it, we wants it!’

‘But there’s two of them. They’ll wake too quick and kill us,’ whined Sméagol in a last effort. ‘Not now. Not yet.’

‘We wants it! But’—and here there was a long pause, as if a new thought had wakened. ‘Not yet, eh? Perhaps not. She might help. She might, yes.’

‘No, no! Not that way!’ wailed Sméagol.

‘Yes! We wants it! We wants it!’

Each time that the second thought spoke, Gollum’s long hand crept out slowly, pawing towards Frodo, and then was drawn back with a jerk as Sméagol spoke again. Finally both arms, with long fingers flexed and twitching, clawed towards his neck.

Sam had lain still, fascinated by this debate, but watching every move that Gollum made from under his half-closed eye-lids. To his simple mind ordinary hunger, the desire to eat hobbits, had seemed the chief danger in Gollum. He realized now that it was not so: Gollum was feeling the terrible call of the Ring. The Dark Lord was *He*, of course; but Sam wondered who *She* was. One of the nasty friends the little wretch had made in his wanderings, he supposed. Then he forgot the point, for things had plainly gone far enough, and were getting dangerous. A great heaviness was in all his limbs, but he roused himself with an effort and sat up. Something warned him to be careful and not to reveal that he had overheard the debate. He let out a loud sigh and gave a huge yawn.

‘What’s the time?’ he said sleepily.

Gollum sent out a long hiss through his teeth. He stood up for a moment, tense and menacing; and then he collapsed, falling forward on to all fours and crawling up the bank of the pit. 'Nice hobbits! Nice Sam!' he said. 'Sleepy heads, yes, sleepy heads! Leave good Sméagol to watch! But it's evening. Dusk is creeping. Time to go.'

'High time!' thought Sam. 'And time we parted, too.' Yet it crossed his mind to wonder if indeed Gollum was not now as dangerous turned loose as kept with them. 'Curse him! I wish he was choked!' he muttered. He stumbled down the bank and roused his master.

Strangely enough, Frodo felt refreshed. He had been dreaming. The dark shadow had passed, and a fair vision had visited him in this land of disease. Nothing remained of it in his memory, yet because of it he felt glad and lighter of heart. His burden was less heavy on him. Gollum welcomed him with dog-like delight. He chuckled and chattered, cracking his long fingers, and pawing at Frodo's knees. Frodo smiled at him.

'Come!' he said. 'You have guided us well and faithfully. This is the last stage. Bring us to the Gate, and then I will not ask you to go further. Bring us to the Gate, and you may go where you wish—only not to our enemies.'

'To the Gate, eh?' Gollum squeaked, seeming surprised and frightened. 'To the Gate, master says! Yes, he says so. And good Sméagol does what he asks, O yes. But when we gets closer, we'll see perhaps, we'll see then. It won't look nice at all. O no! O no!'

'Go on with you!' said Sam. 'Let's get it over!'

In the falling dusk they scrambled out of the pit and slowly threaded their way through the dead land. They had not gone far before they felt once more the fear that had fallen on them when the winged shape swept over the marshes. They halted, cowering on the evil-smelling ground; but they saw nothing in the gloomy evening sky above, and soon the menace passed, high overhead, going maybe on some swift errand from Barad-dûr. After a while Gollum got up and crept forward again, muttering and shaking.

About an hour after midnight the fear fell on them a third time, but it now seemed more remote, as if it were passing far above the clouds, rushing with terrible speed into the West. Gollum, however, was helpless with terror, and was convinced that they were being hunted, that their approach was known.

'Three times!' he whimpered. 'Three times is a threat. They feel us here, they feel the Precious. The Precious is their master. We cannot go any further this way, no. It's no use, no use!'

Pleading and kind words were no longer of any avail. It was not until Frodo commanded him angrily and laid a hand on his sword-hilt that Gollum would get up again. Then at last he rose with a snarl, and went before them like a beaten dog.

So they stumbled on through the weary end of the night, and until the coming of another day of fear they walked in silence with bowed heads, seeing nothing, and hearing nothing but the wind hissing in their ears.



## Chapter 3: The Black Gate Is Closed

Before the next day dawned their journey to Mordor was over. The marshes and the desert were behind them. Before them, darkling against a pallid sky, the great mountains reared their threatening heads.

Upon the west of Mordor marched the gloomy range of Ephel Dûath, the Mountains of Shadow, and upon the north the broken peaks and barren ridges of Ered Lithui, grey as ash. But as these ranges approached one another, being indeed but parts of one great wall about the mournful plains of Lithlad and of Gorgoroth, and the bitter inland sea of Nûrnen amidmost, they swung out long arms northward; and between these arms there was a deep defile. This was Cirith Gorgor, the Haunted Pass, the entrance to the land of the Enemy. High cliffs lowered upon either side, and thrust forward from its mouth were two sheer hills, black-boned and bare. Upon them stood the Teeth of Mordor, two towers strong and tall. In days long past they were built by the Men of Gondor in their pride and power, after the overthrow of Sauron and his flight, lest he should seek to return to his old realm. But the strength of Gondor failed, and men slept, and for long years the towers stood empty. Then Sauron returned. Now the watch-towers, which had fallen into decay, were repaired, and filled with arms, and garrisoned with ceaseless vigilance. Stony-faced they were, with dark window-holes staring north and east and west, and each window was full of sleepless eyes.

Across the mouth of the pass, from cliff to cliff, the Dark Lord had built a rampart of stone. In it there was a single gate of iron, and upon its battlement sentinels paced unceasingly. Beneath the hills on either side the rock was bored into a hundred caves and maggot-holes; there a host of orcs lurked, ready at a signal to issue forth like black ants going to war. None could pass the Teeth of Mordor and not feel their bite, unless they were summoned by Sauron, or knew the secret pass-words that would open the Morannon, the black gate of his land.

The two hobbits gazed at the towers and the wall in despair. Even from a distance they could see in the dim light the movement of the black guards upon the wall, and the patrols before the gate. They lay now peering over the edge of a rocky hollow beneath the outstretched shadow of the northmost buttress of Ephel Dûath. Winging the heavy air in a straight flight a crow, maybe, would have flown but a furlong from their hiding-place to the black summit of the nearer tower. A faint smoke curled above it, as if fire smouldered in the hill beneath.

Day came, and the fallow sun blinked over the lifeless ridges of Ered Lithui. Then suddenly the cry of brazen-throated trumpets was heard: from the watch-towers they blared, and far away from hidden holds and outposts in the hills came answering calls; and further still, remote but deep and ominous, there echoed in the hollow land beyond the mighty horns and drums of Barad-dûr. Another dreadful day of fear and toil had come to Mordor; and the night-guards were summoned to their dungeons and deep halls, and the day-guards, evil-eyed and fell, were marching to their posts. Steel gleamed dimly on the battlement.

‘Well, here we are!’ said Sam. ‘Here’s the Gate, and it looks to me as if that’s about as far as we are ever going to get. My word, but the Gaffer would have a thing or two to say, if he saw me now! Often said I’d come to a bad end, if I didn’t watch my step, he did. But now I don’t suppose I’ll ever see the old fellow again. He’ll miss his chance of *I told ’ee so, Sam*: more’s the pity. He could go on telling me as long as he’d got breath, if only I could see his old face again. But I’d have to get a wash first, or he wouldn’t know me.

‘I suppose it’s no good asking “what way do we go now?” We can’t go no further—unless we want to ask the Orcs for a lift.’

‘No, no!’ said Gollum. ‘No use. We can’t go further. Sméagol said so. He said: we’ll go to the Gate, and then we’ll see. And we do see. O yes, my precious, we do see. Sméagol knew hobbits could not go this way. O yes, Sméagol knew.’

‘Then what the plague did you bring us here for?’ said Sam, not feeling in the mood to be just or reasonable.

‘Master said so. Master says: Bring us to the Gate. So good Sméagol does so. Master said so, wise master.’

‘I did,’ said Frodo. His face was grim and set, but resolute. He was filthy, haggard, and pinched with weariness, but he cowered no longer, and his eyes were clear. ‘I said so, because I purpose to enter Mordor, and I know no other way. Therefore I shall go this way. I do not ask anyone to go with me.’

‘No, no, master!’ wailed Gollum, pawing at him, and seeming in great distress. ‘No use that way! No use! Don’t take the Precious to Him! He’ll eat us all, if He gets it, eat all the world. Keep it, nice master, and be kind to Sméagol. Don’t let Him have it. Or go away, go to nice places, and give it back to little Sméagol. Yes, yes, master give it back, eh? Sméagol will keep it safe; he will do lots of good, especially to nice hobbits. Hobbits go home. Don’t go to the Gate!’

‘I am commanded to go to the land of Mordor, and therefore I shall go,’ said Frodo. ‘If there is only one way, then I must take it. What comes after must come.’

Sam said nothing. The look on Frodo’s face was enough for him; he knew that words of his were useless. And after all he never had any real hope in the affair from the beginning; but being a cheerful hobbit he had not needed hope, as long as despair could be postponed. Now they were come to the bitter end. But he had stuck to his master all the way; that was what he had chiefly come for, and he would still stick to him. His master would not go to Mordor alone. Sam would go with him—and at any rate they would get rid of Gollum.

Gollum, however, did not intend to be got rid of, yet. He knelt at Frodo’s feet, wringing his hands and squeaking. ‘Not this way, master!’ he pleaded. ‘There is another way. O yes indeed there is. Another way, darker, more difficult to find, more secret. But Sméagol knows it. Let Sméagol show you!’

‘Another way!’ said Frodo doubtfully, looking down at Gollum with searching eyes.

‘Yess! Yess indeed! There *was* another way. Sméagol found it. Let’s go and see if it’s still there!’

‘You have not spoken of this before.’

‘No. Master did not ask. Master did not say what he meant to do. He does not tell poor Sméagol. He says: Sméagol, take me to the Gate—and then good-bye! Sméagol can run away and be good. But now he says: I purpose to enter Mordor this way. So Sméagol is very afraid. He does not want to lose nice master. And he promised, master made him promise, to save the Precious. But master is going to take it to Him, straight to the Black Hand, if master will go this way. So Sméagol must save them both, and he thinks of another way that there was, once upon a time. Nice master. Sméagol very good, always helps.’

Sam frowned. If he could have bored holes in Gollum with his eyes, he would have done. His mind was full of doubt. To all appearances Gollum was genuinely distressed and anxious to help Frodo. But Sam, remembering the overheard debate, found it hard to believe that the long submerged Sméagol had come out on top: that voice at any rate had not had the last word in the debate. Sam’s guess was that the Sméagol and Gollum halves (or what in his own mind he called Slinker and Stinker) had made a truce and a temporary alliance: neither wanted the Enemy to get the Ring; both wished to keep Frodo from capture, and under their eye, as long as possible—at any rate as long as Stinker still had a chance of laying hands on his ‘Precious’. Whether there really was another way into Mordor Sam doubted.

‘And it’s a good thing neither half of the old villain don’t know what master means to do,’ he thought. ‘If he knew that Mr. Frodo is trying to put an end to his Precious for good and all, there’d be trouble pretty quick, I bet. Anyhow old Stinker is so frightened of the Enemy—and he’s under orders of some kind from him, or was—that he’d give us away rather than be caught helping us; and rather than let his Precious be melted, maybe. At least that’s my idea. And I hope the master will think it out carefully. He’s as wise as any, but he’s soft-hearted, that’s what he is. It’s beyond any Gamgee to guess what he’ll do next.’

Frodo did not answer Gollum at once. While these doubts were passing through Sam’s slow but shrewd mind, he stood gazing out towards the dark cliff of Cirith Gorgor. The hollow in which they had taken refuge was delved in the side of a low hill, at some little height above a long trenchlike valley that lay between it and the outer buttresses of the mountain-wall. In the midst of the valley stood the black foundations of the western

watch-tower. By morning-light the roads that converged upon the Gate of Mordor could now be clearly seen, pale and dusty; one winding back northwards; another dwindling eastwards into the mists that clung about the feet of Ered Lithui; and a third that ran towards him. As it bent sharply round the tower, it entered a narrow defile and passed not far below the hollow where he stood. Westward, to his right, it turned, skirting the shoulders of the mountains, and went off southwards into the deep shadows that mantled all the western sides of Ephel Dúath; beyond his sight it journeyed on into the narrow land between the mountains and the Great River.

As he gazed Frodo became aware that there was a great stir and movement on the plain. It seemed as if whole armies were on the march, though for the most part they were hidden by the reeks and fumes drifting from the fens and wastes beyond. But here and there he caught the gleam of spears and helmets; and over the levels beside the roads horsemen could be seen riding in many companies. He remembered his vision from afar upon Amon Hen, so few days before, though now it seemed many years ago. Then he knew that the hope that had for one wild moment stirred in his heart was vain. The trumpets had not rung in challenge but in greeting. This was no assault upon the Dark Lord by the men of Gondor, risen like avenging ghosts from the graves of valour long passed away. These were Men of other race, out of the wide Eastlands, gathering to the summons of their Overlord; armies that had encamped before his Gate by night and now marched in to swell his mounting power. As if suddenly made fully aware of the peril of their position, alone, in the growing light of day, so near to this vast menace, Frodo quickly drew his frail grey hood close upon his head, and stepped down into the dell. Then he turned to Gollum.

‘Sméagol,’ he said, ‘I will trust you once more. Indeed it seems that I must do so, and that it is my fate to receive help from you, where I least looked for it, and your fate to help me whom you long pursued with evil purpose. So far you have deserved well of me and have kept your promise truly. Truly, I say and mean,’ he added with a glance at Sam, ‘for twice now we have been in your power, and you have done no harm to us. Nor have you tried to take from me what you once sought. May the third time prove the best! But I warn you, Sméagol, you are in danger.’

‘Yes, yes, master!’ said Gollum. ‘Dreadful danger! Sméagol’s bones shake to think of it, but he doesn’t run away. He must help nice master.’

‘I did not mean the danger that we all share,’ said Frodo. ‘I mean a danger to yourself alone. You swore a promise by what you call the Precious. Remember that! It will hold you to it; but it will seek a way to twist it to your own undoing. Already you are being twisted. You revealed yourself to me just now, foolishly. *Give it back to Sméagol* you said. Do not say that again! Do not let that thought grow in you! You will never get it back. But the desire of it may betray you to a bitter end. You will never get it back. In the last need, Sméagol, I should put on the Precious; and the Precious mastered you long ago. If I, wearing it, were to command you, you would obey, even if it were to leap from a precipice or to cast yourself into the fire. And such would be my command. So have a care, Sméagol!’

Sam looked at his master with approval, but also with surprise: there was a look in his face and a tone in his voice that he had not known before. It had always been a notion of his that the kindness of dear Mr. Frodo was of such a high degree that it must imply a fair measure of blindness. Of course, he also firmly held the incompatible belief that Mr. Frodo was the wisest person in the world (with the possible exception of Old Mr. Bilbo and of Gandalf). Gollum in his own way, and with much more excuse as his acquaintance was much briefer, may have made a similar mistake, confusing kindness and blindness. At any rate this speech abashed and terrified him. He grovelled on the ground and could speak no clear words but *nice master*.

Frodo waited patiently for a while, then he spoke again less sternly. ‘Come now, Gollum or Sméagol if you wish, tell me of this other way, and show me, if you can, what hope there is in it, enough to justify me in turning aside from my plain path. I am in haste.’

But Gollum was in a pitiable state, and Frodo’s threat had quite unnerved him. It was not easy to get any clear account out of him, amid his mumblings and squeakings, and the frequent interruptions in which he crawled on the floor and begged them both to be kind to ‘poor little Sméagol’. After a while he grew a little calmer, and Frodo gathered bit by bit that, if a traveller followed the road that turned west of Ephel Dúath, he would come

in time to a crossing in a circle of dark trees. On the right a road went down to Osgiliath and the bridges of the Anduin; in the middle the road went on southwards.

‘On, on, on,’ said Gollum. ‘We never went that way, but they say it goes a hundred leagues, until you can see the Great Water that is never still. There are lots of fishes there, and big birds eat fishes: nice birds: but we never went there, alas no! we never had a chance. And further still there are more lands, they say, but the Yellow Face is very hot there, and there are seldom any clouds, and the men are fierce and have dark faces. We do not want to see that land.’

‘No!’ said Frodo. ‘But do not wander from your road. What of the third turning?’

‘O yes, O yes, there is a third way,’ said Gollum. ‘That is the road to the left. At once it begins to climb up, up, winding and climbing back towards the tall shadows. When it turns round the black rock, you’ll see it, suddenly you’ll see it above you, and you’ll want to hide.’

‘See it, see it? What will you see?’

‘The old fortress, very old, very horrible now. We used to hear tales from the South, when Sméagol was young, long ago. O yes, we used to tell lots of tales in the evening, sitting by the banks of the Great River, in the willow-lands, when the River was younger too, *gollum, gollum*.’ He began to weep and mutter. The hobbits waited patiently.

‘Tales out of the South,’ Gollum went on again, ‘about the tall Men with the shining eyes, and their houses like hills of stone, and the silver crown of their King and his White Tree: wonderful tales. They built very tall towers, and one they raised was silver-white, and in it there was a stone like the Moon, and round it were great white walls. O yes, there were many tales about the Tower of the Moon.’

‘That would be Minas Ithil that Isildur the son of Elendil built,’ said Frodo. ‘It was Isildur who cut off the finger of the Enemy.’

‘Yes, He has only four on the Black Hand, but they are enough,’ said Gollum shuddering. ‘And He hated Isildur’s city.’

‘What does he not hate?’ said Frodo. ‘But what has the Tower of the Moon to do with us?’

‘Well, master, there it was and there it is: the tall tower and the white houses and the wall; but not nice now, not beautiful. He conquered it long ago. It is a very terrible place now. Travellers shiver when they see it, they creep out of sight, they avoid its shadow. But master will have to go that way. That is the only other way. For the mountains are lower there, and the old road goes up and up, until it reaches a dark pass at the top, and then it goes down, down, again—to Gorgoroth.’ His voice sank to a whisper and he shuddered.

‘But how will that help us?’ asked Sam. ‘Surely the Enemy knows all about his own mountains, and that road will be guarded as close as this? The tower isn’t empty, is it?’

‘O no, not empty!’ whispered Gollum. ‘It seems empty, but it isn’t, O no! Very dreadful things live there. Orcs, yes always Orcs; but worse things, worse things live there too. The road climbs right under the shadow of the walls and passes the gate. Nothing moves on the road that they don’t know about. The things inside know: the Silent Watchers.’

‘So that’s your advice is it,’ said Sam, ‘that we should go another long march south, to find ourselves in the same fix or a worse one, when we get there, if we ever do?’

‘No, no indeed,’ said Gollum. ‘Hobbits must see, must try to understand. He does not expect attack that way. His Eye is all round, but it attends more to some places than to others. He can’t see everything all at once, not yet. You see, He has conquered all the country west of the Shadowy Mountains down to the River, and He holds the bridges now. He thinks no-one can come to the Moontower without fighting big battle at the bridges, or getting lots of boats which they cannot hide and He will know about.’

‘You seem to know a lot about what He’s doing and thinking,’ said Sam. ‘Have you been talking to Him lately? Or just hobnobbing with Orcs?’

‘Not nice hobbit, not sensible,’ said Gollum, giving Sam an angry glance and turning to Frodo. ‘Sméagol has talked to Orcs, yes of course, before he met master, and to many peoples: he has walked very far. And what he says now many peoples are saying. It’s here in the North that the big danger is for Him, and for us. He will come out of the Black Gate one day, one day soon. That is the only way big armies can come. But away down west He is not afraid, and there are the Silent Watchers.’

‘Just so!’ said Sam, not to be put off. ‘And so we are to walk up and knock at their gate and ask if we’re on the right road for Mordor? Or are they too silent to answer? It’s not sense. We might as well do it here, and save ourselves a long tramp.’

‘Don’t make jokes about it,’ hissed Gollum. ‘It isn’t funny, O no! Not amusing. It’s not sense to try and get into Mordor at all. But if master says *I must go* or *I will go*, then he must try some way. But he must not go to the terrible city, O no, of course not. That is where Sméagol helps, nice Sméagol, though no-one tells him what it is all about. Sméagol helps again. He found it. He knows it.’

‘What did you find?’ asked Frodo.

Gollum crouched down and his voice sank to a whisper again. ‘A little path leading up into the mountains; and then a stair, a narrow stair, O yes, very long and narrow. And then more stairs. And then’—his voice sank even lower—‘a tunnel, a dark tunnel; and at last a little cleft, and a path high above the main pass. It was that way that Sméagol got out of the darkness. But it was years ago. The path may have vanished now; but perhaps not, perhaps not.’

‘I don’t like the sound of it at all,’ said Sam. ‘Sounds too easy at any rate in the telling. If that path is still there, it’ll be guarded too. Wasn’t it guarded, Gollum?’ As he said this, he caught or fancied he caught a green gleam in Gollum’s eye. Gollum muttered but did not reply.

‘Is it not guarded?’ asked Frodo sternly. ‘And did you *escape* out of the darkness, Sméagol? Were you not rather permitted to depart, upon an errand? That at least is what Aragorn thought, who found you by the Dead Marshes some years ago.’

‘It’s a lie!’ hissed Gollum, and an evil light came into his eyes at the naming of Aragorn. ‘He lied on me, yes he did. I did escape, all by my poor self. Indeed I was told to seek for the Precious; and I have searched and searched, of course I have. But not for the Black One. The Precious was ours, it was mine I tell you. I did escape.’

Frodo felt a strange certainty that in this matter Gollum was for once not so far from the truth as might be suspected; that he had somehow found a way out of Mordor, and at least believed that it was by his own cunning. For one thing, he noted that Gollum used *I*, and that seemed usually to be a sign, on its rare appearances, that some remnants of old truth and sincerity were for the moment on top. But even if Gollum could be trusted on this point, Frodo did not forget the wiles of the Enemy. The ‘escape’ may have been allowed or arranged, and well known in the Dark Tower. And in any case Gollum was plainly keeping a good deal back.

‘I ask you again,’ he said: ‘is not this secret way guarded?’

But the name of Aragorn had put Gollum into a sullen mood. He had all the injured air of a liar suspected when for once he has told the truth, or part of it. He did not answer.

‘Is it not guarded?’ Frodo repeated.

‘Yes, yes, perhaps. No safe places in this country,’ said Gollum sulkily. ‘No safe places. But master must try it or go home. No other way.’ They could not get him to say more. The name of the perilous place and the high pass he could not tell, or would not.

Its name was Cirith Ungol, a name of dreadful rumour. Aragorn could perhaps have told them that name and its significance; Gandalf would have warned them. But they were alone, and Aragorn was far away, and Gandalf stood amid the ruin of Isengard and strove with Saruman, delayed by treason. Yet even as he spoke his last words to Saruman, and the *palantír* crashed in fire upon the steps of Orthanc, his thought was ever upon Frodo and Samwise, over the long leagues his mind sought for them in hope and pity.



Maybe Frodo felt it, not knowing it, as he had upon Amon Hen, even though he believed that Gandalf was gone, gone for ever into the shadow in Moria far away. He sat upon the ground for a long while, silent, his head bowed, striving to recall all that Gandalf had said to him. But for this choice he could recall no counsel. Indeed Gandalf's guidance had been taken from them too soon, too soon, while the Dark Land was still very far away. How they should enter it at the last Gandalf had not said. Perhaps he could not say. Into the stronghold of the Enemy in the North, into Dol Guldur, he had once ventured. But into Mordor, to the Mountain of Fire and to Barad-dûr, since the Dark Lord rose in power again, had he ever journeyed there? Frodo did not think so. And here he was a little halfling from the Shire, a simple hobbit of the quiet countryside, expected to find a way where the great ones could not go, or dared not go. It was an evil fate. But he had taken it on himself in his own sitting-room in the far-off spring of another year, so remote now that it was like a chapter in a story of the world's youth, when the Trees of Silver and Gold were still in bloom. This was an evil choice. Which way should he choose? And if both led to terror and death, what good lay in choice?

The day drew on. A deep silence fell upon the little grey hollow where they lay, so near to the borders of the land of fear: a silence that could be felt, as if it were a thick veil that cut them off from all the world about them. Above them was a dome of pale sky barred with fleeting smoke, but it seemed high and far away, as if seen through great deeps of air heavy with brooding thought.

Not even an eagle poised against the sun would have marked the hobbits sitting there, under the weight of doom, silent, not moving, shrouded in their thin grey cloaks. For a moment he might have paused to consider Gollum, a tiny figure sprawling on the ground: there perhaps lay the famished skeleton of some child of Men, its ragged garment still clinging to it, its long arms and legs almost bone-white and bone-thin: no flesh worth a peck.

Frodo's head was bowed over his knees, but Sam leaned back, with hands behind his head, staring out of his hood at the empty sky. At least for a long while it was empty. Then presently Sam thought he saw a dark bird-like figure wheel into the circle of his sight, and hover, and then wheel away again. Two more followed, and then a fourth. They were very small to look at, yet he knew, somehow, that they were huge, with a vast stretch of pinion, flying at a great height. He covered his eyes and bent forward, cowering. The same warning fear was on him as he had felt in the presence of the Black Riders, the helpless horror that had come with the cry in the wind and the shadow on the moon, though now it was not so crushing or compelling: the menace was more remote. But menace it was. Frodo felt it too. His thought was broken. He stirred and shivered, but he did not look up. Gollum huddled himself together like a cornered spider. The winged shapes wheeled, and stooped swiftly down, speeding back to Mordor.

Sam took a deep breath. 'The Riders are about again, up in the air,' he said in a hoarse whisper. 'I saw them. Do you think they could see us? They were very high up. And if they are Black Riders, same as before, then they can't see much by daylight, can they?'

'No, perhaps not,' said Frodo. 'But their steeds could see. And these winged creatures that they ride on now, they can probably see more than any other creature. They are like great carrion birds. They are looking for something: the Enemy is on the watch, I fear.'

The feeling of dread passed, but the enfolding silence was broken. For some time they had been cut off from the world, as if in an invisible island; now they were laid bare again, peril had returned. But still Frodo did not speak to Gollum or make his choice. His eyes were closed, as if he were dreaming, or looking inward into his heart and memory. At last he stirred and stood up, and it seemed that he was about to speak and to decide. But 'hark!' he said. 'What is that?'

A new fear was upon them. They heard singing and hoarse shouting. At first it seemed a long way off, but it drew nearer: it was coming towards them. It leaped into all their minds that the Black Wings had spied them and had sent armed soldiers to seize them: no speed seemed too great for these terrible servants of Sauron. They crouched, listening. The voices and the clink of weapons and harness were very close. Frodo and Sam loosened their small swords in their sheaths. Flight was impossible.

Gollum rose slowly and crawled insect-like to the lip of the hollow. Very cautiously he raised himself inch by inch, until he could peer over it between two broken points of stone. He remained there without moving for

some time, making no sound. Presently the voices began to recede again, and then they slowly faded away. Far off a horn blew on the ramparts of the Morannon. Then quietly Gollum drew back and slipped down into the hollow.

‘More Men going to Mordor,’ he said in a low voice. ‘Dark faces. We have not seen Men like these before, no, Sméagol has not. They are fierce. They have black eyes, and long black hair, and gold rings in their ears; yes, lots of beautiful gold. And some have red paint on their cheeks, and red cloaks; and their flags are red, and the tips of their spears; and they have round shields, yellow and black with big spikes. Not nice; very cruel wicked Men they look. Almost as bad as Orcs, and much bigger. Sméagol thinks they have come out of the South beyond the Great River’s end: they came up that road. They have passed on to the Black Gate; but more may follow. Always more people coming to Mordor. One day all the peoples will be inside.’

‘Were there any oliphaunts?’ asked Sam, forgetting his fear in his eagerness for news of strange places.

‘No, no oliphaunts. What are oliphaunts?’ said Gollum.

Sam stood up, putting his hands behind his back (as he always did when ‘speaking poetry’), and began:

*Grey as a mouse,  
Big as a house,  
Nose like a snake,  
I make the earth shake,  
As I tramp through the grass;  
Trees crack as I pass.  
With horns in my mouth  
I walk in the South,  
Flapping big ears.  
Beyond count of years  
I stump round and round,  
Never lie on the ground,  
Not even to die.  
Oliphaunt am I,  
Biggest of all,  
Huge, old, and tall.  
If ever you’d met me  
You wouldn’t forget me.  
If you never do,  
You won’t think I’m true;  
But old Oliphaunt am I,  
And I never lie.*

‘That,’ said Sam, when he had finished reciting, ‘that’s a rhyme we have in the Shire. Nonsense maybe, and maybe not. But we have our tales too, and news out of the South, you know. In the old days hobbits used to go on their travels now and again. Not that many ever came back, and not that all they said was believed: *news from Bree*, and not *sure as Shiretalk*, as the sayings go. But I’ve heard tales of the big folk down away in the Sunlands. Swertings we call ’em in our tales; and they ride on oliphaunts, ’tis said, when they fight. They put houses and towers on the oliphaunts’ backs and all, and the oliphaunts throw rocks and trees at one another. So when you said “Men out of the South, all in red and gold,” I said “were there any oliphaunts?” For if there was, I was going to take a look, risk or no. But now I don’t suppose I’ll ever see an oliphaunt. Maybe there ain’t no such a beast.’ He sighed.

‘No, no oliphaunts,’ said Gollum again. ‘Sméagol has not heard of them. He does not want to see them. He does not want them to be. Sméagol wants to go away from here and hide somewhere safer. Sméagol wants master to go. Nice master, won’t he come with Sméagol?’

Frodo stood up. He had laughed in the midst of all his cares when Sam trotted out the old fireside rhyme of *Oliphaunt*, and the laugh had released him from hesitation. 'I wish we had a thousand oliphaunts with Gandalf on a white one at their head,' he said. 'Then we'd break a way into this evil land, perhaps. But we've not; just our own tired legs, that's all. Well, Sméagol, the third turn may turn the best. I will come with you.'

'Good master, wise master, nice master!' cried Gollum in delight, patting Frodo's knees. 'Good master! Then rest now, nice hobbits, under the shadow of the stones, close under the stones! Rest and lie quiet, till the Yellow Face goes away. Then we can go quickly. Soft and quick as shadows we must be!'



## Chapter 4: Of Herbs And Stewed Rabbit

**F**or the few hours of daylight that were left they rested, shifting into the shade as the sun moved, until at last the shadow of the western rim of their dell grew long, and darkness filled all the hollow. Then they ate a little, and drank sparingly. Gollum ate nothing, but he accepted water gladly.

‘Soon get more now,’ he said, licking his lips. ‘Good water runs down in streams to the Great River, nice water in the lands we are going to. Sméagol will get food there too, perhaps. He’s very hungry, yes, *gollum!*’ He set his two large flat hands on his shrunken belly, and a pale green light came into his eyes.

The dusk was deep when at length they set out, creeping over the westward rim of the dell, and fading like ghosts into the broken country on the borders of the road. The moon was now three nights from the full, but it did not climb over the mountains until nearly midnight, and the early night was very dark. A single red light burned high up in the Towers of the Teeth, but otherwise no sign could be seen or heard of the sleepless watch on the Morannon.

For many miles the red eye seemed to stare at them as they fled, stumbling through a barren stony country. They did not dare to take the road, but they kept it on their left, following its line as well as they could at a little distance. At last, when night was growing old and they were already weary, for they had taken only one short rest, the eye dwindled to a small fiery point and then vanished: they had turned the dark northern shoulder of the lower mountains and were heading southwards.

With hearts strangely lightened they now rested again, but not for long. They were not going quick enough for Gollum. By his reckoning it was nearly thirty leagues from the Morannon to the Cross-roads above Osgiliath, and he hoped to cover that distance in four journeys. So soon they struggled on once more, until the dawn began to spread slowly in the wide grey solitude. They had then walked almost eight leagues, and the hobbits could not have gone any further, even if they had dared.

The growing light revealed to them a land already less barren and ruinous. The mountains still loomed up ominously on their left, but near at hand they could see the southward road, now bearing away from the black roots of the hills and slanting westwards. Beyond it were slopes covered with sombre trees like dark clouds, but all about them lay a tumbled heathland, grown with ling and broom and cornel, and other shrubs that they did not know. Here and there they saw knots of tall pine-trees. The hearts of the hobbits rose again a little in spite of weariness: the air was fresh and fragrant, and it reminded them of the uplands of the Northfarthing far away. It seemed good to be reprieved, to walk in a land that had only been for a few years under the dominion of the Dark Lord and was not yet fallen wholly into decay. But they did not forget their danger, nor the Black Gate that was still all too near, hidden though it was behind the gloomy heights. They looked about for a hiding-place where they could shelter from evil eyes while the light lasted.

The day passed uneasily. They lay deep in the heather and counted out the slow hours, in which there seemed little change; for they were still under the shadows of the Ephel Dúath, and the sun was veiled. Frodo slept at times, deeply and peacefully, either trusting Gollum or too tired to trouble about him; but Sam found it difficult to do more than doze, even when Gollum was plainly fast asleep, whiffling and twitching in his secret dreams. Hunger, perhaps, more than mistrust kept him wakeful: he had begun to long for a good homely meal, ‘something hot out of the pot’.

As soon as the land faded into a formless grey under coming night, they started out again. In a little while Gollum led them down on to the southward road; and after that they went on more quickly, though the danger was greater. Their ears were strained for the sound of hoof or foot on the road ahead, or following them from behind; but the night passed, and they heard no sound of walker or rider.

The road had been made in a long lost time, and for perhaps thirty miles below the Morannon it had been newly repaired, but as it went south the wild encroached upon it. The handiwork of Men of old could still be seen in its straight sure flight and level course: now and again it cut its way through hillside slopes, or leaped over a stream upon a wide shapely arch of enduring masonry; but at last all signs of stonework faded, save for a broken pillar here and there, peering out of bushes at the side, or old paving-stones still lurking amid weeds and moss. Heather and trees and bracken scrambled down and overhung the banks, or sprawled out over the surface. It dwindled at last to a country cart-road little used; but it did not wind: it held on its own sure course and guided them by the swiftest way.

So they passed into the northern marches of that land that Men once called Ithilien, a fair country of climbing woods and swift-falling streams. The night became fine under star and round moon, and it seemed to the hobbits that the fragrance of the air grew as they went forward; and from the blowing and muttering of Gollum it seemed that he noticed it too, and did not relish it. At the first signs of day they halted again. They had come to the end of a long cutting, deep, and sheer-sided in the middle, by which the road clove its way through a stony ridge. Now they climbed up the westward bank and looked abroad.

Day was opening in the sky, and they saw that the mountains were now much further off, receding eastward in a long curve that was lost in the distance. Before them, as they turned west, gentle slopes ran down into dim hazes far below. All about them were small woods of resinous trees, fir and cedar and cypress, and other kinds unknown in the Shire, with wide glades among them; and everywhere there was a wealth of sweet-smelling herbs and shrubs. The long journey from Rivendell had brought them far south of their own land, but not until now in this more sheltered region had the hobbits felt the change of clime. Here Spring was already busy about them: fronds pierced moss and mould, larches were green-fingered, small flowers were opening in the turf, birds were singing. Ithilien, the garden of Gondor now desolate kept still a dishevelled dryad loveliness.

South and west it looked towards the warm lower vales of Anduin, shielded from the east by the Ephel Dúath and yet not under the mountain-shadow, protected from the north by the Emyr Muil, open to the southern airs and the moist winds from the Sea far away. Many great trees grew there, planted long ago, falling into untended age amid a riot of careless descendants; and groves and thickets there were of tamarisk and pungent terebinth, of olive and of bay; and there were junipers and myrtles; and thymes that grew in bushes, or with their woody creeping stems mantled in deep tapestries the hidden stones; sages of many kinds putting forth blue flowers, or red, or pale green; and marjorams and new-sprouting parsleys, and many herbs of forms and scents beyond the garden-lore of Sam. The grotts and rocky walls were already starred with saxifrages and stonecrops. Primeroles and anemones were awake in the filbert-brakes; and asphodel and many lily-flowers nodded their half-opened heads in the grass: deep green grass beside the pools, where falling streams halted in cool hollows on their journey down to Anduin.

The travellers turned their backs on the road and went downhill. As they walked, brushing their way through bush and herb, sweet odours rose about them. Gollum coughed and retched; but the hobbits breathed deep, and suddenly Sam laughed, for heart's ease not for jest. They followed a stream that went quickly down before them. Presently it brought them to a small clear lake in a shallow dell: it lay in the broken ruins of an ancient stone basin, the carven rim of which was almost wholly covered with mosses and rose-brambles; iris-swords stood in ranks about it, and water-lily leaves floated on its dark gently-rippling surface; but it was deep and fresh, and spilled ever softly out over a stony lip at the far end.

Here they washed themselves and drank their fill at the in-falling freshet. Then they sought for a resting-place, and a hiding-place; for this land, fair-seeming still, was nonetheless now territory of the Enemy. They had not come very far from the road, and yet even in so short a space they had seen scars of the old wars, and the newer wounds made by the Orcs and other foul servants of the Dark Lord: a pit of uncovered filth and refuse; trees hewn down wantonly and left to die, with evil runes or the fell sign of the Eye cut in rude strokes on their bark.

Sam scrambling below the outfall of the lake, smelling and touching the unfamiliar plants and trees, forgetful for the moment of Mordor, was reminded suddenly of their ever-present peril. He stumbled on a ring still scorched by fire, and in the midst of it he found a pile of charred and broken bones and skulls. The swift growth of the wild with briar and eglantine and trailing clematis was already drawing a veil over this place of dreadful

feast and slaughter; but it was not ancient. He hurried back to his companions, but he said nothing: the bones were best left in peace and not pawed and routed by Gollum.

‘Let’s find a place to lie up in,’ he said. ‘Not lower down. Higher up for me.’

A little way back above the lake they found a deep brown bed of last year’s fern. Beyond it was a thicket of dark-leaved bay-trees climbing up a steep bank that was crowned with old cedars. Here they decided to rest and pass the day, which already promised to be bright and warm. A good day for strolling on their way along the groves and glades of Ithilien; but though Orcs may shun the sunlight, there were too many places here where they could lie hid and watch; and other evil eyes were abroad: Sauron had many servants. Gollum, in any case, would not move under the Yellow Face. Soon it would look over the dark ridges of the Ephel Dúath, and he would faint and cower in the light and heat.

Sam had been giving earnest thought to food as they marched. Now that the despair of the impassable Gate was behind him, he did not feel so inclined as his master to take no thought for their livelihood beyond the end of their errand; and anyway it seemed wiser to him to save the waybread of the Elves for worse times ahead. Six days or more had passed since he reckoned that they had only a bare supply for three weeks.

‘If we reach the Fire in that time, we’ll be lucky at this rate!’ he thought. ‘And we might be wanting to get back. We might!’

Besides, at the end of a long night-march, and after bathing and drinking, he felt even more hungry than usual. A supper, or a breakfast, by the fire in the old kitchen at Bagshot Row was what he really wanted. An idea struck him and he turned to Gollum. Gollum had just begun to sneak off on his own, and he was crawling away on all fours through the fern.

‘Hi! Gollum!’ said Sam. ‘Where are you going? Hunting? Well, see here, old noser, you don’t like our food, and I’d not be sorry for a change myself. Your new motto’s *always ready to help*. Could you find anything fit for a hungry hobbit?’

‘Yes, perhaps, yes,’ said Gollum. ‘Sméagol always helps, if they asks—if they asks nicely.’

‘Right!’ said Sam. ‘I does ask. And if that isn’t nice enough, I begs.’

Gollum disappeared. He was away some time, and Frodo after a few mouthfuls of *lembas* settled deep into the brown fern and went to sleep. Sam looked at him. The early daylight was only just creeping down into the shadows under the trees, but he saw his master’s face very clearly, and his hands, too, lying at rest on the ground beside him. He was reminded suddenly of Frodo as he had lain, asleep in the house of Elrond, after his deadly wound. Then as he had kept watch Sam had noticed that at times a light seemed to be shining faintly within; but now the light was even clearer and stronger. Frodo’s face was peaceful, the marks of fear and care had left it; but it looked old, old and beautiful, as if the chiselling of the shaping years was now revealed in many fine lines that had before been hidden, though the identity of the face was not changed. Not that Sam Gamgee put it that way to himself. He shook his head, as if finding words useless, and murmured: ‘I love him. He’s like that, and sometimes it shines through, somehow. But I love him, whether or no.’

Gollum returned quietly and peered over Sam’s shoulder. Looking at Frodo, he shut his eyes and crawled away without a sound. Sam came to him a moment later and found him chewing something and muttering to himself. On the ground beside him lay two small rabbits, which he was beginning to eye greedily.

‘Sméagol always helps,’ he said. ‘He has brought rabbits, nice rabbits. But master has gone to sleep, and perhaps Sam wants to sleep. Doesn’t want rabbits now? Sméagol tries to help, but he can’t catch things all in a minute.’

Sam, however, had no objection to rabbit at all, and said so. At least not to cooked rabbit. All hobbits, of course, can cook, for they begin to learn the art before their letters (which many never reach); but Sam was a good cook, even by hobbit reckoning, and he had done a good deal of the camp-cooking on their travels, when there was a chance. He still hopefully carried some of his gear in his pack: a small tinder-box, two small shallow pans, the smaller fitting into the larger; inside them a wooden spoon, a short two-pronged fork and some skewers were stowed; and hidden at the bottom of the pack in a flat wooden box a dwindling treasure,

some salt. But he needed a fire, and other things besides. He thought for a bit, while he took out his knife, cleaned and whetted it, and began to dress the rabbits. He was not going to leave Frodo alone asleep even for a few minutes.

‘Now, Gollum,’ he said, ‘I’ve another job for you. Go and fill these pans with water, and bring ’em back!’

‘Sméagol will fetch water, yes,’ said Gollum. ‘But what does the hobbit want all that water for? He has drunk, he has washed.’

‘Never you mind,’ said Sam. ‘If you can’t guess, you’ll soon find out. And the sooner you fetch the water, the sooner you’ll learn. Don’t you damage one of my pans, or I’ll carve you into mincemeat.’

While Gollum was away Sam took another look at Frodo. He was still sleeping quietly, but Sam was now struck most by the leanness of his face and hands. ‘Too thin and drawn he is,’ he muttered. ‘Not right for a hobbit. If I can get these coneys cooked, I’m going to wake him up.’

Sam gathered a pile of the driest fern, and then scrambled up the bank collecting a bundle of twigs and broken wood; the fallen branch of a cedar at the top gave him a good supply. He cut out some turves at the foot of the bank just outside the fern-brake, and made a shallow hole and laid his fuel in it. Being handy with flint and tinder he soon had a small blaze going. It made little or no smoke but gave off an aromatic scent. He was just stooping over his fire, shielding it and building it up with heavier wood, when Gollum returned, carrying the pans carefully and grumbling to himself.

He set the pans down, and then suddenly saw what Sam was doing. He gave a thin hissing shriek, and seemed to be both frightened and angry. ‘Ach! Sss—no!’ he cried. ‘No! Silly hobbits, foolish, yes foolish! They mustn’t do it!’

‘Mustn’t do what?’ asked Sam in surprise.

‘Not make the nasty red tongues,’ hissed Gollum. ‘Fire, fire! It’s dangerous, yes it is. It burns, it kills. And it will bring enemies, yes it will.’

‘I don’t think so,’ said Sam. ‘Don’t see why it should, if you don’t put wet stuff on it and make a smother. But if it does, it does. I’m going to risk it, anyhow. I’m going to stew these coneys.’

‘Stew the rabbits!’ squealed Gollum in dismay. ‘Spoil beautiful meat Sméagol saved for you, poor hungry Sméagol! What for? What for, silly hobbit? They are young, they are tender, they are nice. Eat them, eat them!’ He clawed at the nearest rabbit, already skinned and lying by the fire.

‘Now, now!’ said Sam. ‘Each to his own fashion. Our bread chokes you, and raw coney chokes me. If you give me a coney, the coney’s mine, see, to cook, if I have a mind. And I have. You needn’t watch me. Go and catch another and eat it as you fancy—somewhere private and out o’ my sight. Then you won’t see the fire, and I shan’t see you, and we’ll both be the happier. I’ll see the fire don’t smoke, if that’s any comfort to you.’

Gollum withdrew grumbling, and crawled into the fern. Sam busied himself with his pans. ‘What a hobbit needs with coney,’ he said to himself, ‘is some herbs and roots, especially taters—not to mention bread. Herbs we can manage, seemingly.’

‘Gollum!’ he called softly. ‘Third time pays for all. I want some herbs.’ Gollum’s head peeped out of the fern, but his looks were neither helpful nor friendly. ‘A few bay-leaves, some thyme and sage, will do—before the water boils,’ said Sam.

‘No!’ said Gollum. ‘Sméagol is not pleased. And Sméagol doesn’t like smelly leaves. He doesn’t eat grasses or roots, no precious, not till he’s starving or very sick, poor Sméagol.’

‘Sméagol’ll get into real true hot water, when this water boils, if he don’t do as he’s asked,’ growled Sam. ‘Sam’ll put his head in it, yes precious. And I’d make him look for turnips and carrots, and taters too, if it was the time o’ the year. I’ll bet there’s all sorts of good things running wild in this country. I’d give a lot for half a dozen taters.’

‘Sméagol won’t go, O no precious, not this time,’ hissed Gollum. ‘He’s frightened, and he’s very tired, and this hobbit’s not nice, not nice at all. Sméagol won’t grub for roots and carrotses and—taters. What’s taters, precious, eh, what’s taters?’

‘Po—ta—toes,’ said Sam. ‘The Gaffer’s delight, and rare good ballast for an empty belly. But you won’t find any, so you needn’t look. But be good Sméagol and fetch me the herbs, and I’ll think better of you. What’s more, if you turn over a new leaf, and keep it turned, I’ll cook you some taters one of these days. I will: fried fish and chips served by S. Gamgee. You couldn’t say no to that.’

‘Yes, yes we could. Spoiling nice fish, scorching it. Give me fish *now*, and keep nasty chips!’

‘Oh you’re hopeless,’ said Sam. ‘Go to sleep!’

In the end he had to find what he wanted for himself; but he did not have to go far, not out of sight of the place where his master lay, still sleeping. For a while Sam sat musing, and tending the fire till the water boiled. The daylight grew and the air became warm; the dew faded off turf and leaf. Soon the rabbits cut up lay simmering in their pans with the bunched herbs. Almost Sam fell asleep as the time went by. He let them stew for close on an hour, testing them now and again with his fork, and tasting the broth.

When he thought all was ready he lifted the pans off the fire, and crept along to Frodo. Frodo half opened his eyes as Sam stood over him, and then he wakened from his dreaming: another gentle, unrecoverable dream of peace.

‘Hullo, Sam!’ he said. ‘Not resting? Is anything wrong? What is the time?’

‘About a couple of hours after daybreak,’ said Sam, ‘and nigh on half past eight by Shire clocks, maybe. But nothing’s wrong. Though it ain’t quite what I’d call right: no stock, no onions, no taters. I’ve got a bit of a stew for you, and some broth, Mr. Frodo. Do you good. You’ll have to sup it in your mug; or straight from the pan, when it’s cooled a bit. I haven’t brought no bowls, nor nothing proper.’

Frodo yawned and stretched. ‘You should have been resting, Sam,’ he said. ‘And lighting a fire was dangerous in these parts. But I do feel hungry. Hmm! Can I smell it from here? What have you stewed?’

‘A present from Sméagol,’ said Sam: ‘a brace o’ young coneys; though I fancy Gollum’s regretting them now. But there’s naught to go with them but a few herbs.’

Sam and his master sat just within the fern-brake and ate their stew from the pans, sharing the old fork and spoon. They allowed themselves half a piece of the Elvish waybread each. It seemed a feast.

‘Wheew! Gollum!’ Sam called and whistled softly. ‘Come on! Still time to change your mind. There’s some left, if you want to try stewed coney.’ There was no answer.

‘Oh well, I suppose he’s gone off to find something for himself. We’ll finish it,’ said Sam.

‘And then you must take some sleep,’ said Frodo.

‘Don’t you drop off, while I’m nodding, Mr. Frodo. I don’t feel too sure of him. There’s a good deal of Stinker—the bad Gollum, if you understand me—in him still, and it’s getting stronger again. Not but what I think he’d try to throttle me first now. We don’t see eye to eye, and he’s not pleased with Sam, O no precious, not pleased at all.’

They finished, and Sam went off to the stream to rinse his gear. As he stood up to return, he looked back up the slope. At that moment he saw the sun rise out of the reek, or haze, or dark shadow, or whatever it was, that lay ever to the east, and it sent its golden beams down upon the trees and glades about him. Then he noticed a thin spiral of blue-grey smoke, plain to see as it caught the sunlight, rising from a thicket above him. With a shock he realized that this was the smoke from his little cooking-fire, which he had neglected to put out.

‘That won’t do! Never thought it would show like that!’ he muttered, and he started to hurry back. Suddenly he halted and listened. Had he heard a whistle or not? Or was it the call of some strange bird? If it was a whistle, it did not come from Frodo’s direction. There it went again from another place! Sam began to run as well as he could uphill.



He found that a small brand, burning away to its outer end, had kindled some fern at the edge of the fire, and the fern blazing up had set the turves smouldering. Hastily he stamped out what was left of the fire, scattered the ashes, and laid the turves on the hole. Then he crept back to Frodo.

‘Did you hear a whistle, and what sounded like an answer?’ he asked. ‘A few minutes back. I hope it was only a bird, but it didn’t sound quite like that: more like somebody mimicking a bird-call, I thought. And I’m afraid my bit of fire’s been smoking. Now if I’ve gone and brought trouble, I’ll never forgive myself. Nor won’t have a chance, maybe!’

‘Hush!’ whispered Frodo. ‘I thought I heard voices.’

The two hobbits trussed their small packs, put them on ready for flight, and then crawled deeper into the fern. There they crouched listening.

There was no doubt of the voices. They were speaking low and furtively, but they were near, and coming nearer. Then quite suddenly one spoke clearly close at hand.

‘Here! Here is where the smoke came from!’ it said. ‘’Twill be nigh at hand. In the fern, no doubt. We shall have it like a coney in a trap. Then we shall learn what kind of thing it is.’

‘Aye, and what it knows!’ said a second voice.

At once four men came striding through the fern from different directions. Since flight and hiding were no longer possible, Frodo and Sam sprang to their feet, putting back to back and whipping out their small swords.

If they were astonished at what they saw, their captors were even more astonished. Four tall Men stood there. Two had spears in their hands with broad bright heads. Two had great bows, almost of their own height, and great quivers of long green-feathered arrows. All had swords at their sides, and were clad in green and brown of varied hues, as if the better to walk unseen in the glades of Ithilien. Green gauntlets covered their hands, and their faces were hooded and masked with green, except for their eyes, which were very keen and bright. At once Frodo thought of Boromir, for these Men were like him in stature and bearing, and in their manner of speech.

‘We have not found what we sought,’ said one. ‘But what have we found?’

‘Not Orcs,’ said another, releasing the hilt of his sword, which he had seized when he saw the glitter of Sting in Frodo’s hand.

‘Elves?’ said a third, doubtfully.

‘Nay! Not Elves,’ said the fourth, the tallest, and as it appeared the chief among them. ‘Elves do not walk in Ithilien in these days. And Elves are wondrous fair to look upon, or so ’tis said.’

‘Meaning we’re not, I take you,’ said Sam. ‘Thank you kindly. And when you’ve finished discussing us, perhaps you’ll say who *you* are, and why you can’t let two tired travellers rest.’

The tall green man laughed grimly. ‘I am Faramir, Captain of Gondor,’ he said. ‘But there are no travellers in this land: only the servants of the Dark Tower, or of the White.’

‘But we are neither,’ said Frodo. ‘And travellers we are, whatever Captain Faramir may say.’

‘Then make haste to declare yourselves and your errand,’ said Faramir. ‘We have a work to do, and this is no time or place for riddling or parleying. Come! Where is the third of your company?’

‘The third?’

‘Yes, the skulking fellow that we saw with his nose in the pool down yonder. He had an ill-favoured look. Some spying breed of Orc, I guess, or a creature of theirs. But he gave us the slip by some fox-trick.’

‘I do not know where he is,’ said Frodo. ‘He is only a chance companion met upon our road, and I am not answerable for him. If you come on him, spare him. Bring him or send him to us. He is only a wretched gangrel creature, but I have him under my care for a while. But as for us, we are Hobbits of the Shire, far to the North and West, beyond many rivers. Frodo son of Drogo is my name, and with me is Samwise son of Hamfast, a

worthy hobbit in my service. We have come by long ways—out of Rivendell, or Imladris as some call it.’ Here Faramir started and grew intent. ‘Seven companions we had: one we lost at Moria, the others we left at Parth Galen above Rauros: two of my kin; a Dwarf there was also, and an Elf, and two Men. They were Aragorn; and Boromir, who said that he came out of Minas Tirith, a city in the South.’

‘Boromir!’ all the four men exclaimed.

‘Boromir son of the Lord Denethor?’ said Faramir, and a strange stern look came into his face. ‘You came with him? That is news indeed, if it be true. Know, little strangers, that Boromir son of Denethor was High Warden of the White Tower, and our Captain-General: sorely do we miss him. Who are you then, and what had you to do with him? Be swift, for the Sun is climbing!’

‘Are the riddling words known to you that Boromir brought to Rivendell?’ Frodo replied.

*Seek for the Sword that was Broken.  
In Imladris it dwells.*

‘The words are known indeed,’ said Faramir in astonishment. ‘It is some token of your truth that you also know them.’

‘Aragorn whom I named is the bearer of the Sword that was Broken,’ said Frodo. ‘And we are the Halflings that the rhyme spoke of.’

‘That I see,’ said Faramir thoughtfully. ‘Or I see that it might be so. And what is Isildur’s Bane?’

‘That is hidden,’ answered Frodo. ‘Doubtless it will be made clear in time.’

‘We must learn more of this,’ said Faramir, ‘and know what brings you so far east under the shadow of yonder—,’ he pointed and said no name. ‘But not now. We have business in hand. You are in peril, and you would not have gone far by field or road this day. There will be hard handstrokes nigh at hand ere the day is full. Then death, or swift flight back to Anduin. I will leave two to guard you, for your good and for mine. Wise man trusts not to chance-meeting on the road in this land. If I return, I will speak more with you.’

‘Farewell!’ said Frodo, bowing low. ‘Think what you will, I am a friend of all enemies of the One Enemy. We would go with you, if we halfling folk could hope to serve you, such doughty men and strong as you seem, and if my errand permitted it. May the light shine on your swords!’

‘The Halflings are courteous folk, whatever else they be,’ said Faramir. ‘Farewell!’

The hobbits sat down again, but they said nothing to one another of their thoughts and doubts. Close by, just under the dappling shadow of the dark bay-trees, two men remained on guard. They took off their masks now and again to cool them, as the day-heat grew, and Frodo saw that they were goodly men, pale-skinned, dark of hair, with grey eyes and faces sad and proud. They spoke together in soft voices, at first using the Common Speech, but after the manner of older days, and then changing to another language of their own. To his amazement, as he listened Frodo became aware that it was the elven-tongue that they spoke, or one but little different; and he looked at them with wonder, for he knew then that they must be Dúnedain of the South, men of the line of the Lords of Westerosse.

After a while he spoke to them; but they were slow and cautious in answering. They named themselves Mablung and Damrod, soldiers of Gondor, and they were Rangers of Ithilien; for they were descended from folk who lived in Ithilien at one time, before it was overrun. From such men the Lord Denethor chose his forayers, who crossed the Anduin secretly (how or where, they would not say) to harry the Orcs and other enemies that roamed between the Ephel Dúath and the River.

‘It is close on ten leagues hence to the east-shore of Anduin,’ said Mablung, ‘and we seldom come so far afield. But we have a new errand on this journey: we come to ambush the Men of Harad. Curse them!’

‘Aye, curse the Southrons!’ said Damrod. ‘’Tis said that there were dealings of old between Gondor and the kingdoms of the Harad in the Far South; though there was never friendship. In those days our bounds were away south beyond the mouths of Anduin, and Umbar, the nearest of their realms, acknowledged our sway. But that is long since. ’Tis many lives of Men since any passed to or fro between us. Now of late we have learned

that the Enemy has been among them, and they are gone over to Him, or back to Him—they were ever ready to His will—as have so many also in the East. I doubt not that the days of Gondor are numbered, and the walls of Minas Tirith are doomed, so great is His strength and malice.’

‘But still we will not sit idle and let Him do all as He would,’ said Mablung. ‘These cursed Southrons come now marching up the ancient roads to swell the hosts of the Dark Tower. Yea, up the very roads that craft of Gondor made. And they go ever more heedlessly, we learn, thinking that the power of their new master is great enough, so that the mere shadow of His hills will protect them. We come to teach them another lesson. Great strength of them was reported to us some days ago, marching north. One of their regiments is due by our reckoning to pass by, some time ere noon—up on the road above, where it passes through the cloven way. The road may pass, but they shall not! Not while Faramir is Captain. He leads now in all perilous ventures. But his life is charmed, or fate spares him for some other end.’

Their talk died down into a listening silence. All seemed still and watchful. Sam, crouched by the edge of the fern-brake, peered out. With his keen hobbit-eyes he saw that many more Men were about. He could see them stealing up the slopes, singly or in long files, keeping always to the shade of grove or thicket, or crawling, hardly visible in their brown and green raiment, through grass and brake. All were hooded and masked, and had gauntlets on their hands, and were armed like Faramir and his companions. Before long they had all passed and vanished. The sun rose till it neared the South. The shadows shrank.

‘I wonder where that dratted Gollum is?’ thought Sam, as he crawled back into deeper shade. ‘He stands a fair chance of being spitted for an Orc, or of being roasted by the Yellow Face. But I fancy he’ll look after himself.’ He lay down beside Frodo and began to doze.

He woke, thinking that he had heard horns blowing. He sat up. It was now high noon. The guards stood alert and tense in the shadow of the trees. Suddenly the horns rang out louder and beyond mistake from above, over the top of the slope. Sam thought that he heard cries and wild shouting also, but the sound was faint, as if it came out of some distant cave. Then presently the noise of fighting broke out near at hand, just above their hiding-place. He could hear plainly the ringing grate of steel on steel, the clang of sword on iron cap, the dull beat of blade on shield; men were yelling and screaming, and one clear loud voice was calling *Gondor! Gondor!*

‘It sounds like a hundred blacksmiths all smithying together,’ said Sam to Frodo. ‘They’re as near as I want them now.’

But the noise grew closer. ‘They are coming!’ cried Damrod. ‘See! Some of the Southrons have broken from the trap and are flying from the road. There they go! Our men after them, and the Captain leading.’

Sam, eager to see more, went now and joined the guards. He scrambled a little way up into one of the larger of the bay-trees. For a moment he caught a glimpse of swarthy men in red running down the slope some way off with green-clad warriors leaping after them, hewing them down as they fled. Arrows were thick in the air. Then suddenly straight over the rim of their sheltering bank, a man fell, crashing through the slender trees, nearly on top of them. He came to rest in the fern a few feet away, face downward, green arrow-feathers sticking from his neck below a golden collar. His scarlet robes were tattered, his corslet of overlapping brazen plates was rent and hewn, his black plaits of hair braided with gold were drenched with blood. His brown hand still clutched the hilt of a broken sword.

It was Sam’s first view of a battle of Men against Men, and he did not like it much. He was glad that he could not see the dead face. He wondered what the man’s name was and where he came from; and if he was really evil of heart, or what lies or threats had led him on the long march from his home; and if he would not really rather have stayed there in peace—all in a flash of thought which was quickly driven from his mind. For just as Mablung stepped towards the fallen body, there was a new noise. Great crying and shouting. Amidst it Sam heard a shrill bellowing or trumpeting. And then a great thudding and bumping, like huge rams dinning on the ground.

‘Ware! Ware!’ cried Damrod to his companion. ‘May the Valar turn him aside! Mûmak! Mûmak!’

To his astonishment and terror, and lasting delight, Sam saw a vast shape crash out of the trees and come careering down the slope. Big as a house, much bigger than a house, it looked to him, a grey-clad moving hill. Fear and wonder, maybe, enlarged him in the hobbit's eyes, but the Mûmak of Harad was indeed a beast of vast bulk, and the like of him does not walk now in Middle-earth; his kin that live still in latter days are but memories of his girth and majesty. On he came, straight towards the watchers, and then swerved aside in the nick of time, passing only a few yards away, rocking the ground beneath their feet: his great legs like trees, enormous sail-like ears spread out, long snout upraised like a huge serpent about to strike, his small red eyes raging. His upturned hornlike tusks were bound with bands of gold and dripped with blood. His trappings of scarlet and gold flapped about him in wild tatters. The ruins of what seemed a very war-tower lay upon his heaving back, smashed in his furious passage through the woods; and high upon his neck still desperately clung a tiny figure—the body of a mighty warrior, a giant among the Swertings.

On the great beast thundered, blundering in blind wrath through pool and thicket. Arrows skipped and snapped harmlessly about the triple hide of his flanks. Men of both sides fled before him, but many he overtook and crushed to the ground. Soon he was lost to view, still trumpeting and stamping far away. What became of him Sam never heard: whether he escaped to roam the wild for a time, until he perished far from his home or was trapped in some deep pit; or whether he raged on until he plunged in the Great River and was swallowed up.

Sam drew a deep breath. 'An Oliphaunt it was!' he said. 'So there are Oliphaunts, and I have seen one. What a life! But no-one at home will ever believe me. Well, if that's over, I'll have a bit of sleep.'

'Sleep while you may,' said Mablung. 'But the Captain will return, if he is unhurt; and when he comes we shall depart swiftly. We shall be pursued as soon as news of our deed reaches the Enemy, and that will not be long.'

'Go quietly when you must!' said Sam. 'No need to disturb my sleep. I was walking all night.'

Mablung laughed. 'I do not think the Captain will leave you here, Master Samwise,' he said. 'But you shall see.'



## Chapter 5: The Window On The West

It seemed to Sam that he had only dozed for a few minutes when he awoke to find that it was late afternoon and Faramir had come back. He had brought many men with him; indeed all the survivors of the foray were now gathered on the slope nearby, two or three hundred strong. They sat in a wide semicircle, between the arms of which Faramir was seated on the ground, while Frodo stood before him. It looked strangely like the trial of a prisoner.

Sam crept out from the fern, but no-one paid any attention to him, and he placed himself at the end of the rows of men, where he could see and hear all that was going on. He watched and listened intently, ready to dash to his master's aid if needed. He could see Faramir's face, which was now unmasked: it was stern and commanding, and a keen wit lay behind his searching glance. Doubt was in the grey eyes that gazed steadily at Frodo.

Sam soon became aware that the Captain was not satisfied with Frodo's account of himself at several points: what part he had to play in the Company that set out from Rivendell; why he had left Boromir; and where he was now going. In particular he returned often to Isildur's Bane. Plainly he saw that Frodo was concealing from him some matter of great importance.

'But it was at the coming of the Halfling that Isildur's Bane should waken, or so one must read the words,' he insisted. 'If then you are the Halfling that was named, doubtless you brought this thing, whatever it may be, to the Council of which you speak, and there Boromir saw it. Do you deny it?'

Frodo made no answer. 'So!' said Faramir. 'I wish then to learn from you more of it; for what concerns Boromir concerns me. An orc-arrow slew Isildur, so far as old tales tell. But orc-arrows are plenty, and the sight of one would not be taken as a sign of Doom by Boromir of Gondor. Had you this thing in keeping? It is hidden, you say; but is not that because you choose to hide it?'

'No, not because I choose,' answered Frodo. 'It does not belong to me. It does not belong to any mortal, great or small; though if any could claim it, it would be Aragorn son of Arathorn, whom I named, the leader of our Company from Moria to Rauros.'

'Why so, and not Boromir, prince of the City that the sons of Elendil founded?'

'Because Aragorn is descended in direct lineage, father to father, from Isildur Elendil's son himself. And the sword that he bears was Elendil's sword.'

A murmur of astonishment ran through all the ring of men. Some cried aloud: 'The sword of Elendil! The sword of Elendil comes to Minas Tirith! Great tidings!' But Faramir's face was unmoved.

'Maybe,' he said. 'But so great a claim will need to be established, and clear proofs will be required, should this Aragorn ever come to Minas Tirith. He had not come, nor any of your Company, when I set out six days ago.'

'Boromir was satisfied of that claim,' said Frodo. 'Indeed, if Boromir were here, he would answer all your questions. And since he was already at Rauros many days back, and intended then to go straight to your city, if you return, you may soon learn the answers there. My part in the Company was known to him, as to all the others, for it was appointed to me by Elrond of Imladris himself before the whole Council. On that errand I came into this country, but it is not mine to reveal to any outside the Company. Yet those who claim to oppose the Enemy would do well not to hinder it.'

Frodo's tone was proud, whatever he felt, and Sam approved of it; but it did not appease Faramir.

‘So!’ he said. ‘You bid me mind my own affairs, and get me back home, and let you be. Boromir will tell all, when he comes. When he comes, say you! Were you a friend of Boromir?’

Vividly before Frodo’s mind came the memory of Boromir’s assault upon him, and for a moment he hesitated. Faramir’s eyes watching him grew harder. ‘Boromir was a valiant member of our Company,’ said Frodo at length. ‘Yes, I was his friend, for my part.’

Faramir smiled grimly. ‘Then you would grieve to learn that Boromir is dead?’

‘I would grieve indeed,’ said Frodo. Then catching the look in Faramir’s eyes, he faltered. ‘Dead?’ he said. ‘Do you mean that he is dead, and that you knew it? You have been trying to trap me in words, playing with me? Or are you now trying to snare me with a falsehood?’

‘I would not snare even an orc with a falsehood,’ said Faramir.

‘How then did he die, and how do you know of it? Since you say that none of the Company had reached the city when you left.’

‘As to the manner of his death, I had hoped that his friend and companion would tell me how it was.’

‘But he was alive and strong when we parted. And he lives still for all that I know. Though surely there are many perils in the world.’

‘Many indeed,’ said Faramir, ‘and treachery not the least.’

Sam had been getting more and more impatient and angry at this conversation. These last words were more than he could bear, and bursting into the middle of the ring, he strode up to his master’s side.

‘Begging your pardon, Mr. Frodo,’ he said, ‘but this has gone on long enough. He’s no right to talk to you so. After all you’ve gone through, as much for his good and all these great Men as for anyone else.’

‘See here, Captain!’ He planted himself squarely in front of Faramir, his hands on his hips, and a look on his face as if he was addressing a young hobbit who had offered him what he called ‘sauce’ when questioned about visits to the orchard. There was some murmuring, but also some grins on the faces of the men looking on: the sight of their Captain sitting on the ground and eye to eye with a young hobbit, legs well apart, bristling with wrath, was one beyond their experience. ‘See here!’ he said. ‘What are you driving at? Let’s come to the point before all the Orcs of Mordor come down on us! If you think my master murdered this Boromir and then ran away, you’ve got no sense; but say it, and have done! And then let us know what you mean to do about it. But it’s a pity that folk as talk about fighting the Enemy can’t let others do their bit in their own way without interfering. He’d be mighty pleased, if he could see you now. Think he’d got a new friend, he would.’

‘Patience!’ said Faramir, but without anger. ‘Do not speak before your master, whose wit is greater than yours. And I do not need any to teach me of our peril. Even so, I spare a brief time, in order to judge justly in a hard matter. Were I as hasty as you, I might have slain you long ago. For I am commanded to slay all whom I find in this land without the leave of the Lord of Gondor. But I do not slay man or beast needlessly, and not gladly even when it is needed. Neither do I talk in vain. So be comforted. Sit by your master, and be silent!’

Sam sat down heavily with a red face. Faramir turned to Frodo again. ‘You asked how do I know that the son of Denethor is dead. Tidings of death have many wings. *Night oft brings news to near kindred*, ’tis said. Boromir was my brother.’

A shadow of sorrow passed over his face. ‘Do you remember aught of special mark that the Lord Boromir bore with him among his gear?’

Frodo thought for a moment, fearing some further trap, and wondering how this debate would turn in the end. He had hardly saved the Ring from the proud grasp of Boromir, and how he would fare now among so many men, warlike and strong, he did not know. Yet he felt in his heart that Faramir, though he was much like his brother in looks, was a man less self-regarding, both sterner and wiser. ‘I remember that Boromir bore a horn,’ he said at last.

‘You remember well, and as one who has in truth seen him,’ said Faramir. ‘Then maybe you can see it in your mind’s eye: a great horn of the wild ox of the East, bound with silver, and written with ancient characters. That horn the eldest son of our house has borne for many generations; and it is said that if it be blown at need anywhere within the bounds of Gondor, as the realm was of old, its voice will not pass unheeded.

‘Five days ere I set out on this venture, eleven days ago at about this hour of the day, I heard the blowing of that horn: from the northward it seemed, but dim, as if it were but an echo in the mind. A boding of ill we thought it, my father and I, for no tidings had we heard of Boromir since he went away, and no watcher on our borders had seen him pass. And on the third night after another and a stranger thing befell me.

‘I sat at night by the waters of Anduin, in the grey dark under the young pale moon, watching the ever-moving stream; and the sad reeds were rustling. So do we ever watch the shores nigh Osgiliath, which our enemies now partly hold, and issue from it to harry our lands. But that night all the world slept at the midnight hour. Then I saw, or it seemed that I saw, a boat floating on the water, glimmering grey, a small boat of a strange fashion with a high prow, and there was none to row or steer it.

‘An awe fell on me, for a pale light was round it. But I rose and went to the bank, and began to walk out into the stream, for I was drawn towards it. Then the boat turned towards me, and stayed its pace, and floated slowly by within my hand’s reach, yet I durst not handle it. It waded deep, as if it were heavily burdened, and it seemed to me as it passed under my gaze that it was almost filled with clear water, from which came the light; and lapped in the water a warrior lay asleep.

‘A broken sword was on his knee. I saw many wounds on him. It was Boromir, my brother, dead. I knew his gear, his sword, his beloved face. One thing only I missed: his horn. One thing only I knew not: a fair belt, as it were of linked golden leaves, about his waist. *Boromir!* I cried. *Where is thy horn? Whither goest thou? O Boromir!* But he was gone. The boat turned into the stream and passed glimmering on into the night. Dreamlike it was, and yet no dream, for there was no waking. And I do not doubt that he is dead and has passed down the River to the Sea.’

‘Alas!’ said Frodo. ‘That was indeed Boromir as I knew him. For the golden belt was given to him in Lothlórien by the Lady Galadriel. She it was that clothed us as you see us, in elven-grey. This brooch is of the same workmanship.’ He touched the green and silver leaf that fastened his cloak beneath his throat.

Faramir looked closely at it. ‘It is beautiful,’ he said. ‘Yes, ’tis work of the same craft. So then you passed through the Land of Lórien? Laurelindórenan it was named of old, but long now it has lain beyond the knowledge of Men,’ he added softly, regarding Frodo with a new wonder in his eyes. ‘Much that was strange about you I begin now to understand. Will you not tell me more? For it is a bitter thought that Boromir died, within sight of the land of his home.’

‘No more can I say than I have said,’ answered Frodo. ‘Though your tale fills me with foreboding. A vision it was that you saw, I think, and no more, some shadow of evil fortune that has been or will be. Unless indeed it is some lying trick of the Enemy. I have seen the faces of fair warriors of old laid in sleep beneath the pools of the Dead Marshes, or seeming so by his foul arts.’

‘Nay, it was not so,’ said Faramir. ‘For his works fill the heart with loathing; but my heart was filled with grief and pity.’

‘Yet how could such a thing have happened in truth?’ asked Frodo. ‘For no boat could have been carried over the stony hills from Tol Brandir; and Boromir purposed to go home across the Entwash and the fields of Rohan. And yet how could any vessel ride the foam of the great falls and not founder in the boiling pools, though laden with water?’

‘I know not,’ said Faramir. ‘But whence came the boat?’

‘From Lórien,’ said Frodo. ‘In three such boats we rowed down Anduin to the Falls. They also were of elven-work.’

‘You passed through the Hidden Land,’ said Faramir, ‘but it seems that you little understood its power. If Men have dealings with the Mistress of Magic who dwells in the Golden Wood, then they may look for strange

things to follow. For it is perilous for mortal man to walk out of the world of this Sun, and few of old came thence unchanged, 'tis said.

*'Boromir, O Boromir!' he cried. 'What did she say to you, the Lady that dies not? What did she see? What woke in your heart then? Why went you ever to Laurelindórenan, and came not by your own road, upon the horses of Rohan riding home in the morning?'*

Then turning again to Frodo, he spoke in a quiet voice once more. 'To those questions I guess that you could make some answer, Frodo son of Drogo. But not here or now, maybe. But lest you still should think my tale a vision, I will tell you this. The horn of Boromir at least returned in truth, and not in seeming. The horn came, but it was cloven in two, as it were by axe or sword. The shards came severally to shore: one was found among the reeds where watchers of Gondor lay, northwards below the infalls of the Entwash; the other was found spinning on the flood by one who had an errand on the water. Strange chances, but murder will out, 'tis said.

'And now the horn of the elder son lies in two pieces upon the lap of Denethor, sitting in his high chair, waiting for news. And you can tell me nothing of the cleaving of the horn?'

'No, I did not know of it,' said Frodo. 'But the day when you heard it blowing, if your reckoning is true, was the day when we parted, when I and my servant left the Company. And now your tale fills me with dread. For if Boromir was then in peril and was slain, I must fear that all my companions perished too. And they were my kindred and my friends.

'Will you not put aside your doubt of me and let me go? I am weary, and full of grief, and afraid. But I have a deed to do, or to attempt, before I too am slain. And the more need of haste, if we two halflings are all that remain of our fellowship.

'Go back, Faramir, valiant Captain of Gondor, and defend your city while you may, and let me go where my doom takes me.'

'For me there is no comfort in our speech together,' said Faramir; 'but you surely draw from it more dread than need be. Unless the people of Lórien themselves came to him, who arrayed Boromir as for a funeral? Not Orcs or servants of the Nameless. Some of your Company, I guess, live still.

'But whatever befell on the North March, you, Frodo, I doubt no longer. If hard days have made me any judge of Men's words and faces, then I may make a guess at Halflings! Though,' and now he smiled, 'there is something strange about you, Frodo, an Elvish air, maybe. But more lies upon our words together than I thought at first. I should now take you back to Minas Tirith to answer there to Denethor, and my life will justly be forfeit, if I now choose a course that proves ill for my city. So I will not decide in haste what is to be done. Yet we must move hence without more delay.'

He sprang to his feet and issued some orders. At once the men who were gathered round him broke up into small groups, and went off this way and that, vanishing quickly into the shadows of the rocks and trees. Soon only Mablung and Damrod remained.

'Now you, Frodo and Samwise, will come with me and my guards,' said Faramir. 'You cannot go along the road southwards, if that was your purpose. It will be unsafe for some days, and always more closely watched after this affray than it has been yet. And you cannot, I think, go far today in any case, for you are weary. And so are we. We are going now to a secret place we have, somewhat less than ten miles from here. The Orcs and spies of the Enemy have not found it yet, and if they did, we could hold it long even against many. There we may lie up and rest for a while, and you with us. In the morning I will decide what is best for me to do, and for you.'

There was nothing for Frodo to do but to fall in with this request, or order. It seemed in any case a wise course for the moment, since this foray of the men of Gondor had made a journey in Ithilien more dangerous than ever.

They set out at once: Mablung and Damrod a little ahead, and Faramir with Frodo and Sam behind. Skirting the hither side of the pool where the hobbits had bathed, they crossed the stream, climbed a long bank, and passed into green-shadowed woodlands that marched ever downwards and westwards. While they walked, as swiftly as the hobbits could go, they talked in hushed voices.



‘I broke off our speech together,’ said Faramir, ‘not only because time pressed, as Master Samwise had reminded me, but also because we were drawing near to matters that were better not debated openly before many men. It was for that reason that I turned rather to the matter of my brother and let be *Isildur’s Bane*. You were not wholly frank with me, Frodo.’

‘I told no lies, and of the truth all I could,’ said Frodo.

‘I do not blame you,’ said Faramir. ‘You spoke with skill in a hard place, and wisely, it seemed to me. But I learned or guessed more from you than your words said. You were not friendly with Boromir, or you did not part in friendship. You, and Master Samwise, too, I guess have some grievance. Now I loved him dearly, and would gladly avenge his death, yet I knew him well. *Isildur’s Bane*—I would hazard that *Isildur’s Bane* lay between you and was a cause of contention in your Company. Clearly it is a mighty heirloom of some sort, and such things do not breed peace among confederates, not if aught may be learned from ancient tales. Do I not hit near the mark?’

‘Near,’ said Frodo, ‘but not in the gold. There was no contention in our Company, though there was doubt: doubt which way we should take from the Eryn Muil. But be that as it may, ancient tales teach us also the peril of rash words concerning such things as—heirlooms.’

‘Ah, then it is as I thought: your trouble was with Boromir alone. He wished this thing brought to Minas Tirith. Alas! it is a crooked fate that seals your lips who saw him last, and holds from me that which I long to know: what was in his heart and thought in his latest hours. Whether he erred or no, of this I am sure: he died well, achieving some good thing. His face was more beautiful even than in life.

‘But, Frodo, I pressed you hard at first about *Isildur’s Bane*. Forgive me! It was unwise in such an hour and place. I had not had time for thought. We had had a hard fight, and there was more than enough to fill my mind. But even as I spoke with you, I drew nearer to the mark, and so deliberately shot wider. For you must know that much is still preserved of ancient lore among the Rulers of the city that is not spread abroad. We of my house are not of the line of Elendil, though the blood of Númenor is in us. For we reckon back our line to Mardil, the good steward, who ruled in the king’s stead when he went away to war. And that was King Eärnur, last of the line of Anárion, and childless, and he came never back. And the stewards have governed the city since that day, though it was many generations of Men ago.

‘And this I remember of Boromir as a boy, when we together learned the tale of our sires and the history of our city, that always it displeased him that his father was not king. “How many hundreds of years needs it to make a steward a king, if the king returns not?” he asked. “Few years, maybe, in other places of less royalty,” my father answered. “In Gondor ten thousand years would not suffice.” Alas! poor Boromir. Does that not tell you something of him?’

‘It does,’ said Frodo. ‘Yet always he treated Aragorn with honour.’

‘I doubt it not,’ said Faramir. ‘If he were satisfied of Aragorn’s claim, as you say, he would greatly reverence him. But the pinch had not yet come. They had not yet reached Minas Tirith or become rivals in her wars.

‘But I stray. We in the house of Denethor know much ancient lore by long tradition, and there are moreover in our treasuries many things preserved: books and tablets writ on withered parchments, yea, and on stone, and on leaves of silver and of gold, in divers characters. Some none can now read; and for the rest, few ever unlock them. I can read a little in them, for I have had teaching. It was these records that brought the Grey Pilgrim to us. I first saw him when I was a child, and he has been twice or thrice since then.’

‘The Grey Pilgrim?’ said Frodo. ‘Had he a name?’

‘Mithrandir we called him in elf-fashion,’ said Faramir, ‘and he was content. *Many are my names*<sup>412</sup> *in many countries*, he said. *Mithrandir among the Elves, Tharkûn to the Dwarves; Olórin I was in my youth in the West that is forgotten, in the South Incánus, in the North Gandalf; to the East I go not.*’

‘Gandalf!’ said Frodo. ‘I thought it was he. Gandalf the Grey, dearest of counsellors. Leader of our Company. He was lost in Moria.’

‘Mithrandir was lost!’ said Faramir. ‘An evil fate seems to have pursued your fellowship. It is hard indeed to believe that one of so great wisdom, and of power—for many wonderful things he did among us—could perish, and so much lore be taken from the world. Are you sure of this, and that he did not just leave you and depart where he would?’

‘Alas! yes,’ said Frodo. ‘I saw him fall into the abyss.’

‘I see that there is some great tale of dread in this,’ said Faramir, ‘which perhaps you may tell me in the evening-time. This Mithrandir was, I now guess, more than a lore-master: a great mover of the deeds that are done in our time. Had he been among us to consult concerning the hard words of our dream, he could have made them clear to us without need of messenger. Yet, maybe, he would not have done so, and the journey of Boromir was doomed. Mithrandir never spoke to us of what was to be, nor did he reveal his purposes. He got leave of Denethor, how I do not know, to look at the secrets of our treasury, and I learned a little of him, when he would teach (and that was seldom). Ever he would search and would question us above all else concerning the Great Battle that was fought upon Dagorlad in the beginning of Gondor, when He whom we do not name was overthrown. And he was eager for stories of Isildur, though of him we had less to tell; for nothing certain was ever known among us of his end.’

Now Faramir’s voice sank to a whisper. ‘But this much I learned, or guessed, and I have kept it ever secret in my heart since: that Isildur took somewhat from the hand of the Unnamed, ere he went away from Gondor, never to be seen among mortal men again. Here I thought was the answer to Mithrandir’s questioning. But it seemed then a matter that concerned only the seekers after ancient learning. Nor when the riddling words of our dream were debated among us, did I think of *Isildur’s Bane* as being this same thing. For Isildur was ambushed and slain by orc-arrows, according to the only legend that we knew, and Mithrandir had never told me more.

‘What in truth this Thing is I cannot yet guess; but some heirloom of power and peril it must be. A fell weapon, perchance, devised by the Dark Lord. If it were a thing that gave advantage in battle, I can well believe that Boromir, the proud and fearless, often rash, ever anxious for the victory of Minas Tirith (and his own glory therein), might desire such a thing and be allured by it. Alas that ever he went on that errand! I should have been chosen by my father and the elders, but he put himself forward, as being the older and the hardier (both true), and he would not be stayed.

‘But fear no more! I would not take this thing, if it lay by the highway. Not were Minas Tirith falling in ruin and I alone could save her, so, using the weapon of the Dark Lord for her good and my glory. No, I do not wish for such triumphs, Frodo son of Drogo.’

‘Neither did the Council,’ said Frodo. ‘Nor do I. I would have nothing to do with such matters.’

‘For myself,’ said Faramir, ‘I would see the White Tree in flower again in the courts of the kings, and the Silver Crown return, and Minas Tirith in peace: Minas Anor again as of old, full of light, high and fair, beautiful as a queen among other queens: not a mistress of many slaves, nay, not even a kind mistress of willing slaves. War must be, while we defend our lives against a destroyer who would devour all; but I do not love the bright sword for its sharpness, nor the arrow for its swiftness, nor the warrior for his glory. I love only that which they defend: the city of the Men of Númenor; and I would have her loved for her memory, her ancientry, her beauty, and her present wisdom. Not feared, save as men may fear the dignity of a man, old and wise.

‘So fear me not! I do not ask you to tell me more. I do not even ask you to tell me whether I now speak nearer the mark. But if you will trust me, it may be that I can advise you in your present quest, whatever that be—yes, and even aid you.’

Frodo made no answer. Almost he yielded to the desire for help and counsel, to tell this grave young man, whose words seemed so wise and fair, all that was in his mind. But something held him back. His heart was heavy with fear and sorrow: if he and Sam were indeed, as seemed likely, all that was now left of the Nine Walkers, then he was in sole command of the secret of their errand. Better mistrust undeserved than rash words. And the memory of Boromir, of the dreadful change that the lure of the Ring had worked in him, was very present to his mind, when he looked at Faramir and listened to his voice: unlike they were, and yet also much akin.

They walked on in silence for a while, passing like grey and green shadows under the old trees, their feet making no sound; above them many birds sang, and the sun glistened on the polished roof of dark leaves in the evergreen woods of Ithilien.

Sam had taken no part in the conversation, though he had listened; and at the same time he had attended with his keen hobbit ears to all the soft woodland noises about them. One thing he had noted, that in all the talk the name of Gollum had not once come up. He was glad, though he felt that it was too much to hope that he would never hear it again. He soon became aware also that though they walked alone, there were many men close at hand: not only Damrod and Mablung flitting in and out of the shadows ahead, but others on either side, all making their swift secret way to some appointed place.

Once, looking suddenly back, as if some prickle of the skin told him that he was watched from behind, he thought he caught a brief glimpse of a small dark shape slipping behind a tree-trunk. He opened his mouth to speak and shut it again. 'I'm not sure of it,' he said to himself, 'and why should I remind them of the old villain, if they choose to forget him? I wish I could!'

So they passed on, until the woodlands grew thinner and the land began to fall more steeply. Then they turned aside again, to the right, and came quickly to a small river in a narrow gorge: it was the same stream that trickled far above out of the round pool, now grown to a swift torrent, leaping down over many stones in a deep-cloven bed, overhung with ilex and dark box-woods. Looking west they could see, below them in a haze of light, lowlands and broad meads, and glinting far off in the westering sun the wide waters of the Anduin.

'Here, alas! I must do you a discourtesy,' said Faramir. 'I hope you will pardon it to one who has so far made his orders give way to courtesy as not to slay you or to bind you. But it is a command that no stranger, not even one of Rohan that fights with us, shall see the path we now go with open eyes. I must blindfold you.'

'As you will,' said Frodo. 'Even the Elves do likewise at need, and blindfolded we crossed the borders of fair Lothlórien. Gimli the dwarf took it ill, but the hobbits endured it.'

'It is to no place so fair that I shall lead you,' said Faramir. 'But I am glad that you will take this willingly and not by force.'

He called softly and immediately Mablung and Damrod stepped out of the trees and came back to him. 'Blindfold these guests,' said Faramir. 'Securely, but not so as to discomfort them. Do not tie their hands. They will give their word not to try and see. I could trust them to shut their eyes of their own accord, but eyes will blink, if the feet stumble. Lead them so that they do not falter.'

With green scarves the two guards now bound up the hobbits' eyes, and drew their hoods down almost to their mouths; then quickly they took each one by the hand and went on their way. All that Frodo and Sam knew of this last mile of the road they learned from guessing in the dark. After a little they found that they were on a path descending steeply; soon it grew so narrow that they went in single file, brushing a stony wall on either side; their guards steered them from behind with hands laid firmly on their shoulders. Now and again they came to rough places and were lifted from their feet for a while, and then set down again. Always the noise of the running water was on their right hand, and it grew nearer and louder. At length they were halted. Quickly Mablung and Damrod turned them about, several times, and they lost all sense of direction. They climbed upwards a little: it seemed cold and the noise of the stream had become faint. Then they were picked up and carried down, down many steps, and round a corner. Suddenly they heard the water again, loud now, rushing and splashing. All round them it seemed, and they felt a fine rain on their hands and cheeks. At last they were set on their feet once more. For a moment they stood so, half fearful, blindfold, not knowing where they were; and no-one spoke.

Then came the voice of Faramir close behind. 'Let them see!' he said. The scarves were removed and their hoods drawn back, and they blinked and gasped.

They stood on a wet floor of polished stone, the doorstep, as it were, of a rough-hewn gate of rock opening dark behind them. But in front a thin veil of water was hung, so near that Frodo could have put an outstretched arm into it. It faced westward. The level shafts of the setting sun behind beat upon it, and the red light was broken into many flickering beams of ever-changing colour. It was as if they stood at the window of some elven-tower,

curtained with threaded jewels of silver and gold, and ruby, sapphire and amethyst, all kindled with an unconsuming fire.

‘At least by good chance we came at the right hour to reward you for your patience,’ said Faramir. ‘This is the Window of the Sunset, Henneth Annûn, fairest of all the falls of Ithilien, land of many fountains. Few strangers have ever seen it. But there is no kingly hall behind to match it. Enter now and see!’

Even as he spoke the sun sank, and the fire faded in the flowing water. They turned and passed under the low forbidding arch. At once they found themselves in a rock-chamber, wide and rough, with an uneven stooping roof. A few torches were kindled and cast a dim light on the glistening walls. Many men were already there. Others were still coming in by twos and threes through a dark narrow door on one side. As their eyes grew accustomed to the gloom the hobbits saw that the cave was larger than they had guessed and was filled with great store of arms and victuals.

‘Well, here is our refuge,’ said Faramir. ‘Not a place of great ease, but here you may pass the night in peace. It is dry at least, and there is food, though no fire. At one time the water flowed down through this cave and out of the arch, but its course was changed further up the gorge, by workmen of old, and the stream sent down in a fall of doubled height over the rocks far above. All the ways into this grot were then sealed against the entry of water or aught else, all save one. There are now but two ways out: that passage yonder by which you entered blindfold, and through the Window-curtain into a deep bowl filled with knives of stone. Now rest a while, until the evening meal is set.’

The hobbits were taken to a corner and given a low bed to lie on, if they wished. Meanwhile men busied themselves about the cave, quietly and in orderly quickness. Light tables were taken from the walls and set up on trestles and laden with gear. This was plain and unadorned for the most part, but all well and fairly made: round platters, bowls and dishes of glazed brown clay or turned box-wood, smooth and clean. Here and there was a cup or basin of polished bronze; and a goblet of plain silver was set by the Captain’s seat in the middle of the inmost table.

Faramir went about among the men, questioning each as he came in, in a soft voice. Some came back from the pursuit of the Southrons; others, left behind as scouts near the road, came in latest. All the Southrons had been accounted for, save only the great mûmak: what happened to him none could say. Of the enemy no movement could be seen; not even an orc-spy was abroad.

‘You saw and heard nothing, Anborn?’ Faramir asked of the latest comer.

‘Well, no, lord,’ said the man. ‘No Orc at least. But I saw, or thought I saw, something a little strange. It was getting deep dusk, when the eyes make things greater than they should be. So perhaps it may have been no more than a squirrel.’ Sam pricked up his ears at this. ‘Yet if so, it was a black squirrel, and I saw no tail. ’Twas like a shadow on the ground, and it whisked behind a tree-trunk when I drew nigh and went up aloft as swift as any squirrel could. You will not have us slay wild beasts for no purpose, and it seemed no more, so I tried no arrow. It was too dark for sure shooting anyway, and the creature was gone into the gloom of the leaves in a twinkling. But I stayed for a while, for it seemed strange, and then I hastened back. I thought I heard the thing hiss at me from high above as I turned away. A large squirrel, maybe. Perhaps under the shadow of the Unnamed some of the beasts of Mirkwood are wandering hither to our woods. They have black squirrels there, ’tis said.’

‘Perhaps,’ said Faramir. ‘But that would be an ill omen, if it were so. We do not want the escapes of Mirkwood in Ithilien.’ Sam fancied that he gave a swift glance towards the hobbits as he spoke; but Sam said nothing. For a while he and Frodo lay back and watched the torchlight, and the men moving to and fro speaking in hushed voices. Then suddenly Frodo fell asleep.

Sam struggled with himself, arguing this way and that. ‘He may be all right,’ he thought, ‘and then he may not. Fair speech may hide a foul heart.’ He yawned. ‘I could sleep for a week, and I’d be better for it. And what can I do, if I do keep awake, me all alone, and all these great Men about? Nothing, Sam Gamgee; but you’ve got to keep awake all the same.’ And somehow he managed it. The light faded from the cave door, and the grey veil of falling water grew dim and was lost in gathering shadow. Always the sound of the water went on, never

changing its note, morning or evening or night. It murmured and whispered of sleep. Sam stuck his knuckles in his eyes.

Now more torches were being lit. A cask of wine was broached. Storage barrels were being opened. Men were fetching water from the fall. Some were laving their hands in basins. A wide copper bowl and a white cloth were brought to Faramir and he washed.

‘Wake our guests,’ he said, ‘and take them water. It is time to eat.’

Frodo sat up and yawned and stretched. Sam, not used to being waited on, looked with some surprise at the tall man who bowed, holding a basin of water before him.

‘Put it on the ground, master, if you please!’ he said. ‘Easier for me and you.’ Then to the astonishment and amusement of the Men he plunged his head into the cold water and splashed his neck and ears.

‘Is it the custom in your land to wash the head before supper?’ said the man who waited on the hobbits.

‘No, before breakfast,’ said Sam. ‘But if you’re short of sleep cold water on the neck’s like rain on a wilted lettuce. There! Now I can keep awake long enough to eat a bit.’

They were led then to seats beside Faramir: barrels covered with pelts and high enough above the benches of the Men for their convenience. Before they ate, Faramir and all his men turned and faced west in a moment of silence. Faramir signed to Frodo and Sam that they should do likewise.

‘So we always do,’ he said, as they sat down: ‘we look towards Númenor that was, and beyond to Elvenhome that is, and to that which is beyond Elvenhome and will ever be. Have you no such custom at meat?’

‘No,’ said Frodo, feeling strangely rustic and untutored. ‘But if we are guests, we bow to our host, and after we have eaten we rise and thank him.’

‘That we do also,’ said Faramir.

After so long journeying and camping, and days spent in the lonely wild, the evening meal seemed a feast to the hobbits: to drink pale yellow wine, cool and fragrant, and eat bread and butter, and salted meats, and dried fruits, and good red cheese, with clean hands and clean knives and plates. Neither Frodo nor Sam refused anything that was offered, nor a second, nor indeed a third helping. The wine coursed in their veins and tired limbs, and they felt glad and easy of heart as they had not done since they left the land of Lórien.

When all was done Faramir led them to a recess at the back of the cave, partly screened by curtains; and a chair and two stools were brought there. A little earthenware lamp burned in a niche.

‘You may soon desire to sleep,’ he said, ‘and especially good Samwise, who would not close his eyes before he ate—whether for fear of blunting the edge of a noble hunger, or for fear of me, I do not know. But it is not good to sleep too soon after meat, and that following a fast. Let us talk a while. On your journey from Rivendell there must have been many things to tell. And you, too, would perhaps wish to learn something of us and the lands where you now are. Tell me of Boromir my brother, and of old Mithrandir, and of the fair people of Lothlórien.’

Frodo no longer felt sleepy and he was willing to talk. But though the food and wine had put him at his ease, he had not lost all his caution. Sam was beaming and humming to himself, but when Frodo spoke he was at first content to listen, only occasionally venturing to make an exclamation of agreement.

Frodo told many tales, yet always he steered the matter away from the quest of the Company and from the Ring, enlarging rather on the valiant part Boromir had played in all their adventures, with the wolves of the wild, in the snows under Caradhras, and in the mines of Moria where Gandalf fell. Faramir was most moved by the story of the fight on the bridge.

‘It must have irked Boromir to run from Orcs,’ he said, ‘or even from the fell thing you name, the Balrog—even though he was the last to leave.’

‘He was the last,’ said Frodo, ‘but Aragorn was forced to lead us. He alone knew the way after Gandalf’s fall. But had there not been us lesser folk to care for, I do not think that either he or Boromir would have fled.’

‘Maybe, it would have been better had Boromir fallen there with Mithrandir,’ said Faramir, ‘and not gone on to the fate that waited above the falls of Rauros.’

‘Maybe. But tell me now of your own fortunes,’ said Frodo, turning the matter aside once again. ‘For I would learn more of Minas Ithil and Osgiliath, and Minas Tirith the long-enduring. What hope have you for that city in your long war?’

‘What hope have we?’ said Faramir. ‘It is long since we had any hope. The sword of Elendil, if it returns indeed, may rekindle it, but I do not think that it will do more than put off the evil day, unless other help unlooked-for also comes, from Elves or Men. For the Enemy increases and we decrease. We are a failing people, a springless autumn.’

‘The Men of Númenor were settled far and wide on the shores and seaward regions of the Great Lands, but for the most part they fell into evils and follies. Many became enamoured of the Darkness and the black arts; some were given over wholly to idleness and ease, and some fought among themselves, until they were conquered in their weakness by the wild men.’

‘It is not said that evil arts were ever practised in Gondor, or that the Nameless One was ever named in honour there; and the old wisdom and beauty brought out of the West remained long in the realm of the sons of Elendil the Fair, and they linger there still. Yet even so it was Gondor that brought about its own decay, falling by degrees into dotage, and thinking that the Enemy was asleep, who was only banished not destroyed.’

‘Death was ever present, because the Númenóreans still, as they had in their old kingdom, and so lost it, hungered after endless life unchanging. Kings made tombs more splendid than houses of the living, and counted old names in the rolls of their descent dearer than the names of sons. Childless lords sat in aged halls musing on heraldry; in secret chambers withered men compounded strong elixirs, or in high cold towers asked questions of the stars. And the last king of the line of Anárion had no heir.’

‘But the stewards were wiser and more fortunate. Wiser, for they recruited the strength of our people from the sturdy folk of the sea-coast, and from the hardy mountaineers of Ered Nimrais. And they made a truce with the proud peoples of the North, who often had assailed us, men of fierce valour, but our kin from afar off, unlike the wild Easterlings or the cruel Haradrim.’

‘So it came to pass in the days of Cirion the Twelfth Steward (and my father is the six and twentieth) that they rode to our aid and at the great Field of Celebrant they destroyed our enemies that had seized our northern provinces. These are the Rohirrim, as we name them, masters of horses, and we ceded to them the fields of Calenardhon that are since called Rohan; for that province had long been sparsely peopled. And they became our allies, and have ever proved true to us, aiding us at need, and guarding our northern marches and the Gap of Rohan.’

‘Of our lore and manners they have learned what they would, and their lords speak our speech at need; yet for the most part they hold by the ways of their own fathers and to their own memories, and they speak among themselves their own North tongue. And we love them: tall men and fair women, valiant both alike, golden-haired, bright-eyed, and strong; they remind us of the youth of Men, as they were in the Elder Days. Indeed it is said by our lore-masters that they have from of old this affinity with us that they are come from those same Three Houses of Men as were the Númenóreans in their beginning; not from Hador the Goldenhaired, the Elf-friend, maybe, yet from such of his people as went not over Sea into the West, refusing the call.’

‘For so we reckon Men in our lore, calling them the High, or Men of the West, which were Númenóreans; and the Middle Peoples, Men of the Twilight, such as are the Rohirrim and their kin that dwell still far in the North; and the Wild, the Men of Darkness.’

‘Yet now, if the Rohirrim are grown in some ways more like to us, enhanced in arts and gentleness, we too have become more like to them, and can scarce claim any longer the title High. We are become Middle Men, of the Twilight, but with memory of other things. For as the Rohirrim do, we now love war and valour as things good in themselves, both a sport and an end; and though we still hold that a warrior should have more skills and knowledge than only the craft of weapons and slaying, we esteem a warrior, nonetheless, above men of other crafts. Such is the need of our days. So even was my brother, Boromir: a man of prowess, and for that he was

accounted the best man in Gondor. And very valiant indeed he was: no heir of Minas Tirith has for long years been so hardy in toil, so onward into battle, or blown a mightier note on the Great Horn.' Faramir sighed and fell silent for a while.

'You don't say much in all your tales about the Elves, sir,' said Sam, suddenly plucking up courage. He had noted that Faramir seemed to refer to Elves with reverence, and this even more than his courtesy, and his food and wine, had won Sam's respect and quieted his suspicions.

'No indeed, Master Samwise,' said Faramir, 'for I am not learned in Elven-lore. But there you touch upon another point in which we have changed, declining from Númenor to Middle-earth. For as you may know, if Mithrandir was your companion and you have spoken with Elrond, the Edain, the Fathers of the Númenóreans, fought beside the Elves in the first wars, and were rewarded by the gift of the kingdom in the midst of the Sea, within sight of Elvenhome. But in Middle-earth Men and Elves became estranged in the days of darkness, by the arts of the Enemy, and by the slow changes of time in which each kind walked further down their sundered roads. Men now fear and misdoubt the Elves, and yet know little of them. And we of Gondor grow like other Men, like the men of Rohan; for even they, who are foes of the Dark Lord, shun the Elves and speak of the Golden Wood with dread.

'Yet there are among us still some who have dealings with the Elves when they may, and ever and anon one will go in secret to Lórien, seldom to return. Not I. For I deem it perilous now for mortal man wilfully to seek out the Elder People. Yet I envy you that have spoken with the White Lady.'

'The Lady of Lórien! Galadriel!' cried Sam. 'You should see her, indeed you should, sir. I am only a hobbit, and gardening's my job at home, sir, if you understand me, and I'm not much good at poetry—not at making it: a bit of a comic rhyme, perhaps, now and again, you know, but not real poetry—so I can't tell you what I mean. It ought to be sung. You'd have to get Strider, Aragorn that is, or old Mr. Bilbo, for that. But I wish I could make a song about her. Beautiful she is, sir! Lovely! Sometimes like a great tree in flower, sometimes like a white daffadowndilly, small and slender like. Hard as di'monds, soft as moonlight. Warm as sunlight, cold as frost in the stars. Proud and far-off as a snow-mountain, and as merry as any lass I ever saw with daisies in her hair in springtime. But that's a lot o' nonsense, and all wide of my mark.'

'Then she must be lovely indeed,' said Faramir. 'Perilously fair.'

'I don't know about *perilous*,' said Sam. 'It strikes me that folk takes their peril with them into Lórien, and finds it there because they've brought it. But perhaps you could call her perilous, because she's so strong in herself. You, you could dash yourself to pieces on her, like a ship on a rock; or drown yourself, like a hobbit in a river. But neither rock nor river would be to blame. Now Boro—' He stopped and went red in the face.

'Yes? *Now Boromir* you would say?' said Faramir. 'What would you say? He took his peril with him?'

'Yes sir, begging your pardon, and a fine man as your brother was, if I may say so. But you've been warm on the scent all along. Now I watched Boromir and listened to him, from Rivendell all down the road—looking after my master, as you'll understand, and not meaning any harm to Boromir—and it's my opinion that in Lórien he first saw clearly what I guessed sooner: what he wanted. From the moment he first saw it he wanted the Enemy's Ring!'

'Sam!' cried Frodo aghast. He had fallen deep into his own thoughts for a while, and came out of them suddenly and too late.

'Save me!' said Sam turning white, and then flushing scarlet. 'There I go again! *When ever you open your big mouth you put your foot in it* the Gaffer used to say to me, and right enough. O dear, O dear!

'Now look here, sir!' He turned, facing up to Faramir with all the courage that he could muster. 'Don't you go taking advantage of my master because his servant's no better than a fool. You've spoken very handsome all along, put me off my guard, talking of Elves and all. But *handsome is as handsome does* we say. Now's a chance to show your quality.'

'So it seems,' said Faramir, slowly and very softly, with a strange smile. 'So that is the answer to all the riddles! The One Ring that was thought to have perished from the world. And Boromir tried to take it by force? And

you escaped? And ran all the way—to me! And here in the wild I have you: two halflings, and a host of men at my call, and the Ring of Rings. A pretty stroke of fortune! A chance for Faramir, Captain of Gondor, to show his quality! Ha!’ He stood up, very tall and stern, his grey eyes glinting.

Frodo and Sam sprang from their stools and set themselves side by side with their backs to the wall, fumbling for their sword-hilts. There was a silence. All the men in the cave stopped talking and looked towards them in wonder. But Faramir sat down again in his chair and began to laugh quietly, and then suddenly became grave again.

‘Alas for Boromir! It was too sore a trial!’ he said. ‘How you have increased my sorrow, you two strange wanderers from a far country, bearing the peril of Men! But you are less judges of Men than I of Halflings. We are truth-speakers, we men of Gondor. We boast seldom, and then perform, or die in the attempt. *Not if I found it on the highway would I take it* I said. Even if I were such a man as to desire this thing, and even though I knew not clearly what this thing was when I spoke, still I should take those words as a vow, and be held by them.

‘But I am not such a man. Or I am wise enough to know that there are some perils from which a man must flee. Sit at peace! And be comforted, Samwise. If you seem to have stumbled, think that it was fated to be so. Your heart is shrewd as well as faithful, and saw clearer than your eyes. For strange though it may seem, it was safe to declare this to me. It may even help the master that you love. It shall turn to his good, if it is in my power. So be comforted. But do not even name this thing again aloud. Once is enough.’

The hobbits came back to their seats and sat very quiet. Men turned back to their drink and their talk, perceiving that their captain had had some jest or other with the little guests, and that it was over.

‘Well, Frodo, now at last we understand one another,’ said Faramir. ‘If you took this thing on yourself, unwilling, at others’ asking, then you have pity and honour from me. And I marvel at you: to keep it hid and not to use it. You are a new people and a new world to me. Are all your kin of like sort? Your land must be a realm of peace and content, and there must gardeners be in high honour.’

‘Not all is well there,’ said Frodo, ‘but certainly gardeners are honoured.’

‘But folk must grow weary there, even in their gardens, as do all things under the Sun of this world. And you are far from home and wayworn. No more tonight. Sleep, both of you—in peace, if you can. Fear not! I do not wish to see it, or touch it, or know more of it than I know (which is enough), lest peril perchance waylay me and I fall lower in the test than Frodo son of Drogo. Go now to rest—but first tell me only, if you will, whither you wish to go, and what to do. For I must watch, and wait, and think. Time passes. In the morning we must each go swiftly on the ways appointed to us.’

Frodo had felt himself trembling as the first shock of fear passed. Now a great weariness came down on him like a cloud. He could dissemble and resist no longer.

‘I was going to find a way into Mordor,’ he said faintly. ‘I was going to Gorgoroth. I must find the Mountain of Fire and cast the thing into the gulf of Doom. Gandalf said so. I do not think I shall ever get there.’

Faramir stared at him for a moment in grave astonishment. Then suddenly he caught him as he swayed, and lifting him gently, carried him to the bed and laid him there, and covered him warmly. At once he fell into a deep sleep.

Another bed was set beside him for his servant. Sam hesitated for a moment, then bowing very low: ‘Good night, Captain, my lord,’ he said. ‘You took the chance, sir.’

‘Did I so?’ said Faramir.

‘Yes sir, and showed your quality: the very highest.’

Faramir smiled. ‘A pert servant, Master Samwise. But nay: the praise of the praiseworthy is above all rewards. Yet there was naught in this to praise. I had no lure or desire to do other than I have done.’

‘Ah well, sir,’ said Sam, ‘you said my master had an Elvish air; and that was good and true. But I can say this: you have an air too, sir, that reminds me of, of—well, Gandalf, of wizards.’



‘Maybe,’ said Faramir. ‘Maybe you discern from far away the air of Númenor. Good night!’



## Chapter 6: The Forbidden Pool

Frodo woke to find Faramir bending over him. For a second old fears seized him and he sat up and shrank away.

‘There is nothing to fear,’ said Faramir.

‘Is it morning already?’ said Frodo yawning.

‘Not yet, but night is drawing to an end, and the full moon is setting. Will you come and see it? Also there is a matter on which I desire your counsel. I am sorry to rouse you from sleep, but will you come?’

‘I will,’ said Frodo, rising and shivering a little as he left the warm blanket and pelts. It seemed cold in the fireless cave. The noise of the water was loud in the stillness. He put on his cloak and followed Faramir.

Sam, waking suddenly by some instinct of watchfulness, saw first his master’s empty bed and leapt to his feet. Then he saw two dark figures, Frodo and a man, framed against the archway, which was now filled with a pale white light. He hurried after them, past rows of men sleeping on mattresses along the wall. As he went by the cave-mouth he saw that the Curtain was now become a dazzling veil of silk and pearls and silver thread: melting icicles of moonlight. But he did not pause to admire it, and turning aside he followed his master through the narrow doorway in the wall of the cave.

They went first along a black passage, then up many wet steps, and so came to a small flat landing cut in the stone and lit by the pale sky, gleaming high above through a long deep shaft. From here two flights of steps led: one going on, as it seemed, up on to the high bank of the stream; the other turning away to the left. This they followed. It wound its way up like a turret-stair.

At last they came out of the stony darkness and looked about. They were on a wide flat rock without rail or parapet. At their right, eastwards, the torrent fell, splashing over many terraces, and then, pouring down a steep race, it filled a smooth-hewn channel with a dark force of water flecked with foam, and curling and rushing almost at their feet it plunged sheer over the edge that yawned upon their left. A man stood there, near the brink, silent, gazing down.

Frodo turned to watch the sleek necks of the water as they curved and dived. Then he lifted his eyes and gazed far away. The world was quiet and cold, as if dawn were near. Far off in the West the full moon was sinking, round and white. Pale mists shimmered in the great vale below: a wide gulf of silver fume, beneath which rolled the cool night-waters of the Anduin. A black darkness loomed beyond, and in it glinted, here and there, cold, sharp, remote, white as the teeth of ghosts, the peaks of Ered Nimrais, the White Mountains of the realm of Gondor, tipped with everlasting snow.

For a while Frodo stood there on the high stone, and a shiver ran through him, wondering if anywhere in the vastness of the nightlands his old companions walked or slept, or lay dead shrouded in mist. Why was he brought here out of forgetful sleep?

Sam was eager for an answer to the same question and could not refrain himself from muttering, for his master’s ear alone as he thought: ‘It’s a fine view, no doubt, Mr. Frodo, but chilly to the heart, not to mention the bones! What’s going on?’

Faramir heard and answered. ‘Moonset over Gondor. Fair Ithil, as he goes from Middle-earth, glances upon the white locks of old Mindolluin. It is worth a few shivers. But that is not what I brought you to see—though as for you, Samwise, you were not brought, and do but pay the penalty of your watchfulness. A draught of wine shall amend it. Come, look now!’

He stepped up beside the silent sentinel on the dark edge, and Frodo followed. Sam hung back. He already felt insecure enough on this high wet platform. Faramir and Frodo looked down. Far below them they saw the white waters pour into a foaming bowl, and then swirl darkly about a deep oval basin in the rocks, until they found their way out again through a narrow gate, and flowed away, fuming and chattering, into calmer and more level reaches. The moonlight still slanted down to the fall's foot and gleamed on the ripples of the basin. Presently Frodo was aware of a small dark thing on the near bank, but even as he looked at it, it dived and vanished just beyond the boil and bubble of the fall, cleaving the black water as neatly as an arrow or an edgewise stone.

Faramir turned to the man at his side. 'Now what would you say that it is, Anborn? A squirrel, or a kingfisher? Are there black kingfishers in the night-pools of Mirkwood?'

'Tis not a bird, whatever else it be,' answered Anborn. 'It has four limbs and dives manwise; a pretty mastery of the craft it shows, too. What is it at? Seeking a way up behind the Curtain to our hidings? It seems we are discovered at last. I have my bow here, and I have posted other archers, nigh as good marksmen as myself, on either bank. We wait only for your command to shoot, Captain.'

'Shall we shoot?' said Faramir, turning quickly to Frodo.

Frodo did not answer for a moment. Then 'No!' he said. 'No! I beg you not to.' If Sam had dared, he would have said 'Yes,' quicker and louder. He could not see, but he guessed well enough from their words what they were looking at.

'You know, then, what this thing is?' said Faramir. 'Come, now you have seen, tell me why it should be spared. In all our words together you have not once spoken of your gangrel companion, and I let him be for the time. He could wait till he was caught and brought before me. I sent my keenest huntsmen to seek him, but he slipped them, and they had no sight of him till now, save Anborn here, once at dusk yesterevening. But now he has done worse trespass than only to go coney-snaring in the uplands: he has dared to come to Henneth Annûn, and his life is forfeit. I marvel at the creature: so secret and so sly as he is, to come sporting in the pool before our very window. Does he think that men sleep without watch all night? Why does he so?'

'There are two answers, I think,' said Frodo. 'For one thing, he knows little of Men, and sly though he is, your refuge is so hidden that perhaps he does not know that Men are concealed here. For another, I think he is allured here by a mastering desire, stronger than his caution.'

'He is lured here, you say?' said Faramir in a low voice. 'Can he, does he then know of your burden?'

'Indeed yes. He bore it himself for many years.'

'He bore it?' said Faramir, breathing sharply in his wonder. 'This matter winds itself ever in new riddles. Then he is pursuing it?'

'Maybe. It is precious to him. But I did not speak of that.'

'What then does the creature seek?'

'Fish,' said Frodo. 'Look!'

They peered down at the dark pool. A little black head appeared at the far end of the basin, just out of the deep shadow of the rocks. There was a brief silver glint, and a swirl of tiny ripples. It swam to the side, and then with marvellous agility a froglike figure climbed out of the water and up the bank. At once it sat down and began to gnaw at the small silver thing that glittered as it turned: the last rays of the moon were now falling behind the stony wall at the pool's end.

Faramir laughed softly. 'Fish!' he said. 'It is a less perilous hunger. Or maybe not: fish from the pool of Henneth Annûn may cost him all he has to give.'

'Now I have him at the arrow-point,' said Anborn. 'Shall I not shoot, Captain? For coming unbidden to this place death is our law.'

'Wait, Anborn,' said Faramir. 'This is a harder matter than it seems. What have you to say now, Frodo? Why should we spare?'

‘The creature is wretched and hungry,’ said Frodo, ‘and unaware of his danger. And Gandalf, your Mithrandir, he would have bidden you not to slay him for that reason, and for others. He forbade the Elves to do so. I do not know clearly why, and of what I guess I cannot speak openly out here. But this creature is in some way bound up with my errand. Until you found us and took us, he was my guide.’

‘Your guide!’ said Faramir. ‘The matter becomes ever stranger. I would do much for you, Frodo, but this I cannot grant: to let this sly wanderer go free at his own will from here, to join you later if it please him, or to be caught by orcs and tell all he knows under threat of pain. He must be slain or taken. Slain, if he be not taken very swiftly. But how can this slippery thing of many guises be caught, save by a feathered shaft?’

‘Let me go down quietly to him,’ said Frodo. ‘You may keep your bows bent, and shoot me at least, if I fail. I shall not run away.’

‘Go then and be swift!’ said Faramir. ‘If he comes off alive, he should be your faithful servant for the rest of his unhappy days. Lead Frodo down to the bank, Anborn, and go softly. The thing has a nose and ears. Give me your bow.’

Anborn grunted and led the way down the winding stair to the landing, and then up the other stair, until at last they came to a narrow opening shrouded with thick bushes. Passing silently through, Frodo found himself on the top of the southern bank above the pool. It was now dark and the falls were pale and grey, reflecting only the lingering moonlight of the western sky. He could not see Gollum. He went forward a short way and Anborn came softly behind him.

‘Go on!’ he breathed in Frodo’s ear. ‘Have a care to your right. If you fall in the pool, then no-one but your fishing friend can help you. And forget not that there are bowmen near at hand, though you may not see them.’

Frodo crept forward, using his hands Gollum-like to feel his way and to steady himself. The rocks were for the most part flat and smooth but slippery. He halted listening. At first he could hear no sound but the unceasing rush of the fall behind him. Then presently he heard, not far ahead, a hissing murmur.

‘Fissh, nice fissh. White Face has vanished, my precious, at last, yes. Now we can eat fish in peace. No, not in peace, precious. For Precious is lost; yes, lost. Dirty hobbits, nasty hobbits. Gone and left us, *gollum*; and Precious is gone. Only poor Sméagol all alone. No Precious. Nasty Men, they’ll take it, steal my Precious. Thieves. We hates them. Fissh, nice fissh. Makes us strong. Makes eyes bright, fingers tight, yes. Throttle them, precious. Throttle them all, yes, if we gets chances. Nice fissh. Nice fissh!’

So it went on, almost as unceasing as the waterfall, only interrupted by a faint noise of slavering and gurgling. Frodo shivered, listening with pity and disgust. He wished it would stop, and that he never need hear that voice again. Anborn was not far behind. He could creep back and ask him to get the huntsmen to shoot. They would probably get close enough, while Gollum was gorging and off his guard. Only one true shot, and Frodo would be rid of the miserable voice for ever. But no, Gollum had a claim on him now. The servant has a claim on the master for service, even service in fear. They would have foundered in the Dead Marshes but for Gollum. Frodo knew, too, somehow, quite clearly that Gandalf would not have wished it.

‘Sméagol!’ he said softly.

‘Fissh, nice fissh,’ said the voice.

‘Sméagol!’ he said, a little louder. The voice stopped.

‘Sméagol, Master has come to look for you. Master is here. Come, Sméagol!’ There was no answer but a soft hiss, as of intaken breath.

‘Come, Sméagol!’ said Frodo. ‘We are in danger. Men will kill you, if they find you here. Come quickly, if you wish to escape death. Come to Master!’

‘No!’ said the voice. ‘Not nice Master. Leaves poor Sméagol and goes with new friends. Master can wait. Sméagol hasn’t finished.’

‘There’s no time,’ said Frodo. ‘Bring fish with you. Come!’

‘No! Must finish fish.’

‘Sméagol!’ said Frodo desperately. ‘Precious will be angry. I shall take Precious, and I shall say: make him swallow the bones and choke. Never taste fish again. Come, Precious is waiting!’

There was a sharp hiss. Presently out of the darkness Gollum came crawling on all fours, like an erring dog called to heel. He had a half-eaten fish in his mouth and another in his hand. He came close to Frodo, almost nose to nose, and sniffed at him. His pale eyes were shining. Then he took the fish out of his mouth and stood up.

‘Nice Master!’ he whispered. ‘Nice hobbit, come back to poor Sméagol. Good Sméagol comes. Now let’s go, go quickly, yes. Through the trees, while the Faces are dark. Yes, come, let’s go!’

‘Yes, we’ll go soon,’ said Frodo. ‘But not at once. I will go with you as I promised. I promise again. But not now. You are not safe yet. I will save you, but you must trust me.’

‘We must trust Master?’ said Gollum doubtfully. ‘Why? Why not go at once? Where is the other one, the cross rude hobbit? Where is he?’

‘Away up there,’ said Frodo, pointing to the waterfall. ‘I am not going without him. We must go back to him.’ His heart sank. This was too much like trickery. He did not really fear that Faramir would allow Gollum to be killed, but he would probably make him prisoner and bind him; and certainly what Frodo did would seem a treachery to the poor treacherous creature. It would probably be impossible ever to make him understand or believe that Frodo had saved his life in the only way he could. What else could he do?—to keep faith, as near as might be, with both sides. ‘Come!’ he said. ‘Or the Precious will be angry. We are going back now, up the stream. Go on, go on, you go in front!’

Gollum crawled along close to the brink for a little way, snuffling and suspicious. Presently he stopped and raised his head. ‘Something’s there!’ he said. ‘Not a hobbit.’ Suddenly he turned back. A green light was flickering in his bulging eyes. ‘Masster, masster!’ he hissed. ‘Wicked! Tricksy! False!’ He spat and stretched out his long arms with white snapping fingers.

At that moment the great black shape of Anborn loomed up behind him and came down on him. A large strong hand took him in the nape of the neck and pinned him. He twisted round like lightning, all wet and slimy as he was, wriggling like an eel, biting and scratching like a cat. But two more men came up out of the shadows.

‘Hold still!’ said one. ‘Or we’ll stick you as full of pins as a hedgehog. Hold still!’

Gollum went limp, and began to whine and weep. They tied him, none too gently.

‘Easy, easy!’ said Frodo. ‘He has no strength to match you. Don’t hurt him, if you can help it. He’ll be quieter, if you don’t. Sméagol! They won’t hurt you. I’ll go with you, and you shall come to no harm. Not unless they kill me too. Trust Master!’

Gollum turned and spat at him. The men picked him up, put a hood over his eyes, and carried him off.

Frodo followed them, feeling very wretched. They went through the opening behind the bushes, and back, down the stairs and passages, into the cave. Two or three torches had been lit. Men were stirring. Sam was there, and he gave a queer look at the limp bundle that the men carried. ‘Got him?’ he said to Frodo.

‘Yes. Well no, I didn’t get him. He came to me, because he trusted me at first, I’m afraid. I did not want him tied up like this. I hope it will be all right; but I hate the whole business.’

‘So do I,’ said Sam. ‘And nothing will ever be all right where that piece of misery is.’

A man came and beckoned to the hobbits, and took them to the recess at the back of the cave. Faramir was sitting there in his chair, and the lamp had been rekindled in its niche above his head. He signed to them to sit down on the stools beside him. ‘Bring wine for the guests,’ he said. ‘And bring the prisoner to me.’

The wine was brought, and then Anborn came carrying Gollum. He removed the cover from Gollum’s head and set him on his feet, standing behind him to support him. Gollum blinked, hooding the malice of his eyes with

their heavy pale lids. A very miserable creature he looked, dripping and dank, smelling of fish (he still clutched one in his hand); his sparse locks were hanging like rank weed over his bony brows, his nose was snivelling.

‘Loose us! Loose us!’ he said. ‘The cord hurts us, yes it does, it hurts us, and we’ve done nothing.’

‘Nothing?’ said Faramir, looking at the wretched creature with a keen glance, but without any expression in his face either of anger, or pity, or wonder. ‘Nothing? Have you never done anything worthy of binding or of worse punishment? However, that is not for me to judge, happily. But tonight you have come where it is death to come. The fish of this pool are dearly bought.’

Gollum dropped the fish from his hand. ‘Don’t want fish,’ he said.

‘The price is not set on the fish,’ said Faramir. ‘Only to come here and look on the pool bears the penalty of death. I have spared you so far at the prayer of Frodo here, who says that of him at least you have deserved some thanks. But you must also satisfy me. What is your name? Whence do you come? And whither do you go? What is your business?’

‘We are lost, lost,’ said Gollum. ‘No name, no business, no Precious, nothing. Only empty. Only hungry; yes, we are hungry. A few little fishes, nasty bony little fishes, for a poor creature, and they say death. So wise they are; so just, so very just.’

‘Not very wise,’ said Faramir. ‘But just: yes perhaps, as just as our little wisdom allows. Unloose him Frodo!’ Faramir took a small nail-knife from his belt and handed it to Frodo. Gollum misunderstanding the gesture, squealed and fell down.

‘Now, Sméagol!’ said Frodo. ‘You must trust me. I will not desert you. Answer truthfully, if you can. It will do you good not harm.’ He cut the cords on Gollum’s wrists and ankles and raised him to his feet.

‘Come hither!’ said Faramir. ‘Look at me! Do you know the name of this place? Have you been here before?’

Slowly Gollum raised his eyes and looked unwillingly into Faramir’s. All light went out of them, and they stared bleak and pale for a moment into the clear unwavering eyes of the man of Gondor. There was a still silence. Then Gollum dropped his head and shrank down, until he was squatting on the floor, shivering. ‘We doesn’t know and we doesn’t want to know,’ he whimpered. ‘Never came here; never come again.’

‘There are locked doors and closed windows in your mind, and dark rooms behind them,’ said Faramir. ‘But in this I judge that you speak the truth. It is well for you. What oath will you swear never to return; and never to lead any living creature hither by word or sign?’

‘Master knows,’ said Gollum with a sidelong glance at Frodo. ‘Yes, he knows. We will promise Master, if he saves us. We’ll promise to It, yes.’ He crawled to Frodo’s feet. ‘Save us, nice Master!’ he whined. ‘Sméagol promises to Precious, promises faithfully. Never come again, never speak, no never! No, precious, no!’

‘Are you satisfied?’ said Faramir.

‘Yes,’ said Frodo. ‘At least, you must either accept this promise or carry out your law. You will get no more. But I promised that if he came to me, he should not be harmed. And I would not be proved faithless.’

Faramir sat for a moment in thought. ‘Very good,’ he said at last. ‘I surrender you to your master, to Frodo son of Drogo. Let him declare what he will do with you!’

‘But, Lord Faramir,’ said Frodo bowing, ‘you have not yet declared your will concerning the said Frodo, and until that is made known, he cannot shape his plans for himself or his companions. Your judgement was postponed until the morning; but that is now at hand.’

‘Then I will declare my doom,’ said Faramir. ‘As for you, Frodo, in so far as lies in me under higher authority, I declare you free in the realm of Gondor to the furthest of its ancient bounds; save only that neither you nor any that go with you have leave to come to this place unbidden. This doom shall stand for a year and a day, and then cease, unless you shall before that term come to Minas Tirith and present yourself to the Lord and Steward of the City. Then I will entreat him to confirm what I have done and to make it lifelong. In the meantime,

whomsoever you take under your protection shall be under my protection and under the shield of Gondor. Are you answered?’

Frodo bowed low. ‘I am answered,’ he said, ‘and I place myself at your service, if that is of any worth to one so high and honourable.’

‘It is of great worth,’ said Faramir. ‘And now, do you take this creature, this Sméagol, under your protection?’

‘I do take Sméagol under my protection,’ said Frodo. Sam sighed audibly; and not at the courtesies, of which, as any hobbit would, he thoroughly approved. Indeed in the Shire such a matter would have required a great many more words and bows.

‘Then I say to you,’ said Faramir, turning to Gollum, ‘you are under doom of death; but while you walk with Frodo you are safe for our part. Yet if ever you be found by any man of Gondor astray without him, the doom shall fall. And may death find you swiftly, within Gondor or without, if you do not well serve him. Now answer me: whither would you go? You were his guide, he says. Whither were you leading him?’ Gollum made no reply.

‘This I will not have secret,’ said Faramir. ‘Answer me, or I will reverse my judgement!’ Still Gollum did not answer.

‘I will answer for him,’ said Frodo. ‘He brought me to the Black Gate, as I asked; but it was impassable.’

‘There is no open gate into the Nameless Land,’ said Faramir.

‘Seeing this, we turned aside and came by the Southward road,’ Frodo continued; ‘for he said that there is, or there may be, a path near to Minas Ithil.’

‘Minas Morgul,’ said Faramir.

‘I do not know clearly,’ said Frodo; ‘but the path climbs, I think, up into the mountains on the northern side of that vale where the old city stands. It goes up to a high cleft and so down to—that which is beyond.’

‘Do you know the name of that high pass?’ said Faramir.

‘No,’ said Frodo.

‘It is called Cirith Ungol,’ Gollum hissed sharply and began muttering to himself. ‘Is not that its name?’ said Faramir turning to him.

‘No!’ said Gollum, and then he squealed, as if something had stabbed him. ‘Yes, yes, we heard the name once. But what does the name matter to us? Master says he must get in. So we must try some way. There is no other way to try, no.’

‘No other way?’ said Faramir. ‘How do you know that? And who has explored all the confines of that dark realm?’ He looked long and thoughtfully at Gollum. Presently he spoke again. ‘Take this creature away, Anborn. Treat him gently, but watch him. And do not you, Sméagol, try to dive into the falls. The rocks have such teeth there as would slay you before your time. Leave us now and take your fish!’

Anborn went out and Gollum went cringing before him. The curtain was drawn across the recess.

‘Frodo, I think you do very unwisely in this,’ said Faramir. ‘I do not think you should go with this creature. It is wicked.’

‘No, not altogether wicked,’ said Frodo.

‘Not wholly, perhaps,’ said Faramir; ‘but malice eats it like a canker, and the evil is growing. He will lead you to no good. If you will part with him, I will give him safe-conduct and guidance to any point on the borders of Gondor that he may name.’

‘He would not take it,’ said Frodo. ‘He would follow after me as he long has done. And I have promised many times to take him under my protection and to go where he led. You would not ask me to break faith with him?’

‘No,’ said Faramir. ‘But my heart would. For it seems less evil to counsel another man to break troth than to do so oneself, especially if one sees a friend bound unwitting to his own harm. But no—if he will go with you, you must now endure him. But I do not think you are holden to go to Cirith Ungol, of which he has told you less than he knows. That much I perceived clearly in his mind. Do not go to Cirith Ungol!’

‘Where then shall I go?’ said Frodo. ‘Back to the Black Gate and deliver myself up to the guard? What do you know against this place that makes its name so dreadful?’

‘Nothing certain,’ said Faramir. ‘We of Gondor do not ever pass east of the Road in these days, and none of us younger men has ever done so, nor has any of us set foot upon the Mountains of Shadow. Of them we know only old report and the rumour of bygone days. But there is some dark terror that dwells in the passes above Minas Morgul. If Cirith Ungol is named, old men and masters of lore will blanch and fall silent.

‘The valley of Minas Morgul passed into evil very long ago, and it was a menace and a dread while the banished Enemy dwelt yet far away, and Ithilien was still for the most part in our keeping. As you know, that city was once a strong place, proud and fair, Minas Ithil, the twin sister of our own city. But it was taken by fell men whom the Enemy in his first strength had dominated, and who wandered homeless and masterless after his fall. It is said that their lords were men of Númenor who had fallen into dark wickedness; to them the Enemy had given rings of power, and he had devoured them: living ghosts they were become, terrible and evil. After his going they took Minas Ithil and dwelt there, and they filled it, and all the valley about, with decay: it seemed empty and was not so, for a shapeless fear lived within the ruined walls. Nine Lords there were, and after the return of their Master, which they aided and prepared in secret, they grew strong again. Then the Nine Riders issued forth from the gates of horror, and we could not withstand them. Do not approach their citadel. You will be espied. It is a place of sleepless malice, full of lidless eyes. Do not go that way!’

‘But where else will you direct me?’ said Frodo. ‘You cannot yourself, you say, guide me to the mountains, nor over them. But over the mountains I am bound, by solemn undertaking to the Council, to find a way or perish in the seeking. And if I turn back, refusing the road in its bitter end, where then shall I go among Elves or Men? Would you have me come to Gondor with this Thing, the Thing that drove your brother mad with desire? What spell would it work in Minas Tirith? Shall there be two cities of Minas Morgul, grinning at each other across a dead land filled with rotteness?’

‘I would not have it so,’ said Faramir.

‘Then what would you have me do?’

‘I know not. Only I would not have you go to death or to torment. And I do not think that Mithrandir would have chosen this way.’

‘Yet since he is gone, I must take such paths as I can find. And there is no time for long searching,’ said Frodo.

‘It is a hard doom and a hopeless errand,’ said Faramir. ‘But at the least, remember my warning: beware of this guide, Sméagol. He has done murder before now. I read it in him.’ He sighed.

‘Well, so we meet and part, Frodo son of Drogo. You have no need of soft words: I do not hope to see you again on any other day under this Sun. But you shall go now with my blessing upon you, and upon all your people. Rest a little while food is prepared for you.

‘I would gladly learn how this creeping Sméagol became possessed of the Thing of which we speak, and how he lost it, but I will not trouble you now. If ever beyond hope you return to the lands of the living and we re-tell our tales, sitting by a wall in the sun, laughing at old grief, you shall tell me then. Until that time, or some other time beyond the vision of the Seeing-stones of Númenor, farewell!’

He rose and bowed low to Frodo, and drawing the curtain passed out into the cave.





## Chapter 7: Journey To The Cross-Roads

Frodo and Sam returned to their beds and lay there in silence resting for a little, while men bestirred themselves and the business of the day began. After a while water was brought to them, and then they were led to a table where food was set for three. Faramir broke his fast with them. He had not slept since the battle on the day before, yet he did not look weary.

When they had finished they stood up. 'May no hunger trouble you on the road,' said Faramir. 'You have little provision, but some small store of food fit for travellers I have ordered to be stowed in your packs. You will have no lack of water as you walk in Ithilien, but do not drink of any stream that flows from Imlad Morgul, the Valley of Living Death. This also I must tell you. My scouts and watchers have all returned, even some that have crept within sight of the Morannon. They all find a strange thing. The land is empty. Nothing is on the road, and no sound of foot, or horn, or bowstring is anywhere to be heard. A waiting silence broods above the Nameless Land. I do not know what this portends. But the time draws swiftly to some great conclusion. Storm is coming. Hasten while you may! If you are ready, let us go. The Sun will soon rise above the shadow.'

The hobbits' packs were brought to them (a little heavier than they had been), and also two stout staves of polished wood, shod with iron, and with carven heads through which ran plaited leathern thongs.

'I have no fitting gifts to give you at our parting,' said Faramir; 'but take these staves. They may be of service to those who walk or climb in the wild. The men of the White Mountains use them; though these have been cut down to your height and newly shod. They are made of the fair tree *lebethron*, beloved of the woodwrights of Gondor, and a virtue has been set upon them of finding and returning. May that virtue not wholly fail under the Shadow into which you go!'

The hobbits bowed low. 'Most gracious host,' said Frodo, 'it was said to me by Elrond Halfelven that I should find friendship upon the way, secret and unlooked for. Certainly I looked for no such friendship as you have shown. To have found it turns evil to great good.'

Now they made ready to depart. Gollum was brought out of some corner or hiding-hole, and he seemed better pleased with himself than he had been, though he kept close to Frodo and avoided the glance of Faramir.

'Your guide must be blindfolded,' said Faramir, 'but you and your servant Samwise I release from this, if you wish.'

Gollum squealed, and squirmed, and clutched at Frodo, when they came to bind his eyes; and Frodo said: 'Blindfold us all three, and cover up my eyes first, and then perhaps he will see that no harm is meant.' This was done, and they were led from the cave of Henneth Annûn. After they had passed the passages and stairs they felt the cool morning air, fresh and sweet, about them. Still blind they went on for some little time, up and then gently down. At last the voice of Faramir ordered them to be uncovered.

They stood under the boughs of the woods again. No noise of the falls could be heard, for a long southward slope lay now between them and the ravine in which the stream flowed. To the west they could see light through the trees, as if the world came there to a sudden end, at a brink looking out only on to sky.

'Here is the last parting of our ways,' said Faramir. 'If you take my counsel, you will not turn eastward yet. Go straight on, for thus you will have the cover of the woodland for many miles. On your west is an edge where the land falls into the great vales, sometimes suddenly and sheer, sometimes in long hillsides. Keep near to this edge and the skirts of the forest. In the beginning of your journey you may walk under daylight, I think. The land dreams in a false peace, and for a while all evil is withdrawn. Fare you well, while you may!'

He embraced the hobbits then, after the manner of his people, stooping, and placing his hands upon their shoulders, and kissing their foreheads. 'Go with the good will of all good men!' he said.

They bowed to the ground. Then he turned and without looking back he left them and went to his two guards that stood at a little distance away. They marvelled to see with what speed these green-clad men now moved, vanishing almost in the twinkling of an eye. The forest where Faramir had stood seemed empty and drear, as if a dream had passed.

Frodo sighed and turned back southward. As if to mark his disregard of all such courtesy, Gollum was scrabbling in the mould at the foot of a tree. 'Hungry again already?' thought Sam. 'Well, now for it again!'

'Have they gone at last?' said Gollum. 'Nassty wicked Men! Sméagol's neck still hurts him, yes it does. Let's go!'

'Yes, let us go,' said Frodo. 'But if you can only speak ill of those who showed you mercy, keep silent!'

'Nice Master!' said Gollum. 'Sméagol was only joking. Always forgives, he does, yes, yes, even nice Master's little trickses. Oh yes, nice Master, nice Sméagol!'

Frodo and Sam did not answer. Hoisting their packs and taking their staves in hand, they passed on into the woods of Ithilien.

Twice that day they rested and took a little of the food provided by Faramir: dried fruits and salted meat, enough for many days; and bread enough to last while it was still fresh. Gollum ate nothing.

The sun rose and passed overhead unseen, and began to sink, and the light through the trees to the west grew golden; and always they walked in cool green shadow, and all about them was silence. The birds seemed all to have flown away or to have fallen dumb.

Darkness came early to the silent woods, and before the fall of night they halted, weary, for they had walked seven leagues or more from Henneth Annûn. Frodo lay and slept away the night on the deep mould beneath an ancient tree. Sam beside him was more uneasy: he woke many times, but there was never a sign of Gollum, who had slipped off as soon as the others had settled to rest. Whether he had slept by himself in some hole nearby, or had wandered restlessly prowling through the night, he did not say; but he returned with the first glimmer of light, and roused his companions.

'Must get up, yes they must!' he said. 'Long ways to go still, south and east. Hobbits must make haste!'

That day passed much as the day before had gone, except that the silence seemed deeper; the air grew heavy, and it began to be stifling under the trees. It felt as if thunder was brewing. Gollum often paused, sniffing the air, and then he would mutter to himself and urge them to greater speed.

As the third stage of their day's march drew on and afternoon waned, the forest opened out, and the trees became larger and more scattered. Great ilexes of huge girth stood dark and solemn in wide glades with here and there among them hoary ash-trees, and giant oaks just putting out their brown-green buds. About them lay long launds of green grass dappled with celandine and anemones, white and blue, now folded for sleep; and there were acres populous with the leaves of woodland hyacinths: already their sleek bell-stems were thrusting through the mould. No living creature, beast or bird, was to be seen, but in these open places Gollum grew afraid, and they walked now with caution, flitting from one long shadow to another.

Light was fading fast when they came to the forest-end. There they sat under an old gnarled oak that sent its roots twisting like snakes down a steep crumbling bank. A deep dim valley lay before them. On its further side the woods gathered again, blue and grey under the sullen evening, and marched on southwards. To the right the Mountains of Gondor glowed, remote in the West, under a fire-flecked sky. To the left lay darkness: the towering walls of Mordor; and out of that darkness the long valley came, falling steeply in an ever-widening trough towards the Anduin. At its bottom ran a hurrying stream: Frodo could hear its stony voice coming up through the silence; and beside it on the hither side a road went winding down like a pale ribbon, down into chill grey mists that no gleam of sunset touched. There it seemed to Frodo that he descried far off, floating as it were on a shadowy sea, the high dim tops and broken pinnacles of old towers forlorn and dark.

He turned to Gollum. 'Do you know where we are?' he said.

'Yes, Master. Dangerous places. This is the road from the Tower of the Moon, Master, down to the ruined city by the shores of the River. The ruined city, yes, very nasty place, full of enemies. We shouldn't have taken Men's advice. Hobbits have come a long way out of the path. Must go east now, away up there.' He waved his skinny arm towards the darkling mountains. 'And we can't use this road. Oh no! Cruel peoples come this way, down from the Tower.'

Frodo looked down on to the road. At any rate nothing was moving on it now. It appeared lonely and forsaken, running down to empty ruins in the mist. But there was an evil feeling in the air, as if things might indeed be passing up and down that eyes could not see. Frodo shuddered as he looked again at the distant pinnacles now dwindling into night, and the sound of the water seemed cold and cruel: the voice of Morgulduin, the polluted stream that flowed from the Valley of the Wraiths.

'What shall we do?' he said. 'We have walked long and far. Shall we look for some place in the woods behind where we can lie hidden?'

'No good hiding in the dark,' said Gollum. 'It's in day that hobbits must hide now, yes in day.'

'Oh come!' said Sam. 'We must rest for a bit, even if we get up again in the middle of the night. There'll still be hours of dark then, time enough for you to take us a long march, if you know the way.'

Gollum reluctantly agreed to this, and he turned back towards the trees, working eastward for a while along the straggling edges of the wood. He would not rest on the ground so near the evil road, and after some debate they all climbed up into the crotch of a large holm-oak, whose thick branches springing together from the trunk made a good hiding-place and a fairly comfortable refuge. Night fell and it grew altogether dark under the canopy of the tree. Frodo and Sam drank a little water and ate some bread and dried fruit, but Gollum at once curled up and went to sleep. The hobbits did not shut their eyes.

It must have been a little after midnight when Gollum woke up: suddenly they were aware of his pale eyes unlidged gleaming at them. He listened and sniffed, which seemed, as they had noticed before, his usual method of discovering the time of night.

'Are we rested? Have we had beautiful sleep?' he said. 'Let's go!'

'We aren't, and we haven't,' growled Sam. 'But we'll go if we must.'

Gollum dropped at once from the branches of the tree on to all fours, and the hobbits followed more slowly.

As soon as they were down they went on again with Gollum leading, eastwards, up the dark sloping land. They could see little, for the night was now so deep that they were hardly aware of the stems of trees before they stumbled against them. The ground became more broken and walking was more difficult, but Gollum seemed in no way troubled. He led them through thickets and wastes of brambles; sometimes round the lip of a deep cleft or dark pit, sometimes down into black bush-shrouded hollows and out again; but if ever they went a little downward, always the further slope was longer and steeper. They were climbing steadily. At their first halt they looked back, and they could dimly perceive the roofs of the forest they had left behind, lying like a vast dense shadow, a darker night under the dark blank sky. There seemed to be a great blackness looming slowly out of the East, eating up the faint blurred stars. Later the sinking moon escaped from the pursuing cloud, but it was ringed all about with a sickly yellow glare.

At last Gollum turned to the hobbits. 'Day soon,' he said. 'Hobbits must hurry. Not safe to stay in the open in these places. Make haste!'

He quickened his pace, and they followed him wearily. Soon they began to climb up on to a great hog-back of land. For the most part it was covered with a thick growth of gorse and whortleberry, and low tough thorns, though here and there clearings opened, the scars of recent fires. The gorse-bushes became more frequent as they got nearer the top; very old and tall they were, gaunt and leggy below but thick above, and already putting out yellow flowers that glimmered in the gloom and gave a faint sweet scent. So tall were the spiny thickets that the hobbits could walk upright under them, passing through long dry aisles carpeted with a deep prickly mould.

On the further edge of this broad hill-back they stayed their march and crawled for hiding underneath a tangled knot of thorns. Their twisted boughs, stooping to the ground, were overridden by a clambering maze of old briars. Deep inside there was a hollow hall, rafted with dead branch and bramble, and roofed with the first leaves and shoots of spring. There they lay for a while, too tired yet to eat; and peering out through the holes in the covert they watched for the slow growth of day.

But no day came, only a dead brown twilight. In the East there was a dull red glare under the lowering cloud: it was not the red of dawn. Across the tumbled lands between, the mountains of the Ephel Dúath frowned at them, black and shapeless below where night lay thick and did not pass away, above with jagged tops and edges outlined hard and menacing against the fiery glow. Away to their right a great shoulder of the mountains stood out, dark and black amid the shadows, thrusting westward.

‘Which way do we go from here?’ asked Frodo. ‘Is that the opening of—of the Morgul Valley, away over there beyond that black mass?’

‘Need we think about it yet?’ said Sam. ‘Surely we’re not going to move any more today, if day it is?’

‘Perhaps not, perhaps not,’ said Gollum. ‘But we must go soon, to the Cross-roads. Yes, to the Cross-roads. That’s the way over there, yes, Master.’

The red glare over Mordor died away. The twilight deepened as great vapours rose in the East and crawled above them. Frodo and Sam took a little food and then lay down, but Gollum was restless. He would not eat any of their food, but he drank a little water and then crawled about under the bushes, sniffing and muttering. Then suddenly he disappeared.

‘Off hunting, I suppose,’ said Sam and yawned. It was his turn to sleep first, and he was soon deep in a dream. He thought he was back in the Bag End garden looking for something; but he had a heavy pack on his back, which made him stoop. It all seemed very weedy and rank somehow, and thorns and bracken were invading the beds down near the bottom hedge.

‘A job of work for me, I can see; but I’m so tired,’ he kept on saying. Presently he remembered what he was looking for. ‘My pipe!’ he said, and with that he woke up.

‘Silly!’ he said to himself, as he opened his eyes and wondered why he was lying down under the hedge. ‘It’s in your pack all the time!’ Then he realized, first that the pipe might be in his pack but he had no leaf, and next that he was hundreds of miles from Bag End. He sat up. It seemed to be almost dark. Why had his master let him sleep on out of turn, right on till evening?

‘Haven’t you had no sleep, Mr. Frodo?’ he said. ‘What’s the time? Seems to be getting late!’

‘No it isn’t,’ said Frodo. ‘But the day is getting darker instead of lighter: darker and darker. As far as I can tell, it isn’t midday yet, and you’ve only slept for about three hours.’

‘I wonder what’s up,’ said Sam. ‘Is there a storm coming? If so it’s going to be the worst there ever was. We shall wish we were down a deep hole, not just stuck under a hedge.’ He listened. ‘What’s that? Thunder, or drums, or what is it?’

‘I don’t know,’ said Frodo. ‘It’s been going on for a good while now. Sometimes the ground seems to tremble, sometimes it seems to be the heavy air throbbing in your ears.’

Sam looked round. ‘Where’s Gollum?’ he said. ‘Hasn’t he come back yet?’

‘No,’ said Frodo. ‘There’s not been a sign or sound of him.’

‘Well, I can’t abide him,’ said Sam. ‘In fact, I’ve never taken anything on a journey that I’d have been less sorry to lose on the way. But it would be just like him, after coming all these miles, to go and get lost now, just when we shall need him most—that is, if he’s ever going to be any use, which I doubt.’

‘You forget the Marshes,’ said Frodo. ‘I hope nothing has happened to him.’

‘And I hope he’s up to no tricks. And anyway I hope he doesn’t fall into other hands, as you might say. Because if he does, we shall soon be in for trouble.’

At that moment a rolling and rumbling noise was heard again, louder now and deeper. The ground seemed to quiver under their feet. 'I think we are in for trouble anyhow,' said Frodo. 'I'm afraid our journey is drawing to an end.'

'Maybe,' said Sam; 'but *where there's life there's hope*, as my gaffer used to say; and *need of vittles*, as he mostways used to add. You have a bite, Mr. Frodo, and then a bit of sleep.'

The afternoon, as Sam supposed it must be called, wore on. Looking out from the covert he could see only a dun, shadowless world, fading slowly into a featureless, colourless gloom. It felt stifling but not warm. Frodo slept unquietly, turning and tossing, and sometimes murmuring. Twice Sam thought he heard him speaking Gandalf's name. The time seemed to drag interminably. Suddenly Sam heard a hiss behind him, and there was Gollum on all fours, peering at them with gleaming eyes.

'Wake up, wake up! Wake up, sleepies!' he whispered. 'Wake up! No time to lose. We must go, yes, we must go at once. No time to lose!'

Sam stared at him suspiciously: he seemed frightened or excited. 'Go now? What's your little game? It isn't time yet. It can't be tea-time even, leastways not in decent places where there is tea-time.'

'Silly!' hissed Gollum. 'We're not in decent places. Time's running short, yes, running fast. No time to lose. We must go. Wake up, Master, wake up!' He clawed at Frodo; and Frodo, startled out of sleep, sat up suddenly and seized him by the arm. Gollum tore himself loose and backed away.

'They mustn't be silly,' he hissed. 'We must go. No time to lose!' And nothing more could they get out of him. Where he had been, and what he thought was brewing to make him in such a hurry, he would not say. Sam was filled with deep suspicion, and showed it; but Frodo gave no sign of what was passing in his mind. He sighed, hoisted his pack, and prepared to go out into the ever-gathering darkness.

Very stealthily Gollum led them down the hillside, keeping under cover wherever it was possible, and running, almost bent to the ground, across any open space; but the light was now so dim that even a keen-eyed beast of the wild could scarcely have seen the hobbits, hooded, in their grey cloaks, nor heard them, walking as warily as the little people can. Without the crack of a twig or the rustle of a leaf they passed and vanished.

For about an hour they went on, silently, in single file, oppressed by the gloom and by the absolute stillness of the land, broken only now and again by the faint rumbling as of thunder far away or drumbeats in some hollow of the hills. Down from their hiding-place they went, and then turning south they steered as straight a course as Gollum could find across a long broken slope that leaned up towards the mountains. Presently, not far ahead, looming up like a black wall, they saw a belt of trees. As they drew nearer they became aware that these were of vast size, very ancient it seemed, and still towering high, though their tops were gaunt and broken, as if tempest and lightning-blast had swept across them, but had failed to kill them or to shake their fathomless roots.

'The Cross-roads, yes,' whispered Gollum, the first words that had been spoken since they left their hiding-place. 'We must go that way.' Turning eastward now, he led them up the slope; and then suddenly there it was before them: the Southward Road, winding its way about the outer feet of the mountains, until presently it plunged into the great ring of trees.

'This is the only way,' whispered Gollum. 'No paths beyond the road. No paths. We must go to the Cross-roads. But make haste! Be silent!'

As furtively as scouts within the campment of their enemies, they crept down on to the road, and stole along its westward edge under the stony bank, grey as the stones themselves, and soft-footed as hunting cats. At length they reached the trees, and found that they stood in a great roofless ring, open in the middle to the sombre sky; and the spaces between their immense boles were like the great dark arches of some ruined hall. In the very centre four ways met. Behind them lay the road to the Morannon; before them it ran out again upon its long journey south; to their right the road from old Osgiliath came climbing up, and crossing, passed out eastward into darkness: the fourth way, the road they were to take.

Standing there for a moment filled with dread Frodo became aware that a light was shining; he saw it glowing on Sam's face beside him. Turning towards it, he saw, beyond an arch of boughs, the road to Osgiliath running

almost as straight as a stretched ribbon down, down, into the West. There, far away, beyond sad Gondor now overwhelmed in shade, the Sun was sinking, finding at last the hem of the great slow-rolling pall of cloud, and falling in an ominous fire towards the yet unsullied Sea. The brief glow fell upon a huge sitting figure, still and solemn as the great stone kings of Argonath. The years had gnawed it, and violent hands had maimed it. Its head was gone, and in its place was set in mockery a round rough-hewn stone, rudely painted by savage hands in the likeness of a grinning face with one large red eye in the midst of its forehead. Upon its knees and mighty chair, and all about the pedestal, were idle scrawls mixed with the foul symbols that the maggot-folk of Mordor used.

Suddenly, caught by the level beams, Frodo saw the old king's head: it was lying rolled away by the roadside. 'Look, Sam!' he cried, startled into speech. 'Look! The king has got a crown again!'

The eyes were hollow and the carven beard was broken, but about the high stern forehead there was a coronal of silver and gold. A trailing plant with flowers like small white stars had bound itself across the brows as if in reverence for the fallen king, and in the crevices of his stony hair yellow stonecrop gleamed.

'They cannot conquer for ever!' said Frodo. And then suddenly the brief glimpse was gone. The Sun dipped and vanished, and as if at the shuttering of a lamp, black night fell.



## Chapter 8: The Stairs Of Cirith Ungol

Gollum was tugging at Frodo's cloak and hissing with fear and impatience. 'We must go,' he said. 'We mustn't stand here. Make haste!'

Reluctantly Frodo turned his back on the West and followed as his guide led him, out into the darkness of the East. They left the ring of trees and crept along the road towards the mountains. This road, too, ran straight for a while, but soon it began to bend away southwards, until it came right under the great shoulder of rock that they had seen from the distance. Black and forbidding it loomed above them, darker than the dark sky behind. Crawling under its shadow the road went on, and rounding it sprang east again and began to climb steeply.

Frodo and Sam were plodding along with heavy hearts, no longer able to care greatly about their peril. Frodo's head was bowed; his burden was dragging him down again. As soon as the great Crossroads had been passed, the weight of it, almost forgotten in Ithilien, had begun to grow once more. Now, feeling the way become steep before his feet, he looked wearily up; and then he saw it, even as Gollum had said that he would: the city of the Ringwraiths. He cowered against the stony bank.

A long-tilted valley, a deep gulf of shadow, ran back far into the mountains. Upon the further side, some way within the valley's arms, high on a rocky seat upon the black knees of the Ephel Dûath, stood the walls and tower of Minas Morgul. All was dark about it, earth and sky, but it was lit with light. Not the imprisoned moonlight welling through the marble walls of Minas Ithil long ago, Tower of the Moon, fair and radiant in the hollow of the hills. Paler indeed than the moon ailing in some slow eclipse was the light of it now, wavering and blowing like a noisome exhalation of decay, a corpse-light, a light that illuminated nothing. In the walls and tower windows showed, like countless black holes looking inward into emptiness; but the topmost course of the tower revolved slowly, first one way and then another, a huge ghostly head leering into the night. For a moment the three companions stood there, shrinking, staring up with unwilling eyes. Gollum was the first to recover. Again he pulled at their cloaks urgently, but he spoke no word. Almost he dragged them forward. Every step was reluctant, and time seemed to slow its pace, so that between the raising of a foot and the setting of it down minutes of loathing passed.

So they came slowly to the white bridge. Here the road, gleaming faintly, passed over the stream in the midst of the valley, and went on, winding deviously up towards the city's gate: a black mouth opening in the outer circle of the northward walls. Wide flats lay on either bank, shadowy meads filled with pale white flowers. Luminous these were too, beautiful and yet horrible of shape, like the demented forms in an uneasy dream; and they gave forth a faint sickening charnel-smell; an odour of rottenness filled the air. From mead to mead the bridge sprang. Figures stood there at its head, carved with cunning in forms human and bestial, but all corrupt and loathsome. The water flowing beneath was silent, and it steamed, but the vapour that rose from it, curling and twisting about the bridge, was deadly cold. Frodo felt his senses reeling and his mind darkening. Then suddenly, as if some force were at work other than his own will, he began to hurry, tottering forward, his groping hands held out, his head lolling from side to side. Both Sam and Gollum ran after him. Sam caught his master in his arms, as he stumbled and almost fell, right on the threshold of the bridge.

'Not that way! No, not that way!' whispered Gollum, but the breath between his teeth seemed to tear the heavy stillness like a whistle, and he cowered to the ground in terror.

'Hold up, Mr. Frodo!' muttered Sam in Frodo's ear. 'Come back! Not that way. Gollum says not, and for once I agree with him.'

Frodo passed his hand over his brow and wrenched his eyes away from the city on the hill. The luminous tower fascinated him, and he fought the desire that was on him to run up the gleaming road towards its gate. At last

with an effort he turned back, and as he did so, he felt the Ring resisting him, dragging at the chain about his neck; and his eyes too, as he looked away, seemed for the moment to have been blinded. The darkness before him was impenetrable.

Gollum, crawling on the ground like a frightened animal, was already vanishing into the gloom. Sam, supporting and guiding his stumbling master, followed after him as quickly as he could. Not far from the near bank of the stream there was a gap in the stone-wall beside the road. Through this they passed, and Sam saw that they were on a narrow path that gleamed faintly at first, as the main road did, until climbing above the meads of deadly flowers it faded and went dark, winding its crooked way up into the northern sides of the valley.

Along this path the hobbits trudged, side by side, unable to see Gollum in front of them, except when he turned back to beckon them on. Then his eyes shone with a green-white light, reflecting the noisome Morgul-sheen perhaps, or kindled by some answering mood within. Of that deadly gleam and of the dark eyeholes Frodo and Sam were always conscious, ever glancing fearfully over their shoulders, and ever dragging their eyes back to find the darkening path. Slowly they laboured on. As they rose above the stench and vapours of the poisonous stream their breath became easier and their heads clearer; but now their limbs were deadly tired, as if they had walked all night under a burden, or had been swimming long against a heavy tide of water. At last they could go no further without a halt.

Frodo stopped and sat down on a stone. They had now climbed up to the top of a great hump of bare rock. Ahead of them there was a bay in the valley-side, and round the head of this the path went on, no more than a wide ledge with a chasm on the right; across the sheer southward face of the mountain it crawled upwards, until it disappeared into the blackness above.

‘I must rest a while, Sam,’ whispered Frodo. ‘It’s heavy on me, Sam lad, very heavy. I wonder how far I can carry it? Anyway I must rest before we venture on to that.’ He pointed to the narrow way ahead.

‘Sssh! ssh!’ hissed Gollum hurrying back to them. ‘Sssh!’ His fingers were on his lips and he shook his head urgently. Tugging at Frodo’s sleeve, he pointed towards the path; but Frodo would not move.

‘Not yet,’ he said, ‘not yet.’ Weariness and more than weariness oppressed him; it seemed as if a heavy spell was laid on his mind and body. ‘I must rest,’ he muttered.

At this Gollum’s fear and agitation became so great that he spoke again, hissing behind his hand, as if to keep the sound from unseen listeners in the air. ‘Not here, no. Not rest here. Fools! Eyes can see us. When they come to the bridge they will see us. Come away! Climb, climb! Come!’

‘Come, Mr. Frodo,’ said Sam. ‘He’s right again. We can’t stay here.’

‘All right,’ said Frodo in a remote voice, as of one speaking half asleep. ‘I will try.’ Wearily he got to his feet.

But it was too late. At that moment the rock quivered and trembled beneath them. The great rumbling noise, louder than ever before, rolled in the ground and echoed in the mountains. Then with searing suddenness there came a great red flash. Far beyond the eastern mountains it leapt into the sky and splashed the lowering clouds with crimson. In that valley of shadow and cold deathly light it seemed unbearably violent and fierce. Peaks of stone and ridges like notched knives sprang out in staring black against the uprushing flame in Gorgoroth. Then came a great crack of thunder.

And Minas Morgul answered. There was a flare of livid lightnings: forks of blue flame springing up from the tower and from the encircling hills into the sullen clouds. The earth groaned; and out of the city there came a cry. Mingled with harsh high voices as of birds of prey, and the shrill neighing of horses wild with rage and fear, there came a rending screech, shivering, rising swiftly to a piercing pitch beyond the range of hearing. The hobbits wheeled round towards it, and cast themselves down, holding their hands upon their ears.

As the terrible cry ended, falling back through a long sickening wail to silence, Frodo slowly raised his head. Across the narrow valley, now almost on a level with his eyes, the walls of the evil city stood, and its cavernous gate, shaped like an open mouth with gleaming teeth, was gaping wide. And out of the gate an army came.



All that host was clad in sable, dark as the night. Against the wan walls and the luminous pavement of the road Frodo could see them, small black figures in rank upon rank, marching swiftly and silently, passing outwards in an endless stream. Before them went a great cavalry of horsemen moving like ordered shadows, and at their head was one greater than all the rest: a Rider, all black, save that on his hooded head he had a helm like a crown that flickered with a perilous light. Now he was drawing near the bridge below, and Frodo's staring eyes followed him, unable to wink or to withdraw. Surely there was the Lord of the Nine Riders returned to earth to lead his ghastly host to battle? Here, yes here indeed was the haggard king whose cold hand had smitten down the Ring-bearer with his deadly knife. The old wound throbbed with pain and a great chill spread towards Frodo's heart.

Even as these thoughts pierced him with dread and held him bound as with a spell, the Rider halted suddenly, right before the entrance of the bridge, and behind him all the host stood still. There was a pause, a dead silence. Maybe it was the Ring that called to the Wraith-lord, and for a moment he was troubled, sensing some other power within his valley. This way and that turned the dark head helmed and crowned with fear, sweeping the shadows with its unseen eyes. Frodo waited, like a bird at the approach of a snake, unable to move. And as he waited, he felt, more urgent than ever before, the command that he should put on the Ring. But great as the pressure was, he felt no inclination now to yield to it. He knew that the Ring would only betray him, and that he had not, even if he put it on, the power to face the Morgul-king—not yet. There was no longer any answer to that command in his own will, dismayed by terror though it was, and he felt only the beating upon him of a great power from outside. It took his hand, and as Frodo watched with his mind, not willing it but in suspense (as if he looked on some old story far away), it moved the hand inch by inch towards the chain upon his neck. Then his own will stirred; slowly it forced the hand back and set it to find another thing, a thing lying hidden near his breast. Cold and hard it seemed as his grip closed on it: the phial of Galadriel, so long treasured, and almost forgotten till that hour. As he touched it, for a while all thought of the Ring was banished from his mind. He sighed and bent his head.

At that moment the Wraith-king turned and spurred his horse and rode across the bridge, and all his dark host followed him. Maybe the elven-hoods defied his unseen eyes, and the mind of his small enemy, being strengthened, had turned aside his thought. But he was in haste. Already the hour had struck, and at his great Master's bidding he must march with war into the West.

Soon he had passed, like a shadow into shadow, down the winding road, and behind him still the black ranks crossed the bridge. So great an army had never issued from that vale since the days of Isildur's might; no host so fell and strong in arms had yet assailed the fords of Anduin; and yet it was but one and not the greatest of the hosts that Mordor now sent forth.

Frodo stirred. And suddenly his heart went out to Faramir. 'The storm has burst at last,' he thought. 'This great array of spears and swords is going to Osgiliath. Will Faramir get across in time? He guessed it, but did he know the hour? And who can now hold the fords when the King of the Nine Riders comes? And other armies will come. I am too late. All is lost. I tarried on the way. All is lost. Even if my errand is performed, no-one will ever know. There will be no-one I can tell. It will be in vain.' Overcome with weakness he wept. And still the host of Morgul crossed the bridge.

Then at a great distance, as if it came out of memories of the Shire, some sunlit early morning, when the day called and doors were opening, he heard Sam's voice speaking. 'Wake up, Mr. Frodo! Wake up!' Had the voice added: 'Your breakfast is ready,' he would hardly have been surprised. Certainly Sam was urgent. 'Wake up, Mr. Frodo! They're gone,' he said.

There was a dull clang. The gates of Minas Morgul had closed. The last rank of spears had vanished down the road. The tower still grinned across the valley, but the light was fading in it. The whole city was falling back into a dark brooding shade, and silence. Yet still it was filled with watchfulness.

'Wake up, Mr. Frodo! They're gone, and we'd better go too. There's something still alive in that place, something with eyes, or a seeing mind, if you take me; and the longer we stay in one spot, the sooner it will get on to us. Come on, Mr. Frodo!'

Frodo raised his head, and then stood up. Despair had not left him, but the weakness had passed. He even smiled grimly, feeling now as clearly as a moment before he had felt the opposite, that what he had to do, he had to do, if he could, and that whether Faramir or Aragorn or Elrond or Galadriel or Gandalf or anyone else ever knew about it was beside the purpose. He took his staff in one hand and the phial in his other. When he saw that the clear light was already welling through his fingers, he thrust it into his bosom and held it against his heart. Then turning from the city of Morgul, now no more than a grey glimmer across a dark gulf, he prepared to take the upward road.

Gollum, it seemed, had crawled off along the ledge into the darkness beyond, when the gates of Minas Morgul opened, leaving the hobbits where they lay. He now came creeping back, his teeth chattering and his fingers snapping. 'Foolish! Silly!' he hissed. 'Make haste! They mustn't think danger has passed. It hasn't. Make haste!'

They did not answer, but they followed him on to the climbing ledge. It was little to the liking of either of them, not even after facing so many other perils; but it did not last long. Soon the path reached a rounded angle where the mountain-side swelled out again, and there it suddenly entered a narrow opening in the rock. They had come to the first stair that Gollum had spoken of. The darkness was almost complete, and they could see nothing much beyond their hands' stretch; but Gollum's eyes shone pale, several feet above, as he turned back towards them.

'Careful!' he whispered. 'Steps. Lots of steps. Must be careful!'

Care was certainly needed. Frodo and Sam at first felt easier, having now a wall on either side, but the stairway was almost as steep as a ladder, and as they climbed up and up, they became more and more aware of the long black fall behind them. And the steps were narrow, spaced unevenly, and often treacherous: they were worn and smooth at the edges, and some were broken, and some cracked as foot was set upon them. The hobbits struggled on, until at last they were clinging with desperate fingers to the steps ahead, and forcing their aching knees to bend and straighten; and ever as the stair cut its way deeper into the sheer mountain the rocky walls rose higher and higher above their heads.

At length, just as they felt that they could endure no more, they saw Gollum's eyes peering down at them again. 'We're up,' he whispered. 'First stair's past. Clever hobbits to climb so high, very clever hobbits. Just a few more little steps and that's all, yes.'

Dizzy and very tired Sam, and Frodo following him, crawled up the last step, and sat down rubbing their legs and knees. They were in a deep dark passage that seemed still to go up before them, though at a gentler slope and without steps. Gollum did not let them rest long.

'There's another stair still,' he said. 'Much longer stair. Rest when we get to the top of next stair. Not yet.'

Sam groaned. 'Longer, did you say?' he asked.

'Yes, yess, longer,' said Gollum. 'But not so difficult. Hobbits have climbed the Straight Stair. Next comes the Winding Stair.'

'And what after that?' said Sam.

'We shall see,' said Gollum softly. 'O yes, we shall see!'

'I thought you said there was a tunnel,' said Sam. 'Isn't there a tunnel or something to go through?'

'O yes, there's a tunnel,' said Gollum. 'But hobbits can rest before they try that. If they get through that, they'll be nearly at the top. Very nearly, if they get through. O yes!'

Frodo shivered. The climb had made him sweat, but now he felt cold and clammy, and there was a chill draught in the dark passage, blowing down from the invisible heights above. He got up and shook himself. 'Well, let's go on!' he said. 'This is no place to sit in.'

The passage seemed to go on for miles, and always the chill air flowed over them, rising as they went on to a bitter wind. The mountains seemed to be trying with their deadly breath to daunt them, to turn them back from the secrets of the high places, or to blow them away into the darkness behind. They only knew that they had

come to the end, when suddenly they felt no wall at their right hand. They could see very little. Great black shapeless masses and deep grey shadows loomed above them and about them, but now and again a dull red light flickered up under the lowering clouds, and for a moment they were aware of tall peaks, in front and on either side, like pillars holding up a vast sagging roof. They seemed to have climbed up many hundreds of feet, on to a wide shelf. A cliff was on their left and a chasm on their right.

Gollum led the way close under the cliff. For the present they were no longer climbing, but the ground was now more broken and dangerous in the dark, and there were blocks and lumps of fallen stone in the way. Their going was slow and cautious. How many hours had passed since they had entered the Morgul Vale neither Sam nor Frodo could any longer guess. The night seemed endless.

At length they were once more aware of a wall looming up, and once more a stairway opened before them. Again they halted, and again they began to climb. It was a long and weary ascent; but this stairway did not delve into the mountain-side. Here the huge cliff-face sloped backwards, and the path like a snake wound to and fro across it. At one point it crawled sideways right to the edge of the dark chasm, and Frodo glancing down saw below him as a vast deep pit the great ravine at the head of the Morgul Valley. Down in its depths glimmered like a glow-worm thread the wraith-road from the dead city to the Nameless Pass. He turned hastily away.

Still on and up the stairway bent and crawled, until at last with a final flight, short and straight, it climbed out again on to another level. The path had veered away from the main pass in the great ravine, and it now followed its own perilous course at the bottom of a lesser cleft among the higher regions of the Ephel Dúath. Dimly the hobbits could discern tall piers and jagged pinnacles of stone on either side, between which were great crevices and fissures blacker than the night, where forgotten winters had gnawed and carved the sunless stone. And now the red light in the sky seemed stronger; though they could not tell whether a dreadful morning were indeed coming to this place of shadow, or whether they saw only the flame of some great violence of Sauron in the torment of Gorgoroth beyond. Still far ahead, and still high above, Frodo, looking up, saw, as he guessed, the very crown of this bitter road. Against the sullen redness of the eastern sky a cleft was outlined in the topmost ridge, narrow, deep-cloven between two black shoulders; and on either shoulder was a horn of stone.

He paused and looked more attentively. The horn upon the left was tall and slender; and in it burned a red light, or else the red light in the land beyond was shining through a hole. He saw now: it was a black tower poised above the outer pass. He touched Sam's arm and pointed.

'I don't like the look of that!' said Sam. 'So this secret way of yours is guarded after all,' he growled, turning to Gollum. 'As you knew all along, I suppose?'

'All ways are watched, yes,' said Gollum. 'Of course they are. But hobbits must try some way. This may be least watched. Perhaps they've all gone away to big battle, perhaps!'

'Perhaps,' grunted Sam. 'Well, it still seems a long way off, and a long way up before we get there. And there's still the tunnel. I think you ought to rest now, Mr. Frodo. I don't know what time of day or night it is, but we've kept going for hours and hours.'

'Yes, we must rest,' said Frodo. 'Let us find some corner out of the wind, and gather our strength—for the last lap.' For so he felt it to be. The terrors of the land beyond, and the deed to be done there, seemed remote, too far off yet to trouble him. All his mind was bent on getting through or over this impenetrable wall and guard. If once he could do that impossible thing, then somehow the errand would be accomplished, or so it seemed to him in that dark hour of weariness, still labouring in the stony shadows under Cirith Ungol.

In a dark crevice between two great piers of rock they sat down: Frodo and Sam a little way within, and Gollum crouched upon the ground near the opening. There the hobbits took what they expected would be their last meal before they went down into the Nameless Land, maybe the last meal they would ever eat together. Some of the food of Gondor they ate, and wafers of the waybread of the Elves, and they drank a little. But of their water they were sparing and took only enough to moisten their dry mouths.

'I wonder when we'll find water again?' said Sam. 'But I suppose even over there they drink? Orcs drink, don't they?'

‘Yes, they drink,’ said Frodo. ‘But do not let us speak of that. Such drink is not for us.’

‘Then all the more need to fill our bottles,’ said Sam. ‘But there isn’t any water up here: not a sound or a trickle have I heard. And anyway Faramir said we were not to drink any water in Morgul.’

‘No water flowing out of Imlad Morgul, were his words,’ said Frodo. ‘We are not in that valley now, and if we came on a spring it would be flowing into it and not out of it.’

‘I wouldn’t trust it,’ said Sam, ‘not till I was dying of thirst. There’s a wicked feeling about this place.’ He sniffed. ‘And a smell, I fancy. Do you notice it? A queer kind of a smell, stuffy. I don’t like it.’

‘I don’t like anything here at all,’ said Frodo, ‘step or stone, breath or bone. Earth, air and water all seem accursed. But so our path is laid.’

‘Yes, that’s so,’ said Sam. ‘And we shouldn’t be here at all, if we’d known more about it before we started. But I suppose it’s often that way. The brave things in the old tales and songs, Mr. Frodo: adventures, as I used to call them. I used to think that they were things the wonderful folk of the stories went out and looked for, because they wanted them, because they were exciting and life was a bit dull, a kind of a sport, as you might say. But that’s not the way of it with the tales that really mattered, or the ones that stay in the mind. Folk seem to have been just landed in them, usually—their paths were laid that way, as you put it. But I expect they had lots of chances, like us, of turning back, only they didn’t. And if they had, we shouldn’t know, because they’d have been forgotten. We hear about those as just went on—and not all to a good end, mind you; at least not to what folk inside a story and not outside it call a good end. You know, coming home, and finding things all right, though not quite the same—like old Mr. Bilbo. But those aren’t always the best tales to hear, though they may be the best tales to get landed in! I wonder what sort of a tale we’ve fallen into?’

‘I wonder,’ said Frodo. ‘But I don’t know. And that’s the way of a real tale. Take any one that you’re fond of. You may know, or guess, what kind of a tale it is, happy-ending or sad-ending, but the people in it don’t know. And you don’t want them to.’

‘No, sir, of course not. Beren now, he never thought he was going to get that Silmaril from the Iron Crown<sup>362</sup> in Thangorodrim<sup>361</sup>, and yet he did, and that was a worse place and a blacker danger than ours. But that’s a long tale, of course, and goes on past the happiness and into grief and beyond it—and the Silmaril<sup>365</sup> went on and came to Eärendil. And why, sir, I never thought of that before! We’ve got—you’ve got some of the light of it in that star-glass that the Lady gave you! Why, to think of it, we’re in the same tale still! It’s going on. Don’t the great tales never end?’

‘No, they never end as tales,’ said Frodo. ‘But the people in them come, and go when their part’s ended. Our part will end later—or sooner.’

‘And then we can have some rest and some sleep,’ said Sam. He laughed grimly. ‘And I mean just that, Mr. Frodo. I mean plain ordinary rest, and sleep, and waking up to a morning’s work in the garden. I’m afraid that’s all I’m hoping for all the time. All the big important plans are not for my sort. Still, I wonder if we shall ever be put into songs or tales. We’re in one, of course; but I mean: put into words, you know, told by the fireside, or read out of a great big book with red and black letters, years and years afterwards. And people will say: “Let’s hear about Frodo and the Ring!” And they’ll say: “Yes, that’s one of my favourite stories. Frodo was very brave, wasn’t he, dad?” “Yes, my boy, the famousest of the hobbits, and that’s saying a lot.”’

‘It’s saying a lot too much,’ said Frodo, and he laughed, a long clear laugh from his heart. Such a sound had not been heard in those places since Sauron came to Middle-earth. To Sam suddenly it seemed as if all the stones were listening and the tall rocks leaning over them. But Frodo did not heed them; he laughed again. ‘Why, Sam,’ he said, ‘to hear you somehow makes me as merry as if the story was already written. But you’ve left out one of the chief characters: Samwise the stouthearted. “I want to hear more about Sam, dad. Why didn’t they put in more of his talk, dad? That’s what I like, it makes me laugh. And Frodo wouldn’t have got far without Sam, would he, dad?”’

‘Now, Mr. Frodo,’ said Sam, ‘you shouldn’t make fun. I was serious.’

‘So was I,’ said Frodo, ‘and so I am. We’re going on a bit too fast. You and I, Sam, are still stuck in the worst places of the story, and it is all too likely that some will say at this point: “Shut the book now, dad; we don’t want to read any more.”’

‘Maybe,’ said Sam, ‘but I wouldn’t be one to say that. Things done and over and made into part of the great tales are different. Why, even Gollum might be good in a tale, better than he is to have by you, anyway. And he used to like tales himself once, by his own account. I wonder if he thinks he’s the hero or the villain?’

‘Gollum!’ he called. ‘Would you like to be the hero—now where’s he got to again?’

There was no sign of him at the mouth of their shelter nor in the shadows near. He had refused their food, though he had, as usual, accepted a mouthful of water; and then he had seemed to curl up for a sleep. They had supposed that one at any rate of his objects in his long absence the day before had been to hunt for food to his own liking; and now he had evidently slipped off again while they talked. But what for this time?

‘I don’t like his sneaking off without saying,’ said Sam. ‘And least of all now. He can’t be looking for food up here, not unless there’s some kind of rock he fancies. Why, there isn’t even a bit of moss!’

‘It’s no good worrying about him now,’ said Frodo. ‘We couldn’t have got so far, not even within sight of the pass, without him, and so we’ll have to put up with his ways. If he’s false, he’s false.’

‘All the same, I’d rather have him under my eye,’ said Sam. ‘All the more so, if he’s false. Do you remember he never would say if this pass was guarded or no? And now we see a tower there—and it may be deserted, and it may not. Do you think he’s gone to fetch them, Orcs or whatever they are?’

‘No, I don’t think so,’ answered Frodo. ‘Even if he’s up to some wickedness, and I suppose that’s not unlikely. I don’t think it’s that: not to fetch Orcs, or any servants of the Enemy. Why wait till now, and go through all the labour of the climb, and come so near the land he fears? He could probably have betrayed us to Orcs many times since we met him. No, if it’s anything, it will be some little private trick of his own that he thinks is quite secret.’

‘Well, I suppose you’re right, Mr. Frodo,’ said Sam. ‘Not that it comforts me mightily. I don’t make no mistake: I don’t doubt he’d hand *me* over to Orcs as gladly as kiss his hand. But I was forgetting—his Precious. No, I suppose the whole time it’s been *The Precious for poor Sméagol*. That’s the one idea in all his little schemes, if he has any. But how bringing us up here will help him in that is more than I can guess.’

‘Very likely he can’t guess himself,’ said Frodo. ‘And I don’t think he’s got just one plain scheme in his muddled head. I think he really is in part trying to save the Precious from the Enemy, as long as he can. For that would be the last disaster for himself too, if the Enemy got it. And in the other part, perhaps, he’s just biding his time and waiting on chance.’

‘Yes, Slinker and Stinker, as I’ve said before,’ said Sam. ‘But the nearer they get to the Enemy’s land the more like Stinker Slinker will get. Mark my words: if ever we get to the pass, he won’t let us really take the precious thing over the border without making some kind of trouble.’

‘We haven’t got there yet,’ said Frodo.

‘No, but we’d better keep our eyes skinned till we do. If we’re caught napping, Stinker will come out on top pretty quick. Not but what it would be safe for you to have a wink now, master. Safe, if you lay close to me. I’d be dearly glad to see you have a sleep. I’d keep watch over you; and anyway, if you lay near, with my arm round you, no-one could come pawing you without your Sam knowing it.’

‘Sleep!’ said Frodo and sighed, as if out of a desert he had seen a mirage of cool green. ‘Yes, even here I could sleep.’

‘Sleep then, master! Lay your head in my lap.’

And so Gollum found them hours later, when he returned, crawling and creeping down the path out of the gloom ahead. Sam sat propped against the stone, his head dropping sideways and his breathing heavy. In his lap lay Frodo’s head, drowned deep in sleep; upon his white forehead lay one of Sam’s brown hands, and the other lay softly upon his master’s breast. Peace was in both their faces.

Gollum looked at them. A strange expression passed over his lean hungry face. The gleam faded from his eyes, and they went dim and grey, old and tired. A spasm of pain seemed to twist him, and he turned away, peering back up towards the pass, shaking his head, as if engaged in some interior debate. Then he came back, and slowly putting out a trembling hand, very cautiously he touched Frodo's knee—but almost the touch was a caress. For a fleeting moment, could one of the sleepers have seen him, they would have thought that they beheld an old weary hobbit, shrunken by the years that had carried him far beyond his time, beyond friends and kin, and the fields and streams of youth, an old starved pitiable thing.

But at that touch Frodo stirred and cried out softly in his sleep, and immediately Sam was wide awake. The first thing he saw was Gollum—'pawing at master,' as he thought.

'Hey you!' he said roughly. 'What are you up to?' 'Nothing, nothing,' said Gollum softly. 'Nice Master!' 'I daresay,' said Sam. 'But where have you been to—sneaking off and sneaking back, you old villain?'

Gollum withdrew himself, and a green glint flickered under his heavy lids. Almost spider-like he looked now, crouched back on his bent limbs, with his protruding eyes. The fleeting moment had passed, beyond recall. 'Sneaking, sneaking!' he hissed. 'Hobbits always so polite, yes. O nice hobbits! Sméagol brings them up secret ways that nobody else could find. Tired he is, thirsty he is, yes thirsty; and he guides them and he searches for paths, and they say *sneak, sneak*. Very nice friends, O yes my precious, very nice.'

Sam felt a bit remorseful, though not more trustful. 'Sorry,' he said. 'I'm sorry, but you startled me out of my sleep. And I shouldn't have been sleeping, and that made me a bit sharp. But Mr. Frodo, he's that tired, I asked him to have a wink; and well, that's how it is. Sorry. But where *have* you been to?'

'Sneaking,' said Gollum, and the green glint did not leave his eyes.

'O very well,' said Sam, 'have it your own way! I don't suppose it's so far from the truth. And now we'd better all be sneaking along together. What's the time? Is it today or tomorrow?'

'It's tomorrow,' said Gollum, 'or this was tomorrow when hobbits went to sleep. Very foolish, very dangerous—if poor Sméagol wasn't sneaking about to watch.'

'I think we shall get tired of that word soon,' said Sam. 'But never mind. I'll wake master up.' Gently he smoothed the hair back from Frodo's brow, and bending down spoke softly to him.

'Wake up, Mr. Frodo! Wake up!'

Frodo stirred and opened his eyes, and smiled, seeing Sam's face bending over him. 'Calling me early aren't you, Sam?' he said. 'It's dark still!'

'Yes it's always dark here,' said Sam. 'But Gollum's come back, Mr. Frodo, and he says it's tomorrow. So we must be walking on. The last lap.'

Frodo drew a deep breath and sat up. 'The last lap!' he said. 'Hullo, Sméagol! Found any food? Have you had any rest?'

'No food, no rest, nothing for Sméagol,' said Gollum. 'He's a sneak.'

Sam clicked his tongue, but restrained himself.

'Don't take names to yourself, Sméagol,' said Frodo. 'It's unwise, whether they are true or false.'

'Sméagol has to take what's given him,' answered Gollum. 'He was given that name by kind Master Samwise, the hobbit that knows so much.'

Frodo looked at Sam. 'Yes sir,' he said. 'I did use the word, waking up out of my sleep sudden and all and finding him at hand. I said I was sorry, but I soon shan't be.'

'Come, let it pass then,' said Frodo. 'But now we seem to have come to the point, you and I, Sméagol. Tell me. Can we find the rest of the way by ourselves? We're in sight of the pass, of a way in, and if we can find it now, then I suppose our agreement can be said to be over. You have done what you promised, and you're free: free to go back to food and rest, wherever you wish to go, except to servants of the Enemy. And one day I may reward you, I or those that remember me.'

‘No, no, not yet,’ Gollum whined. ‘O no! They can’t find the way themselves, can they? O no indeed. There’s the tunnel coming. Sméagol must go on. No rest. No food. Not yet.’



## Chapter 9: Shelob's Lair

It may indeed have been daytime now, as Gollum said, but the hobbits could see little difference, unless, perhaps, the heavy sky above was less utterly black, more like a great roof of smoke; while instead of the darkness of deep night, which lingered still in cracks and holes, a grey blurring shadow shrouded the stony world about them. They passed on, Gollum in front and the hobbits now side by side, up the long ravine between the piers and columns of torn and weathered rock, standing like huge unshapen statues on either hand. There was no sound. Some way ahead, a mile or so, perhaps, was a great grey wall, a last huge upthrusting mass of mountain-stone. Darker it loomed, and steadily it rose as they approached, until it towered up high above them, shutting out the view of all that lay beyond. Deep shadow lay before its feet. Sam sniffed the air.

‘Ugh! That smell!’ he said. ‘It’s getting stronger and stronger.’

Presently they were under the shadow, and there in the midst of it they saw the opening of a cave. ‘This is the way in,’ said Gollum softly. ‘This is the entrance to the tunnel.’ He did not speak its name: Torech Ungol, Shelob’s Lair. Out of it came a stench, not the sickly odour of decay in the meads of Morgul, but a foul reek, as if filth unnameable were piled and hoarded in the dark within.

‘Is this the only way, Sméagol?’ said Frodo.

‘Yes, yes,’ he answered. ‘Yes, we must go this way now.’

‘D’you mean to say you’ve been through this hole?’ said Sam. ‘Phew! But perhaps you don’t mind bad smells.’

Gollum’s eyes glinted. ‘He doesn’t know what we minds, does he, precious? No, he doesn’t. But Sméagol can bear things. Yes. He’s been through. O yes, right through. It’s the only way.’

‘And what makes the smell, I wonder,’ said Sam. ‘It’s like—well, I wouldn’t like to say. Some beastly hole of the Orcs, I’ll warrant, with a hundred years of their filth in it.’

‘Well,’ said Frodo, ‘Orcs or no, if it’s the only way, we must take it.’

Drawing a deep breath they passed inside. In a few steps they were in utter and impenetrable dark. Not since the lightless passages of Moria had Frodo or Sam known such darkness, and if possible here it was deeper and denser. There, there were airs moving, and echoes, and a sense of space. Here the air was still, stagnant, heavy, and sound fell dead. They walked as it were in a black vapour wrought of veritable darkness itself that, as it was breathed, brought blindness not only to the eyes but to the mind, so that even the memory of colours and of forms and of any light faded out of thought. Night always had been, and always would be, and night was all.

But for a while they could still feel, and indeed the senses of their feet and fingers at first seemed sharpened almost painfully. The walls felt, to their surprise, smooth, and the floor, save for a step now and again, was straight and even, going ever up at the same stiff slope. The tunnel was high and wide, so wide that, though the hobbits walked abreast, only touching the side-walls with their outstretched hands, they were separated, cut off alone in the darkness.

Gollum had gone in first and seemed to be only a few steps ahead. While they were still able to give heed to such things, they could hear his breath hissing and gasping just in front of them. But after a time their senses became duller, both touch and hearing seemed to grow numb, and they kept on, groping, walking, on and on, mainly by the force of the will with which they had entered, will to go through and desire to come at last to the high gate beyond.



Before they had gone very far, perhaps, but time and distance soon passed out of his reckoning, Sam on the right, feeling the wall, was aware that there was an opening at the side: for a moment he caught a faint breath of some air less heavy, and then they passed it by.

‘There’s more than one passage here,’ he whispered with an effort: it seemed hard to make his breath give any sound. ‘It’s as orc-like a place as ever there could be!’

After that, first he on the right, and then Frodo on the left, passed three or four such openings, some wider, some smaller; but there was as yet no doubt of the main way, for it was straight, and did not turn, and still went steadily up. But how long was it, how much more of this would they have to endure, or could they endure? The breathlessness of the air was growing as they climbed; and now they seemed often in the blind dark to sense some resistance thicker than the foul air. As they thrust forward they felt things brush against their heads, or against their hands, long tentacles, or hanging growths perhaps: they could not tell what they were. And still the stench grew. It grew, until almost it seemed to them that smell was the only clear sense left to them, and that was for their torment. One hour, two hours, three hours: how many had they passed in this lightless hole? Hours—days, weeks rather. Sam left the tunnel-side and shrank towards Frodo, and their hands met and clasped, and so together they still went on.

At length Frodo, groping along the left-hand wall, came suddenly to a void. Almost he fell sideways into the emptiness. Here was some opening in the rock far wider than any they had yet passed; and out of it came a reek so foul, and a sense of lurking malice so intense, that Frodo reeled. And at that moment Sam too lurched and fell forwards.

Fighting off both the sickness and the fear, Frodo gripped Sam’s hand. ‘Up!’ he said in a hoarse breath without voice. ‘It all comes from here, the stench and the peril. Now for it! Quick!’

Calling up his remaining strength and resolution, he dragged Sam to his feet, and forced his own limbs to move. Sam stumbled beside him. One step, two steps, three steps—at last six steps. Maybe they had passed the dreadful unseen opening, but whether that was so or not, suddenly it was easier to move, as if some hostile will for the moment had released them. They struggled on, still hand in hand.

But almost at once they came to a new difficulty. The tunnel forked, or so it seemed, and in the dark they could not tell which was the wider way, or which kept nearer to the straight. Which should they take, the left, or the right? They knew of nothing to guide them, yet a false choice would almost certainly be fatal.

‘Which way has Gollum gone?’ panted Sam. ‘And why didn’t he wait?’

‘Sméagol!’ said Frodo, trying to call. ‘Sméagol!’ But his voice croaked, and the name fell dead almost as it left his lips. There was no answer, not an echo, not even a tremor of the air.

‘He’s really gone this time, I fancy,’ muttered Sam. ‘I guess this is just exactly where he meant to bring us. Gollum! If ever I lay hands on you again, you’ll be sorry for it.’

Presently, groping and fumbling in the dark, they found that the opening on the left was blocked: either it was a blind, or else some great stone had fallen in the passage. ‘This can’t be the way,’ Frodo whispered. ‘Right or wrong, we must take the other.’

‘And quick!’ Sam panted. ‘There’s something worse than Gollum about. I can feel something looking at us.’

They had not gone more than a few yards when from behind them came a sound, startling and horrible in the heavy padded silence: a gurgling, bubbling noise, and a long venomous hiss. They wheeled round, but nothing could be seen. Still as stones they stood, staring, waiting for they did not know what.

‘It’s a trap!’ said Sam, and he laid his hand upon the hilt of his sword; and as he did so, he thought of the darkness of the barrow whence it came. ‘I wish old Tom was near us now!’ he thought. Then, as he stood, darkness about him and a blackness of despair and anger in his heart, it seemed to him that he saw a light: a light in his mind, almost unbearably bright at first, as a sun-ray to the eyes of one long hidden in a windowless pit. Then the light became colour: green, gold, silver, white. Far off, as in a little picture drawn by elven-fingers, he saw the Lady Galadriel standing on the grass in Lórien, and gifts were in her hands. *And you, Ring-bearer*, he heard her say, remote but clear, *for you I have prepared this.*

The bubbling hiss drew nearer, and there was a creaking as of some great jointed thing that moved with slow purpose in the dark. A reek came on before it. 'Master, master!' cried Sam, and life and urgency came back into his voice. 'The Lady's gift! The star-glass! A light to you in dark places, she said it was to be. The star-glass!'

'The star-glass?' muttered Frodo, as one answering out of sleep, hardly comprehending. 'Why yes! Why had I forgotten it? *A light when all other lights go out!* And now indeed light alone can help us.'

Slowly his hand went to his bosom, and slowly he held aloft the Phial of Galadriel. For a moment it glimmered, faint as a rising star struggling in heavy earthward mists, and then as its power waxed, and hope grew in Frodo's mind, it began to burn, and kindled to a silver flame, a minute heart of dazzling light, as though Eärendil had himself come down from the high sunset paths with the last Silmaril upon his brow. The darkness receded from it, until it seemed to shine in the centre of a globe of airy crystal, and the hand that held it sparkled with white fire.<sup>365</sup>

Frodo gazed in wonder at this marvellous gift that he had so long carried, not guessing its full worth and potency. Seldom had he remembered it on the road, until they came to Morgul Vale, and never had he used it for fear of its revealing light. *Aiya Eärendil Elenion Ancalima!* he cried, and knew not what he had spoken; for it seemed that another voice spoke through his, clear, untroubled by the foul air of the pit.

But other potencies there are in Middle-earth, powers of night, and they are old and strong. And She that walked in the darkness had heard the Elves cry that cry far back in the deeps of time, and she had not heeded it, and it did not daunt her now. Even as Frodo spoke he felt a great malice bent upon him, and a deadly regard considering him. Not far down the tunnel, between them and the opening where they had reeled and stumbled, he was aware of eyes growing visible, two great clusters of many-windowed eyes—the coming menace was unmasked at last. The radiance of the star-glass was broken and thrown back from their thousand facets, but behind the glitter a pale deadly fire began steadily to glow within, a flame kindled in some deep pit of evil thought. Monstrous and abominable eyes they were, bestial and yet filled with purpose and with hideous delight, gloating over their prey trapped beyond all hope of escape.

Frodo and Sam, horror-stricken, began slowly to back away, their own gaze held by the dreadful stare of those baleful eyes; but as they backed so the eyes advanced. Frodo's hand wavered, and slowly the Phial drooped. Then suddenly, released from the holding spell to run a little while in vain panic for the amusement of the eyes, they both turned and fled together; but even as they ran Frodo looked back and saw with terror that at once the eyes came leaping up behind. The stench of death was like a cloud about him.

'Stand! stand!' he cried desperately. 'Running is no use.'

Slowly the eyes crept nearer.

'Galadriel!' he called, and gathering his courage he lifted up the Phial once more. The eyes halted. For a moment their regard relaxed, as if some hint of doubt troubled them. Then Frodo's heart flamed within him, and without thinking what he did, whether it was folly or despair or courage, he took the Phial in his left hand, and with his right hand drew his sword. Sting flashed out, and the sharp elven-blade sparkled in the silver light, but at its edges a blue fire flickered. Then holding the star aloft and the bright sword advanced, Frodo, hobbit of the Shire, walked steadily down to meet the eyes.

They wavered. Doubt came into them as the light approached. One by one they dimmed, and slowly they drew back. No brightness so deadly had ever afflicted them before. From sun and moon and star they had been safe underground, but now a star had descended into the very earth. Still it approached, and the eyes began to quail. One by one they all went dark; they turned away, and a great bulk, beyond the light's reach, heaved its huge shadow in between. They were gone.

'Master, master!' cried Sam. He was close behind, his own sword drawn and ready. 'Stars and glory! But the Elves would make a song of that, if ever they heard of it! And may I live to tell them and hear them sing. But don't go on, master! Don't go down to that den! Now's our only chance. Now let's get out of this foul hole!'

And so back they turned once more, first walking and then running; for as they went the floor of the tunnel rose steeply, and with every stride they climbed higher above the stench of the unseen lair, and strength returned to limb and heart. But still the hatred of the Watcher lurked behind them, blind for a while, perhaps, but

undefeated, still bent on death. And now there came a flow of air to meet them, cold and thin. The opening, the tunnel's end, at last it was before them. Panting, yearning for a roofless place, they flung themselves forward; and then in amazement they staggered, tumbling back. The outlet was blocked with some barrier, but not of stone: soft and a little yielding it seemed, and yet strong and impervious; air filtered through, but not a glimmer of any light. Once more they charged and were hurled back.

Holding aloft the Phial Frodo looked and before him he saw a greyness which the radiance of the star-glass did not pierce and did not illuminate, as if it were a shadow that being cast by no light, no light could dissipate. Across the width and height of the tunnel a vast web was spun, orderly as the web of some huge spider, but denser-woven and far greater, and each thread was as thick as rope.

Sam laughed grimly. 'Cobwebs!' he said. 'Is that all? Cobwebs! But what a spider! Have at 'em, down with 'em!'

In a fury he hewed at them with his sword, but the thread that he struck did not break. It gave a little and then sprang back like a plucked bowstring, turning the blade and tossing up both sword and arm. Three times Sam struck with all his force, and at last one single cord of all the countless cords snapped and twisted, curling and whipping through the air. One end of it lashed Sam's hand, and he cried out in pain, starting back and drawing his hand across his mouth.

'It will take days to clear the road like this,' he said. 'What's to be done? Have those eyes come back?'

'No, not to be seen,' said Frodo. 'But I still feel that they are looking at me, or thinking about me: making some other plan, perhaps. If this light were lowered, or if it failed, they would quickly come again.'

'Trapped in the end!' said Sam bitterly, his anger rising again above weariness and despair. 'Gnats in a net. May the curse of Faramir bite that Gollum and bite him quick!'

'That would not help us now,' said Frodo. 'Come! Let us see what Sting can do. It is an elven-blade. There were webs of horror in the dark ravines of Beleriand where it was forged. But you must be the guard and hold back the eyes. Here, take the star-glass. Do not be afraid. Hold it up and watch!'

Then Frodo stepped up to the great grey net, and hewed it with a wide sweeping stroke, drawing the bitter edge swiftly across a ladder of close-strung cords, and at once springing away. The blue-gleaming blade shore through them like a scythe through grass, and they leaped and writhed and then hung loose. A great rent was made.

Stroke after stroke he dealt, until at last all the web within his reach was shattered, and the upper portion blew and swayed like a loose veil in the incoming wind. The trap was broken.

'Come!' cried Frodo. 'On! On!' Wild joy at their escape from the very mouth of despair suddenly filled all his mind. His head whirled as with a draught of potent wine. He sprang out, shouting as he came.

It seemed light in that dark land to his eyes that had passed through the den of night. The great smokes had risen and grown thinner, and the last hours of a sombre day were passing; the red glare of Mordor had died away in sullen gloom. Yet it seemed to Frodo that he looked upon a morning of sudden hope. Almost he had reached the summit of the wall. Only a little higher now. The Cleft, Cirith Ungol, was before him, a dim notch in the black ridge, and the horns of rock darkling in the sky on either side. A short race, a sprinter's course, and he would be through!

'The pass, Sam!' he cried, not heeding the shrillness of his voice, that released from the choking airs of the tunnel rang out now high and wild. 'The pass! Run, run, and we'll be through—through before anyone can stop us!'

Sam came up behind as fast as he could urge his legs; but glad as he was to be free, he was uneasy, and as he ran, he kept on glancing back at the dark arch of the tunnel, fearing to see eyes, or some shape beyond his imagining, spring out in pursuit. Too little did he or his master know of the craft of Shelob. She had many exits from her lair.

There agelong she had dwelt, an evil thing in spider-form, even such as once of old had lived in the Land of the Elves in the West that is now under the Sea, such as Beren fought in the Mountains of Terror in Doriath, and so came to Lúthien upon the green sward amid the hemlocks in the moonlight long ago. How Shelob came there, flying from ruin, no tale tells, for out of the Dark Years few tales have come. But still she was there, who was there before Sauron, and before the first stone of Barad-dûr; and she served none but herself, drinking the blood of Elves and Men, bloated and grown fat with endless brooding on her feasts, weaving webs of shadow; for all living things were her food, and her vomit darkness. Far and wide her lesser broods, bastards of the miserable mates, her own offspring, that she slew, spread from glen to glen, from the Ephel Dúath to the eastern hills, to Dol Guldur and the fastnesses of Mirkwood. But none could rival her, Shelob the Great, last child of Ungoliant to trouble the unhappy world.

Already, years before, Gollum had beheld her, Sméagol who pried into all dark holes, and in past days he had bowed and worshipped her, and the darkness of her evil will walked through all the ways of his weariness beside him, cutting him off from light and from regret. And he had promised to bring her food. But her lust was not his lust. Little she knew of or cared for towers, or rings, or anything devised by mind or hand, who only desired death for all others, mind and body, and for herself a glut of life, alone, swollen till the mountains could no longer hold her up and the darkness could not contain her.

But that desire was yet far away, and long now had she been hungry, lurking in her den, while the power of Sauron grew, and light and living things forsook his borders; and the city in the valley was dead, and no Elf or Man came near, only the unhappy Orcs. Poor food and wary. But she must eat, and however busily they delved new winding passages from the pass and from their tower, ever she found some way to snare them. But she lusted for sweeter meat. And Gollum had brought it to her.

‘We’ll see, we’ll see,’ he said often to himself, when the evil mood was on him, as he walked the dangerous road from Emyr Muil to Morgul Vale, ‘we’ll see. It may well be, O yes, it may well be that when She throws away the bones and the empty garments, we shall find it, we shall get it, the Precious, a reward for poor Sméagol who brings nice food. And we’ll save the Precious, as we promised. O yes. And when we’ve got it safe, then She’ll know it, O yes, then we’ll pay Her back, my precious. Then we’ll pay everyone back!’

So he thought in an inner chamber of his cunning, which he still hoped to hide from her, even when he had come to her again and had bowed low before her while his companions slept.

And as for Sauron: he knew where she lurked. It pleased him that she should dwell there hungry but unabated in malice, a more sure watch upon that ancient path into his land than any other that his skill could have devised. And Orcs, they were useful slaves, but he had them in plenty. If now and again Shelob caught them to stay her appetite, she was welcome: he could spare them. And sometimes as a man may cast a dainty to his cat (*his cat* he calls her, but she owns him not) Sauron would send her prisoners that he had no better uses for: he would have them driven to her hole, and report brought back to him of the play she made.

So they both lived, delighting in their own devices, and feared no assault, nor wrath, nor any end of their wickedness. Never yet had any fly escaped from Shelob’s webs, and the greater now was her rage and hunger.

But nothing of this evil which they had stirred up against them did poor Sam know, except that a fear was growing on him, a menace which he could not see; and such a weight did it become that it was a burden to him to run, and his feet seemed leaden.

Dread was round him, and enemies before him in the pass, and his master was in a fey mood running heedlessly to meet them. Turning his eyes away from the shadow behind and the deep gloom beneath the cliff upon his left, he looked ahead, and he saw two things that increased his dismay. He saw that the sword which Frodo still held unsheathed was glittering with blue flame; and he saw that though the sky behind was now dark, still the window in the tower was glowing red.

‘Orcs!’ he muttered. ‘We’ll never rush it like this. There’s Orcs about, and worse than Orcs.’ Then returning quickly to his long habit of secrecy, he closed his hand about the precious Phial which he still bore. Red with his own living blood his hand shone for a moment, and then he thrust the revealing light deep into a pocket near his breast and drew his elven-cloak about him. Now he tried to quicken his pace. His master was gaining on

him; already he was some twenty strides ahead, flitting on like a shadow; soon he would be lost to sight in that grey world.

Hardly had Sam hidden the light of the star-glass when she came. A little way ahead and to his left he saw suddenly, issuing from a black hole of shadow under the cliff, the most loathly shape that he had ever beheld, horrible beyond the horror of an evil dream. Most like a spider she was, but huger than the great hunting beasts, and more terrible than they because of the evil purpose in her remorseless eyes. Those same eyes that he had thought daunted and defeated, there they were lit with a fell light again, clustering in her out-thrust head. Great horns she had, and behind her short stalk-like neck was her huge swollen body, a vast bloated bag, swaying and sagging between her legs; its great bulk was black, blotched with livid marks, but the belly underneath was pale and luminous and gave forth a stench. Her legs were bent, with great knobbed joints high above her back, and hairs that stuck out like steel spines, and at each leg's end there was a claw.

As soon as she had squeezed her soft squelching body and its folded limbs out of the upper exit from her lair, she moved with a horrible speed, now running on her creaking legs, now making a sudden bound. She was between Sam and his master. Either she did not see Sam, or she avoided him for the moment as the bearer of the light, and fixed all her intent upon one prey, upon Frodo, bereft of his Phial, running heedless up the path, unaware yet of his peril. Swiftly he ran, but Shelob was swifter; in a few leaps she would have him.

Sam gasped and gathered all his remaining breath to shout. 'Look out behind!' he yelled. 'Look out, master! I'm'—but suddenly his cry was stifled.

A long clammy hand went over his mouth and another caught him by the neck, while something wrapped itself about his leg. Taken off his guard he toppled backwards into the arms of his attacker.

'Got him!' hissed Gollum in his ear. 'At last, my precious, we've got him, yes, the nasty hobbit. We takes this one. She'll get the other. O yes, Shelob will get him, not Sméagol: he promised; he won't hurt Master at all. But he's got you, you nasty filthy little sneak!' He spat on Sam's neck.

Fury at the treachery, and desperation at the delay when his master was in deadly peril, gave to Sam a sudden violence and strength that was far beyond anything that Gollum had expected from this slow stupid hobbit, as he thought him. Not Gollum himself could have twisted more quickly or more fiercely. His hold on Sam's mouth slipped, and Sam ducked and lunged forward again, trying to tear away from the grip on his neck. His sword was still in his hand, and on his left arm, hanging by its thong, was Faramir's staff. Desperately he tried to turn and stab his enemy. But Gollum was too quick. His long right arm shot out, and he grabbed Sam's wrist: his fingers were like a vice; slowly and relentlessly he bent the hand down and forward, till with a cry of pain Sam released the sword and it fell to the ground; and all the while Gollum's other hand was tightening on Sam's throat.

Then Sam played his last trick. With all his strength he pulled away and got his feet firmly planted; then suddenly he drove his legs against the ground and with his whole force hurled himself backwards.

Not expecting even this simple trick from Sam, Gollum fell over with Sam on top, and he received the weight of the sturdy hobbit in his stomach. A sharp hiss came out of him, and for a second his hand upon Sam's throat loosened; but his fingers still gripped the sword-hand. Sam tore himself forward and away, and stood up, and then quickly he wheeled away to his right, pivoted on the wrist held by Gollum. Laying hold of the staff with his left hand, Sam swung it up, and down it came with a whistling crack on Gollum's outstretched arm, just below the elbow.

With a squeal Gollum let go. Then Sam waded in; not waiting to change the staff from left to right he dealt another savage blow. Quick as a snake Gollum slithered aside, and the stroke aimed at his head fell across his back. The staff cracked and broke. That was enough for him. Grabbing from behind was an old game of his, and seldom had he failed in it. But this time, misled by spite, he had made the mistake of speaking and gloating before he had both hands on his victim's neck. Everything had gone wrong with his beautiful plan, since that horrible light had so unexpectedly appeared in the darkness. And now he was face to face with a furious enemy, little less than his own size. This fight was not for him. Sam swept up his sword from the ground and raised it.

Gollum squealed, and springing aside on to all fours, he jumped away in one big bound like a frog. Before Sam could reach him, he was off, running with amazing speed back towards the tunnel.

Sword in hand Sam went after him. For the moment he had forgotten everything else but the red fury in his brain and the desire to kill Gollum. But before he could overtake him, Gollum was gone. Then as the dark hole stood before him and the stench came out to meet him, like a clap of thunder the thought of Frodo and the monster smote upon Sam's mind. He spun round, and rushed wildly up the path, calling and calling his master's name. He was too late. So far Gollum's plot had succeeded.



## Chapter 10: The Choices Of Master Samwise

Frodo was lying face upward on the ground and the monster was bending over him, so intent upon her victim that she took no heed of Sam and his cries, until he was close at hand. As he rushed up he saw that Frodo was already bound in cords, wound about him from ankle to shoulder, and the monster with her great forelegs was beginning half to lift, half to drag his body away.

On the near side of him lay, gleaming on the ground, his elven-blade, where it had fallen useless from his grasp. Sam did not wait to wonder what was to be done, or whether he was brave, or loyal, or filled with rage. He sprang forward with a yell, and seized his master's sword in his left hand. Then he charged. No onslaught more fierce was ever seen in the savage world of beasts, where some desperate small creature armed with little teeth, alone, will spring upon a tower of horn and hide that stands above its fallen mate.

Disturbed as if out of some gloating dream by his small yell she turned slowly the dreadful malice of her glance upon him. But almost before she was aware that a fury was upon her greater than any she had known in countless years, the shining sword bit upon her foot and shore away the claw. Sam sprang in, inside the arches of her legs, and with a quick upthrust of his other hand stabbed at the clustered eyes upon her lowered head. One great eye went dark.

Now the miserable creature was right under her, for the moment out of the reach of her sting and of her claws. Her vast belly was above him with its putrid light, and the stench of it almost smote him down. Still his fury held for one more blow, and before she could sink upon him, smothering him and all his little impudence of courage, he slashed the bright elven-blade across her with desperate strength.

But Shelob was not as dragons are, no softer spot had she save only her eyes. Knobbed and pitted with corruption was her age-old hide, but ever thickened from within with layer on layer of evil growth. The blade scored it with a dreadful gash, but those hideous folds could not be pierced by any strength of men, not though Elf or Dwarf should forge the steel or the hand of Beren or of Túrin wield it. She yielded to the stroke, and then heaved up the great bag of her belly high above Sam's head. Poison frothed and bubbled from the wound. Now splaying her legs she drove her huge bulk down on him again. Too soon. For Sam still stood upon his feet, and dropping his own sword, with both hands he held the elven-blade point upwards, fending off that ghastly roof; and so Shelob, with the driving force of her own cruel will, with strength greater than any warrior's hand, thrust herself upon a bitter spike. Deep, deep it pricked, as Sam was crushed slowly to the ground.

No such anguish had Shelob ever known, or dreamed of knowing, in all her long world of wickedness. Not the doughtiest soldier of old Gondor, nor the most savage Orc entrapped, had ever thus endured her, or set blade to her beloved flesh. A shudder went through her. Heaving up again, wrenching away from the pain, she bent her writhing limbs beneath her and sprang backwards in a convulsive leap.

Sam had fallen to his knees by Frodo's head, his senses reeling in the foul stench, his two hands still gripping the hilt of the sword. Through the mist before his eyes he was aware dimly of Frodo's face, and stubbornly he fought to master himself and to drag himself out of the swoon that was upon him. Slowly he raised his head and saw her, only a few paces away, eyeing him, her beak drabbling a spittle of venom, and a green ooze trickling from below her wounded eye. There she crouched, her shuddering belly splayed upon the ground, the great bows of her legs quivering, as she gathered herself for another spring—this time to crush and sting to death: no little bite of poison to still the struggling of her meat; this time to slay and then to rend.

Even as Sam himself crouched, looking at her, seeing his death in her eyes, a thought came to him, as if some remote voice had spoken, and he fumbled in his breast with his left hand, and found what he sought: cold and hard and solid it seemed to his touch in a phantom world of horror, the Phial of Galadriel.

‘Galadriel!’ he said faintly, and then he heard voices far off but clear: the crying of the Elves as they walked under the stars in the beloved shadows of the Shire, and the music of the Elves as it came through his sleep in the Hall of Fire in the house of Elrond.

*Gilthoniel A Elbereth!*

And then his tongue was loosed and his voice cried in a language which he did not know:

*A Elbereth Gilthoniel  
o menel palan-diriel,  
le nallon sí di ’nguruthos!  
A tiro nin, Fanuilos!*

And with that he staggered to his feet and was Samwise the hobbit, Hamfast’s son, again.

‘Now come, you filth!’ he cried. ‘You’ve hurt my master, you brute, and you’ll pay for it. We’re going on; but we’ll settle with you first. Come on, and taste it again!’

As if his indomitable spirit had set its potency in motion, the glass blazed suddenly like a white torch in his hand. It flamed like a star that leaping from the firmament sears the dark air with intolerable light. No such terror out of heaven had ever burned in Shelob’s face before. The beams of it entered into her wounded head and scored it with unbearable pain, and the dreadful infection of light spread from eye to eye. She fell back beating the air with her forelegs, her sight blasted by inner lightnings, her mind in agony. Then turning her maimed head away, she rolled aside and began to crawl, claw by claw, towards the opening in the dark cliff behind.

Sam came on. He was reeling like a drunken man, but he came on. And Shelob cowed at last, shrunken in defeat, jerked and quivered as she tried to hasten from him. She reached the hole, and squeezing down, leaving a trail of green-yellow slime, she slipped in, even as Sam hewed a last stroke at her dragging legs. Then he fell to the ground.

Shelob was gone; and whether she lay long in her lair, nursing her malice and her misery, and in slow years of darkness healed herself from within, rebuilding her clustered eyes, until with hunger like death she spun once more her dreadful snares in the glens of the Mountains of Shadow, this tale does not tell.

Sam was left alone. Wearily, as the evening of the Nameless Land fell upon the place of battle, he crawled back to his master.

‘Master, dear master,’ he said, but Frodo did not speak. As he had run forward, eager, rejoicing to be free, Shelob with hideous speed had come behind and with one swift stroke had stung him in the neck. He lay now pale, and heard no voice, and did not move.

‘Master, dear master!’ said Sam, and through a long silence waited, listening in vain.

Then as quickly as he could he cut away the binding cords and laid his head upon Frodo’s breast and to his mouth, but no stir of life could he find, nor feel the faintest flutter of the heart. Often he chafed his master’s hands and feet, and touched his brow, but all were cold.

‘Frodo, Mr. Frodo!’ he called. ‘Don’t leave me here alone! It’s your Sam calling. Don’t go where I can’t follow! Wake up, Mr. Frodo! O wake up, Frodo, me dear, me dear. Wake up!’

Then anger surged over him, and he ran about his master’s body in a rage, stabbing the air, and smiting the stones, and shouting challenges. Presently he came back, and bending looked at Frodo’s face, pale beneath him in the dusk. And suddenly he saw that he was in the picture that was revealed to him in the mirror of Galadriel in Lórien: Frodo with a pale face lying fast asleep under a great dark cliff. Or fast asleep he had thought then. ‘He’s dead!’ he said. ‘Not asleep, dead!’ And as he said it, as if the words had set the venom to its work again, it seemed to him that the hue of the face grew livid green.

And then black despair came down on him, and Sam bowed to the ground, and drew his grey hood over his head, and night came into his heart, and he knew no more.



When at last the blackness passed, Sam looked up and shadows were about him; but for how many minutes or hours the world had gone dragging on he could not tell. He was still in the same place, and still his master lay beside him dead. The mountains had not crumbled nor the earth fallen into ruin.

‘What shall I do, what shall I do?’ he said. ‘Did I come all this way with him for nothing?’ And then he remembered his own voice speaking words that at the time he did not understand himself, at the beginning of their journey: *I have something to do before the end. I must see it through, sir, if you understand.*

‘But what can I do? Not leave Mr. Frodo dead, unburied on the top of the mountains, and go home? Or go on? Go on?’ he repeated, and for a moment doubt and fear shook him. ‘Go on? Is that what I’ve got to do? And leave him?’

Then at last he began to weep; and going to Frodo he composed his body, and folded his cold hands upon his breast, and wrapped his cloak about him; and he laid his own sword at one side, and the staff that Faramir had given at the other.

‘If I’m to go on,’ he said, ‘then I must take your sword, by your leave, Mr. Frodo, but I’ll put this one to lie by you, as it lay by the old king in the barrow; and you’ve got your beautiful mithril coat from old Mr. Bilbo. And your star-glass, Mr. Frodo, you did lend it to me and I’ll need it, for I’ll be always in the dark now. It’s too good for me, and the Lady gave it to you, but maybe she’d understand. Do *you* understand, Mr. Frodo? I’ve got to go on.’

But he could not go, not yet. He knelt and held Frodo’s hand and could not release it. And time went by and still he knelt, holding his master’s hand, and in his heart keeping a debate.

Now he tried to find strength to tear himself away and go on a lonely journey—for vengeance. If once he could go, his anger would bear him down all the roads of the world, pursuing, until he had him at last: Gollum. Then Gollum would die in a corner. But that was not what he had set out to do. It would not be worth while to leave his master for that. It would not bring him back. Nothing would. They had better both be dead together. And that too would be a lonely journey.

He looked on the bright point of the sword. He thought of the places behind where there was a black brink and an empty fall into nothingness. There was no escape that way. That was to do nothing, not even to grieve. That was not what he had set out to do. ‘What am I to do then?’ he cried again, and now he seemed plainly to know the hard answer: *see it through*. Another lonely journey, and the worst.

‘What? Me, alone, go to the Crack of Doom and all?’ He quailed still, but the resolve grew. ‘What? *Me* take the Ring from *him*? The Council gave it to him.’

But the answer came at once: ‘And the Council gave him companions, so that the errand should not fail. And you are the last of all the Company. The errand must not fail.’

‘I wish I wasn’t the last,’ he groaned. ‘I wish old Gandalf was here, or somebody. Why am I left all alone to make up my mind? I’m sure to go wrong. And it’s not for me to go taking the Ring, putting myself forward.’

‘But you haven’t put yourself forward; you’ve been put forward. And as for not being the right and proper person, why, Mr. Frodo wasn’t, as you might say, nor Mr. Bilbo. They didn’t choose themselves.’

‘Ah well, I must make up my own mind. I will make it up. But I’ll be sure to go wrong: that’d be Sam Gamgee all over.’

‘Let me see now: if we’re found here, or Mr. Frodo’s found, and that Thing’s on him, well, the Enemy will get it. And that’s the end of all of us, of Lórien, and Rivendell, and the Shire and all. And there’s no time to lose, or it’ll be the end anyway. The war’s begun, and more than likely things are all going the Enemy’s way already. No chance to go back with It and get advice or permission. No, it’s sit here till they come and kill me over master’s body, and gets It; or take It and go.’ He drew a deep breath. ‘Then take It, it is!’

He stooped. Very gently he undid the clasp at the neck and slipped his hand inside Frodo’s tunic; then with his other hand raising the head, he kissed the cold forehead, and softly drew the chain over it. And then the head

lay quietly back again in rest. No change came over the still face, and by that more than by all other tokens Sam was convinced at last that Frodo had died and laid aside the Quest.

‘Good-bye, master, my dear!’ he murmured. ‘Forgive your Sam. He’ll come back to this spot when the job’s done—if he manages it. And then he’ll not leave you again. Rest you quiet till I come; and may no foul creature come anigh you! And if the Lady could hear me and give me one wish, I would wish to come back and find you again. Good-bye!’

And then he bent his own neck and put the chain upon it, and at once his head was bowed to the ground with the weight of the Ring, as if a great stone had been strung on him. But slowly, as if the weight became less, or new strength grew in him, he raised his head, and then with a great effort got to his feet and found that he could walk and bear his burden. And for a moment he lifted up the Phial and looked down at his master, and the light burned gently now with the soft radiance of the evening-star in summer, and in that light Frodo’s face was fair of hue again, pale but beautiful with an Elvish beauty, as of one who has long passed the shadows. And with the bitter comfort of that last sight Sam turned and hid the light and stumbled on into the growing dark.

He had not far to go. The tunnel was some way behind; the Cleft a couple of hundred yards ahead, or less. The path was visible in the dusk, a deep rut worn in ages of passage, running now gently up in a long trough with cliffs on either side. The trough narrowed rapidly. Soon Sam came to a long flight of broad shallow steps. Now the orc-tower was right above him, frowning black, and in it the red eye glowed. Now he was hidden in the dark shadow under it. He was coming to the top of the steps and was in the Cleft at last.

‘I’ve made up my mind,’ he kept saying to himself. But he had not. Though he had done his best to think it out, what he was doing was altogether against the grain of his nature. ‘Have I got it wrong?’ he muttered. ‘What ought I to have done?’

As the sheer sides of the Cleft closed about him, before he reached the actual summit, before he looked at last on the path descending into the Nameless Land, he turned. For a moment, motionless in intolerable doubt, he looked back. He could still see, like a small blot in the gathering gloom, the mouth of the tunnel; and he thought he could see or guess where Frodo lay. He fancied there was a glimmer on the ground down there, or perhaps it was some trick of his tears, as he peered out at that high stony place where all his life had fallen in ruin.

‘If only I could have my wish, my one wish,’ he sighed, ‘to go back and find him!’ Then at last he turned to the road in front and took a few steps: the heaviest and the most reluctant he had ever taken.

Only a few steps; and now only a few more and he would be going down and would never see that high place again. And then suddenly he heard cries and voices. He stood still as stone. Orc-voices. They were behind him and before him. A noise of tramping feet and harsh shouts: Orcs were coming up to the Cleft from the far side, from some entry to the tower, perhaps. Tramping feet and shouts behind. He wheeled round. He saw small red lights, torches, winking away below there as they issued from the tunnel. At last the hunt was up. The red eye of the tower had not been blind. He was caught.

Now the flicker of approaching torches and the clink of steel ahead was very near. In a minute they would reach the top and be on him. He had taken too long in making up his mind, and now it was no good. How could he escape, or save himself, or save the Ring? The Ring. He was not aware of any thought or decision. He simply found himself drawing out the chain and taking the Ring in his hand. The head of the orc-company appeared in the Cleft right before him. Then he put it on.

The world changed, and a single moment of time was filled with an hour of thought. At once he was aware that hearing was sharpened while sight was dimmed, but otherwise than in Shelob’s lair. All things about him now were not dark but vague; while he himself was there in a grey hazy world, alone, like a small black solid rock, and the Ring, weighing down his left hand, was like an orb of hot gold. He did not feel invisible at all, but horribly and uniquely visible; and he knew that somewhere an Eye was searching for him.

He heard the crack of stone, and the murmur of water far off in Morgul Vale; and down away under the rock the bubbling misery of Shelob, groping, lost in some blind passage; and voices in the dungeons of the tower; and the cries of the Orcs as they came out of the tunnel; and deafening, roaring in his ears, the crash of the feet and the rending clamour of the Orcs before him. He shrank against the cliff. But they marched up like a

phantom company, grey distorted figures in a mist, only dreams of fear with pale flames in their hands. And they passed him by. He cowered, trying to creep away into some cranny and to hide.

He listened. The Orcs from the tunnel and the others marching down had sighted one another, and both parties were now hurrying and shouting. He heard them both clearly, and he understood what they said. Perhaps the Ring gave understanding of tongues, or simply understanding, especially of the servants of Sauron its maker, so that if he gave heed, he understood and translated the thought to himself. Certainly the Ring had grown greatly in power as it approached the places of its forging; but one thing it did not confer, and that was courage. At present Sam still thought only of hiding, of lying low till all was quiet again; and he listened anxiously. He could not tell how near the voices were, the words seemed almost in his ears.

‘Hola! Gorbag! What are you doing up here? Had enough of war already?’

‘Orders, you lubber. And what are you doing, Shagrat? Tired of lurking up there? Thinking of coming down to fight?’

‘Orders to you. I’m in command of this pass. So speak civil. What’s your report?’

‘Nothing.’

‘Hai! hai! yoi!’ A yell broke into the exchanges of the leaders. The Orcs lower down had suddenly seen something. They began to run. So did the others.

‘Hai! Hola! Here’s something! Lying right in the road. A spy, a spy!’ There was a hoot of snarling horns and a babel of baying voices.

With a dreadful stroke Sam was wakened from his cowering mood. They had seen his master. What would they do? He had heard tales of the Orcs to make the blood run cold. It could not be borne. He sprang up. He flung the Quest and all his decisions away, and fear and doubt with them. He knew now where his place was and had been: at his master’s side, though what he could do there was not clear. Back he ran down the steps, down the path towards Frodo.

‘How many are there?’ he thought. ‘Thirty or forty from the tower at least, and a lot more than that from down below, I guess. How many can I kill before they get me? They’ll see the flame of the sword, as soon as I draw it, and they’ll get me sooner or later. I wonder if any song will ever mention it: How Samwise fell in the High Pass and made a wall of bodies round his master. No, no song. Of course not, for the Ring’ll be found, and there’ll be no more songs. I can’t help it. My place is by Mr. Frodo. They must understand that—Elrond and the Council, and the great Lords and Ladies with all their wisdom. Their plans have gone wrong. I can’t be their Ring-bearer. Not without Mr. Frodo.’

But the Orcs were out of his dim sight now. He had had no time to consider himself, but now he realized that he was weary, weary almost to exhaustion: his legs would not carry him as he wished. He was too slow. The path seemed miles long. Where had they all got to in the mist?

There they were again! A good way ahead still. A cluster of figures round something lying on the ground; a few seemed to be darting this way and that, bent like dogs on a trail. He tried to make a spurt.

‘Come on, Sam!’ he said, ‘or you’ll be too late again.’ He loosened the sword in its sheath. In a minute he would draw it, and then—

There was a wild clamour, hooting and laughing, as something was lifted from the ground. ‘Ya hoi! Ya harri hoi! Up! Up!’

Then a voice shouted: ‘Now off! The quick way. Back to the Undergate! She’ll not trouble us tonight by all the signs.’ The whole band of orc-figures began to move. Four in the middle were carrying a body high on their shoulders. ‘Ya hoi!’

They had taken Frodo’s body. They were off. He could not catch them up. Still he laboured on. The Orcs reached the tunnel and were passing in. Those with the burden went first, and behind them there was a good deal of struggling and jostling. Sam came on. He drew the sword, a flicker of blue in his wavering hand, but they did not see it. Even as he came panting up, the last of them vanished into the black hole.

For a moment he stood, gasping, clutching his breast. Then he drew his sleeve across his face, wiping away the grime, and sweat, and tears. 'Curse the filth!' he said, and sprang after them into the darkness.

It no longer seemed very dark to him in the tunnel, rather it was as if he had stepped out of a thin mist into a heavier fog. His weariness was growing but his will hardened all the more. He thought he could see the light of torches a little way ahead, but try as he would, he could not catch them up. Orcs go fast in tunnels, and this tunnel they knew well; for in spite of Shelob they were forced to use it often as the swiftest way from the Dead City over the mountains. In what far-off time the main tunnel and the great round pit had been made, where Shelob had taken up her abode in ages past, they did not know; but many byways they had themselves delved about it on either side, so as to escape the lair in their goings to and fro on the business of their masters. Tonight they did not intend to go far down, but were hastening to find a side-passage that led back to their watch-tower on the cliff. Most of them were gleeful, delighted with what they had found and seen, and as they ran they gabbled and yammered after the fashion of their kind. Sam heard the noise of their harsh voices, flat and hard in the dead air, and he could distinguish two voices from among all the rest: they were louder, and nearer to him. The captains of the two parties seemed to be bringing up the rear, debating as they went.

'Can't you stop your rabble making such a racket, Shagrat?' grunted the one. 'We don't want Shelob on us.'

'Go on, Gorbag! Yours are making more than half the noise,' said the other. 'But let the lads play! No need to worry about Shelob for a bit, I reckon. She's sat on a nail, it seems, and we shan't cry about that. Didn't you see: a nasty mess all the way back to that cursed crack of hers? If we've stopped it once, we've stopped it a hundred times. So let 'em laugh. And we've struck a bit of luck at last: got something that Lugbúrz wants.'

'Lugbúrz wants it, eh? What is it, d'you think? Elvish it looked to me, but undersized. What's the danger in a thing like that?'

'Don't know till we've had a look.'

'Oho! So they haven't told you what to expect? They don't tell us all they know, do they? Not by half. But they can make mistakes, even the Top Ones can.'

'Sh, Gorbag!' Shagrat's voice was lowered, so that even with his strangely sharpened hearing Sam could only just catch what was said. 'They may, but they've got eyes and ears everywhere; some among my lot, as like as not. But there's no doubt about it, they're troubled about something. The Nazgûl down below are, by your account; and Lugbúrz is too. Something nearly slipped.'

'Nearly, you say!' said Gorbag.

'All right,' said Shagrat, 'but we'll talk of that later. Wait till we get to the Under-way. There's a place there where we can talk a bit, while the lads go on.'

Shortly afterwards Sam saw the torches disappear. Then there was a rumbling noise, and just as he hurried up, a bump. As far as he could guess the Orcs had turned and gone into the very opening which Frodo and he had tried and found blocked. It was still blocked.

There seemed to be a great stone in the way, but the Orcs had got through somehow, for he could hear their voices on the other side. They were still running along, deeper and deeper into the mountain, back towards the tower. Sam felt desperate. They were carrying off his master's body for some foul purpose and he could not follow. He thrust and pushed at the block, and he threw himself against it, but it did not yield. Then not far inside, or so he thought, he heard the two captains' voices talking again. He stood still listening for a little, hoping perhaps to learn something useful. Perhaps Gorbag, who seemed to belong to Minas Morgul, would come out, and he could then slip in.

'No, I don't know,' said Gorbag's voice. 'The messages go through quicker than anything could fly, as a rule. But I don't enquire how it's done. Safest not to. Grr! Those Nazgûl give me the creeps. And they skin the body off you as soon as look at you, and leave you all cold in the dark on the other side. But He likes 'em; they're His favourites nowadays, so it's no use grumbling. I tell you, it's no game serving down in the city.'

'You should try being up here with Shelob for company,' said Shagrat.

‘I’d like to try somewhere where there’s none of ’em. But the war’s on now, and when that’s over things may be easier.’

‘It’s going well, they say.’

‘They would,’ grunted Gorbag. ‘We’ll see. But anyway, if it does go well, there should be a lot more room. What d’you say?—if we get a chance, you and me’ll slip off and set up somewhere on our own with a few trusty lads, somewhere where there’s good loot nice and handy, and no big bosses.’

‘Ah!’ said Shagrat. ‘Like old times.’

‘Yes,’ said Gorbag. ‘But don’t count on it. I’m not easy in my mind. As I said, the Big Bosses, ay,’ his voice sank almost to a whisper, ‘ay, even the Biggest, can make mistakes. Something nearly slipped, you say. I say, something *has* slipped. And we’ve got to look out. Always the poor Uruks to put slips right, and small thanks. But don’t forget: the enemies don’t love us any more than they love Him, and if they get topsides on Him, we’re done too. But see here: when were you ordered out?’

‘About an hour ago, just before you saw us. A message came: *Nazgûl uneasy. Spies feared on Stairs. Double vigilance. Patrol to head of Stairs.* I came at once.’

‘Bad business,’ said Gorbag. ‘See here—our Silent Watchers were uneasy more than two days ago, that I know. But my patrol wasn’t ordered out for another day, nor any message sent to Lugbûrz either: owing to the Great Signal going up, and the High Nazgûl going off to the war, and all that. And then they couldn’t get Lugbûrz to pay attention for a good while, I’m told.’

‘The Eye was busy elsewhere, I suppose,’ said Shagrat. ‘Big things going on away west, they say.’

‘I daresay,’ growled Gorbag. ‘But in the meantime enemies have got up the Stairs. And what were you up to? You’re supposed to keep watch, aren’t you, special orders or no? What are you for?’

‘That’s enough! Don’t try and teach me my job. We were awake all right. We knew there were funny things going on.’

‘Very funny!’

‘Yes, very funny: lights and shouting and all. But Shelob was on the go. My lads saw her and her Sneak.’

‘Her Sneak? What’s that?’

‘You must have seen him: little thin black fellow; like a spider himself, or perhaps more like a starved frog. He’s been here before. Came *out* of Lugbûrz the first time, years ago, and we had word from High Up to let him pass. He’s been up the Stairs once or twice since then, but we’ve left him alone: seems to have some understanding with Her Ladyship. I suppose he’s no good to eat: she wouldn’t worry about words from High Up. But a fine guard you keep in the valley: he was up here a day before all this racket. Early last night we saw him. Anyway my lads reported that Her Ladyship was having some fun, and that seemed good enough for me, until the message came. I thought her Sneak had brought her a toy, or that you’d perhaps sent her a present, a prisoner of war or something. I don’t interfere when she’s playing. Nothing gets by Shelob when she’s on the hunt.’

‘Nothing, say you! Didn’t you use your eyes back there? I tell you I’m not easy in my mind. Whatever came up the Stairs, *did* get by. It cut her web and got clean out of the hole. That’s something to think about!’

‘Ah well, but she got him in the end, didn’t she?’

‘*Got* him? Got *who*? This little fellow? But if he was the only one, then she’d have had him off to her larder long before, and there he’d be now. And if Lugbûrz wanted him, *you’d* have to go and get him. Nice for you. But there was more than one.’

At this point Sam began to listen more attentively and pressed his ear against the stone.

‘Who cut the cords she’d put round him, Shagrat? Same one as cut the web. Didn’t you see that? And who stuck a pin into Her Ladyship? Same one, I reckon. And where is he? Where is he, Shagrat?’

Shagrat made no reply.

‘You may well put your thinking cap on, if you’ve got one. It’s no laughing matter. No-one, *no*-one has ever stuck a pin in Shelob before, as you should know well enough. There’s no grief in that; but think—there’s someone loose hereabouts as is more dangerous than any other damned rebel that ever walked since the bad old times, since the Great Siege. Something *has* slipped.’

‘And what is it then?’ growled Shagrat.

‘By all the signs, Captain Shagrat, I’d say there’s a large warrior loose, Elf most likely, with an elf-sword anyway, and an axe as well maybe; and he’s loose in your bounds, too, and you’ve never spotted him. Very funny indeed!’ Gorbag spat. Sam smiled grimly at this description of himself.

‘Ah well, you always did take a gloomy view,’ said Shagrat. ‘You can read the signs how you like, but there may be other ways to explain them. Anyhow, I’ve got watchers at every point, and I’m going to deal with one thing at a time. When I’ve had a look at the fellow we *have* caught, then I’ll begin to worry about something else.’

‘It’s my guess you won’t find much in that little fellow,’ said Gorbag. ‘He may have had nothing to do with the real mischief. The big fellow with the sharp sword doesn’t seem to have thought him worth much anyhow—just left him lying: regular Elvish trick.’

‘We’ll see. Come on now! We’ve talked enough. Let’s go and have a look at the prisoner!’

‘What are you going to do with him? Don’t forget I spotted him first. If there’s any game, me and my lads must be in it.’

‘Now, now,’ growled Shagrat, ‘I have my orders. And it’s more than my belly’s worth, or yours, to break ’em. *Any* trespasser found by the guard is to be held at the tower. Prisoner is to be stripped. Full description of every article, garment, weapon, letter, ring, or trinket is to be sent to Lugbúrz at once, and to Lugbúrz *only*. And the prisoner is to be kept safe and intact, under pain of death for every member of the guard, until He sends or comes Himself. That’s plain enough, and that’s what I’m going to do.’

‘Stripped, eh?’ said Gorbag. ‘What, teeth, nails, hair, and all?’

‘No, none of that. He’s for Lugbúrz, I tell you. He’s wanted safe and whole.’

‘You’ll find that difficult,’ laughed Gorbag. ‘He’s nothing but carrion now. What Lugbúrz will do with such stuff I can’t guess. He might as well go in the pot.’

‘You fool,’ snarled Shagrat. ‘You’ve been talking very clever, but there’s a lot you don’t know, though most other folk do. You’ll be for the pot or for Shelob, if you don’t take care. Carrion! Is that all you know of Her Ladyship? When she binds with cords, she’s after meat. She doesn’t eat dead meat, nor suck cold blood. This fellow isn’t dead!’

Sam reeled, clutching at the stone. He felt as if the whole dark world was turning upside down. So great was the shock that he almost swooned, but even as he fought to keep a hold on his senses, deep inside him he was aware of the comment: ‘You fool, he isn’t dead, and your heart knew it. Don’t trust your head, Samwise, it is not the best part of you. The trouble with you is that you never really had any hope. Now what is to be done?’ For the moment nothing, but to prop himself against the unmoving stone and listen, listen to the vile orc-voices.

‘Garn!’ said Shagrat. ‘She’s got more than one poison. When she’s hunting, she just gives ’em a dab in the neck and they go as limp as boned fish, and then she has her way with them. D’you remember old Ufthak? We lost him for days. Then we found him in a corner; hanging up he was, but he was wide awake and glaring. How we laughed! She’d forgotten him, maybe, but we didn’t touch him—no good interfering with Her. Nar—this little filth, he’ll wake up, in a few hours; and beyond feeling a bit sick for a bit, he’ll be all right. Or would be, if Lugbúrz would let him alone. And of course, beyond wondering where he is and what’s happened to him.’

‘And what’s going to happen to him,’ laughed Gorbag. ‘We can tell him a few stories at any rate, if we can’t do anything else. I don’t suppose he’s ever been in lovely Lugbúrz, so he may like to know what to expect. This is going to be more funny than I thought. Let’s go!’

‘There’s going to be no fun, I tell you,’ said Shagrat. ‘And he’s got to be kept safe, or we’re all as good as dead.’

‘All right! But if I were you, I’d catch the big one that’s loose, before you send in any report to Lugbúrz. It won’t sound too pretty to say you’ve caught the kitten and let the cat escape.’

The voices began to move away. Sam heard the sound of feet receding. He was recovering from his shock, and now a wild fury was on him. ‘I got it all wrong!’ he cried. ‘I knew I would. Now they’ve got him, the devils! the filth! Never leave your master, never, never: that was my right rule. And I knew it in my heart. May I be forgiven! Now I’ve got to get back to him. Somehow, somehow!’

He drew his sword again and beat on the stone with the hilt, but it only gave out a dull sound. The sword, however, blazed so brightly now that he could see dimly in its light. To his surprise he noticed that the great block was shaped like a heavy door, and was less than twice his own height. Above it was a dark blank space between the top and the low arch of the opening. It was probably only meant to be a stop against the intrusion of Shelob, fastened on the inside with some latch or bolt beyond the reach of her cunning. With his remaining strength Sam leaped and caught the top, scrambled up, and dropped; and then he ran madly, sword blazing in hand, round a bend and up a winding tunnel.

The news that his master was still alive roused him to a last effort beyond thought of weariness. He could not see anything ahead, for this new passage twisted and turned constantly; but he thought he was catching the two Orcs up: their voices were growing nearer again. Now they seemed quite close.

‘That’s what I’m going to do,’ said Shagrat in angry tones. ‘Put him right up in the top chamber.’

‘What for?’ growled Gorbag. ‘Haven’t you any lock-ups down below?’

‘He’s going out of harm’s way, I tell you,’ answered Shagrat. ‘See? He’s precious. I don’t trust all my lads, and none of yours; nor you neither, when you’re mad for fun. He’s going where I want him, and where you won’t come, if you don’t keep civil. Up to the top, I say. He’ll be safe there.’

‘Will he?’ said Sam. ‘You’re forgetting the great big Elvish warrior that’s loose!’ And with that he raced round the last corner, only to find that by some trick of the tunnel, or of the hearing which the Ring gave him, he had misjudged the distance.

The two orc-figures were still some way ahead. He could see them now, black and squat against a red glare. The passage ran straight at last, up an incline; and at the end, wide open, were great double doors, leading probably to deep chambers far below the high horn of the tower. Already the Orcs with their burden had passed inside. Gorbag and Shagrat were drawing near the gate.

Sam heard a burst of hoarse singing, blaring of horns and banging of gongs, a hideous clamour. Gorbag and Shagrat were already on the threshold.

Sam yelled and brandished Sting, but his little voice was drowned in the tumult. No-one heeded him.

The great doors slammed to. Boom. The bars of iron fell into place inside. Clang. The gate was shut. Sam hurled himself against the bolted brazen plates and fell senseless to the ground. He was out in the darkness. Frodo was alive but taken by the Enemy.









## Chapter 1: Minas Tirith

Pippin looked out from the shelter of Gandalf's cloak. He wondered if he was awake or still sleeping, still in the swift-moving dream in which he had been wrapped so long since the great ride began. The dark world was rushing by and the wind sang loudly in his ears. He could see nothing but the wheeling stars, and away to his right vast shadows against the sky where the mountains of the South marched past. Sleepily he tried to reckon the times and stages of their journey, but his memory was drowsy and uncertain.

There had been the first ride at terrible speed without a halt, and then in the dawn he had seen a pale gleam of gold, and they had come to the silent town and the great empty house on the hill. And hardly had they reached its shelter when the winged shadow had passed over once again, and men wilted with fear. But Gandalf had spoken soft words to him, and he had slept in a corner, tired but uneasy, dimly aware of comings and goings and of men talking and Gandalf giving orders. And then again riding, riding in the night. This was the second, no, the third night since he had looked in the Stone. And with that hideous memory he woke fully, and shivered, and the noise of the wind became filled with menacing voices.

A light kindled in the sky, a blaze of yellow fire behind dark barriers. Pippin cowered back, afraid for a moment, wondering into what dreadful country Gandalf was bearing him. He rubbed his eyes, and then he saw that it was the moon rising above the eastern shadows, now almost at the full. So the night was not yet old and for hours the dark journey would go on. He stirred and spoke.

‘Where are we, Gandalf?’ he asked.

‘In the realm of Gondor,’ the wizard answered. ‘The land of Anórien is still passing by.’

There was a silence again for a while. Then, ‘What is that?’ cried Pippin suddenly, clutching at Gandalf's cloak. ‘Look! Fire, red fire! Are there dragons in this land? Look, there is another!’

For answer Gandalf cried aloud to his horse. ‘On, Shadowfax! We must hasten. Time is short. See! The beacons of Gondor are alight, calling for aid. War is kindled. See, there is the fire on Amon Dîn, and flame on Eilenach; and there they go speeding west: Nardol, Erelas, Min-Rimmon, Calenhad, and the Halifirien on the borders of Rohan.’

But Shadowfax paused in his stride, slowing to a walk, and then he lifted up his head and neighed. And out of the darkness the answering neigh of other horses came; and presently the thudding of hoofs was heard, and three riders swept up and passed like flying ghosts in the moon and vanished into the West. Then Shadowfax gathered himself together and sprang away, and the night flowed over him like a roaring wind.

Pippin became drowsy again and paid little attention to Gandalf telling him of the customs of Gondor, and how the Lord of the City had beacons built on the tops of outlying hills along both borders of the great range, and maintained posts at these points where fresh horses were always in readiness to bear his errand-riders to Rohan in the North, or to Belfalas in the South. ‘It is long since the beacons of the North were lit,’ he said; ‘and in the ancient days of Gondor they were not needed, for they had the Seven Stones.’ Pippin stirred uneasily.

‘Sleep again, and do not be afraid!’ said Gandalf. ‘For you are not going like Frodo to Mordor, but to Minas Tirith, and there you will be as safe as you can be anywhere in these days. If Gondor falls, or the Ring is taken, then the Shire will be no refuge.’

‘You do not comfort me,’ said Pippin, but nonetheless sleep crept over him. The last thing that he remembered before he fell into deep dream was a glimpse of high white peaks, glimmering like floating isles above the clouds as they caught the light of the westering moon. He wondered where Frodo was, and if he was already in

Mordor, or if he was dead; and he did not know that Frodo from far away looked on that same moon as it set beyond Gondor ere the coming of the day.

Pippin woke to the sound of voices. Another day of hiding and a night of journey had fled by. It was twilight: the cold dawn was at hand again, and chill grey mists were about them. Shadowfax stood steaming with sweat, but he held his neck proudly and showed no sign of weariness. Many tall men heavily cloaked stood beside him, and behind them in the mist loomed a wall of stone. Partly ruinous it seemed, but already before the night was passed the sound of hurried labour could be heard: beat of hammers, clink of trowels, and the creak of wheels. Torches and flares glowed dully here and there in the fog. Gandalf was speaking to the men that barred his way, and as he listened Pippin became aware that he himself was being discussed.

‘Yea truly, we know you, Mithrandir,’ said the leader of the men, ‘and you know the pass-words of the Seven Gates and are free to go forward. But we do not know your companion. What is he? A dwarf out of the mountains in the North? We wish for no strangers in the land at this time, unless they be mighty men of arms in whose faith and help we can trust.’

‘I will vouch for him before the seat of Denethor,’ said Gandalf. ‘And as for valour, that cannot be computed by stature. He has passed through more battles and perils than you have, Ingold, though you be twice his height; and he comes now from the storming of Isengard, of which we bear tidings, and great weariness is on him, or I would wake him. His name is Peregrin, a very valiant man.’

‘Man?’ said Ingold dubiously, and the others laughed.

‘Man!’ cried Pippin, now thoroughly roused. ‘Man! Indeed not! I am a hobbit and no more valiant than I am a man, save perhaps now and again by necessity. Do not let Gandalf deceive you!’

‘Many a doer of great deeds might say no more,’ said Ingold. ‘But what is a hobbit?’

‘A Halfling,’ answered Gandalf. ‘Nay, not the one that was spoken of,’ he added seeing the wonder in the men’s faces. ‘Not he, yet one of his kindred.’

‘Yes, and one who journeyed with him,’ said Pippin. ‘And Boromir of your City was with us, and he saved me in the snows of the North, and at the last he was slain defending me from many foes.’

‘Peace!’ said Gandalf. ‘The news of that grief should have been told first to the father.’

‘It has been guessed already,’ said Ingold; ‘for there have been strange portents here of late. But pass on now quickly! For the Lord of Minas Tirith will be eager to see any that bear the latest tidings of his son, be he man or—’

‘Hobbit,’ said Pippin. ‘Little service can I offer to your lord, but what I can do, I would do, remembering Boromir the brave.’

‘Fare you well!’ said Ingold; and the men made way for Shadowfax, and he passed through a narrow gate in the wall. ‘May you bring good counsel to Denethor in his need, and to us all, Mithrandir!’ Ingold cried. ‘But you come with tidings of grief and danger, as is your wont, they say.’

‘Because I come seldom but when my help is needed,’ answered Gandalf. ‘And as for counsel, to you I would say that you are over-late in repairing the wall of the Pelennor. Courage will now be your best defence against the storm that is at hand—that and such hope as I bring. For not all the tidings that I bring are evil. But leave your trowels and sharpen your swords!’

‘The work will be finished ere evening,’ said Ingold. ‘This is the last portion of the wall to be put in defence: the least open to attack, for it looks towards our friends of Rohan. Do you know aught of them? Will they answer the summons, think you?’

‘Yes, they will come. But they have fought many battles at your back. This road and no road looks towards safety any longer. Be vigilant! But for Gandalf Stormcrow you would have seen a host of foes coming out of Anórien and no Riders of Rohan. And you may yet. Fare you well, and sleep not!’

Gandalf passed now into the wide land beyond the Rammas Echor. So the men of Gondor called the out-wall that they had built with great labour, after Ithilien fell under the shadow of their Enemy. For ten leagues or more it ran from the mountains' feet and so back again, enclosing in its fence the fields of the Pelennor: fair and fertile townlands on the long slopes and terraces falling to the deep levels of the Anduin. At its furthest point from the Great Gate of the City, north-eastward, the wall was four leagues distant, and there from a frowning bank it overlooked the long flats beside the river, and men had made it high and strong; for at that point, upon a walled causeway, the road came in from the fords and bridges of Osgiliath and passed through a guarded gate between embattled towers. At its nearest point the wall was little more than one league from the City, and that was south-eastward. There Anduin, going in a wide knee about the hills of Emyr Arnem in South Ithilien, bent sharply west, and the out-wall rose upon its very brink; and beneath it lay the quays and landings of the Harlond for craft that came upstream from the southern fiefs.

The townlands were rich, with wide tilth and many orchards, and homesteads there were with oast and garner, fold and byre, and many rills rippling through the green from the highlands down to Anduin. Yet the herdsmen and husbandmen that dwelt there were not many, and the most part of the people of Gondor lived in the seven circles of the City, or in the high vales of the mountain-borders, in Lossarnach, or further south in fair Lebennin with its five swift streams. There dwelt a hardy folk between the mountains and the sea. They were reckoned men of Gondor, yet their blood was mingled, and there were short and swarthy folk among them whose sires came more from the forgotten men who housed in the shadow of the hills in the Dark Years ere the coming of the kings. But beyond, in the great fief of Belfalas, dwelt Prince Imrahil in his castle of Dol Amroth by the sea, and he was of high blood, and his folk also, tall men and proud with sea-grey eyes.

Now after Gandalf had ridden for some time the light of day grew in the sky, and Pippin roused himself and looked up. To his left lay a sea of mist, rising to a bleak shadow in the East; but to his right great mountains reared their heads, ranging from the West to a steep and sudden end, as if in the making of the land the River had burst through a great barrier, carving out a mighty valley to be a land of battle and debate in times to come. And there where the White Mountains of Ered Nimrais came to their end he saw, as Gandalf had promised, the dark mass of Mount Mindolluin, the deep purple shadows of its high glens, and its tall face whitening in the rising day. And upon its out-thrust knee was the Guarded City, with its seven walls of stone so strong and old that it seemed to have been not builded but carved by giants out of the bones of the earth.

Even as Pippin gazed in wonder the walls passed from looming grey to white, blushing faintly in the dawn; and suddenly the sun climbed over the eastern shadow and sent forth a shaft that smote the face of the City. Then Pippin cried aloud, for the Tower of Ecthelion, standing high within the topmost wall, shone out against the sky, glimmering like a spike of pearl and silver, tall and fair and shapely, and its pinnacle glittered as if it were wrought of crystals; and white banners broke and fluttered from the battlements in the morning breeze, and high and far he heard a clear ringing as of silver trumpets.

So Gandalf and Peregrin rode to the Great Gate of the Men of Gondor at the rising of the sun, and its iron doors rolled back before them.

'Mithrandir! Mithrandir!' men cried. 'Now we know that the storm is indeed nigh!'

'It is upon you,' said Gandalf. 'I have ridden on its wings. Let me pass! I must come to your Lord Denethor, while his stewardship lasts. Whatever betide, you have come to the end of the Gondor that you have known. Let me pass!'

Then men fell back before the command of his voice and questioned him no further, though they gazed in wonder at the hobbit that sat before him and at the horse that bore him. For the people of the City used horses very little and they were seldom seen in their streets, save only those ridden by the errand-riders of their lord. And they said: 'Surely that is one of the great steeds of the King of Rohan? Maybe the Rohirrim will come soon to strengthen us.' But Shadowfax walked proudly up the long winding road.

For the fashion of Minas Tirith was such that it was built on seven levels, each delved into the hill, and about each was set a wall, and in each wall was a gate. But the gates were not set in a line: the Great Gate in the City Wall was at the east point of the circuit, but the next faced half south, and the third half north, and so to and fro upwards; so that the paved way that climbed towards the Citadel turned first this way and then that across the

face of the hill. And each time that it passed the line of the Great Gate it went through an arched tunnel, piercing a vast pier of rock whose huge out-thrust bulk divided in two all the circles of the City save the first. For partly in the primeval shaping of the hill, partly by the mighty craft and labour of old, there stood up from the rear of the wide court behind the Gate a towering bastion of stone, its edge sharp as a ship-keel facing east. Up it rose, even to the level of the topmost circle, and there was crowned by a battlement; so that those in the Citadel might, like mariners in a mountainous ship, look from its peak sheer down upon the Gate seven hundred feet below. The entrance to the Citadel also looked eastward, but was delved in the heart of the rock; thence a long lamp-lit slope ran up to the seventh gate. Thus men reached at last the High Court, and the Place of the Fountain before the feet of the White Tower: tall and shapely, fifty fathoms from its base to the pinnacle, where the banner of the Stewards floated a thousand feet above the plain.

A strong citadel it was indeed, and not to be taken by a host of enemies, if there were any within that could hold weapons; unless some foe could come behind and scale the lower skirts of Mindolluin, and so come upon the narrow shoulder that joined the Hill of Guard to the mountain mass. But that shoulder, which rose to the height of the fifth wall, was hedged with great ramparts right up to the precipice that overhung its western end; and in that space stood the houses and domed tombs of bygone kings and lords, for ever silent between the mountain and the tower.

Pippin gazed in growing wonder at the great stone city, vaster and more splendid than anything that he had dreamed of; greater and stronger than Isengard, and far more beautiful. Yet it was in truth falling year by year into decay; and already it lacked half the men that could have dwelt at ease there. In every street they passed some great house or court over whose doors and arched gates were carved many fair letters of strange and ancient shapes: names Pippin guessed of great men and kindreds that had once dwelt there; and yet now they were silent, and no footsteps rang on their wide pavements, nor voice was heard in their halls, nor any face looked out from door or empty window.

At last they came out of shadow to the seventh gate, and the warm sun that shone down beyond the river, as Frodo walked in the glades of Ithilien, glowed here on the smooth walls and rooted pillars, and the great arch with keystone carven in the likeness of a crowned and kingly head. Gandalf dismounted, for no horse was allowed in the Citadel, and Shadowfax suffered himself to be led away at the soft word of his master.

The Guards of the gate were robed in black, and their helms were of strange shape, high-crowned, with long cheek-guards close-fitting to the face, and above the cheek-guards were set the white wings of sea-birds; but the helms gleamed with a flame of silver, for they were indeed wrought of *mithril*, heirlooms from the glory of old days. Upon the black surcoats were embroidered in white a tree blossoming like snow beneath a silver crown and many-pointed stars. This was the livery of the heirs of Elendil, and none wore it now in all Gondor, save the Guards of the Citadel before the Court of the Fountain where the White Tree once had grown.

Already it seemed that word of their coming had gone before them; and at once they were admitted, silently, and without question. Quickly Gandalf strode across the white-paved court. A sweet fountain played there in the morning sun, and a sword of bright green lay about it; but in the midst, drooping over the pool, stood a dead tree, and the falling drops dripped sadly from its barren and broken branches back into the clear water.

Pippin glanced at it as he hurried after Gandalf. It looked mournful, he thought, and he wondered why the dead tree was left in this place where everything else was well tended.

*Seven stars and seven stones and one white tree.*

The words that Gandalf had murmured came back into his mind. And then he found himself at the doors of the great hall beneath the gleaming tower; and behind the wizard he passed the tall silent door-wardens and entered the cool echoing shadows of the house of stone.

They walked down a paved passage, long and empty, and as they went Gandalf spoke softly to Pippin. 'Be careful of your words, Master Peregrin! This is no time for hobbit pertness. Théoden is a kindly old man. Denethor is of another sort, proud and subtle, a man of far greater lineage and power, though he is not called a king. But he will speak most to you, and question you much, since you can tell him of his son Boromir. He loved him greatly: too much perhaps; and the more so because they were unlike. But under cover of this love he

will think it easier to learn what he wishes from you rather than from me. Do not tell him more than you need, and leave quiet the matter of Frodo's errand. I will deal with that in due time. And say nothing about Aragorn either, unless you must.'

'Why not? What is wrong with Strider?' Pippin whispered. 'He meant to come here, didn't he? And he'll be arriving soon himself, anyway.'

'Maybe, maybe,' said Gandalf. 'Though if he comes, it is likely to be in some way that no-one expects, not even Denethor. It will be better so. At least he should come unheralded by us.'

Gandalf halted before a tall door of polished metal. 'See, Master Pippin, there is no time to instruct you now in the history of Gondor; though it might have been better, if you had learned something of it, when you were still birds-nesting and playing truant in the woods of the Shire. Do as I bid! It is scarcely wise when bringing the news of the death of his heir to a mighty lord to speak over much of the coming of one who will, if he comes, claim the kingship. Is that enough?'

'Kingship?' said Pippin amazed.

'Yes,' said Gandalf. 'If you have walked all these days with closed ears and mind asleep, wake up now!' He knocked on the door.

The door opened, but no-one could be seen to open it. Pippin looked into a great hall. It was lit by deep windows in the wide aisles at either side, beyond the rows of tall pillars that upheld the roof. Monoliths of black marble, they rose to great capitals carved in many strange figures of beasts and leaves; and far above in shadow the wide vaulting gleamed with dull gold. The floor was of polished stone, white-gleaming, inset with flowing traceries of many colours. No hangings nor storied webs, nor any things of woven stuff or of wood, were to be seen in that long solemn hall; but between the pillars there stood a silent company of tall images graven in cold stone.

Suddenly Pippin was reminded of the hewn rocks of Argonath, and awe fell on him, as he looked down that avenue of kings long dead. At the far end upon a dais of many steps was set a high throne under a canopy of marble shaped like a crowned helm; behind it was carved upon the wall and set with gems an image of a tree in flower. But the throne was empty. At the foot of the dais, upon the lowest step which was broad and deep, there was a stone chair, black and unadorned, and on it sat an old man gazing at his lap. In his hand was a white rod with a golden knob. He did not look up. Solemnly they paced the long floor towards him, until they stood three paces from his footstool. Then Gandalf spoke.

'Hail, Lord and Steward of Minas Tirith, Denethor son of Ecthelion! I am come with counsel and tidings in this dark hour.'

Then the old man looked up. Pippin saw his carved face with its proud bones and skin like ivory, and the long curved nose between the dark deep eyes; and he was reminded not so much of Boromir as of Aragorn. 'Dark indeed is the hour,' said the old man, 'and at such times you are wont to come, Mithrandir. But though all the signs forebode that the doom of Gondor is drawing nigh, less now to me is that darkness than my own darkness. It has been told to me that you bring with you one who saw my son die. Is this he?'

'It is,' said Gandalf. 'One of the twain. The other is with Théoden of Rohan and may come hereafter. Halflings they are, as you see, yet this is not he of whom the omens spoke.'

'Yet a Halfling still,' said Denethor grimly, 'and little love do I bear the name, since those accursed words came to trouble our counsels and drew away my son on the wild errand to his death. My Boromir! Now we have need of you. Faramir should have gone in his stead.'

'He would have gone,' said Gandalf. 'Be not unjust in your grief! Boromir claimed the errand and would not suffer any other to have it. He was a masterful man, and one to take what he desired. I journeyed far with him and learned much of his mood. But you speak of his death. You have had news of that ere we came?'

'I have received this,' said Denethor, and laying down his rod he lifted from his lap the thing that he had been gazing at. In each hand he held up one half of a great horn cloven through the middle: a wild-ox horn bound with silver.

‘That is the horn that Boromir always wore!’ cried Pippin.

‘Verily,’ said Denethor. ‘And in my turn I bore it, and so did each eldest son of our house, far back into the vanished years before the failing of the kings, since Vorondil<sup>376</sup> father of Mardil hunted the wild kine of Araw in the far fields of Rhûn. I heard it blowing dim upon the northern marches thirteen days ago, and the River brought it to me, broken: it will wind no more.’ He paused and there was a heavy silence. Suddenly he turned his black glance upon Pippin. ‘What say you to that, Halfling?’

‘Thirteen, thirteen days,’ faltered Pippin. ‘Yes, I think that would be so. Yes, I stood beside him, as he blew the horn. But no help came. Only more orcs.’

‘So,’ said Denethor, looking keenly at Pippin’s face. ‘You were there? Tell me more! Why did no help come? And how did you escape, and yet he did not, so mighty a man as he was, and only orcs to withstand him?’

Pippin flushed and forgot his fear. ‘The mightiest man may be slain by one arrow,’ he said; ‘and Boromir was pierced by many. When last I saw him he sank beside a tree and plucked a black-feathered shaft from his side. Then I swooned and was made captive. I saw him no more, and know no more. But I honour his memory, for he was very valiant. He died to save us, my kinsman Meriadoc and myself, waylaid in the woods by the soldiery of the Dark Lord; and though he fell and failed, my gratitude is none the less.’

Then Pippin looked the old man in the eye, for pride stirred strangely within him, still stung by the scorn and suspicion in that cold voice. ‘Little service, no doubt, will so great a lord of Men think to find in a hobbit, a halfling from the northern Shire; yet such as it is, I will offer it, in payment of my debt.’ Twitching aside his grey cloak, Pippin drew forth his small sword and laid it at Denethor’s feet.

A pale smile, like a gleam of cold sun on a winter’s evening, passed over the old man’s face; but he bent his head and held out his hand, laying the shards of the horn aside. ‘Give me the weapon!’ he said.

Pippin lifted it and presented the hilt to him. ‘Whence came this?’ said Denethor. ‘Many, many years lie on it. Surely this is a blade wrought by our own kindred in the North in the deep past?’

‘It came out of the mounds that lie on the borders of my country,’ said Pippin. ‘But only evil wights dwell there now, and I will not willingly tell more of them.’

‘I see that strange tales are woven about you,’ said Denethor, ‘and once again it is shown that looks may belie the man—or the halfling. I accept your service. For you are not daunted by words; and you have courteous speech, strange though the sound of it may be to us in the South. And we shall have need of all folk of courtesy, be they great or small, in the days to come. Swear to me now!’

‘Take the hilt,’ said Gandalf, ‘and speak after the Lord, if you are resolved on this.’

‘I am,’ said Pippin.

The old man laid the sword along his lap, and Pippin put his hand to the hilt, and said slowly after Denethor:

‘Here do I swear fealty and service to Gondor, and to the Lord and Steward of the realm, to speak and to be silent, to do and to let be, to come and to go, in need or plenty, in peace or war, in living or dying, from this hour henceforth, until my lord release me, or death take me, or the world end. So say I, Peregrin son of Paladin of the Shire of the Halflings.’

‘And this do I hear, Denethor son of Ecthelion, Lord of Gondor, Steward of the High King, and I will not forget it, nor fail to reward that which is given: fealty with love, valour with honour, oath-breaking with vengeance.’ Then Pippin received back his sword and put it in its sheath.

‘And now,’ said Denethor, ‘my first command to you: speak and be not silent! Tell me your full tale, and see that you recall all that you can of Boromir, my son. Sit now and begin!’ As he spoke he struck a small silver gong that stood near his footstool, and at once servants came forward. Pippin saw then that they had been standing in alcoves on either side of the door, unseen as he and Gandalf entered.

‘Bring wine and food and seats for the guests,’ said Denethor, ‘and see that none trouble us for one hour.’

‘It is all that I have to spare, for there is much else to heed,’ he said to Gandalf. ‘Much of more import, it may seem, and yet to me less pressing. But maybe we can speak again at the end of the day.’

‘And earlier, it is to be hoped,’ said Gandalf. ‘For I have not ridden hither from Isengard, one hundred and fifty leagues, with the speed of wind, only to bring you one small warrior, however courteous. Is it naught to you that Théoden has fought a great battle, and that Isengard is overthrown, and that I have broken the staff of Saruman?’

‘It is much to me. But I know already sufficient of these deeds for my own counsel against the menace of the East.’ He turned his dark eyes on Gandalf, and now Pippin saw a likeness between the two, and he felt the strain between them, almost as if he saw a line of smouldering fire, drawn from eye to eye, that might suddenly burst into flame.

Denethor looked indeed much more like a great wizard than Gandalf did, more kingly, beautiful, and powerful; and older. Yet by a sense other than sight Pippin perceived that Gandalf had the greater power and the deeper wisdom, and a majesty that was veiled. And he was older, far older. ‘How much older?’ he wondered, and then he thought how odd it was that he had never thought about it before. Treebeard had said something about wizards, but even then he had not thought of Gandalf as one of them. What was Gandalf? In what far time and place did he come into the world, and when would he leave it? And then his musings broke off, and he saw that Denethor and Gandalf still looked each other in the eye, as if reading the other’s mind. But it was Denethor who first withdrew his gaze.

‘Yea,’ he said; ‘for though the Stones be lost, they say, still the lords of Gondor have keener sight than lesser men, and many messages come to them. But sit now!’

Then men came bearing a chair and a low stool, and one brought a salver with a silver flagon and cups, and white cakes. Pippin sat down, but he could not take his eyes from the old lord. Was it so, or had he only imagined it, that as he spoke of the Stones a sudden gleam of his eye had glanced upon Pippin’s face?

‘Now tell me your tale, my liege,’ said Denethor, half kindly, half mockingly. ‘For the words of one whom my son so befriended will be welcome indeed.’

Pippin never forgot that hour in the great hall under the piercing eye of the Lord of Gondor, stabbed ever and anon by his shrewd questions, and all the while conscious of Gandalf at his side, watching and listening, and (so Pippin felt) holding in check a rising wrath and impatience. When the hour was over and Denethor again rang the gong, Pippin felt worn out. ‘It cannot be more than nine o’clock,’ he thought. ‘I could now eat three breakfasts on end.’

‘Lead the Lord Mithrandir to the housing prepared for him,’ said Denethor, ‘and his companion may lodge with him for the present, if he will. But be it known that I have now sworn him to my service, and he shall be known as Peregrin son of Paladin and taught the lesser pass-words. Send word to the Captains that they shall wait on me here, as soon as may be after the third hour has rung.

‘And you, my Lord Mithrandir, shall come too, as and when you will. None shall hinder your coming to me at any time, save only in my brief hours of sleep. Let your wrath at an old man’s folly run off, and then return to my comfort!’

‘Folly?’ said Gandalf. ‘Nay, my lord, when you are a dotard you will die. You can use even your grief as a cloak. Do you think that I do not understand your purpose in questioning for an hour one who knows the least, while I sit by?’

‘If you understand it, then be content,’ returned Denethor. ‘Pride would be folly that disdained help and counsel at need; but you deal out such gifts according to your own designs. Yet the Lord of Gondor is not to be made the tool of other men’s purposes, however worthy. And to him there is no purpose higher in the world as it now stands than the good of Gondor; and the rule of Gondor, my lord, is mine and no other man’s, unless the king should come again.’

‘Unless the king should come again?’ said Gandalf. ‘Well, my lord Steward, it is your task to keep some kingdom still against that event, which few now look to see. In that task you shall have all the aid that you are



pleased to ask for. But I will say this: the rule of no realm is mine, neither of Gondor nor any other, great or small. But all worthy things that are in peril as the world now stands, those are my care. And for my part, I shall not wholly fail of my task, though Gondor should perish, if anything passes through this night that can still grow fair or bear fruit and flower again in days to come. For I also am a steward. Did you not know?' And with that he turned and strode from the hall with Pippin running at his side.

Gandalf did not look at Pippin or speak a word to him as they went. Their guide brought them from the doors of the hall, and then led them across the Court of the Fountain into a lane between tall buildings of stone. After several turns they came to a house close to the wall of the citadel upon the north side, not far from the shoulder that linked the hill with the mountain. Within, upon the first floor above the street, up a wide carven stair, he showed them to a fair room, light and airy, with goodly hangings of dull gold sheen unfigured. It was sparsely furnished, having but a small table, two chairs and a bench; but at either side there were curtained alcoves and well-clad beds within with vessels and basins for washing. There were three high narrow windows that looked northward over the great curve of Anduin, still shrouded in mists, towards the Emyr Muil and Rauros far away. Pippin had to climb on the bench to look out over the deep stone sill.

'Are you angry with me, Gandalf?' he said, as their guide went out and closed the door. 'I did the best I could.'

'You did indeed!' said Gandalf, laughing suddenly; and he came and stood beside Pippin, putting his arm about the hobbit's shoulders, and gazing out of the window. Pippin glanced in some wonder at the face now close beside his own, for the sound of that laugh had been gay and merry. Yet in the wizard's face he saw at first only lines of care and sorrow; though as he looked more intently he perceived that under all there was a great joy: a fountain of mirth enough to set a kingdom laughing, were it to gush forth.

'Indeed you did your best,' said the wizard; 'and I hope that it may be long before you find yourself in such a tight corner again between two such terrible old men. Still the Lord of Gondor learned more from you than you may have guessed, Pippin. You could not hide the fact that Boromir did not lead the Company from Moria, and that there was one among you of high honour who was coming to Minas Tirith; and that he had a famous sword. Men think much about the stories of old days in Gondor; and Denethor has given long thought to the rhyme and to the words *Isildur's Bane*, since Boromir went away.'

'He is not as other men of this time, Pippin, and whatever be his descent from father to son, by some chance the blood of Westergond runs nearly true in him; as it does in his other son, Faramir, and yet did not in Boromir whom he loved best. He has long sight. He can perceive, if he bends his will thither, much of what is passing in the minds of men, even of those that dwell far off. It is difficult to deceive him, and dangerous to try.'

'Remember that! For you are now sworn to his service. I do not know what put it into your head, or your heart, to do that. But it was well done. I did not hinder it, for generous deed should not be checked by cold counsel. It touched his heart, as well (may I say it) as pleasing his humour. And at least you are free now to move about as you will in Minas Tirith—when you are not on duty. For there is another side to it. You are at his command; and he will not forget. Be wary still!'

He fell silent and sighed. 'Well, no need to brood on what tomorrow may bring. For one thing, tomorrow will be certain to bring worse than today, for many days to come. And there is nothing more that I can do to help it. The board is set, and the pieces are moving. One piece that I greatly desire to find is Faramir, now the heir of Denethor. I do not think that he is in the City; but I have had no time to gather news. I must go, Pippin. I must go to this lords' council and learn what I can. But the Enemy has the move, and he is about to open his full game. And pawns are likely to see as much of it as any, Peregrin son of Paladin, soldier of Gondor. Sharpen your blade!'

Gandalf went to the door, and there he turned. 'I am in haste, Pippin,' he said. 'Do me a favour when you go out. Even before you rest, if you are not too weary. Go and find Shadowfax and see how he is housed. These people are kindly to beasts, for they are a good and wise folk, but they have less skill with horses than some.'

With that Gandalf went out; and as he did so, there came the note of a clear sweet bell ringing in a tower of the citadel. Three strokes it rang, like silver in the air, and ceased: the third hour from the rising of the sun.

After a minute Pippin went to the door and down the stair and looked about the street. The sun was now shining warm and bright, and the towers and tall houses cast long clear-cut shadows westward. High in the blue air Mount Mindolluin lifted its white helm and snowy cloak. Armed men went to and fro in the ways of the City, as if going at the striking of the hour to changes of post and duty.

‘Nine o’clock we’d call it in the Shire,’ said Pippin aloud to himself. ‘Just the time for a nice breakfast by the open window in spring sunshine. And how I should like breakfast! Do these people ever have it, or is it over? And when do they have dinner, and where?’

Presently he noticed a man, clad in black and white, coming along the narrow street from the centre of the citadel towards him. Pippin felt lonely and made up his mind to speak as the man passed; but he had no need. The man came straight up to him.

‘You are Peregrin the Halfling?’ he said. ‘I am told that you have been sworn to the service of the Lord and of the City. Welcome!’ He held out his hand and Pippin took it.

‘I am named Beregond son of Baranor. I have no duty this morning, and I have been sent to you to teach you the pass-words, and to tell you some of the many things that no doubt you will wish to know. And for my part, I would learn of you also. For never before have we seen a halfling in this land and though we have heard rumour of them, little is said of them in any tale that we know. Moreover you are a friend of Mithrandir. Do you know him well?’

‘Well,’ said Pippin. ‘I have known *of* him all my short life, as you might say; and lately I have travelled far with him. But there is much to read in that book, and I cannot claim to have seen more than a page or two. Yet perhaps I know him as well as any but a few. Aragorn was the only one of our Company, I think, who really knew him.’

‘Aragorn?’ said Beregond. ‘Who is he?’

‘Oh,’ stammered Pippin, ‘he was a man who went about with us. I think he is in Rohan now.’

‘You have been in Rohan, I hear. There is much that I would ask you of that land also; for we put much of what little hope we have in its people. But I am forgetting my errand, which was first to answer what you would ask. What would you know, Master Peregrin?’

‘Er well,’ said Pippin, ‘if I may venture to say so, rather a burning question in my mind at present is, well, what about breakfast and all that? I mean, what are the meal-times, if you understand me, and where is the dining-room, if there is one? And the inns? I looked, but never a one could I see as we rode up, though I had been borne up by the hope of a draught of ale as soon as we came to the homes of wise and courtly men.’

Beregond looked at him gravely. ‘An old campaigner, I see,’ he said. ‘They say that men who go warring afield look ever to the next hope of food and of drink; though I am not a travelled man myself. Then you have not yet eaten today?’

‘Well, yes, to speak in courtesy, yes,’ said Pippin. ‘But no more than a cup of wine and a white cake or two by the kindness of your lord; but he racked me for it with an hour of questions, and that is hungry work.’

Beregond laughed. ‘At the table small men may do the greater deeds, we say. But you have broken your fast as well as any man in the Citadel, and with greater honour. This is a fortress and a tower of guard and is now in posture of war. We rise ere the Sun, and take a morsel in the grey light, and go to our duties at the opening hour. But do not despair!’ He laughed again, seeing the dismay in Pippin’s face. ‘Those who have had *heavy* duty take somewhat to refresh their strength in the mid-morning. Then there is the nuncheon, at noon or after as duties allow; and men gather for the daymeal, and such mirth as there still may be, about the hour of sunset.

‘Come! We will walk a little and then go find us some refreshment, and eat and drink on the battlement, and survey the fair morning.’

‘One moment!’ said Pippin blushing. ‘Greed, or hunger by your courtesy, put it out of my mind. But Gandalf, Mithrandir as you call him, asked me to see to his horse—Shadowfax, a great steed of Rohan, and the apple of the king’s eye, I am told, though he has given him to Mithrandir for his services. I think his new master loves

the beast better than he loves many men, and if his good will is of any value to this city, you will treat Shadowfax with all honour: with greater kindness than you have treated this hobbit, if it is possible.'

'Hobbit?' said Beregond.

'That is what we call ourselves,' said Pippin.

'I am glad to learn it,' said Beregond, 'for now I may say that strange accents do not mar fair speech, and hobbits are a fair-spoken folk. But come! You shall make me acquainted with this good horse. I love beasts, and we see them seldom in this stony city; for my people came from the mountain-vales, and before that from Ithilien. But fear not! The visit shall be short, a mere call of courtesy, and we will go thence to the butteries.'

Pippin found that Shadowfax had been well housed and tended. For in the sixth circle, outside the walls of the citadel, there were some fair stables where a few swift horses were kept, hard by the lodgings of the errand-riders of the Lord: messengers always ready to go at the urgent command of Denethor or his chief captains. But now all the horses and the riders were out and away.

Shadowfax whinnied as Pippin entered the stable and turned his head. 'Good morning!' said Pippin. 'Gandalf will come as soon as he may. He is busy, but he sends greetings, and I am to see that all is well with you; and you resting, I hope, after your long labours.'

Shadowfax tossed his head and stamped. But he allowed Beregond to handle his head gently and stroke his great flanks.

'He looks as if he were spoiling for a race, and not newly come from a great journey,' said Beregond. 'How strong and proud he is! Where is his harness? It should be rich and fair.'

'None is rich and fair enough for him,' said Pippin. 'He will have none. If he will consent to bear you, bear you he does; and if not, well, no bit, bridle, whip, or thong will tame him. Farewell, Shadowfax! Have patience. Battle is coming.'

Shadowfax lifted up his head and neighed, so that the stable shook, and they covered their ears. Then they took their leave, seeing that the manger was well filled.

'And now for our manger,' said Beregond, and he led Pippin back to the citadel, and so to a door in the north side of the great tower. There they went down a long cool stair into a wide alley lit with lamps. There were hatches in the walls at the side, and one of these was open.

'This is the storehouse and buttery of my company of the Guard,' said Beregond. 'Greetings, Targon!' he called through the hatch. 'It is early yet, but here is a newcomer that the Lord has taken into his service. He has ridden long and far with a tight belt, and has had sore labour this morning, and he is hungry. Give us what you have!'

They got there bread, and butter, and cheese and apples: the last of the winter store, wrinkled but sound and sweet; and a leather flagon of new-drawn ale, and wooden platters and cups. They put all into a wicker basket and climbed back into the sun; and Beregond brought Pippin to a place at the east end of the great out-thrust battlement where there was an embrasure in the walls with a stone seat beneath the sill. From there they could look out on the morning over the world.

They ate and drank; and they talked now of Gondor and its ways and customs, now of the Shire and the strange countries that Pippin had seen. And ever as they talked Beregond was more amazed, and looked with greater wonder at the hobbit, swinging his short legs as he sat on the seat, or standing tiptoe upon it to peer over the sill at the lands below.

'I will not hide from you, Master Peregrin,' said Beregond, 'that to us you look almost as one of our children, a lad of nine summers or so; and yet you have endured perils and seen marvels that few of our greybeards could boast of. I thought it was the whim of our Lord to take him a noble page, after the manner of the kings of old, they say. But I see that it is not so, and you must pardon my foolishness.'

'I do,' said Pippin. 'Though you are not far wrong. I am still little more than a boy in the reckoning of my own people, and it will be four years yet before I "come of age", as we say in the Shire. But do not bother about me. Come and look and tell me what I can see.'

The sun was now climbing, and the mists in the vale below had been drawn up. The last of them were floating away, just overhead, as wisps of white cloud borne on the stiffening breeze from the East, that was now flapping and tugging the flags and white standards of the citadel. Away down in the valley-bottom, five leagues or so as the eye leaps, the Great River could now be seen grey and glittering, coming out of the north-west, and bending in a mighty sweep south and west again, till it was lost to view in a haze and shimmer, far beyond which lay the Sea fifty leagues away.

Pippin could see all the Pelennor laid out before him, dotted into the distance with farmsteads and little walls, barns and byres, but nowhere could he see any kine or other beasts. Many roads and tracks crossed the green fields, and there was much coming and going: wains moving in lines towards the Great Gate, and others passing out. Now and again a horseman would ride up, and leap from the saddle and hasten into the City. But most of the traffic went out along the chief highway, and that turned south, and then bending swifter than the River skirted the hills and passed soon from sight. It was wide and well-paved, and along its eastern edge ran a broad green riding-track, and beyond that a wall. On the ride horsemen galloped to and fro, but all the street seemed to be choked with great covered wains going south. But soon Pippin saw that all was in fact well-ordered: the wains were moving in three lines, one swifter drawn by horses; another slower, great waggons with fair housings of many colours, drawn by oxen; and along the west rim of the road many smaller carts hauled by trudging men.

‘That is the road to the vales of Tumladen and Lossarnach, and the mountain-villages, and then on to Lebennin,’ said Beregond. ‘There go the last of the wains that bear away to refuge the aged, the children, and the women that must go with them. They must all be gone from the Gate and the road clear for a league before noon: that was the order. It is a sad necessity.’ He sighed. ‘Few, maybe, of those now sundered will meet again. And there were always too few children in this city; but now there are none—save some young lads that will not depart, and may find some task to do: my own son is one of them.’

They fell silent for a while. Pippin gazed anxiously eastward, as if at any moment he might see thousands of orcs pouring over the fields. ‘What can I see there?’ he asked, pointing down to the middle of the great curve of the Anduin. ‘Is that another city, or what is it?’

‘It was a city,’ said Beregond, ‘the chief city of Gondor, of which this was only a fortress. For that is the ruin of Osgiliath on either side of Anduin, which our enemies took and burned long ago. Yet we won it back in the days of the youth of Denethor: not to dwell in, but to hold as an outpost, and to rebuild the bridge for the passage of our arms. And then came the Fell Riders out of Minas Morgul.’

‘The Black Riders?’ said Pippin, opening his eyes, and they were wide and dark with an old fear re-awakened.

‘Yes, they were black,’ said Beregond, ‘and I see that you know something of them, though you have not spoken of them in any of your tales.’

‘I know of them,’ said Pippin softly, ‘but I will not speak of them now, so near, so near.’ He broke off and lifted his eyes above the River, and it seemed to him that all he could see was a vast and threatening shadow. Perhaps it was mountains looming on the verge of sight, their jagged edges softened by wellnigh twenty leagues of misty air; perhaps it was but a cloud-wall, and beyond that again a yet deeper gloom. But even as he looked it seemed to his eyes that the gloom was growing and gathering, very slowly, slowly rising to smother the regions of the sun.

‘So near to Mordor?’ said Beregond quietly. ‘Yes, there it lies. We seldom name it; but we have dwelt ever in sight of that shadow: sometimes it seems fainter and more distant; sometimes nearer and darker. It is growing and darkening now; and therefore our fear and disquiet grow too. And the Fell Riders, less than a year ago they won back the crossings, and many of our best men were slain. Boromir it was that drove the enemy at last back from this western shore, and we hold still the near half of Osgiliath. For a little while. But we await now a new onslaught there. Maybe the chief onslaught of the war that comes.’

‘When?’ said Pippin. ‘Have you a guess? For I saw the beacons two nights ago and the errand-riders; and Gandalf said that it was a sign that war had begun. He seemed in a desperate hurry. But now everything seems to have slowed up again.’

‘Only because everything is now ready,’ said Beregond. ‘It is but the deep breath before the plunge.’

‘But why were the beacons lit two nights ago?’

‘It is over-late to send for aid when you are already besieged,’ answered Beregond. ‘But I do not know the counsel of the Lord and his captains. They have many ways of gathering news. And the Lord Denethor is unlike other men: he sees far. Some say that as he sits alone in his high chamber in the Tower at night, and bends his thought this way and that, he can read somewhat of the future; and that he will at times search even the mind of the Enemy, wrestling with him. And so it is that he is old, worn before his time. But however that may be, my lord Faramir is abroad, beyond the River on some perilous errand, and he may have sent tidings.

‘But if you would know what I think set the beacons ablaze, it was the news that came that eve out of Lebennin. There is a great fleet drawing near to the mouths of Anduin, manned by the corsairs of Umbar in the South. They have long ceased to fear the might of Gondor, and they have allied them with the Enemy, and now make a heavy stroke in his cause. For this attack will draw off much of the help that we looked to have from Lebennin and Belfalas, where folk are hardy and numerous. All the more do our thoughts go north to Rohan; and the more glad are we for these tidings of victory that you bring.

‘And yet’—he paused and stood up, and looked round, north, east, and south—‘the doings at Isengard should warn us that we are caught now in a great net and strategy. This is no longer a bickering at the fords, raiding from Ithilien and from Anórien, ambushing and pillaging. This is a great war long-planned, and we are but one piece in it, whatever pride may say. Things move in the far East beyond the Inland Sea, it is reported; and north in Mirkwood and beyond; and south in Harad. And now all realms shall be put to the test, to stand, or fall—under the Shadow.

‘Yet, Master Peregrin, we have this honour: ever we bear the brunt of the chief hatred of the Dark Lord, for that hatred comes down out of the depths of time and over the deeps of the Sea. Here will the hammer-stroke fall hardest. And for that reason Mithrandir came hither in such haste. For if we fall, who shall stand? And, Master Peregrin, do you see any hope that we shall stand?’

Pippin did not answer. He looked at the great walls, and the towers and brave banners, and the sun in the high sky, and then at the gathering gloom in the East; and he thought of the long fingers of that Shadow: of the orcs in the woods and the mountains, the treason of Isengard, the birds of evil eye, and the Black Riders even in the lanes of the Shire—and of the winged terror, the Nazgûl. He shuddered, and hope seemed to wither. And even at that moment the sun for a second faltered and was obscured, as though a dark wing had passed across it. Almost beyond hearing he thought he caught, high and far up in the heavens, a cry: faint, but heart-quelling, cruel and cold. He blanched and cowered against the wall.

‘What was that?’ asked Beregond. ‘You also felt something?’

‘Yes,’ muttered Pippin. ‘It is the sign of our fall, and the shadow of doom, a Fell Rider of the air.’

‘Yes, the shadow of doom,’ said Beregond. ‘I fear that Minas Tirith shall fall. Night comes. The very warmth of my blood seems stolen away.’

For a time they sat together with bowed heads and did not speak. Then suddenly Pippin looked up and saw that the sun was still shining and the banners still streaming in the breeze. He shook himself. ‘It is passed,’ he said. ‘No, my heart will not yet despair. Gandalf fell and has returned and is with us. We may stand, if only on one leg, or at least be left still upon our knees.’

‘Rightly said!’ cried Beregond, rising and striding to and fro. ‘Nay, though all things must come utterly to an end in time, Gondor shall not perish yet. Not though the walls be taken by a reckless foe that will build a hill of carrion before them. There are still other fastnesses, and secret ways of escape into the mountains. Hope and memory shall live still in some hidden valley where the grass is green.’

‘All the same, I wish it was over for good or ill,’ said Pippin. ‘I am no warrior at all and dislike any thought of battle; but waiting on the edge of one that I can’t escape is worst of all. What a long day it seems already! I should be happier, if we were not obliged to stand and watch, making no move, striking nowhere first. No stroke would have been struck in Rohan, I think, but for Gandalf.’

‘Ah, there you lay your finger on the sore that many feel!’ said Beregond. ‘But things may change when Faramir returns. He is bold, more bold than many deem; for in these days men are slow to believe that a captain can be wise and learned in the scrolls of lore and song, as he is, and yet a man of hardihood and swift judgement in the field. But such is Faramir. Less reckless and eager than Boromir, but not less resolute. Yet what indeed can he do? We cannot assault the mountains of—of yonder realm. Our reach is shortened, and we cannot strike till some foe comes within it. Then our hand must be heavy!’ He smote the hilt of his sword.

Pippin looked at him: tall and proud and noble, as all the men that he had yet seen in that land; and with a glitter in his eye as he thought of the battle. ‘Alas! my own hand feels as light as a feather,’ he thought, but he said nothing. ‘A pawn did Gandalf say? Perhaps; but on the wrong chessboard.’

So they talked until the sun reached its height, and suddenly the noon-bells were rung, and there was a stir in the citadel; for all save the watchmen were going to their meal.

‘Will you come with me?’ said Beregond. ‘You may join my mess for this day. I do not know to what company you will be assigned; or the Lord may hold you at his own command. But you will be welcome. And it will be well to meet as many men as you may, while there is yet time.’

‘I shall be glad to come,’ said Pippin. ‘I am lonely, to tell you the truth. I left my best friend behind in Rohan, and I have had no-one to talk to or jest with. Perhaps I could really join your company? Are you the captain? If so, you could take me on, or speak for me?’

‘Nay, nay,’ Beregond laughed, ‘I am no captain. Neither office nor rank nor lordship have I, being but a plain man of arms of the Third Company of the Citadel. Yet, Master Peregrin, to be only a man of arms of the Guard of the Tower of Gondor is held worthy in the City, and such men have honour in the land.’

‘Then it is far beyond me,’ said Pippin. ‘Take me back to our room, and if Gandalf is not there, I will go where you like—as your guest.’

Gandalf was not in the lodging and had sent no message; so Pippin went with Beregond and was made known to the men of the Third Company. And it seemed that Beregond got as much honour from it as his guest, for Pippin was very welcome. There had already been much talk in the citadel about Mithrandir’s companion and his long closeting with the Lord; and rumour declared that a Prince of the Halflings had come out of the North to offer allegiance to Gondor and five thousand swords. And some said that when the Riders came from Rohan each would bring behind him a halfling warrior, small maybe, but doughty.

Though Pippin had regretfully to destroy this hopeful tale, he could not be rid of his new rank, only fitting, men thought, to one befriended by Boromir and honoured by the Lord Denethor; and they thanked him for coming among them, and hung on his words and stories of the outlands, and gave him as much food and ale as he could wish. Indeed his only trouble was to be ‘wary’ according to the counsel of Gandalf, and not to let his tongue wag freely after the manner of a hobbit among friends.

At length Beregond rose. ‘Farewell for this time!’ he said. ‘I have duty now till sundown, as have all the others here, I think. But if you are lonely, as you say, maybe you would like a merry guide about the City. My son would go with you gladly. A good lad, I may say. If that pleases you, go down to the lowest circle and ask for the Old Guesthouse in the Rath Celerdain, the Lampwrights’ Street. You will find him there with other lads that are remaining in the City. There may be things worth seeing down at the Great Gate ere the closing.’

He went out, and soon after all the others followed. The day was still fine, though it was growing hazy, and it was hot for March, even so far southwards. Pippin felt sleepy, but the lodging seemed cheerless, and he decided to go down and explore the City. He took a few morsels that he had saved to Shadowfax, and they were graciously accepted, though the horse seemed to have no lack. Then he walked on down many winding ways.

People stared much as he passed. To his face men were gravely courteous, saluting him after the manner of Gondor with bowed head and hands upon the breast; but behind him he heard many calls, as those out of doors cried to others within to come and see the Prince of the Halflings, the companion of Mithrandir. Many used some other tongue than the Common Speech, but it was not long before he learned at least what was meant by *Ernil i Pheriannath* and knew that his title had gone down before him into the City.

He came at last by arched streets and many fair alleys and pavements to the lowest and widest circle, and there he was directed to the Lampwrights' Street, a broad way running towards the Great Gate. In it he found the Old Guesthouse, a large building of grey weathered stone with two wings running back from the street, and between them a narrow greensward, behind which was the many-windowed house, fronted along its whole width by a pillared porch and a flight of steps down on to the grass. Boys were playing among the pillars, the only children that Pippin had seen in Minas Tirith, and he stopped to look at them. Presently one of them caught sight of him, and with a shout he sprang across the grass and came into the street, followed by several others. There he stood in front of Pippin, looking him up and down.

'Greetings!' said the lad. 'Where do you come from? You are a stranger in the City.'

'I was,' said Pippin; 'but they say I have become a man of Gondor.'

'Oh come!' said the lad. 'Then we are all men here. But how old are you, and what is your name? I am ten years already, and shall soon be five feet. I am taller than you. But then my father is a Guard, one of the tallest. What is your father?'

'Which question shall I answer first?' said Pippin. 'My father farms the lands round Whitwell near Tuckborough in the Shire. I am nearly twenty-nine, so I pass you there; though I am but four feet, and not likely to grow any more, save sideways.'

'Twenty-nine!' said the lad and whistled. 'Why, you are quite old! As old as my uncle Iorlas. Still,' he added hopefully, 'I wager I could stand you on your head or lay you on your back.'

'Maybe you could, if I let you,' said Pippin with a laugh. 'And maybe I could do the same to you: we know some wrestling tricks in my little country. Where, let me tell you, I am considered uncommonly large and strong; and I have never allowed anyone to stand me on my head. So if it came to a trial and nothing else would serve, I might have to kill you. For when you are older, you will learn that folk are not always what they seem; and though you may have taken me for a soft stranger-lad and easy prey, let me warn you: I am not, I am a halfling, hard, bold, and wicked!' Pippin pulled such a grim face that the boy stepped back a pace, but at once he returned with clenched fists and the light of battle in his eye.

'No!' Pippin laughed. 'Don't believe what strangers say of themselves either! I am not a fighter. But it would be politer in any case for the challenger to say who he is.'

The boy drew himself up proudly. 'I am Bergil son of Beregon of the Guards,' he said.

'So I thought,' said Pippin, 'for you look like your father. I know him and he sent me to find you.'

'Then why did you not say so at once?' said Bergil, and suddenly a look of dismay came over his face. 'Do not tell me that he has changed his mind, and will send me away with the maidens! But no, the last wains have gone.'

'His message is less bad than that, if not good,' said Pippin. 'He says that if you would prefer it to standing me on my head, you might show me round the City for a while and cheer my loneliness. I can tell you some tales of far countries in return.'

Bergil clapped his hands, and laughed with relief. 'All is well,' he cried. 'Come then! We were soon going to the Gate to look on. We will go now.'

'What is happening there?'

'The Captains of the Outlands are expected up the South Road ere sundown. Come with us and you will see.'

Bergil proved a good comrade, the best company Pippin had had since he parted from Merry, and soon they were laughing and talking gaily as they went about the streets, heedless of the many glances that men gave them. Before long they found themselves in a throng going towards the Great Gate. There Pippin went up much in the esteem of Bergil, for when he spoke his name and the pass-word the guard saluted him and let him pass through; and what was more, he allowed him to take his companion with him.

‘That is good!’ said Bergil. ‘We boys are no longer allowed to pass the Gate without an elder. Now we shall see better.’

Beyond the Gate there was a crowd of men along the verge of the road and of the great paved space into which all the ways to Minas Tirith ran. All eyes were turned southwards, and soon a murmur rose: ‘There is dust away there! They are coming!’

Pippin and Bergil edged their way forward to the front of the crowd, and waited. Horns sounded at some distance, and the noise of cheering rolled towards them like a gathering wind. Then there was a loud trumpet-blast, and all about them people were shouting.

‘Forlong! Forlong!’ Pippin heard men calling. ‘What do they say?’ he asked.

‘Forlong has come,’ Bergil answered; ‘old Forlong the Fat, the Lord of Lossarnach. That is where my grandsire lives. Hurrah! Here he is. Good old Forlong!’

Leading the line there came walking a big thick-limbed horse, and on it sat a man of wide shoulders and huge girth, but old and grey-bearded, yet mail-clad and black-helmed and bearing a long heavy spear. Behind him marched proudly a dusty line of men, well-armed and bearing great battle-axes; grim-faced they were, and shorter and somewhat swarthier than any men that Pippin had yet seen in Gondor.

‘Forlong!’ men shouted. ‘True heart, true friend! Forlong!’ But when the men of Lossarnach had passed they muttered: ‘So few! Two hundreds, what are they? We hoped for ten times the number. That will be the new tidings of the black fleet. They are sparing only a tithe of their strength. Still every little is a gain.’

And so the companies came and were hailed and cheered and passed through the Gate, men of the Outlands marching to defend the City of Gondor in a dark hour; but always too few, always less than hope looked for or need asked. The men of Ringló Vale behind the son of their lord, Dervorin striding on foot: three hundreds. From the uplands of Morthond, the great Blackroot Vale, tall Duinhir with his sons, Duilin and Derufin, and five hundred bowmen. From the Anfalas, the Langstrand far away, a long line of men of many sorts, hunters and herdsmen and men of little villages, scantily equipped save for the household of Golasgil their lord. From Lamedon, a few grim hillmen without a captain. Fisher-folk of the Ethir, some hundred or more spared from the ships. Hirluin the Fair of the Green Hills from Pinnath Gelin with three hundreds of gallant green-clad men. And last and proudest, Imrahil, Prince of Dol Amroth, kinsman of the Lord, with gilded banners bearing his token of the Ship and the Silver Swan, and a company of knights in full harness riding grey horses; and behind them seven hundreds of men at arms, tall as lords, grey-eyed, dark-haired, singing as they came.

And that was all, less than three thousands full told. No more would come. Their cries and the tramp of their feet passed into the City and died away. The onlookers stood silent for a while. Dust hung in the air, for the wind had died and the evening was heavy. Already the closing hour was drawing nigh, and the red sun had gone behind Mindolluin. Shadow came down on the City.

Pippin looked up, and it seemed to him that the sky had grown ashen-grey, as if a vast dust and smoke hung above them, and light came dully through it. But in the West the dying sun had set all the fume on fire, and now Mindolluin stood black against a burning smoulder flecked with embers. ‘So ends a fair day in wrath!’ he said, forgetful of the lad at his side.

‘So it will, if I have not returned before the sundown-bells,’ said Bergil. ‘Come! There goes the trumpet for the closing of the Gate.’

Hand in hand they went back into the City, the last to pass the Gate before it was shut; and as they reached the Lampwrights’ Street all the bells in the towers tolled solemnly. Lights sprang in many windows, and from the houses and wards of the men at arms along the walls there came the sound of song.

‘Farewell for this time,’ said Bergil. ‘Take my greetings to my father, and thank him for the company that he sent. Come again soon, I beg. Almost I wish now that there was no war, for we might have had some merry times. We might have journeyed to Lossarnach, to my grandsire’s house; it is good to be there in spring, the woods and fields are full of flowers. But maybe we will go thither together yet. They will never overcome our Lord, and my father is very valiant. Farewell and return!’



They parted and Pippin hurried back towards the citadel. It seemed a long way, and he grew hot and very hungry; and night closed down swift and dark. Not a star pricked the sky. He was late for the daymeal in the mess, and Beregond greeted him gladly, and sat him at his side to hear news of his son. After the meal Pippin stayed a while, and then took his leave, for a strange gloom was on him, and now he desired very much to see Gandalf again.

‘Can you find your way?’ said Beregond at the door of the small hall, on the north side of the citadel, where they had sat. ‘It is a black night, and all the blacker since orders came that lights are to be dimmed within the City, and none are to shine out from the walls. And I can give you news of another order: you will be summoned to the Lord Denethor early tomorrow. I fear you will not be for the Third Company. Still we may hope to meet again. Farewell and sleep in peace!’

The lodging was dark, save for a little lantern set on the table. Gandalf was not there. Gloom settled still more heavily on Pippin. He climbed on the bench and tried to peer out of a window, but it was like looking into a pool of ink. He got down and closed the shutter and went to bed. For a while he lay and listened for sounds of Gandalf’s return, and then he fell into an uneasy sleep.

In the night he was wakened by a light, and he saw that Gandalf had come and was pacing to and fro in the room beyond the curtain of the alcove. There were candles on the table and rolls of parchment. He heard the wizard sigh, and mutter: ‘When will Faramir return?’

‘Hullo!’ said Pippin, poking his head round the curtain. ‘I thought you had forgotten all about me. I am glad to see you back. It has been a long day.’

‘But the night will be too short,’ said Gandalf. ‘I have come back here, for I must have a little peace, alone. You should sleep, in a bed while you still may. At the sunrise I shall take you to the Lord Denethor again. No, when the summons comes, not at sunrise. The Darkness has begun. There will be no dawn.’



## Chapter 2: The Passing Of The Grey Company

Gandalf was gone, and the thudding hoofs of Shadowfax were lost in the night, when Merry came back to Aragorn. He had only a light bundle, for he had lost his pack at Parth Galen, and all he had was a few useful things he had picked up among the wreckage of Isengard. Hasufel was already saddled. Legolas and Gimli with their horse stood close by.

‘So four of the Company still remain,’ said Aragorn. ‘We will ride on together. But we shall not go alone, as I thought. The king is now determined to set out at once. Since the coming of the winged shadow, he desires to return to the hills under cover of night.’

‘And then whither?’ said Legolas.

‘I cannot say yet,’ Aragorn answered. ‘As for the king, he will go to the muster that he commanded at Edoras, four nights from now. And there, I think, he will hear tidings of war, and the Riders of Rohan will go down to Minas Tirith. But for myself, and any that will go with me . . . .’

‘I for one!’ cried Legolas. ‘And Gimli with him!’ said the Dwarf.

‘Well, for myself,’ said Aragorn, ‘it is dark before me. I must go down also to Minas Tirith, but I do not yet see the road. An hour long prepared approaches.’

‘Don’t leave me behind!’ said Merry. ‘I have not been of much use yet; but I don’t want to be laid aside, like baggage to be called for when all is over. I don’t think the Riders will want to be bothered with me now. Though, of course, the king did say that I was to sit by him when he came to his house and tell him all about the Shire.’

‘Yes,’ said Aragorn, ‘and your road lies with him, I think, Merry. But do not look for mirth at the ending. It will be long, I fear, ere Théoden sits at ease again in Meduseld. Many hopes will wither in this bitter Spring.’

Soon all were ready to depart: twenty-four horses, with Gimli behind Legolas, and Merry in front of Aragorn. Presently they were riding swiftly through the night. They had not long passed the mounds at the Fords of Isen, when a Rider galloped up from the rear of their line.

‘My lord,’ he said to the king, ‘there are horsemen behind us. As we crossed the fords I thought that I heard them. Now we are sure. They are overtaking us, riding hard.’

Théoden at once called a halt. The Riders turned about and seized their spears. Aragorn dismounted and set Merry on the ground, and drawing his sword he stood by the king’s stirrup. Éomer and his esquire rode back to the rear. Merry felt more like unneeded baggage than ever, and he wondered, if there was a fight, what he should do. Supposing the king’s small escort was trapped and overcome, but he escaped into the darkness—alone in the wild fields of Rohan with no idea of where he was in all the endless miles? ‘No good!’ he thought. He drew his sword and tightened his belt.

The sinking moon was obscured by a great sailing cloud, but suddenly it rode out clear again. Then they all heard the sound of hoofs, and at the same moment they saw dark shapes coming swiftly on the path from the fords. The moonlight glinted here and there on the points of spears. The number of the pursuers could not be told, but they seemed no fewer than the king’s escort, at the least.

When they were some fifty paces off, Éomer cried in a loud voice: ‘Halt! Halt! Who rides in Rohan?’

The pursuers brought their steeds to a sudden stand. A silence followed; and then in the moonlight, a horseman could be seen dismounting and walking slowly forward. His hand showed white as he held it up, palm outward,

in token of peace; but the king's men gripped their weapons. At ten paces the man stopped. He was tall, a dark standing shadow. Then his clear voice rang out.

'Rohan? Rohan did you say? That is a glad word. We seek that land in haste from long afar.'

'You have found it,' said Éomer. 'When you crossed the fords yonder you entered it. But it is the realm of Théoden the King. None ride here save by his leave. Who are you? And what is your haste?'

'Halbarad Dúnadan, Ranger of the North I am,' cried the man. 'We seek one Aragorn son of Arathorn, and we heard that he was in Rohan.'

'And you have found him also!' cried Aragorn. Giving his reins to Merry, he ran forward and embraced the newcomer. 'Halbarad!' he said. 'Of all joys this is the least expected!'

Merry breathed a sigh of relief. He had thought that this was some last trick of Saruman's, to waylay the king while he had only a few men about him; but it seemed that there would be no need to die in Théoden's defence, not yet at any rate. He sheathed his sword.

'All is well,' said Aragorn, turning back. 'Here are some of my own kin from the far land where I dwelt. But why they come, and how many they be, Halbarad shall tell us.'

'I have thirty with me,' said Halbarad. 'That is all of our kindred that could be gathered in haste; but the brethren Elladan and Elrohir have ridden with us, desiring to go to the war. We rode as swiftly as we might when your summons came.'

'But I did not summon you,' said Aragorn, 'save only in wish. My thoughts have often turned to you, and seldom more than tonight; yet I have sent no word. But come! All such matters must wait. You find us riding in haste and danger. Ride with us now, if the king will give his leave.'

Théoden was indeed glad of the news. 'It is well!' he said. 'If these kinsmen be in any way like to yourself, my lord Aragorn, thirty such knights will be a strength that cannot be counted by heads.'

Then the Riders set out again, and Aragorn for a while rode with the Dúnedain; and when they had spoken of tidings in the North and in the South, Elrohir said to him:

'I bring word to you from my father: *The days are short. If thou art in haste, remember the Paths of the Dead.*'

'Always my days have seemed to me too short to achieve my desire,' answered Aragorn. 'But great indeed will be my haste ere I take that road.'

'That will soon be seen,' said Elrohir. 'But let us speak no more of these things upon the open road!'

And Aragorn said to Halbarad: 'What is that that you bear, kinsman?' For he saw that instead of a spear he bore a tall staff, as it were a standard, but it was close-furled in a black cloth bound about with many thongs.

'It is a gift that I bring you from the Lady of Rivendell,' answered Halbarad. 'She wrought it in secret, and long was the making. But she also sends word to you: *The days now are short. Either our hope cometh, or all hope's end. Therefore I send thee what I have made for thee. Fare well, Elfstone!*'

And Aragorn said: 'Now I know what you bear. Bear it still for me a while!' And he turned and looked away to the North under the great stars, and then he fell silent and spoke no more while the night's journey lasted.

The night was old and the East grey when they rode up at last from Deeping-coomb and came back to the Hornburg. There they were to lie and rest for a brief while and take counsel.

Merry slept until he was roused by Legolas and Gimli. 'The Sun is high,' said Legolas. 'All others are up and doing. Come, Master Sluggard, and look at this place while you may!'

'There was a battle here three nights ago,' said Gimli, 'and here Legolas and I played a game that I won only by a single orc. Come and see how it was! And there are caves, Merry, caves of wonder! Shall we visit them, Legolas, do you think?'

‘Nay! There is no time,’ said the Elf. ‘Do not spoil the wonder with haste! I have given you my word to return hither with you, if a day of peace and freedom comes again. But it is now near to noon, and at that hour we eat, and then set out again, I hear.’

Merry got up and yawned. His few hours’ sleep had not been nearly enough; he was tired and rather dismal. He missed Pippin, and felt that he was only a burden, while everybody was making plans for speed in a business that he did not fully understand. ‘Where is Aragorn?’ he asked.

‘In a high chamber of the Burg,’ said Legolas. ‘He has neither rested nor slept, I think. He went thither some hours ago, saying that he must take thought, and only his kinsman, Halbarad, went with him; but some dark doubt or care sits on him.’

‘They are a strange company, these newcomers,’ said Gimli. ‘Stout men and lordly they are, and the Riders of Rohan look almost as boys beside them; for they are grim men of face, worn like weathered rocks for the most part, even as Aragorn himself; and they are silent.’

‘But even as Aragorn they are courteous, if they break their silence,’ said Legolas. ‘And have you marked the brethren Elladan and Elrohir? Less sombre is their gear than the others’, and they are fair and gallant as Elven-lords; and that is not to be wondered at in the sons of Elrond of Rivendell.’

‘Why have they come? Have you heard?’ asked Merry. He had now dressed, and he flung his grey cloak about his shoulders; and the three passed out together towards the ruined gate of the Burg.

‘They answered a summons, as you heard,’ said Gimli. ‘Word came to Rivendell, they say: *Aragorn has need of his kindred. Let the Dúnedain ride to him in Rohan!* But whence this message came they are now in doubt. Gandalf sent it, I would guess.’

‘Nay, Galadriel,’ said Legolas. ‘Did she not speak through Gandalf of the ride of the Grey Company from the North?’

‘Yes, you have it,’ said Gimli. ‘The Lady of the Wood! She read many hearts and desires. Now why did not we wish for some of our own kinsfolk, Legolas?’

Legolas stood before the gate and turned his bright eyes away north and east, and his fair face was troubled. ‘I do not think that any would come,’ he answered. ‘They have no need to ride to war; war already marches on their own lands.’

For a while the three companions walked together, speaking of this and that turn of the battle, and they went down from the broken gate, and passed the mounds of the fallen on the greensward beside the road, until they stood on Helm’s Dike and looked into the Coomb. The Death Down already stood there, black and tall and stony, and the great trampling and scoring of the grass by the Huorns could be plainly seen. The Dunlendings and many men of the garrison of the Burg were at work on the Dike or in the fields and about the battered walls behind; yet all seemed strangely quiet: a weary valley resting after a great storm. Soon they turned back and went to the midday meal in the hall of the Burg.

The king was already there, and as soon as they entered he called for Merry and had a seat set for him at his side. ‘It is not as I would have it,’ said Théoden; ‘for this is little like my fair house in Edoras. And your friend is gone, who should also be here. But it may be long ere we sit, you and I, at the high table in Meduseld; there will be no time for feasting when I return thither. But come now! Eat and drink, and let us speak together while we may. And then you shall ride with me.’

‘May I?’ said Merry, surprised and delighted. ‘That would be splendid!’ He had never felt more grateful for any kindness in words. ‘I am afraid I am only in everybody’s way,’ he stammered; ‘but I should like to do anything I could, you know.’

‘I doubt it not,’ said the king. ‘I have had a good hill-pony made ready for you. He will bear you as swift as any horse by the roads that we shall take. For I will ride from the Burg by mountain paths, not by the plain, and so come to Edoras by way of Dunharrow where the Lady Éowyn awaits me. You shall be my esquire, if you will. Is there gear of war in this place, Éomer, that my swordthain could use?’

‘There are no great weapon-hoards here, lord,’ answered Éomer. ‘Maybe a light helm might be found to fit him; but we have no mail or sword for one of his stature.’

‘I have a sword,’ said Merry, climbing from his seat, and drawing from its black sheath his small bright blade. Filled suddenly with love for this old man, he knelt on one knee, and took his hand and kissed it. ‘May I lay the sword of Meriadoc of the Shire on your lap, Théoden King?’ he cried. ‘Receive my service, if you will!’

‘Gladly will I take it,’ said the king; and laying his long old hands upon the brown hair of the hobbit, he blessed him. ‘Rise now, Meriadoc, esquire of Rohan of the household of Meduseld!’ he said. ‘Take your sword and bear it unto good fortune!’

‘As a father you shall be to me,’ said Merry.

‘For a little while,’ said Théoden.

They talked then together as they ate, until presently Éomer spoke. ‘It is near the hour that we set for our going, lord,’ he said. ‘Shall I bid men sound the horns? But where is Aragorn? His place is empty and he has not eaten.’

‘We will make ready to ride,’ said Théoden; ‘but let word be sent to the Lord Aragorn that the hour is nigh.’

The king with his guard and Merry at his side passed down from the gate of the Burg to where the Riders were assembling on the green. Many were already mounted. It would be a great company; for the king was leaving only a small garrison in the Burg, and all who could be spared were riding to the weapontake at Edoras. A thousand spears had indeed already ridden away at night; but still there would be some five hundred more to go with the king, for the most part men from the fields and dales of Westfold.

A little apart the Rangers sat, silent, in an ordered company, armed with spear and bow and sword. They were clad in cloaks of dark grey, and their hoods were cast now over helm and head. Their horses were strong and of proud bearing, but rough-haired; and one stood there without a rider, Aragorn’s own horse that they had brought from the North; Roheryn was his name. There was no gleam of stone or gold, nor any fair thing in all their gear and harness; nor did their riders bear any badge or token, save only that each cloak was pinned upon the left shoulder by a brooch of silver shaped like a rayed star.<sup>382</sup>

The king mounted his horse, Snowmane, and Merry sat beside him on his pony: Stybba was his name. Presently Éomer came out from the gate, and with him was Aragorn, and Halbarad bearing the great staff close-furled in black, and two tall men, neither young nor old. So much alike were they, the sons of Elrond, that few could tell them apart: dark-haired, grey-eyed, and their faces elven-fair, clad alike in bright mail beneath cloaks of silver-grey. Behind them walked Legolas and Gimli. But Merry had eyes only for Aragorn, so startling was the change that he saw in him, as if in one night many years had fallen on his head. Grim was his face, grey-hued and weary.

‘I am troubled in mind, lord,’ he said, standing by the king’s horse. ‘I have heard strange words, and I see new perils far off. I have laboured long in thought, and now I fear that I must change my purpose. Tell me, Théoden, you ride now to Dunharrow, how long will it be ere you come there?’

‘It is now a full hour past noon,’ said Éomer. ‘Before the night of the third day from now we should come to the Hold. The Moon will then be two nights past his full, and the muster that the king commanded will be held the day after. More speed we cannot make, if the strength of Rohan is to be gathered.’

Aragorn was silent for a moment. ‘Three days,’ he murmured, ‘and the muster of Rohan will only be begun. But I see that it cannot now be hastened.’ He looked up, and it seemed that he had made some decision; his face was less troubled. ‘Then, by your leave, lord, I must take new counsel for myself and my kindred. We must ride our own road, and no longer in secret. For me the time of stealth has passed. I will ride east by the swiftest way, and I will take the Paths of the Dead.’

‘The Paths of the Dead!’ said Théoden, and trembled. ‘Why do you speak of them?’ Éomer turned and gazed at Aragorn, and it seemed to Merry that the faces of the Riders that sat within hearing turned pale at the words. ‘If there be in truth such paths,’ said Théoden, ‘their gate is in Dunharrow; but no living man may pass it.’

‘Alas! Aragorn my friend!’ said Éomer. ‘I had hoped that we should ride to war together; but if you seek the Paths of the Dead, then our parting is come, and it is little likely that we shall ever meet again under the Sun.’

‘That road I will take, nonetheless,’ said Aragorn. ‘But I say to you, Éomer, that in battle we may yet meet again, though all the hosts of Mordor should stand between.’

‘You will do as you will, my lord Aragorn,’ said Théoden. ‘It is your doom, maybe, to tread strange paths that others dare not. This parting grieves me, and my strength is lessened by it; but now I must take the mountain-roads and delay no longer. Farewell!’

‘Farewell, lord!’ said Aragorn. ‘Ride unto great renown! Farewell, Merry! I leave you in good hands, better than we hoped when we hunted the orcs to Fangorn. Legolas and Gimli will still hunt with me, I hope; but we shall not forget you.’

‘Good-bye!’ said Merry. He could find no more to say. He felt very small, and he was puzzled and depressed by all these gloomy words. More than ever he missed the unquenchable cheerfulness of Pippin. The Riders were ready, and their horses were fidgeting; he wished they would start and get it over.

Now Théoden spoke to Éomer, and he lifted up his hand and cried aloud, and with that word the Riders set forth. They rode over the Dike and down the Coomb, and then, turning swiftly eastwards, they took a path that skirted the foothills for a mile or so, until bending south it passed back among the hills and disappeared from view. Aragorn rode to the Dike and watched till the king’s men were far down the Coomb. Then he turned to Halbarad.

‘There go three that I love, and the smallest not the least,’ he said. ‘He knows not to what end he rides; yet if he knew, he still would go on.’

‘A little people, but of great worth are the Shire-folk,’ said Halbarad. ‘Little do they know of our long labour for the safekeeping of their borders, and yet I grudge it not.’

‘And now our fates are woven together,’ said Aragorn. ‘And yet, alas! here we must part. Well, I must eat a little, and then we also must hasten away. Come, Legolas and Gimli! I must speak with you as I eat.’

Together they went back into the Burg; yet for some time Aragorn sat silent at the table in the hall, and the others waited for him to speak. ‘Come!’ said Legolas at last. ‘Speak and be comforted, and shake off the shadow! What has happened since we came back to this grim place in the grey morning?’

‘A struggle somewhat grimmer for my part than the battle of the Hornburg,’ answered Aragorn. ‘I have looked in the Stone of Orthanc, my friends.’

‘You have looked in that accursed stone of wizardry!’ exclaimed Gimli with fear and astonishment in his face. ‘Did you say aught to—him? Even Gandalf feared that encounter.’

‘You forget to whom you speak,’ said Aragorn sternly, and his eyes glinted. ‘What do you fear that I should say to him? Did I not openly proclaim my title before the doors of Edoras? Nay, Gimli,’ he said in a softer voice, and the grimness left his face, and he looked like one who has laboured in sleepless pain for many nights. ‘Nay, my friends, I am the lawful master of the Stone, and I had both the right and the strength to use it, or so I judged. The right cannot be doubted. The strength was enough—barely.’

He drew a deep breath. ‘It was a bitter struggle, and the weariness is slow to pass. I spoke no word to him, and in the end I wrenched the Stone to my own will. That alone he will find hard to endure. And he beheld me. Yes, Master Gimli, he saw me, but in other guise than you see me here. If that will aid him, then I have done ill. But I do not think so. To know that I lived and walked the earth was a blow to his heart, I deem; for he knew it not till now. The eyes in Orthanc did not see through the armour of Théoden; but Sauron has not forgotten Isildur and the sword of Elendil. Now in the very hour of his great designs the heir of Isildur and the Sword are revealed; for I showed the blade re-forged to him. He is not so mighty yet that he is above fear; nay, doubt ever gnaws him.’

‘But he wields great dominion, nonetheless,’ said Gimli; ‘and now he will strike more swiftly.’

‘The hasty stroke goes oft astray,’ said Aragorn. ‘We must press our Enemy, and no longer wait upon him for the move. See my friends, when I had mastered the Stone, I learned many things. A grave peril I saw coming unlooked-for upon Gondor from the South that will draw off great strength from the defence of Minas Tirith. If it is not countered swiftly, I deem that the City will be lost ere ten days be gone.’

‘Then lost it must be,’ said Gimli. ‘For what help is there to send thither, and how could it come there in time?’

‘I have no help to send, therefore I must go myself,’ said Aragorn. ‘But there is only one way through the mountains that will bring me to the coastlands before all is lost. That is the Paths of the Dead.’

‘The Paths of the Dead!’ said Gimli. ‘It is a fell name; and little to the liking to the Men of Rohan, as I saw. Can the living use such a road and not perish? And even if you pass that way, what will so few avail to counter the strokes of Mordor?’

‘The living have never used that road since the coming of the Rohirrim,’ said Aragorn, ‘for it is closed to them. But in this dark hour the heir of Isildur may use it, if he dare. Listen! This is the word that the sons of Elrond bring to me from their father in Rivendell, wisest in lore: *Bid Aragorn remember the words of the seer, and the Paths of the Dead.*’

‘And what may be the words of the seer?’ said Legolas.

‘Thus spoke Malbeth the Seer, in the days of Arvedui, last king at Fornost,’ said Aragorn:

*Over the land there lies a long shadow,  
westward reaching wings of darkness.  
The Tower trembles; to the tombs of kings  
doom approaches. The Dead awaken;  
for the hour is come for the oathbreakers:  
at the Stone of Erech they shall stand again  
and hear there a horn in the hills ringing.  
Whose shall the horn be? Who shall call them  
from the grey twilight, the forgotten people?  
The heir of him to whom the oath they swore.  
From the North shall he come, need shall drive him:  
he shall pass the Door to the Paths of the Dead.*

‘Dark ways, doubtless,’ said Gimli, ‘but no darker than these staves are to me.’

‘If you would understand them better, then I bid you come with me,’ said Aragorn; ‘for that way I now shall take. But I do not go gladly; only need drives me. Therefore, only of your free will would I have you come, for you will find both toil and great fear, and maybe worse.’

‘I will go with you even on the Paths of the Dead, and to whatever end they may lead,’ said Gimli.

‘I also will come,’ said Legolas, ‘for I do not fear the Dead.’

‘I hope that the forgotten people will not have forgotten how to fight,’ said Gimli; ‘for otherwise I see not why we should trouble them.’

‘That we shall know if ever we come to Erech,’ said Aragorn. ‘But the oath that they broke was to fight against Sauron, and they must fight therefore, if they are to fulfil it. For at Erech there stands yet a black stone that was brought, it was said, from Númenor by Isildur; and it was set upon a hill, and upon it the King of the Mountains swore allegiance to him in the beginning of the realm of Gondor. But when Sauron returned and grew in might again, Isildur summoned the Men of the Mountains to fulfil their oath, and they would not: for they had worshipped Sauron in the Dark Years.

‘Then Isildur said to their king: “Thou shalt be the last king. And if the West prove mightier than thy Black Master, this curse I lay upon thee and thy folk: to rest never until your oath is fulfilled. For this war will last through years uncounted, and you shall be summoned once again ere the end.” And they fled before the wrath

of Isildur, and did not dare to go forth to war on Sauron's part; and they hid themselves in secret places in the mountains and had no dealings with other men, but slowly dwindled in the barren hills. And the terror of the Sleepless Dead lies about the Hill of Erech and all places where that people lingered. But that way I must go, since there are none living to help me.'

He stood up. 'Come!' he cried, and drew his sword, and it flashed in the twilit hall of the Burg. 'To the Stone of Erech! I seek the Paths of the Dead. Come with me who will!'

Legolas and Gimli made no answer, but they rose and followed Aragorn from the hall. On the green there waited, still and silent, the hooded Rangers. Legolas and Gimli mounted. Aragorn sprang upon Roheryn. Then Halbarad lifted a great horn, and the blast of it echoed in Helm's Deep: and with that they leapt away, riding down the Coomb like thunder, while all the men that were left on Dike or Burg stared in amaze.

And while Théoden went by slow paths in the hills, the Grey Company passed swiftly over the plain, and on the next day in the afternoon they came to Edoras; and there they halted only briefly, ere they passed up the valley, and so came to Dunharrow as darkness fell.

The Lady Éowyn greeted them and was glad of their coming; for no mightier men had she seen than the Dúnedain and the fair sons of Elrond; but on Aragorn most of all her eyes rested. And when they sat at supper with her, they talked together, and she heard of all that had passed since Théoden rode away, concerning which only hasty tidings had yet reached her; and when she heard of the battle in Helm's Deep and the great slaughter of their foes, and of the charge of Théoden and his knights, then her eyes shone.

But at last she said: 'Lords, you are weary and shall now go to your beds with such ease as can be contrived in haste. But tomorrow fairer housing shall be found for you.'

But Aragorn said: 'Nay, lady, be not troubled for us! If we may lie here tonight and break our fast tomorrow, it will be enough. For I ride on an errand most urgent, and with the first light of morning we must go.'

She smiled on him and said: 'Then it was kindly done, lord, to ride so many miles out of your way to bring tidings to Éowyn, and to speak with her in her exile.'

'Indeed no man would count such a journey wasted,' said Aragorn; 'and yet, lady, I could not have come hither, if it were not that the road which I must take leads me to Dunharrow.'

And she answered as one that likes not what is said: 'Then, lord, you are astray; for out of Harrowdale no road runs east or south; and you had best return as you came.'

'Nay, lady,' said he, 'I am not astray; for I walked in this land ere you were born to grace it. There is a road out of this valley, and that road I shall take. Tomorrow I shall ride by the Paths of the Dead.'

Then she stared at him as one that is stricken, and her face blanched, and for long she spoke no more, while all sat silent. 'But, Aragorn,' she said at last, 'is it then your errand to seek death? For that is all that you will find on that road. They do not suffer the living to pass.'

'They may suffer me to pass,' said Aragorn; 'but at the least I will adventure it. No other road will serve.'

'But this is madness,' she said. 'For here are men of renown and prowess, whom you should not take into the shadows, but should lead to war, where men are needed. I beg you to remain and ride with my brother; for then all our hearts will be gladdened, and our hope be the brighter.'

'It is not madness, lady,' he answered; 'for I go on a path appointed. But those who follow me do so of their free will; and if they wish now to remain and ride with the Rohirrim, they may do so. But I shall take the Paths of the Dead, alone, if needs be.'

Then they said no more, and they ate in silence; but her eyes were ever upon Aragorn, and the others saw that she was in great torment of mind. At length they arose, and took their leave of the Lady, and thanked her for her care, and went to their rest.



But as Aragorn came to the booth where he was to lodge with Legolas and Gimli, and his companions had gone in, there came the Lady Éowyn after him and called to him. He turned and saw her as a glimmer in the night, for she was clad in white; but her eyes were on fire.

‘Aragorn,’ she said, ‘why will you go on this deadly road?’

‘Because I must,’ he said. ‘Only so can I see any hope of doing my part in the war against Sauron. I do not choose paths of peril, Éowyn. Were I to go where my heart dwells, far in the North I would now be wandering in the fair valley of Rivendell.’

For a while she was silent, as if pondering what this might mean. Then suddenly she laid her hand on his arm. ‘You are a stern lord and resolute,’ she said; ‘and thus do men win renown.’ She paused. ‘Lord,’ she said, ‘if you must go, then let me ride in your following. For I am weary of skulking in the hills, and wish to face peril and battle.’

‘Your duty is with your people,’ he answered.

‘Too often have I heard of duty,’ she cried. ‘But am I not of the House of Eorl, a shieldmaiden and not a dry-nurse? I have waited on faltering feet long enough. Since they falter no longer, it seems, may I not now spend my life as I will?’

‘Few may do that with honour,’ he answered. ‘But as for you, lady: did you not accept the charge to govern the people until their lord’s return? If you had not been chosen, then some marshal or captain would have been set in the same place, and he could not ride away from his charge, were he weary of it or no.’

‘Shall I always be chosen?’ she said bitterly. ‘Shall I always be left behind when the Riders depart, to mind the house while they win renown, and find food and beds when they return?’

‘A time may come soon,’ said he, ‘when none will return. Then there will be need of valour without renown, for none shall remember the deeds that are done in the last defence of your homes. Yet the deeds will not be less valiant because they are unpraised.’

And she answered: ‘All your words are but to say: you are a woman, and your part is in the house. But when the men have died in battle and honour, you have leave to be burned in the house, for the men will need it no more. But I am of the House of Eorl and not a serving-woman. I can ride and wield blade, and I do not fear either pain or death.’

‘What do you fear, lady?’ he asked.

‘A cage,’ she said. ‘To stay behind bars, until use and old age accept them, and all chance of doing great deeds is gone beyond recall or desire.’

‘And yet you counselled me not to adventure on the road that I had chosen, because it is perilous?’

‘So may one counsel another,’ she said. ‘Yet I do not bid you flee from peril, but to ride to battle where your sword may win renown and victory. I would not see a thing that is high and excellent cast away needlessly.’

‘Nor would I,’ he said. ‘Therefore I say to you, lady: Stay! For you have no errand to the South.’

‘Neither have those others who go with thee. They go only because they would not be parted from thee—because they love thee.’ Then she turned and vanished into the night.

When the light of day was come into the sky but the sun was not yet risen above the high ridges in the East, Aragorn made ready to depart. His company was all mounted, and he was about to leap into the saddle, when the Lady Éowyn came to bid them farewell. She was clad as a Rider and girt with a sword. In her hand she bore a cup, and she set it to her lips and drank a little, wishing them good speed; and then she gave the cup to Aragorn, and he drank, and he said: ‘Farewell, Lady of Rohan! I drink to the fortunes of your House, and of you, and of all your people. Say to your brother: beyond the shadows we may meet again!’

Then it seemed to Gimli and Legolas who were nearby that she wept, and in one so stern and proud that seemed the more grievous. But she said: ‘Aragorn, wilt thou go?’

‘I will,’ he said.

‘Then wilt thou not let me ride with this company, as I have asked?’

‘I will not, lady,’ he said. ‘For that I could not grant without leave of the king and of your brother; and they will not return until tomorrow. But I count now every hour, indeed every minute. Farewell!’

Then she fell on her knees, saying: ‘I beg thee!’

‘Nay, lady,’ he said, and taking her by the hand he raised her. Then he kissed her hand, and sprang into the saddle, and rode away, and did not look back; and only those who knew him well and were near to him saw the pain that he bore.

But Éowyn stood still as a figure carved in stone, her hands clenched at her sides, and she watched them until they passed into the shadows under the black Dwimorberg, the Haunted Mountain, in which was the Door of the Dead. When they were lost to view, she turned, stumbling as one that is blind, and went back to her lodging. But none of her folk saw this parting, for they hid themselves in fear and would not come forth until the day was up, and the reckless strangers were gone.

And some said: ‘They are Elvish wights. Let them go where they belong, into the dark places, and never return. The times are evil enough.’

The light was still grey as they rode, for the sun had not yet climbed over the black ridges of the Haunted Mountain before them. A dread fell on them, even as they passed between the lines of ancient stones and so came to the Dimholt. There under the gloom of black trees that not even Legolas could long endure they found a hollow place opening at the mountain’s root, and right in their path stood a single mighty stone like a finger of doom.

‘My blood runs chill,’ said Gimli, but the others were silent, and his voice fell dead on the dank fir-needles at his feet. The horses would not pass the threatening stone, until the riders dismounted and led them about. And so they came at last deep into the glen; and there stood a sheer wall of rock, and in the wall the Dark Door gaped before them like the mouth of night. Signs and figures were carved above its wide arch too dim to read, and fear flowed from it like a grey vapour.

The Company halted, and there was not a heart among them that did not quail, unless it were the heart of Legolas of the Elves, for whom the ghosts of Men have no terror.

‘This is an evil door,’ said Halbarad, ‘and my death lies beyond it. I will dare to pass it nonetheless; but no horse will enter.’

‘But we must go in, and therefore the horses must go too,’ said Aragorn. ‘For if ever we come through this darkness, many leagues lie beyond, and every hour that is lost there will bring the triumph of Sauron nearer. Follow me!’

Then Aragorn led the way, and such was the strength of his will in that hour that all the Dúnedain and their horses followed him. And indeed the love that the horses of the Rangers bore for their riders was so great that they were willing to face even the terror of the Door, if their masters’ hearts were steady as they walked beside them. But Arod, the horse of Rohan, refused the way, and he stood sweating and trembling in a fear that was grievous to see. Then Legolas laid his hands on his eyes and sang some words that went soft in the gloom, until he suffered himself to be led, and Legolas passed in. And there stood Gimli the Dwarf left all alone.

His knees shook, and he was wroth with himself. ‘Here is a thing unheard of!’ he said. ‘An Elf will go underground and a Dwarf dare not!’ With that he plunged in. But it seemed to him that he dragged his feet like lead over the threshold; and at once a blindness came upon him, even upon Gimli Glóin’s son who had walked unafraid in many deep places of the world.

Aragorn had brought torches from Dunharrow, and now he went ahead bearing one aloft; and Elladan with another went at the rear, and Gimli, stumbling behind, strove to overtake him. He could see nothing but the dim flame of the torches; but if the Company halted, there seemed an endless whisper of voices all about him, a murmur of words in no tongue that he had ever heard before.

Nothing assailed the Company nor withstood their passage, and yet steadily fear grew on the Dwarf as he went on: most of all because he knew now that there could be no turning back; all the paths behind were thronged by an unseen host that followed in the dark.

So time unreckoned passed, until Gimli saw a sight that he was ever afterwards loth to recall. The road was wide, as far as he could judge, but now the Company came suddenly into a great empty space, and there were no longer any walls upon either side. The dread was so heavy on him that he could hardly walk. Away to the left something glittered in the gloom as Aragorn's torch drew near. Then Aragorn halted and went to look what it might be.

'Does he feel no fear?' muttered the Dwarf. 'In any other cave Gimli Glóin's son would have been the first to run to the gleam of gold. But not here! Let it lie!'

Nonetheless he drew near, and saw Aragorn kneeling, while Elladan held aloft both torches. Before him were the bones<sup>393</sup> of a mighty man. He had been clad in mail, and still his harness lay there whole; for the cavern's air was as dry as dust, and his hauberk was gilded. His belt was of gold and garnets, and rich with gold was the helm upon his bony head face downward on the floor. He had fallen near the far wall of the cave, as now could be seen, and before him stood a stony door closed fast: his finger-bones were still clawing at the cracks. A notched and broken sword lay by him, as if he had hewn at the rock in his last despair.

Aragorn did not touch him, but after gazing silently for a while he rose and sighed. 'Hither shall the flowers of *simbelmyne* come never unto world's end,' he murmured. 'Nine mounds and seven there are now green with grass, and through all the long years he has lain at the door that he could not unlock. Whither does it lead? Why would he pass? None shall ever know!'

'For that is not my errand!' he cried, turning back and speaking to the whispering darkness behind. 'Keep your hoards and your secrets hidden in the Accursed Years! Speed only we ask. Let us pass, and then come! I summon you to the Stone of Erech!'

There was no answer, unless it were an utter silence more dreadful than the whispers before; and then a chill blast came in which the torches flickered and went out, and could not be rekindled. Of the time that followed, one hour or many, Gimli remembered little. The others pressed on, but he was ever hindmost, pursued by a groping horror that seemed always just about to seize him; and a rumour came after him like the shadow-sound of many feet. He stumbled on until he was crawling like a beast on the ground and felt that he could endure no more: he must either find an ending and escape or run back in madness to meet the following fear.

Suddenly he heard the tinkle of water, a sound hard and clear as a stone falling into a dream of dark shadow. Light grew, and lo! the Company passed through another gateway, high-arched and broad, and a rill ran out beside them; and beyond, going steeply down, was a road between sheer cliffs, knife-edged against the sky far above. So deep and narrow was that chasm that the sky was dark, and in it small stars glinted. Yet as Gimli after learned it was still two hours ere sunset of the day on which they had set out from Dunharrow; though for all that he could then tell it might have been twilight in some later year, or in some other world.

The Company now mounted again, and Gimli returned to Legolas. They rode in file, and evening came on and a deep blue dusk; and still fear pursued them. Legolas turning to speak to Gimli looked back and the Dwarf saw before his face the glitter in the Elf's bright eyes. Behind them rode Elladan, last of the Company, but not the last of those that took the downward road.

'The Dead are following,' said Legolas. 'I see shapes of Men and of horses, and pale banners like shreds of cloud, and spears like winter-thickets on a misty night. The Dead are following.'

'Yes, the Dead ride behind. They have been summoned,' said Elladan.

The Company came at last out of the ravine, as suddenly as if they had issued from a crack in a wall; and there lay the uplands of a great vale before them, and the stream beside them went down with a cold voice over many falls.

‘Where in Middle-earth are we?’ said Gimli; and Elladan answered: ‘We have descended from the uprising of the Morthond, the long chill river that flows at last to the sea that washes the walls of Dol Amroth. You will not need to ask hereafter how comes its name: Blackroot men call it.’

The Morthond Vale made a great bay that beat up against the sheer southern faces of the mountains. Its steep slopes were grass-grown; but all was grey in that hour, for the sun had gone, and far below lights twinkled in the homes of Men. The vale was rich and many folk dwelt there.

Then without turning Aragorn cried aloud so that all could hear: ‘Friends, forget your weariness! Ride now, ride! We must come to the Stone of Erech ere this day passes, and long still is the way.’ So without looking back they rode the mountain-fields, until they came to a bridge over the growing torrent and found a road that went down into the land.

Lights went out in house and hamlet as they came, and doors were shut, and folk that were afield cried in terror and ran wild like hunted deer. Ever there rose the same cry in the gathering night: ‘The King of the Dead! The King of the Dead is come upon us!’

Bells were ringing far below, and all men fled before the face of Aragorn; but the Grey Company in their haste rode like hunters, until their horses were stumbling with weariness. And thus, just ere midnight, and in a darkness as black as the caverns in the mountains, they came at last to the Hill of Erech.

Long had the terror of the Dead lain upon that hill and upon the empty fields about it. For upon the top stood a black stone, round as a great globe, the height of a man, though its half was buried in the ground. Unearthly it looked, as though it had fallen from the sky, as some believed; but those who remembered still the lore of Westergates told that it had been brought out of the ruin of Númenor and there set by Isildur at his landing. None of the people of the valley dared to approach it, nor would they dwell near; for they said that it was a trysting-place of the Shadow-men and there they would gather in times of fear, thronging round the Stone and whispering.

To that Stone the Company came and halted in the dead of night. Then Elrohir gave to Aragorn a silver horn, and he blew upon it; and it seemed to those that stood near that they heard a sound of answering horns, as if it was an echo in deep caves far away. No other sound they heard, and yet they were aware of a great host gathered all about the hill on which they stood; and a chill wind like the breath of ghosts came down from the mountains. But Aragorn dismounted, and standing by the Stone he cried in a great voice:

‘Oathbreakers, why have ye come?’

And a voice was heard out of the night that answered him, as if from far away:

‘To fulfil our oath and have peace.’

Then Aragorn said: ‘The hour is come at last. Now I go to Pelargir upon Anduin, and ye shall come after me. And when all this land is clean of the servants of Sauron, I will hold the oath fulfilled, and ye shall have peace and depart for ever. For I am Elessar, Isildur’s heir of Gondor.’

And with that he bade Halbarad unfurl the great standard which he had brought; and behold! it was black, and if there was any device upon it, it was hidden in the darkness. Then there was silence, and not a whisper nor a sigh was heard again all the long night. The Company camped beside the Stone, but they slept little, because of the dread of the Shadows that hedged them round.

But when the dawn came, cold and pale, Aragorn rose at once, and he led the Company forth upon the journey of greatest haste and weariness that any among them had known, save he alone, and only his will held them to go on. No other mortal Men could have endured it, none but the Dúnedain of the North, and with them Gimli the Dwarf and Legolas of the Elves.

They passed Tarlang’s Neck and came into Lamedon; and the Shadow Host pressed behind and fear went on before them, until they came to Calembel upon Ciril, and the sun went down like blood behind Pinnath Gelin away in the West behind them. The township and the fords of Ciril they found deserted, for many men had gone away to war, and all that were left fled to the hills at the rumour of the coming of the King of the Dead. But the

next day there came no dawn, and the Grey Company passed on into the darkness of the Storm of Mordor and were lost to mortal sight; but the Dead followed them.



## Chapter 3: The Muster Of Rohan

Now all roads were running together to the East to meet the coming of war and the onset of the Shadow. And even as Pippin stood at the Great Gate of the City and saw the Prince of Dol Amroth ride in with his banners, the King of Rohan came down out of the hills.

Day was waning. In the last rays of the sun the Riders cast long pointed shadows that went on before them. Darkness had already crept beneath the murmuring fir-woods that clothed the steep mountain-sides. The king rode now slowly at the end of the day. Presently the path turned round a huge bare shoulder of rock and plunged into the gloom of soft-sighing trees. Down, down they went in a long winding file. When at last they came to the bottom of the gorge they found that evening had fallen in the deep places. The sun was gone. Twilight lay upon the waterfalls.

All day far below them a leaping stream had run down from the high pass behind, cleaving its narrow way between pine-clad walls; and now through a stony gate it flowed out and passed into a wider vale. The Riders followed it, and suddenly Harrowdale lay before them, loud with the noise of waters in the evening. There the white Snowbourn, joined by the lesser stream, went rushing, fuming on the stones, down to Edoras and the green hills and the plains. Away to the right at the head of the great dale the mighty Starkhorn loomed up above its vast buttresses swathed in cloud; but its jagged peak, clothed in everlasting snow, gleamed far above the world, blue-shadowed upon the East, red-stained by the sunset in the West.

Merry looked out in wonder upon this strange country, of which he had heard many tales upon their long road. It was a skyless world, in which his eye, through dim gulfs of shadowy air, saw only ever-mounting slopes, great walls of stone behind great walls, and frowning precipices wreathed with mist. He sat for a moment half dreaming, listening to the noise of water, the whisper of dark trees, the crack of stone, and the vast waiting silence that brooded behind all sound. He loved mountains, or he had loved the thought of them marching on the edge of stories brought from far away; but now he was borne down by the insupportable weight of Middle-earth. He longed to shut out the immensity in a quiet room by a fire.

He was very tired, for though they had ridden slowly, they had ridden with very little rest. Hour after hour for nearly three weary days he had jogged up and down, over passes, and through long dales, and across many streams. Sometimes where the way was broader he had ridden at the king's side, not noticing that many of the Riders smiled to see the two together: the hobbit on his little shaggy grey pony, and the Lord of Rohan on his great white horse. Then he had talked to Théoden, telling him about his home and the doings of the Shire-folk, or listening in turn to tales of the Mark and its mighty men of old. But most of the time, especially on this last day, Merry had ridden by himself just behind the king, saying nothing, and trying to understand the slow sonorous speech of Rohan that he heard the men behind him using. It was a language in which there seemed to be many words that he knew, though spoken more richly and strongly than in the Shire, yet he could not piece the words together. At times some Rider would lift up his clear voice in stirring song, and Merry felt his heart leap, though he did not know what it was about.

All the same he had been lonely, and never more so than now at the day's end. He wondered where in all this strange world Pippin had got to; and what would become of Aragorn and Legolas and Gimli. Then suddenly like a cold touch on his heart he thought of Frodo and Sam. 'I am forgetting them!' he said to himself reproachfully. 'And yet they are more important than all the rest of us. And I came to help them; but now they must be hundreds of miles away, if they are still alive.' He shivered.

‘Harrowdale at last!’ said Éomer. ‘Our journey is almost at an end.’ They halted. The paths out of the narrow gorge fell steeply. Only a glimpse, as through a tall window, could be seen of the great valley in the gloaming below. A single small light could be seen twinkling by the river.

‘This journey is over, maybe,’ said Théoden, ‘but I have far yet to go. Two nights ago the moon was full, and in the morning I shall ride to Edoras to the gathering of the Mark.’

‘But if you would take my counsel,’ said Éomer in a low voice, ‘you would then return hither, until the war is over, lost or won.’

Théoden smiled. ‘Nay, my son, for so I will call you, speak not the soft words of Wormtongue in my old ears!’ He drew himself up and looked back at the long line of his men fading into the dusk behind. ‘Long years in the space of days it seems since I rode west; but never will I lean on a staff again. If the war is lost, what good will be my hiding in the hills? And if it is won, what grief will it be, even if I fall, spending my last strength? But we will leave this now. Tonight I will lie in the Hold of Dunharrow. One evening of peace at least is left us. Let us ride on!’

In the deepening dusk they came down into the valley. Here the Snowbourn flowed near to the western walls of the dale, and soon the path led them to a ford where the shallow waters murmured loudly on the stones. The ford was guarded. As the king approached many men sprang up out of the shadow of the rocks; and when they saw the king they cried with glad voices: ‘Théoden King! Théoden King! The King of the Mark returns!’

Then one blew a long call on a horn. It echoed in the valley. Other horns answered it, and lights shone out across the river.

And suddenly there rose a great chorus of trumpets from high above, sounding from some hollow place, as it seemed, that gathered their notes into one voice and sent it rolling and beating on the walls of stone.

So the King of the Mark came back victorious out of the West to Dunharrow beneath the feet of the White Mountains. There he found the remaining strength of his people already assembled; for as soon as his coming was known captains rode to meet him at the ford, bearing messages from Gandalf. Dúnhere, chieftain of the folk of Harrowdale, was at their head.

‘At dawn three days ago, lord,’ he said, ‘Shadowfax came like a wind out of the West to Edoras, and Gandalf brought tidings of your victory to gladden our hearts. But he brought also word from you to hasten the gathering of the Riders. And then came the winged Shadow.’

‘The winged Shadow?’ said Théoden. ‘We saw it also, but that was in the dead of night before Gandalf left us.’

‘Maybe, lord,’ said Dúnhere. ‘Yet the same, or another like to it, a flying darkness in the shape of a monstrous bird, passed over Edoras that morning, and all men were shaken with fear. For it stooped upon Meduseld, and as it came low, almost to the gable, there came a cry that stopped our hearts. Then it was that Gandalf counselled us not to assemble in the fields, but to meet you here in the valley under the mountains. And he bade us to kindle no more lights or fires than barest need asked. So it has been done. Gandalf spoke with great authority. We trust that it is as you would wish. Naught has been seen in Harrowdale of these evil things.’

‘It is well,’ said Théoden. ‘I will ride now to the Hold, and there before I go to rest I will meet the marshals and captains. Let them come to me as soon as may be!’

The road now led eastward straight across the valley, which was at that point little more than half a mile in width. Flats and meads of rough grass, grey now in the falling night, lay all about, but in front on the far side of the dale Merry saw a frowning wall, a last outlier of the great roots of the Starkhorn, cloven by the river in ages past.

On all the level spaces there was great concourse of men. Some thronged to the roadside, hailing the king and the riders from the West with glad cries; but stretching away into the distance behind there were ordered rows of tents and booths, and lines of picketed horses, and great store of arms, and piled spears bristling like thickets of new-planted trees. Now all the great assembly was falling into shadow, and yet, though the night-chill blew cold from the heights, no lanterns glowed, no fires were lit. Watchmen heavily cloaked paced to and fro.

Merry wondered how many Riders there were. He could not guess their number in the gathering gloom, but it looked to him like a great army, many thousands strong. While he was peering from side to side the king's party came up under the looming cliff on the eastern side of the valley; and there suddenly the path began to climb, and Merry looked up in amazement. He was on a road the like of which he had never seen before, a great work of men's hands in years beyond the reach of song. Upwards it wound, coiling like a snake, boring its way across the sheer slope of rock. Steep as a stair, it looped backwards and forwards as it climbed. Up it horses could walk, and wains could be slowly hauled; but no enemy could come that way, except out of the air, if it was defended from above. At each turn of the road there were great standing stones that had been carved in the likeness of men, huge and clumsy-limbed, squatting cross-legged with their stumpy arms folded on fat bellies. Some in the wearing of the years had lost all features save the dark holes of their eyes that still stared sadly at the passers-by. The Riders hardly glanced at them. The Púkel-men they called them, and heeded them little: no power or terror was left in them; but Merry gazed at them with wonder and a feeling almost of pity, as they loomed up mournfully in the dusk.

After a while he looked back and found that he had already climbed some hundreds of feet above the valley, but still far below he could dimly see a winding line of Riders crossing the ford and filing along the road towards the camp prepared for them. Only the king and his guard were going up into the Hold.

At last the king's company came to a sharp brink, and the climbing road passed into a cutting between walls of rock, and so went up a short slope and out on to a wide upland. The Firienfeld men called it, a green mountain-field of grass and heath, high above the deep-delved courses of the Snowbourn, laid upon the lap of the great mountains behind: the Starkhorn southwards, and northwards the saw-toothed mass of Írensaga, between which there faced the riders, the grim black wall of the Dwimorberg, the Haunted Mountain rising out of steep slopes of sombre pines. Dividing the upland into two there marched a double line of unshaped standing stones that dwindled into the dusk and vanished in the trees. Those who dared to follow that road came soon to the black Dimholt under Dwimorberg, and the menace of the pillar of stone, and the yawning shadow of the forbidden door.

Such was the dark Dunharrow, the work of long-forgotten men. Their name was lost and no song or legend remembered it. For what purpose they had made this place, as a town or secret temple or a tomb of kings, none in Rohan could say. Here they laboured in the Dark Years, before ever a ship came to the western shores, or Gondor of the Dúnedain was built; and now they had vanished, and only the old Púkel-men were left, still sitting at the turnings of the road.

Merry stared at the lines of marching stones: they were worn and black; some were leaning, some were fallen, some cracked or broken; they looked like rows of old and hungry teeth. He wondered what they could be, and he hoped that the king was not going to follow them into the darkness beyond. Then he saw that there were clusters of tents and booths on either side of the stony way; but these were not set near the trees, and seemed rather to huddle away from them towards the brink of the cliff. The greater number were on the right, where the Firienfeld was wider; and on the left there was a smaller camp, in the midst of which stood a tall pavilion. From this side a rider now came out to meet them, and they turned from the road.

As they drew near Merry saw that the rider was a woman with long braided hair gleaming in the twilight, yet she wore a helm and was clad to the waist like a warrior and girded with a sword.

'Hail, Lord of the Mark!' she cried. 'My heart is glad at your returning.'

'And you, Éowyn,' said Théoden, 'is all well with you?'

'All is well,' she answered; yet it seemed to Merry that her voice belied her, and he would have thought that she had been weeping, if that could be believed of one so stern of face. 'All is well. It was a weary road for the people to take, torn suddenly from their homes. There were hard words, for it is long since war has driven us from the green fields; but there have been no evil deeds. All is now ordered, as you see. And your lodging is prepared for you; for I have had full tidings of you and knew the hour of your coming.'

'So Aragorn has come then,' said Éomer. 'Is he still here?'

'No, he is gone,' said Éowyn turning away and looking at the mountains dark against the East and South.



‘Whither did he go?’ asked Éomer.

‘I do not know,’ she answered. ‘He came at night, and rode away yesternorn, ere the Sun had climbed over the mountain-tops. He is gone.’

‘You are grieved, daughter,’ said Théoden. ‘What has happened? Tell me, did he speak of that road?’ He pointed away along the darkening lines of stones towards the Dwimorberg. ‘Of the Paths of the Dead?’

‘Yes, lord,’ said Éowyn. ‘And he has passed into the shadow from which none have returned. I could not dissuade him. He is gone.’

‘Then our paths are sundered,’ said Éomer. ‘He is lost. We must ride without him, and our hope dwindles.’

Slowly they passed through the short heath and upland grass, speaking no more, until they came to the king’s pavilion. There Merry found that everything was made ready, and that he himself was not forgotten. A little tent had been pitched for him beside the king’s lodging; and there he sat alone, while men passed to and fro, going in to the king and taking counsel with him. Night came on and the half-seen heads of the mountains westward were crowned with stars, but the East was dark and blank. The marching stones faded slowly from sight, but still beyond them, blacker than the gloom, brooded the vast crouching shadow of the Dwimorberg.

‘The Paths of the Dead,’ he muttered to himself. ‘The Paths of the Dead? What does all this mean? They have all left me now. They have all gone to some doom: Gandalf and Pippin to war in the East; and Sam and Frodo to Mordor; and Strider and Legolas and Gimli to the Paths of the Dead. But my turn will come soon enough, I suppose. I wonder what they are all talking about, and what the king means to do. For I must go where he goes now.’

In the midst of these gloomy thoughts he suddenly remembered that he was very hungry, and he got up to go and see if anyone else in this strange camp felt the same. But at that very moment a trumpet sounded, and a man came summoning him, the king’s esquire, to wait at the king’s board.

In the inner part of the pavilion was a small space, curtained off with brodered hangings, and strewn with skins; and there at a small table sat Théoden with Éomer and Éowyn, and Dúnhere, lord of Harrowdale. Merry stood beside the king’s stool and waited on him, till presently the old man, coming out of deep thought, turned to him and smiled.

‘Come, Master Meriadoc!’ he said. ‘You shall not stand. You shall sit beside me, as long as I remain in my own lands, and lighten my heart with tales.’

Room was made for the hobbit at the king’s left hand, but no-one called for any tale. There was indeed little speech, and they ate and drank for the most part in silence, until at last, plucking up courage, Merry asked the question that was tormenting him.

‘Twice now, lord, I have heard of the Paths of the Dead,’ he said. ‘What are they? And where has Strider, I mean the Lord Aragorn, where has he gone?’

The king sighed, but no-one answered, until at last Éomer spoke. ‘We do not know, and our hearts are heavy,’ he said. ‘But as for the Paths of the Dead, you have yourself walked on their first steps. Nay, I speak no words of ill omen! The road that we have climbed is the approach to the Door, yonder in the Dimholt. But what lies beyond no man knows.’

‘No man knows,’ said Théoden: ‘yet ancient legend, now seldom spoken, has somewhat to report. If these old tales speak true that have come down from father to son in the House of Eorl, then the Door under Dwimorberg leads to a secret way that goes beneath the mountain to some forgotten end. But none have ever ventured in to search its secrets, since Baldor,<sup>393</sup> son of Brego, passed the Door and was never seen among men again. A rash vow he spoke, as he drained the horn at that feast which Brego made to hallow new-built Meduseld, and he came never to the high seat of which he was the heir.

‘Folk say that Dead Men out of the Dark Years guard the way and will suffer no living man to come to their hidden halls; but at whiles they may themselves be seen passing out of the door like shadows and down the

stony road. Then the people of Harrowdale shut fast their doors and shroud their windows and are afraid. But the Dead come seldom forth and only at times of great unquiet and coming death.'

'Yet it is said in Harrowdale,' said Éowyn in a low voice, 'that in the moonless nights but little while ago a great host in strange array passed by. Whence they came none knew, but they went up the stony road and vanished into the hill, as if they went to keep a tryst.'

'Then why has Aragorn gone that way?' asked Merry. 'Don't you know anything that would explain it?'

'Unless he has spoken words to you as his friend that we have not heard,' said Éomer, 'none now in the land of the living can tell his purpose.'

'Greatly changed he seemed to me since I saw him first in the king's house,' said Éowyn: 'grimmer, older. Fey I thought him, and like one whom the Dead call.'

'Maybe he was called,' said Théoden; 'and my heart tells me that I shall not see him again. Yet he is a kingly man of high destiny. And take comfort in this, daughter, since comfort you seem to need in your grief for this guest. It is said that when the Eorlingas came out of the North and passed at length up the Snowbourn, seeking strong places of refuge in time of need, Brego and his son Baldor climbed the Stair of the Hold and so came before the Door. On the threshold sat an old man, aged beyond guess of years; tall and kingly he had been, but now he was withered as an old stone. Indeed for stone they took him, for he moved not, and he said no word, until they sought to pass him by and enter. And then a voice came out of him, as it were out of the ground, and to their amaze it spoke in the western tongue: *The way is shut*.

'Then they halted and looked at him and saw that he lived still; but he did not look at them. *The way is shut*, his voice said again. *It was made by those who are Dead, and the Dead keep it, until the time comes. The way is shut*.

'*And when will that time be?*' said Baldor. But no answer did he ever get. For the old man died in that hour and fell upon his face; and no other tidings of the ancient dwellers in the mountains have our folk ever learned. Yet maybe at last the time foretold has come, and Aragorn may pass.'

'But how shall a man discover whether that time be come or no, save by daring the Door?' said Éomer. 'And that way I would not go though all the hosts of Mordor stood before me, and I were alone and had no other refuge. Alas that a fey mood should fall on a man so greathearted in this hour of need! Are there not evil things enough abroad without seeking them under the earth? War is at hand.'

He paused, for at that moment there was a noise outside, a man's voice crying the name of Théoden, and the challenge of the guard.

Presently the captain of the Guard thrust aside the curtain. 'A man is here, lord,' he said, 'an errand-rider of Gondor. He wishes to come before you at once.'

'Let him come!' said Théoden.

A tall man entered, and Merry choked back a cry; for a moment it seemed to him that Boromir was alive again and had returned. Then he saw that it was not so; the man was a stranger, though as like to Boromir as if he were one of his kin, tall and grey-eyed and proud. He was clad as a rider with a cloak of dark green over a coat of fine mail; on the front of his helm was wrought a small silver star. In his hand he bore a single arrow, black-feathered and barbed with steel, but the point was painted red.

He sank on one knee and presented the arrow to Théoden. 'Hail, Lord of the Rohirrim, friend of Gondor!' he said. 'Hirgon I am, errand-rider of Denethor, who bring you this token of war. Gondor is in great need. Often the Rohirrim have aided us, but now the Lord Denethor asks for all your strength and all your speed, lest Gondor fall at last.'

'The Red Arrow!' said Théoden, holding it, as one who receives a summons long expected and yet dreadful when it comes. His hand trembled. 'The Red Arrow has not been seen in the Mark in all my years! Has it indeed come to that? And what does the Lord Denethor reckon that all my strength and all my speed may be?'

‘That is best known to yourself, lord,’ said Hirgon. ‘But ere long it may well come to pass that Minas Tirith is surrounded, and unless you have the strength to break a siege of many powers, the Lord Denethor bids me say that he judges that the strong arms of the Rohirrim would be better within his walls than without.’

‘But he knows that we are a people who fight rather upon horseback and in the open, and that we are also a scattered people and time is needed for the gathering of our Riders. Is it not true, Hirgon, that the Lord of Minas Tirith knows more than he sets in his message? For we are already at war, as you may have seen, and you do not find us all unprepared. Gandalf the Grey has been among us, and even now we are mustering for battle in the East.’

‘What the Lord Denethor may know or guess of all these things I cannot say,’ answered Hirgon. ‘But indeed our case is desperate. My lord does not issue any command to you, he begs you only to remember old friendship and oaths long spoken, and for your own good to do all that you may. It is reported to us that many kings have ridden in from the East to the service of Mordor. From the North to the field of Dagorlad there is skirmish and rumour of war. In the South the Haradrim are moving, and fear has fallen on all our coastlands, so that little help will come to us thence. Make haste! For it is before the walls of Minas Tirith that the doom of our time will be decided, and if the tide be not stemmed there, then it will flow over all the fair fields of Rohan, and even in this Hold among the hills there shall be no refuge.’

‘Dark tidings,’ said Théoden, ‘yet not all unguessed. But say to Denethor that even if Rohan itself felt no peril, still we would come to his aid. But we have suffered much loss in our battles with Saruman the traitor, and we must still think of our frontier to the north and east, as his own tidings make clear. So great a power as the Dark Lord seems now to wield might well contain us in battle before the City and yet strike with great force across the River away beyond the Gate of Kings.’

‘But we will speak no longer counsels of prudence. We will come. The weapontake was set for the morrow. When all is ordered we will set out. Ten thousand spears I might have sent riding over the plain to the dismay of your foes. It will be less now, I fear; for I will not leave my strongholds all unguarded. Yet six thousands at the least shall ride behind me. For say to Denethor that in this hour the King of the Mark himself will come down to the land of Gondor, though maybe he will not ride back. But it is a long road, and man and beast must reach the end with strength to fight. A week it may be from tomorrow’s morn ere you hear the cry of the Sons of Eorl coming from the North.’

‘A week!’ said Hirgon. ‘If it must be so, it must. But you are like to find only ruined walls in seven days from now, unless other help unlooked-for comes. Still, you may at the least disturb the Orcs and Swarthy Men from their feasting in the White Tower.’

‘At the least we will do that,’ said Théoden. ‘But I myself am new-come from battle and long journey, and I will now go to rest. Tarry here this night. Then you shall look on the muster of Rohan and ride away the gladder for the sight, and the swifter for the rest. In the morning counsels are best, and night changes many thoughts.’

With that the king stood up, and they all rose. ‘Go now each to your rest,’ he said, ‘and sleep well. And you, Master Meriadoc, I need no more tonight. But be ready to my call as soon as the Sun is risen.’

‘I will be ready,’ said Merry, ‘even if you bid me ride with you on the Paths of the Dead.’

‘Speak not words of omen!’ said the king. ‘For there may be more roads than one that could bear that name. But I did not say that I would bid you ride with me on any road. Good night!’

‘I won’t be left behind, to be called for on return!’ said Merry. ‘I won’t be left, I won’t.’ And repeating this over and over again to himself he fell asleep at last in his tent.

He was wakened by a man shaking him. ‘Wake up, wake up, Master Holbytla!’ he cried; and at length Merry came out of deep dreams and sat up with a start. It still seemed very dark, he thought.

‘What is the matter?’ he asked.

‘The king calls for you.’

‘But the Sun has not risen, yet,’ said Merry.

‘No, and will not rise today, Master Holbytla. Nor ever again, one would think under this cloud. But time does not stand still, though the Sun be lost. Make haste!’

Flinging on some clothes, Merry looked outside. The world was darkling. The very air seemed brown, and all things about were black and grey and shadowless; there was a great stillness. No shape of cloud could be seen, unless it were far away westward, where the furthest groping fingers of the great gloom still crawled onwards and a little light leaked through them. Overhead there hung a heavy roof, sombre and featureless, and light seemed rather to be failing than growing.

Merry saw many folk standing, looking up and muttering; all their faces were grey and sad, and some were afraid. With a sinking heart he made his way to the king. Hirgon the rider of Gondor was there before him, and beside him stood now another man, like him and dressed alike, but shorter and broader. As Merry entered he was speaking to the king.

‘It comes from Mordor, lord,’ he said. ‘It began last night at sunset. From the hills in the Eastfold of your realm I saw it rise and creep across the sky, and all night as I rode it came behind eating up the stars. Now the great cloud hangs over all the land between here and the Mountains of Shadow; and it is deepening. War has already begun.’

For a while the king sat silent. At last he spoke. ‘So we come to it in the end,’ he said: ‘the great battle of our time, in which many things shall pass away. But at least there is no longer need for hiding. We will ride the straight way and the open road and with all our speed. The muster shall begin at once, and wait for none that tarry. Have you good store in Minas Tirith? For if we must ride now in all haste, then we must ride light, with but meal and water enough to last us into battle.’

‘We have very great store long prepared,’ answered Hirgon. ‘Ride now as light and as swift as you may!’

‘Then call the heralds, Éomer,’ said Théoden. ‘Let the Riders be marshalled!’

Éomer went out, and presently the trumpets rang in the Hold and were answered by many others from below; but their voices no longer sounded clear and brave as they had seemed to Merry the night before. Dull they seemed and harsh in the heavy air, braying ominously.

The king turned to Merry. ‘I am going to war, Master Meriadoc,’ he said. ‘In a little while I shall take the road. I release you from my service, but not from my friendship. You shall abide here, and if you will, you shall serve the Lady Éowyn, who will govern the folk in my stead.’

‘But, but, lord,’ Merry stammered, ‘I offered you my sword. I do not want to be parted from you like this, Théoden King. And as all my friends have gone to the battle, I should be ashamed to stay behind.’

‘But we ride on horses tall and swift,’ said Théoden; ‘and great though your heart be, you cannot ride on such beasts.’

‘Then tie me on to the back of one, or let me hang on a stirrup, or something,’ said Merry. ‘It is a long way to run; but run I shall, if I cannot ride, even if I wear my feet off and arrive weeks too late.’

Théoden smiled. ‘Rather than that I would bear you with me on Snowmane,’ he said. ‘But at the least you shall ride with me to Edoras and look on Meduseld; for that way I shall go. So far Stybba can bear you: the great race will not begin till we reach the plains.’

Then Éowyn rose up. ‘Come now, Meriadoc!’ she said. ‘I will show you the gear that I have prepared for you.’ They went out together. ‘This request only did Aragorn make to me,’ said Éowyn, as they passed among the tents, ‘that you should be armed for battle. I have granted it, as I could. For my heart tells me that you will need such gear ere the end.’

Now she led Merry to a booth among the lodges of the king’s guard; and there an armourer brought out to her a small helm, and a round shield, and other gear.

‘No mail have we to fit you,’ said Éowyn, ‘nor any time for the forging of such a hauberk; but here is also a stout jerkin of leather, a belt, and a knife. A sword you have.’

Merry bowed, and the lady showed him the shield, which was like the shield that had been given to Gimli, and it bore on it the device of the white horse. 'Take all these things,' she said, 'and bear them to good fortune! Farewell now, Master Meriadoc! Yet maybe we shall meet again, you and I.'

So it was that amid a gathering gloom the King of the Mark made ready to lead all his Riders on the eastward road. Hearts were heavy and many quailed in the shadow. But they were a stern people, loyal to their lord, and little weeping or murmuring was heard, even in the camp in the Hold where the exiles from Edoras were housed, women and children and old men. Doom hung over them, but they faced it silently.

Two swift hours passed, and now the king sat upon his white horse, glimmering in the half-light. Proud and tall he seemed, though the hair that flowed beneath his high helm was like snow; and many marvelled at him and took heart to see him unbent and unafraid.

There on the wide flats beside the noisy river were marshalled in many companies well nigh five and fifty hundreds of Riders fully armed, and many hundreds of other men with spare horses lightly burdened. A single trumpet sounded. The king raised his hand, and then silently the host of the Mark began to move. Foremost went twelve of the king's household-men, Riders of renown. Then the king followed with Éomer on his right. He had said farewell to Éowyn above in the Hold, and the memory was grievous; but now he turned his mind to the road that lay ahead. Behind him Merry rode on Stybba with the errand riders of Gondor, and behind them again twelve more of the king's household. They passed down the long ranks of waiting men with stern and unmoved faces. But when they had come almost to the end of the line one looked up glancing keenly at the hobbit. A young man, Merry thought as he returned the glance, less in height and girth than most. He caught the glint of clear grey eyes; and then he shivered, for it came suddenly to him that it was the face of one without hope who goes in search of death.

On down the grey road they went beside the Snowbourn rushing on its stones; through the hamlets of Underharrow and Upbourn, where many sad faces of women looked out from dark doors; and so without horn or harp or music of men's voices the great ride into the East began with which the songs of Rohan were busy for many long lives of men thereafter.

*From dark Dunharrow in the dim morning  
withthane and captain rode Thengel's son:  
to Edoras he came, the ancient halls  
of the Mark-wardens mist-enshrouded;  
golden timbers were in gloom mantled.  
Farewell he bade to his free people,  
hearth and high-seat, and the hallowed places,  
where long he had feasted ere the light faded.  
Forth rode the king, fear behind him,  
fate before him. Fealty kept he;  
oaths he had taken, all fulfilled them.  
Forth rode Théoden. Five nights and days  
east and onward rode the Eorlingas  
through Folde and Fenmarch and the Firienwood,  
six thousand spears to Sunlending,  
Mundburg the mighty under Mindolluin,  
Sea-kings' city in the South-kingdom  
foe-beleaguered, fire-encircled.  
Doom drove them on. Darkness took them,  
horse and horseman; hoofbeats afar  
sank into silence: so the songs tell us.*

It was indeed in deepening gloom that the king came to Edoras, although it was then but noon by the hour. There he halted only a short while and strengthened his host by some three score of Riders that came late to the

weapon-take. Now having eaten he made ready to set out again, and he wished his esquire a kindly farewell. But Merry begged for the last time not to be parted from him.

‘This is no journey for such steeds as Stybba, as I have told you,’ said Théoden. ‘And in such a battle as we think to make on the fields of Gondor what would you do, Master Meriadoc, swordthain though you be, and greater of heart than of stature?’

‘As for that, who can tell?’ answered Merry. ‘But why, lord, did you receive me as swordthain, if not to stay by your side? And I would not have it said of me in song only that I was always left behind!’

‘I received you for your safe-keeping,’ answered Théoden; ‘and also to do as I might bid. None of my Riders can bear you as burden. If the battle were before my gates, maybe your deeds would be remembered by the minstrels; but it is a hundred leagues and two to Mundburg where Denethor is lord. I will say no more.’

Merry bowed and went away unhappily, and stared at the lines of horsemen. Already the companies were preparing to start: men were tightening girths, looking to saddles, caressing their horses; some gazed uneasily at the lowering sky. Unnoticed a Rider came up and spoke softly in the hobbit’s ear.

‘*Where will wants not, a way opens*, so we say,’ he whispered; ‘and so I have found myself.’ Merry looked up and saw that it was the young Rider whom he had noticed in the morning. ‘You wish to go whither the Lord of the Mark goes: I see it in your face.’

‘I do,’ said Merry.

‘Then you shall go with me,’ said the Rider. ‘I will bear you before me, under my cloak until we are far afield, and this darkness is yet darker. Such good will should not be denied. Say no more to any man, but come!’

‘Thank you indeed!’ said Merry. ‘Thank you, sir, though I do not know your name.’

‘Do you not?’ said the Rider softly. ‘Then call me Dernhelm.’

Thus it came to pass that when the king set out, before Dernhelm sat Meriadoc the hobbit, and the great grey steed Windfole made little of the burden; for Dernhelm was less in weight than many men, though lithe and well-knit in frame.

On into the shadow they rode. In the willow-thickets where Snowbourn flowed into Entwash, twelve leagues east of Edoras, they camped that night. And then on again through the Folde; and through the Fenmarch, where to their right great oakwoods climbed on the skirts of the hills under the shades of dark Halifirien by the borders of Gondor; but away to their left the mists lay on the marshes fed by the mouths of Entwash. And as they rode rumour came of war in the North. Lone men, riding wild, brought word of foes assailing their east-borders, of orc-hosts marching in the Wold of Rohan.

‘Ride on! Ride on!’ cried Éomer. ‘Too late now to turn aside. The fens of Entwash must guard our flank. Haste now we need. Ride on!’

And so King Théoden departed from his own realm, and mile by mile the long road wound away, and the beacon hills marched past: Calenhad, Min-Rimmon, Erelas, Nardol. But their fires were quenched. All the lands were grey and still; and ever the shadow deepened before them, and hope waned in every heart.



## Chapter 4: The Siege Of Gondor

Pippin was roused by Gandalf. Candles were lit in their chamber, for only a dim twilight came through the windows; the air was heavy as with approaching thunder.

‘What is the time?’ said Pippin yawning.

‘Past the second hour,’ said Gandalf. ‘Time to get up and make yourself presentable. You are summoned to the Lord of the City to learn your new duties.’

‘And will he provide breakfast?’

‘No! I have provided it: all that you will get till noon. Food is now doled out by order.’

Pippin looked ruefully at the small loaf and (he thought) very inadequate pat of butter which was set out for him, beside a cup of thin milk. ‘Why did you bring me here?’ he said.

‘You know quite well,’ said Gandalf. ‘To keep you out of mischief; and if you do not like being here, you can remember that you brought it on yourself.’ Pippin said no more.

Before long he was walking with Gandalf once more down the cold corridor to the door of the Tower Hall. There Denethor sat in a grey gloom, like an old patient spider, Pippin thought; he did not seem to have moved since the day before. He beckoned Gandalf to a seat, but Pippin was left for a while standing unheeded. Presently the old man turned to him:

‘Well, Master Peregrin, I hope that you used yesterday to your profit, and to your liking? Though I fear that the board is barer in this city than you could wish.’

Pippin had an uncomfortable feeling that most of what he had said or done was somehow known to the Lord of the City, and much was guessed of what he thought as well. He did not answer.

‘What would you do in my service?’

‘I thought, sir, that you would tell me my duties.’

‘I will, when I learn what you are fit for,’ said Denethor. ‘But that I shall learn soonest, maybe, if I keep you beside me. The esquire of my chamber has begged leave to go to the out-garrison, so you shall take his place for a while. You shall wait on me, bear errands, and talk to me, if war and council leave me any leisure. Can you sing?’

‘Yes,’ said Pippin. ‘Well, yes, well enough for my own people. But we have no songs fit for great halls and evil times, lord. We seldom sing of anything more terrible than wind or rain. And most of my songs are about things that make us laugh; or about food and drink, of course.’

‘And why should such songs be unfit for my halls, or for such hours as these? We who have lived long under the Shadow may surely listen to echoes from a land untroubled by it? Then we may feel that our vigil was not fruitless, though it may have been thankless.’

Pippin’s heart sank. He did not relish the idea of singing any song of the Shire to the Lord of Minas Tirith, certainly not the comic ones that he knew best; they were too, well, rustic for such an occasion. He was however spared the ordeal for the present. He was not commanded to sing. Denethor turned to Gandalf, asking questions about the Rohirrim and their policies, and the position of Éomer, the king’s nephew. Pippin marvelled at the amount that the Lord seemed to know about a people that lived far away, though it must, he thought, be many years since Denethor himself had ridden abroad.

Presently Denethor waved to Pippin and dismissed him again for a while. 'Go to the armouries of the Citadel,' he said, 'and get you there the livery and gear of the Tower. It will be ready. It was commanded yesterday. Return when you are clad!'

It was as he said; and Pippin soon found himself arrayed in strange garments, all of black and silver. He had a small hauberk, its rings forged of steel, maybe, yet black as jet; and a high-crowned helm with small raven-wings on either side, set with a silver star in the centre of the circlet. Above the mail was a short surcoat of black, but brodered on the breast in silver with the token of the Tree. His old clothes were folded and put away, but he was permitted to keep the grey cloak of Lórien, though not to wear it when on duty. He looked now, had he known it, verily *Ernil i Pheriannath*, the Prince of the Halflings, that folk had called him; but he felt uncomfortable. And the gloom began to weigh on his spirits.

It was dark and dim all day. From the sunless dawn until evening the heavy shadow had deepened, and all hearts in the City were oppressed. Far above a great cloud streamed slowly westward from the Black Land, devouring light, borne upon a wind of war; but below the air was still and breathless, as if all the Vale of Anduin waited for the onset of a ruinous storm.

About the eleventh hour, released at last for a while from service, Pippin came out and went in search of food and drink to cheer his heavy heart and make his task of waiting more supportable. In the messes he met Beregond again, who had just come from an errand over the Pelennor out to the Guard-towers upon the Causeway. Together they strolled out to the walls; for Pippin felt imprisoned indoors, and stifled even in the lofty citadel. Now they sat side by side again in the embrasure looking eastward, where they had eaten and talked the day before.

It was the sunset-hour, but the great pall had now stretched far into the West, and only as it sank at last into the Sea did the Sun escape to send out a brief farewell gleam before the night, even as Frodo saw it at the Cross-roads touching the head of the fallen king. But to the fields of the Pelennor, under the shadow of Mindolluin, there came no gleam: they were brown and drear.

Already it seemed years to Pippin since he had sat there before, in some half-forgotten time when he had still been a hobbit, a light-hearted wanderer touched little by the perils he had passed through. Now he was one small soldier in a city preparing for a great assault, clad in the proud but sombre manner of the Tower of Guard.

In some other time and place Pippin might have been pleased with his new array, but he knew now that he was taking part in no play; he was in deadly earnest the servant of a grim master in the greatest peril. The hauberk was burdensome, and the helm weighed upon his head. His cloak he had cast aside upon the seat. He turned his tired gaze away from the darkling fields below and yawned, and then he sighed.

'You are weary of this day?' said Beregond.

'Yes,' said Pippin, 'very: tired out with idleness and waiting. I have kicked my heels at the door of my master's chamber for many slow hours, while he has debated with Gandalf and the Prince and other great persons. And I'm not used, Master Beregond, to waiting hungry on others while they eat. It is a sore trial for a hobbit, that. No doubt you will think I should feel the honour more deeply. But what is the good of such honour? Indeed what is the good even of food and drink under this creeping shadow? What does it mean? The very air seems thick and brown! Do you often have such glooms when the wind is in the East?'

'Nay,' said Beregond, 'this is no weather of the world. This is some device of his malice; some broil of fume from the Mountain of Fire that he sends to darken hearts and counsel. And so it doth indeed. I wish the Lord Faramir would return. He would not be dismayed. But now, who knows if he will ever come back across the River out of the Darkness?'

'Yes,' said Pippin, 'Gandalf, too, is anxious. He was disappointed, I think, not to find Faramir here. And where has he got to himself? He left the Lord's council before the noon-meal, and in no good mood either, I thought. Perhaps he has some foreboding of bad news.'

Suddenly as they talked they were stricken dumb, frozen as it were to listening stones. Pippin cowered down with his hands pressed to his ears; but Beregond, who had been looking out from the battlement as he spoke of Faramir, remained there, stiffened, staring out with starting eyes. Pippin knew the shuddering cry that he had



heard: it was the same that he had heard long ago in the Marish of the Shire, but now it was grown in power and hatred, piercing the heart with a poisonous despair.

At last Beregond spoke with an effort. 'They have come!' he said. 'Take courage and look! There are fell things below.'

Reluctantly Pippin climbed on to the seat and looked out over the wall. The Pelennor lay dim beneath him, fading away to the scarce guessed line of the Great River. But now wheeling swiftly across it, like shadows of untimely night, he saw in the middle airs below him five birdlike forms, horrible as carrion-fowl yet greater than eagles, cruel as death. Now they swooped near, venturing almost within bowshot of the walls, now they circled away.

'Black Riders!' muttered Pippin. 'Black Riders of the air! But see, Beregond!' he cried. 'They are looking for something, surely? See how they wheel and swoop, always down to that point over there! And can you see something moving on the ground? Dark little things. Yes, men on horses: four or five. Ah! I cannot stand it! Gandalf! Gandalf save us!'

Another long screech rose and fell, and he threw himself back again from the wall, panting like a hunted animal. Faint and seemingly remote through that shuddering cry he heard winding up from below the sound of a trumpet ending on a long high note.

'Faramir! The Lord Faramir! It is his call!' cried Beregond. 'Brave heart! But how can he win to the Gate, if these foul hell-hawks have other weapons than fear? But look! They hold on. They will make the Gate. No! the horses are running mad. Look! the men are thrown; they are running on foot. No, one is still up, but he rides back to the others. That will be the Captain: he can master both beasts and men. Ah! there one of the foul things is stooping on him. Help! help! Will no-one go out to him? Faramir!'

With that Beregond sprang away and ran off into the gloom. Ashamed of his terror, while Beregond of the Guard thought first of the captain whom he loved, Pippin got up and peered out. At that moment he caught a flash of white and silver coming from the North, like a small star down on the dusky fields. It moved with the speed of an arrow and grew as it came, converging swiftly with the flight of the four men towards the Gate. It seemed to Pippin that a pale light was spread about it and the heavy shadows gave way before it; and then as it drew near he thought that he heard, like an echo in the walls, a great voice calling.

'Gandalf!' he cried. 'Gandalf! He always turns up when things are darkest. Go on! Go on, White Rider! Gandalf, Gandalf!' he shouted wildly, like an onlooker at a great race urging on a runner who is far beyond encouragement.

But now the dark swooping shadows were aware of the newcomer. One wheeled towards him; but it seemed to Pippin that he raised his hand, and from it a shaft of white light stabbed upwards. The Nazgûl gave a long wailing cry and swerved away; and with that the four others wavered, and then rising in swift spirals they passed away eastward vanishing into the lowering cloud above; and down on the Pelennor it seemed for a while less dark.

Pippin watched, and he saw the horseman and the White Rider meet and halt, waiting for those on foot. Men now hurried out to them from the City; and soon they all passed from sight under the outer walls, and he knew that they were entering the Gate. Guessing that they would come at once to the Tower and the Steward, he hurried to the entrance of the citadel. There he was joined by many others who had watched the race and the rescue from the high walls.

It was not long before a clamour was heard in the streets leading up from the outer circles, and there was much cheering and crying of the names of Faramir and Mithrandir. Presently Pippin saw torches, and followed by a press of people two horsemen riding slowly: one was in white but shining no longer, pale in the twilight as if his fire was spent or veiled; the other was dark and his head was bowed. They dismounted, and as grooms took Shadowfax and the other horse, they walked forward to the sentinel at the gate: Gandalf steadily, his grey cloak flung back, and a fire still smouldering in his eyes; the other, clad all in green, slowly, swaying a little as a weary or a wounded man.

Pippin pressed forward as they passed under the lamp beneath the gate-arch, and when he saw the pale face of Faramir he caught his breath. It was the face of one who has been assailed by a great fear or anguish, but has mastered it and now is quiet. Proud and grave he stood for a moment as he spoke to the guard, and Pippin gazing at him saw how closely he resembled his brother Boromir—whom Pippin had liked from the first, admiring the great man's lordly but kindly manner. Yet suddenly for Faramir his heart was strangely moved with a feeling that he had not known before. Here was one with an air of high nobility such as Aragorn at times revealed, less high perhaps, yet also less incalculable and remote: one of the Kings of Men born into a later time, but touched with the wisdom and sadness of the Elder Race. He knew now why Beregon spoke his name with love. He was a captain that men would follow, that he would follow, even under the shadow of the black wings.

'Faramir!' he cried aloud with the others. 'Faramir!' And Faramir, catching his strange voice among the clamour of the men of the City, turned and looked down at him and was amazed.

'Whence come you?' he said. 'A halfling, and in the livery of the Tower! Whence. . .?'

But with that Gandalf stepped to his side and spoke. 'He came with me from the land of the Halflings,' he said. 'He came with me. But let us not tarry here. There is much to say and to do, and you are weary. He shall come with us. Indeed he must, for if he does not forget his new duties more easily than I do, he must attend on his lord again within this hour. Come, Pippin, follow us!'

So at length they came to the private chamber of the Lord of the City. There deep seats were set about a brazier of charcoal; and wine was brought; and there Pippin, hardly noticed, stood behind the chair of Denethor and felt his weariness little, so eagerly did he listen to all that was said.

When Faramir had taken white bread and drunk a draught of wine, he sat upon a low chair at his father's left hand. Removed a little upon the other side sat Gandalf in a chair of carven wood; and he seemed at first to be asleep. For at the beginning Faramir spoke only of the errand upon which he had been sent out ten days before, and he brought tidings of Ithilien and of movements of the Enemy and his allies; and he told of the fight on the road when the men of Harad and their great beast were overthrown: a captain reporting to his master such matters as had often been heard before, small things of border-war that now seemed useless and petty, shorn of their renown.

Then suddenly Faramir looked at Pippin. 'But now we come to strange matters,' he said. 'For this is not the first halfling that I have seen walking out of northern legends into the Southlands.'

At that Gandalf sat up and gripped the arms of his chair; but he said nothing, and with a look stopped the exclamation on Pippin's lips. Denethor looked at their faces and nodded his head, as though in sign that he had read much there before it was spoken. Slowly, while the others sat silent and still, Faramir told his tale, with his eyes for the most part on Gandalf, though now and again his glance strayed to Pippin, as if to refresh his memory of others that he had seen.

As his story was unfolded of his meeting with Frodo and his servant and of the events at Henneth Annûn, Pippin became aware that Gandalf's hands were trembling as they clutched the carven wood. White they seemed now and very old, and as he looked at them, suddenly with a thrill of fear Pippin knew that Gandalf, Gandalf himself, was troubled, even afraid. The air of the room was close and still. At last when Faramir spoke of his parting with the travellers, and of their resolve to go to Cirith Ungol, his voice fell, and he shook his head and sighed. Then Gandalf sprang up.

'Cirith Ungol? Morgul Vale?' he said. 'The time, Faramir, the time? When did you part with them? When would they reach that accursed valley?'

'I parted with them in the morning two days ago,' said Faramir. 'It is fifteen leagues thence to the vale of the Morgulduin, if they went straight south; and then they would be still five leagues westward of the accursed Tower. At swiftest they could not come there before today, and maybe they have not come there yet. Indeed I see what you fear. But the darkness is not due to their venture. It began yestereve, and all Ithilien was under shadow last night. It is clear to me that the Enemy has long planned an assault on us, and its hour had already been determined before ever the travellers left my keeping.'

Gandalf paced the floor. 'The morning of two days ago, nigh on three days of journey! How far is the place where you parted?'

'Some twenty-five leagues as a bird flies,' answered Faramir. 'But I could not come more swiftly. Yestereve I lay at Cair Andros, the long isle in the River northward which we hold in defence; and horses are kept on the hither bank. As the dark drew on I knew that haste was needed, so I rode thence with three others that could also be horsed. The rest of my company I sent south to strengthen the garrison at the fords of Osgiliath. I hope that I have not done ill?' He looked at his father.

'Ill?' cried Denethor, and his eyes flashed suddenly. 'Why do you ask? The men were under your command. Or do you ask for my judgement on all your deeds? Your bearing is lowly in my presence, yet it is long now since you turned from your own way at my counsel. See, you have spoken skilfully, as ever; but I, have I not seen your eye fixed on Mithrandir, seeking whether you said well or too much? He has long had your heart in his keeping.'

'My son, your father is old but not yet dotard. I can see and hear, as was my wont; and little of what you have half said or left unsaid is now hidden from me. I know the answer to many riddles. Alas, alas for Boromir!'

'If what I have done displeases you, my father,' said Faramir quietly, 'I wish I had known your counsel before the burden of so weighty a judgement was thrust on me.'

'Would that have availed to change your judgement?' said Denethor. 'You would still have done just so, I deem. I know you well. Ever your desire is to appear lordly and generous as a king of old, gracious, gentle. That may well befit one of high race, if he sits in power and peace. But in desperate hours gentleness may be repaid with death.'

'So be it,' said Faramir.

'So be it!' cried Denethor. 'But not with your death only, Lord Faramir: with the death also of your father, and of all your people, whom it is your part to protect now that Boromir is gone.'

'Do you wish then,' said Faramir, 'that our places had been exchanged?'

'Yes, I wish that indeed,' said Denethor. 'For Boromir was loyal to me and no wizard's pupil. He would have remembered his father's need, and would not have squandered what fortune gave. He would have brought me a mighty gift.'

For a moment Faramir's restraint gave way. 'I would ask you, my father, to remember why it was that I, not he, was in Ithilien. On one occasion at least your counsel has prevailed, not long ago. It was the Lord of the City that gave the errand to him.'

'Stir not the bitterness in the cup that I mixed for myself,' said Denethor. 'Have I not tasted it now many nights upon my tongue, foreboding that worse yet lay in the dregs? As now indeed I find. Would it were not so! Would that this thing had come to me!'

'Comfort yourself!' said Gandalf. 'In no case would Boromir have brought it to you. He is dead, and died well; may he sleep in peace! Yet you deceive yourself. He would have stretched out his hand to this thing, and taking it he would have fallen. He would have kept it for his own, and when he returned you would not have known your son.'

The face of Denethor set hard and cold. 'You found Boromir less apt to your hand, did you not?' he said softly. 'But I who was his father say that he would have brought it to me. You are wise, maybe, Mithrandir, yet with all your subtleties you have not all wisdom. Counsels may be found that are neither the webs of wizards nor the haste of fools. I have in this matter more lore and wisdom than you deem.'

'What then is your wisdom?' said Gandalf.

'Enough to perceive that there are two follies to avoid. To use this thing is perilous. At this hour, to send it in the hands of a witless halfling into the land of the Enemy himself, as you have done, and this son of mine, that is madness.'

‘And the Lord Denethor what would he have done?’

‘Neither. But most surely not for any argument would he have set this thing at a hazard beyond all but a fool’s hope, risking our utter ruin, if the Enemy should recover what he lost. Nay, it should have been kept, hidden, hidden dark and deep. Not used, I say, unless at the uttermost end of need, but set beyond his grasp, save by a victory so final that what then befell would not trouble us, being dead.’

‘You think, as is your wont, my lord, of Gondor only,’ said Gandalf. ‘Yet there are other men and other lives, and time still to be. And for me, I pity even his slaves.’

‘And where will other men look for help, if Gondor falls?’ answered Denethor. ‘If I had this thing now in the deep vaults of this citadel, we should not then shake with dread under this gloom, fearing the worst, and our counsels would be undisturbed. If you do not trust me to endure the test, you do not know me yet.’

‘Nonetheless I do not trust you,’ said Gandalf. ‘Had I done so, I could have sent this thing hither to your keeping and spared myself and others much anguish. And now hearing you speak I trust you less, no more than Boromir. Nay, stay your wrath! I do not trust myself in this, and I refused this thing, even as a freely given gift. You are strong and can still in some matters govern yourself, Denethor; yet if you had received this thing, it would have overthrown you. Were it buried beneath the roots of Mindolluin, still it would burn your mind away, as the darkness grows, and the yet worse things follow that soon shall come upon us.’

For a moment the eyes of Denethor glowed again as he faced Gandalf, and Pippin felt once more the strain between their wills; but now almost it seemed as if their glances were like blades from eye to eye, flickering as they fenced. Pippin trembled fearing some dreadful stroke. But suddenly Denethor relaxed and grew cold again. He shrugged his shoulders.

‘If I had! If you had!’ he said. ‘Such words and ifs are vain. It has gone into the Shadow, and only time will show what doom awaits it, and us. The time will not be long. In what is left, let all who fight the Enemy in their fashion be at one, and keep hope while they may, and after hope still the hardihood to die free.’ He turned to Faramir. ‘What think you of the garrison at Osgiliath?’

‘It is not strong,’ said Faramir. ‘I have sent the company of Ithilien to strengthen it, as I have said.’

‘Not enough, I deem,’ said Denethor. ‘It is there that the first blow will fall. They will have need of some stout captain there.’

‘There and elsewhere in many places,’ said Faramir, and sighed. ‘Alas for my brother, whom I too loved!’ He rose. ‘May I have your leave, father?’ And then he swayed and leaned upon his father’s chair.

‘You are weary, I see,’ said Denethor. ‘You have ridden fast and far, and under shadows of evil in the air, I am told.’

‘Let us not speak of that!’ said Faramir.

‘Then we will not,’ said Denethor. ‘Go now and rest as you may. Tomorrow’s need will be sterner.’

All now took leave of the Lord of the City and went to rest while they still could. Outside there was a starless blackness as Gandalf, with Pippin beside him bearing a small torch, made his way to their lodging. They did not speak until they were behind closed doors. Then at last Pippin took Gandalf’s hand.

‘Tell me,’ he said, ‘is there any hope? For Frodo, I mean; or at least mostly for Frodo.’

Gandalf put his hand on Pippin’s head. ‘There never was much hope,’ he answered. ‘Just a fool’s hope, as I have been told. And when I heard of Cirith Ungol—’ He broke off and strode to the window, as if his eyes could pierce the night in the East. ‘Cirith Ungol!’ he muttered. ‘Why that way, I wonder?’ He turned. ‘Just now, Pippin, my heart almost failed me, hearing that name. And yet in truth I believe that the news that Faramir brings has some hope in it. For it seems clear that our Enemy has opened his war at last and made the first move while Frodo was still free. So now for many days he will have his eye turned this way and that, away from his own land. And yet, Pippin, I feel from afar his haste and fear. He has begun sooner than he would. Something has happened to stir him.’

Gandalf stood for a moment in thought. 'Maybe,' he muttered. 'Maybe even your foolishness helped, my lad. Let me see: some five days ago now he would discover that we had thrown down Saruman, and had taken the Stone. Still what of that? We could not use it to much purpose, or without his knowing. Ah! I wonder. Aragorn? His time draws near. And he is strong and stern underneath, Pippin; bold, determined, able to take his own counsel and dare great risks at need. That may be it. He may have used the Stone and shown himself to the Enemy, challenging him, for this very purpose. I wonder. Well, we shall not know the answer till the Riders of Rohan come, if they do not come too late. There are evil days ahead. To sleep while we may!'

'But,' said Pippin.

'But what?' said Gandalf. 'Only one *but* will I allow tonight.'

'Gollum,' said Pippin. 'How on earth could they be going about *with* him, even following him? And I could see that Faramir did not like the place he was taking them to any more than you do. What is wrong?'

'I cannot answer that now,' said Gandalf. 'Yet my heart guessed that Frodo and Gollum would meet before the end. For good, or for evil. But of Cirith Ungol I will not speak tonight. Treachery, treachery I fear; treachery of that miserable creature. But so it must be. Let us remember that a traitor may betray himself and do good that he does not intend. It can be so, sometimes. Good night!'

The next day came with a morning like a brown dusk, and the hearts of men, lifted for a while by the return of Faramir, sank low again. The winged Shadows were not seen again that day, yet ever and anon, high above the city, a faint cry would come, and many who heard it would stand stricken with a passing dread, while the less stout-hearted quailed and wept.

And now Faramir was gone again. 'They give him no rest,' some murmured. 'The Lord drives his son too hard, and now he must do the duty of two, for himself and for the one that will not return.' And ever men looked northward, asking: 'Where are the Riders of Rohan?'

In truth Faramir did not go by his own choosing. But the Lord of the City was master of his Council, and he was in no mood that day to bow to others. Early in the morning the Council had been summoned. There all the captains judged that because of the threat in the South their force was too weak to make any stroke of war on their own part, unless perchance the Riders of Rohan yet should come. Meanwhile they must man the walls and wait.

'Yet,' said Denethor, 'we should not lightly abandon the outer defences, the Rammas made with so great a labour. And the Enemy must pay dearly for the crossing of the River. That he cannot do, in force to assail the City, either north of Cair Andros because of the marshes, or southwards towards Lebennin because of the breadth of the River, that needs many boats. It is at Osgiliath that he will put his weight, as before when Boromir denied him the passage.'

'That was but a trial,' said Faramir. 'Today we may make the Enemy pay ten times our loss at the passage and yet rue the exchange. For he can afford to lose a host better than we to lose a company. And the retreat of those that we put out far afield will be perilous, if he wins across in force.'

'And what of Cair Andros?' said the Prince. 'That, too, must be held, if Osgiliath is defended. Let us not forget the danger on our left. The Rohirrim may come, and they may not. But Faramir has told us of great strength drawing ever to the Black Gate. More than one host may issue from it, and strike for more than one passage.'

'Much must be risked in war,' said Denethor. 'Cair Andros is manned, and no more can be sent so far. But I will not yield the River and the Pelennor unfought—not if there is a captain here who has still the courage to do his lord's will.'

Then all were silent. But at length Faramir said: 'I do not oppose your will, sire. Since you are robbed of Boromir, I will go and do what I can in his stead—if you command it.'

'I do so,' said Denethor.

'Then farewell!' said Faramir. 'But if I should return, think better of me!'

'That depends on the manner of your return,' said Denethor.

Gandalf it was that last spoke to Faramir ere he rode east. 'Do not throw your life away rashly or in bitterness,' he said. 'You will be needed here, for other things than war. Your father loves you, Faramir, and will remember it ere the end. Farewell!'

So now the Lord Faramir had gone forth again, and had taken with him such strength of men as were willing to go or could be spared. On the walls some gazed through the gloom towards the ruined city, and they wondered what chanced there, for nothing could be seen. And others, as ever, looked north and counted the leagues to Théoden in Rohan. 'Will he come? Will he remember our old alliance?' they said.

'Yes, he will come,' said Gandalf, 'even if he comes too late. But think! At best the Red Arrow cannot have reached him more than two days ago, and the miles are long from Edoras.'

It was night again ere news came. A man rode in haste from the fords, saying that a host had issued from Minas Morgul and was already drawing nigh to Osgiliath; and it had been joined by regiments from the South, Haradrim, cruel and tall. 'And we have learned,' said the messenger, 'that the Black Captain leads them once again, and the fear of him has passed before him over the River.'

With those ill-boding words the third day closed since Pippin came to Minas Tirith. Few went to rest, for small hope had any now that even Faramir could hold the fords for long.

The next day, though the darkness had reached its full and grew no deeper, it weighed heavier on men's hearts, and a great dread was on them. Ill news came soon again. The passage of Anduin was won by the Enemy. Faramir was retreating to the wall of the Pelennor, rallying his men to the Causeway Forts; but he was ten times outnumbered.

'If he wins back at all across the Pelennor, his enemies will be on his heels,' said the messenger. 'They have paid dear for the crossing, but less dearly than we hoped. The plan has been well laid. It is now seen that in secret they have long been building floats and barges in great number in East Osgiliath. They swarmed across like beetles. But it is the Black Captain that defeats us. Few will stand and abide even the rumour of his coming. His own folk quail at him, and they would slay themselves at his bidding.'

'Then I am needed there more than here,' said Gandalf, and rode off at once, and the glimmer of him faded soon from sight. And all that night Pippin alone and sleepless stood upon the wall and gazed eastward.

The bells of day had scarcely rung out again, a mockery in the unlightened dark, when far away he saw fires spring up, across in the dim spaces where the walls of the Pelennor stood. The watchmen cried aloud, and all men in the City stood to arms. Now ever and anon there was a red flash, and slowly through the heavy air dull rumbles could be heard.

'They have taken the wall!' men cried. 'They are blasting breaches in it. They are coming!'

'Where is Faramir?' cried Beregon in dismay. 'Say not that he has fallen!'

It was Gandalf that brought the first tidings. With a handful of horsemen he came in the middle morning, riding as escort to a line of wains. They were filled with wounded men, all that could be saved from the wreck of the Causeway Forts. At once he went to Denethor. The Lord of the City sat now in a high chamber above the Hall of the White Tower with Pippin at his side; and through the dim windows, north and south and east, he bent his dark eyes, as if to pierce the shadows of doom that ringed him round. Most to the North he looked, and would pause at whiles to listen as if by some ancient art his ears might hear the thunder of hoofs on the plains far away.

'Is Faramir come?' he asked.

'No,' said Gandalf. 'But he still lived when I left him. Yet he is resolved to stay with the rearguard, lest the retreat over the Pelennor become a rout. He may, perhaps, hold his men together long enough, but I doubt it. He is pitted against a foe too great. For one has come that I feared.'

'Not—the Dark Lord?' cried Pippin, forgetting his place in his terror.

Denethor laughed bitterly. 'Nay, not yet, Master Peregrin! He will not come save only to triumph over me when all is won. He uses others as his weapons. So do all great lords, if they are wise, Master Halfling. Or why

should I sit here in my tower and think, and watch, and wait, spending even my sons? For I can still wield a brand.'

He stood up and cast open his long black cloak, and behold! he was clad in mail beneath, and girt with a long sword, great-hilted in a sheath of black and silver. 'Thus have I walked, and thus now for many years have I slept,' he said, 'lest with age the body should grow soft and timid.'

'Yet now under the Lord of Barad-dûr the most fell of all his captains is already master of your outer walls,' said Gandalf. 'King of Angmar long ago, Sorcerer, Ringwraith, Lord of the Nazgûl, a spear of terror in the hand of Sauron, shadow of despair.'

'Then, Mithrandir, you had a foe to match you,' said Denethor. 'For myself, I have long known who is the chief captain of the hosts of the Dark Tower. Is this all that you have returned to say? Or can it be that you have withdrawn because you are overmatched?'

Pippin trembled, fearing that Gandalf would be stung to sudden wrath, but his fear was needless. 'It might be so,' Gandalf answered softly. 'But our trial of strength is not yet come. And if words spoken of old be true, not by the hand of man shall he fall, and hidden from the Wise is the doom that awaits him. However that may be, the Captain of Despair does not press forward, yet. He rules rather according to the wisdom that you have just spoken, from the rear, driving his slaves in madness on before.'

'Nay, I came rather to guard the hurt men that can yet be healed; for the Rammas is breached far and wide, and soon the host of Morgul will enter in at many points. And I came chiefly to say this. Soon there will be battle on the fields. A sortie must be made ready. Let it be of mounted men. In them lies our brief hope, for in one thing only is the enemy still poorly provided: he has few horsemen.'

'And we also have few. Now would the coming of Rohan be in the nick of time,' said Denethor.

'We are likely to see other newcomers first,' said Gandalf. 'Fugitives from Cair Andros have already reached us. The isle has fallen. Another army is come from the Black Gate, crossing from the north-east.'

'Some have accused you, Mithrandir, of delighting to bear ill news,' said Denethor, 'but to me this is no longer news: it was known to me ere nightfall yesterday. As for the sortie, I had already given thought to it. Let us go down.'

Time passed. At length watchers on the walls could see the retreat of the out-companies. Small bands of weary and often wounded men came first with little order; some were running wildly as if pursued. Away to the eastward the distant fires flickered, and now it seemed that here and there they crept across the plain. Houses and barns were burning. Then from many points little rivers of red flame came hurrying on, winding through the gloom, converging towards the line of the broad road that led from the City-gate to Osgiliath.

'The enemy,' men murmured. 'The dike is down. Here they come pouring through the breaches! And they carry torches, it seems. Where are our own folk?'

It drew now to evening by the hour, and the light was so dim that even far-sighted men upon the Citadel could discern little clearly out upon the fields, save only the burnings that ever multiplied, and the lines of fire that grew in length and speed. At last, less than a mile from the City, a more ordered mass of men came into view, marching not running, still holding together.

The watchers held their breath. 'Faramir must be there,' they said. 'He can govern man and beast. He will make it yet.'

Now the main retreat was scarcely two furlongs distant. Out of the gloom behind a small company of horsemen galloped, all that was left of the rearguard. Once again they turned at bay, facing the oncoming lines of fire. Then suddenly there was a tumult of fierce cries. Horsemen of the enemy swept up. The lines of fire became flowing torrents, file upon file of Orcs bearing flames, and wild Southron men with red banners, shouting with harsh tongues, surging up, overtaking the retreat. And with a piercing cry out of the dim sky fell the winged shadows, the Nazgûl stooping to the kill.

The retreat became a rout. Already men were breaking away, flying wild and witless here and there, flinging away their weapons, crying out in fear, falling to the ground.

And then a trumpet rang from the Citadel, and Denethor at last released the sortie. Drawn up within the shadow of the Gate and under the looming walls outside they had waited for his signal: all the mounted men that were left in the City. Now they sprang forward, formed, quickened to a gallop, and charged with a great shout. And from the walls an answering shout went up; for foremost on the field rode the swan-knights of Dol Amroth with their Prince and his blue banner at their head.

‘Amroth for Gondor!’ they cried. ‘Amroth to Faramir!’

Like thunder they broke upon the enemy on either flank of the retreat; but one rider outran them all, swift as the wind in the grass: Shadowfax bore him, shining, unveiled once more, a light starting from his upraised hand.

The Nazgûl screeched and swept away, for their Captain was not yet come to challenge the white fire of his foe. The hosts of Morgul intent on their prey, taken at unawares in wild career, broke, scattering like sparks in a gale. The out-companies with a great cheer turned and smote their pursuers. Hunters became the hunted. The retreat became an onslaught. The field was strewn with stricken orcs and men, and a reek arose of torches cast away, sputtering out in swirling smoke. The cavalry rode on.

But Denethor did not permit them to go far. Though the enemy was checked, and for the moment driven back, great forces were flowing in from the East. Again the trumpet rang, sounding the retreat. The cavalry of Gondor halted. Behind their screen the out-companies re-formed. Now steadily they came marching back. They reached the Gate of the City and entered, stepping proudly; and proudly the people of the City looked on them and cried their praise, and yet they were troubled in heart. For the companies were grievously reduced. Faramir had lost a third of his men. And where was he?

Last of all he came. His men passed in. The mounted knights returned, and at their rear the banner of Dol Amroth, and the Prince. And in his arms before him on his horse he bore the body of his kinsman, Faramir son of Denethor, found upon the stricken field.

‘Faramir! Faramir!’ men cried, weeping in the streets. But he did not answer, and they bore him away up the winding road to the Citadel and his father. Even as the Nazgûl had swerved aside from the onset of the White Rider, there came flying a deadly dart, and Faramir, as he held at bay a mounted champion of Harad, had fallen to the earth. Only the charge of Dol Amroth had saved him from the red southland swords that would have hewed him as he lay.

The Prince Imrahil brought Faramir to the White Tower, and he said: ‘Your son has returned, lord, after great deeds,’ and he told all that he had seen. But Denethor rose and looked on the face of his son and was silent. Then he bade them make a bed in the chamber and lay Faramir upon it and depart. But he himself went up alone into the secret room under the summit of the Tower; and many who looked up thither at that time saw a pale light that gleamed and flickered from the narrow windows for a while, and then flashed and went out. And when Denethor descended again he went to Faramir and sat beside him without speaking, but the face of the Lord was grey, more deathlike than his son’s.

So now at last the City was besieged, enclosed in a ring of foes. The Rammas was broken, and all the Pelennor abandoned to the Enemy. The last word to come from outside the walls was brought by men flying down the northward road ere the Gate was shut. They were the remnant of the guard that was kept at that point where the way from Anórien and Rohan ran into the townlands. Ingold led them, the same who had admitted Gandalf and Pippin less than five days before, while the sun still rose and there was hope in the morning.

‘There is no news of the Rohirrim,’ he said. ‘Rohan will not come now. Or if they come, it will not avail us. The new host that we had tidings of has come first, from over the River by way of Andros, it is said. They are strong: battalions of Orcs of the Eye, and countless companies of Men of a new sort that we have not met before. Not tall, but broad and grim, bearded like dwarves, wielding great axes. Out of some savage land in the wide East they come, we deem. They hold the northward road; and many have passed on into Anórien. The Rohirrim cannot come.’



The Gate was shut. All night watchmen on the walls heard the rumour of the enemy that roamed outside, burning field and tree, and hewing any man that they found abroad, living or dead. The numbers that had already passed over the River could not be guessed in the darkness, but when morning, or its dim shadow, stole over the plain, it was seen that even fear by night had scarcely over-counted them. The plain was dark with their marching companies, and as far as eyes could strain in the mirk there sprouted, like a foul fungus-growth, all about the beleaguered city great camps of tents, black or sombre red.

Busy as ants hurrying orcs were digging, digging lines of deep trenches in a huge ring, just out of bowshot from the walls; and as the trenches were made each was filled with fire, though how it was kindled or fed, by art or devilry, none could see. All day the labour went forward, while the men of Minas Tirith looked on, unable to hinder it. And as each length of trench was completed, they could see great wains approaching; and soon yet more companies of the enemy were swiftly setting up, each behind the cover of a trench, great engines for the casting of missiles. There were none upon the City walls large enough to reach so far or to stay the work.

At first men laughed and did not greatly fear such devices. For the main wall of the City was of great height and marvellous thickness, built ere the power and craft of Númenor waned in exile; and its outward face was like to the Tower of Orthanc, hard and dark and smooth, unconquerable by steel or fire, unbreakable except by some convulsion that would rend the very earth on which it stood.

‘Nay,’ they said, ‘not if the Nameless One himself should come, not even he could enter here while we yet live.’ But some answered: ‘While we yet live? How long? He has a weapon that has brought low many strong places since the world began. Hunger. The roads are cut. Rohan will not come.’

But the engines did not waste shot upon the indomitable wall. It was no brigand or orc-chieftain that ordered the assault upon the Lord of Mordor’s greatest foe. A power and mind of malice guided it. As soon as the great catapults were set, with many yells and the creaking of rope and winch, they began to throw missiles marvellously high, so that they passed right above the battlement and fell thudding within the first circle of the City; and many of them by some secret art burst into flame as they came toppling down.

Soon there was great peril of fire behind the wall, and all who could be spared were busy quelling the flames that sprang up in many places. Then among the greater casts there fell another hail, less ruinous but more horrible. All about the streets and lanes behind the Gate it tumbled down, small round shot that did not burn. But when men ran to learn what it might be, they cried aloud or wept. For the enemy was flinging into the City all the heads of those who had fallen fighting at Osgiliath, or on the Rammas, or in the fields. They were grim to look on; for though some were crushed and shapeless, and some had been cruelly hewn, yet many had features that could be told, and it seemed that they had died in pain; and all were branded with the foul token of the Lidless Eye. But marred and dishonoured as they were, it often chanced that thus a man would see again the face of someone that he had known, who had walked proudly once in arms, or tilled the fields, or ridden in upon a holiday from the green vales in the hills.

In vain men shook their fists at the pitiless foes that swarmed before the Gate. Curses they heeded not, nor understood the tongues of western men, crying with harsh voices like beasts and carrion-birds. But soon there were few left in Minas Tirith who had the heart to stand up and defy the hosts of Mordor. For yet another weapon, swifter than hunger, the Lord of the Dark Tower had: dread and despair.

The Nazgûl came again, and as their Dark Lord now grew and put forth his strength, so their voices, which uttered only his will and his malice, were filled with evil and horror. Ever they circled above the City, like vultures that expect their fill of doomed men’s flesh. Out of sight and shot they flew, and yet were ever present, and their deadly voices rent the air. More unbearable they became, not less, at each new cry. At length even the stout-hearted would fling themselves to the ground as the hidden menace passed over them, or they would stand, letting their weapons fall from nerveless hands while into their minds a blackness came, and they thought no more of war; but only of hiding and of crawling, and of death.

During all this black day Faramir lay upon his bed in the chamber of the White Tower, wandering in a desperate fever; dying someone said, and soon ‘dying’ all men were saying upon the walls and in the streets. And by him his father sat, and said nothing, but watched, and gave no longer any heed to the defence.

No hours so dark had Pippin known, not even in the clutches of the Uruk-hai. It was his duty to wait upon the Lord, and wait he did, forgotten it seemed, standing by the door of the unlit chamber, mastering his own fears as best he could. And as he watched, it seemed to him that Denethor grew old before his eyes, as if something had snapped in his proud will, and his stern mind was overthrown. Grief maybe had wrought it, and remorse. He saw tears on that once tearless face, more unbearable than wrath.

‘Do not weep, lord,’ he stammered. ‘Perhaps he will get well. Have you asked Gandalf?’

‘Comfort me not with wizards!’ said Denethor. ‘The fool’s hope has failed. The Enemy has found it, and now his power waxes; he sees our very thoughts, and all we do is ruinous.’

‘I sent my son forth, unthanked, unblessed, out into needless peril, and here he lies with poison in his veins. Nay, nay, whatever may now betide in war, my line too is ending, even the House of the Stewards has failed. Mean folk shall rule the last remnant of the Kings of Men, lurking in the hills until all are hounded out.’

Men came to the door crying for the Lord of the City. ‘Nay, I will not come down,’ he said. ‘I must stay beside my son. He might still speak before the end. But that is near. Follow whom you will, even the Grey Fool, though his hope has failed. Here I stay.’

So it was that Gandalf took command of the last defence of the City of Gondor. Wherever he came men’s hearts would lift again, and the winged shadows pass from memory. Tirelessly he strode from Citadel to Gate, from north to south about the wall; and with him went the Prince of Dol Amroth in his shining mail. For he and his knights still held themselves like lords in whom the race of Númenor ran true. Men that saw them whispered saying: ‘Belike the old tales speak well; there is Elvish blood in the veins of that folk, for the people of Nimrodel dwelt in that land once long ago.’ And then one would sing amid the gloom some staves of the Lay of Nimrodel, or other songs of the Vale of Anduin out of vanished years.

And yet—when they had gone, the shadows closed on men again, and their hearts went cold, and the valour of Gondor withered into ash. And so slowly they passed out of a dim day of fears into the darkness of a desperate night. Fires now raged unchecked in the first circle of the City, and the garrison upon the outer wall was already in many places cut off from retreat. But the faithful who remained there at their posts were few; most had fled beyond the second gate.

Far behind the battle the River had been swiftly bridged, and all day more force and gear of war had poured across. Now at last in the middle night the assault was loosed. The vanguard passed through the trenches of fire by many devious paths that had been left between them. On they came, reckless of their loss as they approached, still bunched and herded, within the range of bowmen on the wall. But indeed there were too few now left there to do them great damage, though the light of the fires showed up many a mark for archers of such skill as Gondor once had boasted. Then perceiving that the valour of the City was already beaten down, the hidden Captain put forth his strength. Slowly the great siege-towers built in Osgiliath rolled forward through the dark.

Messengers came again to the chamber in the White Tower, and Pippin let them enter, for they were urgent. Denethor turned his head slowly from Faramir’s face, and looked at them silently.

‘The first circle of the City is burning, lord,’ they said. ‘What are your commands? You are still the Lord and Steward. Not all will follow Mithrandir. Men are flying from the walls and leaving them unmanned.’

‘Why? Why do the fools fly?’ said Denethor. ‘Better to burn sooner than late, for burn we must. Go back to your bonfire! And I? I will go now to my pyre. To my pyre! No tomb for Denethor and Faramir. No tomb! No long slow sleep of death embalmed. We will burn like heathen kings before ever a ship sailed hither from the West. The West has failed. Go back and burn!’

The messengers without bow or answer turned and fled.

Now Denethor stood up and released the fevered hand of Faramir that he had held. ‘He is burning, already burning,’ he said sadly. ‘The house of his spirit crumbles.’ Then stepping softly towards Pippin he looked down at him.

‘Farewell!’ he said. ‘Farewell, Peregrin son of Paladin! Your service has been short, and now it is drawing to an end. I release you from the little that remains. Go now, and die in what way seems best to you. And with whom you will, even that friend whose folly brought you to this death. Send for my servants and then go. Farewell!’

‘I will not say farewell, my lord,’ said Pippin kneeling. And then suddenly hobbit-like once more, he stood up and looked the old man in the eyes. ‘I will take your leave, sir,’ he said; ‘for I want to see Gandalf very much indeed. But he is no fool; and I will not think of dying until he despairs of life. But from my word and your service I do not wish to be released while you live. And if they come at last to the Citadel, I hope to be here and stand beside you and earn perhaps the arms that you have given me.’

‘Do as you will, Master Halfling,’ said Denethor. ‘But my life is broken. Send for my servants!’ He turned back to Faramir.

Pippin left him and called for the servants, and they came: six men of the household, strong and fair; yet they trembled at the summons. But in a quiet voice Denethor bade them lay warm coverlets on Faramir’s bed and take it up. And they did so, and lifting up the bed they bore it from the chamber. Slowly they paced to trouble the fevered man as little as might be, and Denethor, now bending on a staff, followed them; and last came Pippin.

Out from the White Tower they walked, as if to a funeral, out into the darkness, where the overhanging cloud was lit beneath with flickers of dull red. Softly they paced the great courtyard, and at a word from Denethor halted beside the Withered Tree.

All was silent, save for the rumour of war in the City down below, and they heard the water dripping sadly from the dead branches into the dark pool. Then they went on through the Citadel gate, where the sentinel stared at them in wonder and dismay as they passed by. Turning westward they came at length to a door in the rearward wall of the sixth circle. Fen Hollen it was called, for it was kept ever shut save at times of funeral, and only the Lord of the City might use that way, or those who bore the token of the tombs and tended the houses of the dead. Beyond it went a winding road that descended in many curves down to the narrow land under the shadow of Mindolluin’s precipice where stood the mansions of the dead Kings and of their Stewards.

A porter sat in a little house beside the way, and with fear in his eyes he came forth bearing a lantern in his hand. At the Lord’s command he unlocked the door, and silently it swung back; and they passed through, taking the lantern from his hand. It was dark on the climbing road between ancient walls and many-pillared balusters looming in the swaying lantern-beam. Their slow feet echoed as they walked down, down, until at last they came to the Silent Street, Rath Dínen, between pale domes and empty halls and images of men long dead; and they entered into the House of the Stewards and set down their burden.

There Pippin, staring uneasily about him, saw that he was in a wide vaulted chamber, draped as it were with the great shadows that the little lantern threw upon its shrouded walls. And dimly to be seen were many rows of tables, carved of marble; and upon each table lay a sleeping form, hands folded, head pillowed upon stone. But one table near at hand stood broad and bare. Upon it at a sign from Denethor they laid Faramir and his father side by side, and covered them with one covering, and stood then with bowed heads as mourners beside a bed of death. Then Denethor spoke in a low voice.

‘Here we will wait,’ he said. ‘But send not for the embalmers. Bring us wood quick to burn, and lay it all about us, and beneath; and pour oil upon it. And when I bid you thrust in a torch. Do this and speak no more to me. Farewell!’

‘By your leave, lord!’ said Pippin and turned and fled in terror from the deathly house. ‘Poor Faramir!’ he thought. ‘I must find Gandalf. Poor Faramir! Quite likely he needs medicine more than tears. Oh, where can I find Gandalf? In the thick of things, I suppose; and he will have no time to spare for dying men or madmen.’

At the door he turned to one of the servants who had remained on guard there. ‘Your master is not himself,’ he said. ‘Go slow! Bring no fire to this place while Faramir lives! Do nothing until Gandalf comes!’

‘Who is the master of Minas Tirith?’ the man answered. ‘The Lord Denethor or the Grey Wanderer?’

‘The Grey Wanderer or no-one, it would seem,’ said Pippin, and he sped back and up the winding way as swiftly as his feet would carry him, past the astonished porter, out through the door, and on, till he came near the gate of the Citadel. The sentinel hailed him as he went by, and he recognized the voice of Beregond.

‘Whither do you run, Master Peregrin?’ he cried.

‘To find Mithrandir,’ Pippin answered.

‘The Lord’s errands are urgent and should not be hindered by me,’ said Beregond; ‘but tell me quickly, if you may: what goes forward? Whither has my Lord gone? I have just come on duty, but I heard that he passed towards the Closed Door, and men were bearing Faramir before him.’

‘Yes,’ said Pippin, ‘to the Silent Street.’

Beregond bowed his head to hide his tears. ‘They said that he was dying,’ he sighed, ‘and now he is dead.’

‘No,’ said Pippin, ‘not yet. And even now his death might be prevented, I think. But the Lord of the City, Beregond, has fallen before his city is taken. He is fey and dangerous.’ Quickly he told of Denethor’s strange words and deeds. ‘I must find Gandalf at once.’

‘Then you must go down to the battle.’

‘I know. The Lord has given me leave. But, Beregond, if you can, do something to stop any dreadful thing happening.’

‘The Lord does not permit those who wear the black and silver to leave their post for any cause, save at his own command.’

‘Well, you must choose between orders and the life of Faramir,’ said Pippin. ‘And as for orders, I think you have a madman to deal with, not a lord. I must run. I will return if I can.’

He ran on, down, down towards the outer city. Men flying back from the burning passed him, and some seeing his livery turned and shouted, but he paid no heed. At last he was through the Second Gate, beyond which great fires leaped up between the walls. Yet it seemed strangely silent. No noise or shouts of battle or din of arms could be heard. Then suddenly there was a dreadful cry and a great shock, and a deep echoing boom. Forcing himself on against a gust of fear and horror that shook him almost to his knees, Pippin turned a corner opening on the wide place behind the City Gate. He stopped dead. He had found Gandalf; but he shrank back, cowering into a shadow.

Ever since the middle night the great assault had gone on. The drums rolled. To the north and to the south company upon company of the enemy pressed to the walls. There came great beasts, like moving houses in the red and fitful light, the *mûmakil* of the Harad dragging through the lanes amid the fires huge towers and engines. Yet their Captain cared not greatly what they did or how many might be slain: their purpose was only to test the strength of the defence and to keep the men of Gondor busy in many places. It was against the Gate that he would throw his heaviest weight. Very strong it might be, wrought of steel and iron, and guarded with towers and bastions of indomitable stone, yet it was the key, the weakest point in all that high and impenetrable wall.

The drums rolled louder. Fires leaped up. Great engines crawled across the field; and in the midst was a huge ram, great as a forest-tree a hundred feet in length, swinging on mighty chains. Long had it been forging in the dark smithies of Mordor, and its hideous head, founded of black steel, was shaped in the likeness of a ravaging wolf; on it spells of ruin lay. Grond they named it, in memory of the Hammer of the Underworld of old. Great beasts drew it, orcs surrounded it, and behind walked mountain-trolls to wield it.

But about the Gate resistance still was stout, and there the knights of Dol Amroth and the hardiest of the garrison stood at bay. Shot and dart fell thick; siege-towers crashed or blazed suddenly like torches. All before the walls on either side of the Gate the ground was choked with wreck and with bodies of the slain; yet still driven as by a madness more and more came up.

Grond crawled on. Upon its housing no fire would catch; and though now and again some great beast that hauled it would go mad and spread stamping ruin among the orcs innumerable that guarded it, their bodies were cast aside from its path and others took their place.

Grond crawled on. The drums rolled wildly. Over the hills of slain a hideous shape appeared: a horseman, tall, hooded, cloaked in black. Slowly, trampling the fallen, he rode forth, heeding no longer any dart. He halted and held up a long pale sword. And as he did so a great fear fell on all, defender and foe alike; and the hands of men drooped to their sides, and no bow sang. For a moment all was still.

The drums rolled and rattled. With a vast rush Grond was hurled forward by huge hands. It reached the Gate. It swung. A deep boom rumbled through the City like thunder running in the clouds. But the doors of iron and posts of steel withstood the stroke.

Then the Black Captain rose in his stirrups and cried aloud in a dreadful voice, speaking in some forgotten tongue words of power and terror to rend both heart and stone.

Thrice he cried. Thrice the great ram boomed. And suddenly upon the last stroke the Gate of Gondor broke. As if stricken by some blasting spell it burst asunder: there was a flash of searing lightning, and the doors tumbled in riven fragments to the ground.

In rode the Lord of the Nazgûl. A great black shape against the fires beyond he loomed up, grown to a vast menace of despair. In rode the Lord of the Nazgûl, under the archway that no enemy ever yet had passed, and all fled before his face.

All save one. There waiting, silent and still in the space before the Gate, sat Gandalf upon Shadowfax: Shadowfax who alone among the free horses of the earth endured the terror, unmoving, steadfast as a graven image in Rath Dínen.

‘You cannot enter here,’ said Gandalf, and the huge shadow halted. ‘Go back to the abyss prepared for you! Go back! Fall into the nothingness that awaits you and your Master. Go!’

The Black Rider flung back his hood, and behold! he had a kingly crown; and yet upon no head visible was it set. The red fires shone between it and the mantled shoulders vast and dark. From a mouth unseen there came a deadly laughter.

‘Old fool!’ he said. ‘Old fool! This is my hour. Do you not know Death when you see it? Die now and curse in vain!’ And with that he lifted high his sword and flames ran down the blade.

Gandalf did not move. And in that very moment, away behind in some courtyard of the City, a cock crowed. Shrill and clear he crowed, recking nothing of wizardry or war, welcoming only the morning that in the sky far above the shadows of death was coming with the dawn.

And as if in answer there came from far away another note. Horns, horns, horns. In dark Mindolluin’s sides they dimly echoed. Great horns of the North wildly blowing. Rohan had come at last.



## Chapter 5: The Ride Of The Rohirrim

It was dark and Merry could see nothing as he lay on the ground rolled in a blanket; yet though the night was airless and windless, all about him hidden trees were sighing softly. He lifted his head. Then he heard it again: a sound like faint drums in the wooded hills and mountain-steps. The throb would cease suddenly and then be taken up again at some other point, now nearer, now further off. He wondered if the watchmen had heard it.

He could not see them, but he knew that all round him were the companies of the Rohirrim. He could smell the horses in the dark, and could hear their shiftings and their soft stamping on the needle-covered ground. The host was bivouacked in the pine-woods that clustered about Eilenach Beacon, a tall hill standing up from the long ridges of the Drúadan Forest that lay beside the great road in East Anórien.

Tired as he was Merry could not sleep. He had ridden now for four days on end, and the ever-deepening gloom had slowly weighed down his heart. He began to wonder why he had been so eager to come, when he had been given every excuse, even his lord's command, to stay behind. He wondered, too, if the old King knew that he had been disobeyed and was angry. Perhaps not. There seemed to be some understanding between Dernhelm and Elfhelm, the Marshal who commanded the *éored* in which they were riding. He and all his men ignored Merry and pretended not to hear if he spoke. He might have been just another bag that Dernhelm was carrying. Dernhelm was no comfort: he never spoke to anyone. Merry felt small, unwanted, and lonely. Now the time was anxious, and the host was in peril. They were less than a day's ride from the out-walls of Minas Tirith that encircled the townlands. Scouts had been sent ahead. Some had not returned. Others hastening back had reported that the road was held in force against them. A host of the enemy was encamped upon it, three miles west of Amon Dîn, and some strength of men was already thrusting along the road and was no more than three leagues away. Orcs were roving in the hills and woods along the roadside. The king and Éomer held council in the watches of the night.

Merry wanted somebody to talk to, and he thought of Pippin. But that only increased his restlessness. Poor Pippin, shut up in the great city of stone, lonely and afraid. Merry wished he was a tall Rider like Éomer and could blow a horn or something and go galloping to his rescue. He sat up, listening to the drums that were beating again, now nearer at hand. Presently he heard voices speaking low, and he saw dim half-shrouded lanterns passing through the trees. Men nearby began to move uncertainly in the dark.

A tall figure loomed up and stumbled over him, cursing the tree-roots. He recognized the voice of Elfhelm the Marshal.

'I am not a tree-root, Sir,' he said, 'nor a bag, but a bruised hobbit. The least you can do in amends is to tell me what is afoot.'

'Anything that can keep so in this devil's mirk,' answered Elfhelm. 'But my lord sends word that we must set ourselves in readiness: orders may come for a sudden move.'

'Is the enemy coming then?' asked Merry anxiously. 'Are those their drums? I began to think I was imagining them, as no-one else seemed to take any notice of them.'

'Nay, nay,' said Elfhelm, 'the enemy is on the road not in the hills. You hear the Woses, the Wild Men of the Woods: thus they talk together from afar. They still haunt Drúadan Forest, it is said. Remnants of an older time they be, living few and secretly, wild and wary as the beasts. They go not to war with Gondor or the Mark; but now they are troubled by the darkness and the coming of the orcs: they fear lest the Dark Years be returning, as seems likely enough. Let us be thankful that they are not hunting us: for they use poisoned arrows, it is said, and they are woodcrafty beyond compare. But they have offered their services to Théoden. Even now one of

their headmen is being taken to the king. Yonder go the lights. So much I have heard but no more. And now I must busy myself with my lord's commands. Pack yourself up, Master Bag!' He vanished into the shadows.

Merry did not like this talk of wild men and poisoned darts, but quite apart from that a great weight of dread was on him. Waiting was unbearable. He longed to know what was going to happen. He got up and soon was walking warily in pursuit of the last lantern before it disappeared among the trees.

Presently he came to an open space where a small tent had been set up for the king under a great tree. A large lantern, covered above, was hanging from a bough and cast a pale circle of light below. There sat Théoden and Éomer, and before them on the ground sat a strange squat shape of a man, gnarled as an old stone, and the hairs of his scanty beard straggled on his lumpy chin like dry moss. He was short-legged and fat-armed, thick and stumpy, and clad only with grass about his waist. Merry felt that he had seen him before somewhere, and suddenly he remembered the Púkel-men of Dunharrow. Here was one of those old images brought to life, or maybe a creature descended in true line through endless years from the models used by the forgotten craftsmen long ago.

There was a silence as Merry crept nearer, and then the Wild Man began to speak, in answer to some question, it seemed. His voice was deep and guttural, yet to Merry's surprise he spoke the Common Speech, though in a halting fashion, and uncouth words were mingled with it.

'No, father of Horse-men,' he said, 'we fight not. Hunt only. Kill *gorgûn* in woods, hate orc-folk. You hate *gorgûn* too. We help as we can. Wild Men have long ears and long eyes; know all paths. Wild Men live here before Stone-houses; before Tall Men come up out of Water.'

'But our need is for aid in battle,' said Éomer. 'How will you and your folk help us?'

'Bring news,' said the Wild Man. 'We look out from hills. We climb big mountain and look down. Stone-city is shut. Fire burns there outside; now inside too. You wish to come there? Then you must be quick. But *gorgûn* and men out of far-away,' he waved a short gnarled arm eastward, 'sit on horse-road. Very many, more than Horse-men.'

'How do you know that?' said Éomer.

The old man's flat face and dark eyes showed nothing, but his voice was sullen with displeasure. 'Wild Men are wild, free, but not children,' he answered. 'I am great headman, Ghân-buri-Ghân. I count many things: stars in sky, leaves on trees, men in the dark. You have a score of scores counted ten times and five. They have more. Big fight, and who will win? And many more walk round walls of Stone-houses.'

'Alas! he speaks all too shrewdly,' said Théoden. 'And our scouts say that they have cast trenches and stakes across the road. We cannot sweep them away in sudden onset.'

'And yet we need great haste,' said Éomer. 'Mundburg is on fire!'

'Let Ghân-buri-Ghân finish!' said the Wild Man. 'More than one road he knows. He will lead you by road where no pits are, no *gorgûn* walk, only Wild Men and beasts. Many paths were made when Stonehouse-folk were stronger. They carved hills as hunters carve beast-flesh. Wild Men think they ate stone for food. They went through Drûadan to Rimmon with great wains. They go no longer. Road is forgotten, but not by Wild Men. Over hill and behind hill it lies still under grass and tree, there behind Rimmon and down to Dîn, and back at the end to Horse-men's road. Wild Men will show you that road. Then you will kill *gorgûn* and drive away bad dark with bright iron, and Wild Men can go back to sleep in the wild woods.'

Éomer and the king spoke together in their own tongue. At length Théoden turned to the Wild Man. 'We will receive your offer,' he said. 'For though we leave a host of foes behind, what matter? If the Stone-city falls, then we shall have no returning. If it is saved, then the orc-host itself will be cut off. If you are faithful, Ghân-buri-Ghân, then we will give you rich reward, and you shall have the friendship of the Mark for ever.'

'Dead men are not friends to living men, and give them no gifts,' said the Wild Man. 'But if you live after the Darkness, then leave Wild Men alone in the woods and do not hunt them like beasts any more. Ghân-buri-Ghân will not lead you into trap. He will go himself with father of Horse-men, and if he leads you wrong, you will kill him.'

‘So be it!’ said Théoden.

‘How long will it take to pass by the enemy and come back to the road?’ asked Éomer. ‘We must go at foot-pace, if you guide us; and I doubt not the way is narrow.’

‘Wild Men go quick on feet,’ said Ghân. ‘Way is wide for four horses in Stonewain Valley yonder,’ he waved his hand southwards; ‘but narrow at beginning and at end. Wild Man could walk from here to Dîn between sunrise and noon.’

‘Then we must allow at least seven hours for the leaders,’ said Éomer; ‘but we must reckon rather on some ten hours for all. Things unforeseen may hinder us, and if our host is all strung out, it will be long ere it can be set in order when we issue from the hills. What is the hour now?’

‘Who knows?’ said Théoden. ‘All is night now.’

‘It is all dark, but it is not all night,’ said Ghân. ‘When Sun comes we feel her, even when she is hidden. Already she climbs over East-mountains. It is the opening of day in the sky-fields.’

‘Then we must set out as soon as may be,’ said Éomer. ‘Even so we cannot hope to come to Gondor’s aid today.’

Merry waited to hear no more, but slipped away to get ready for the summons to the march. This was the last stage before the battle. It did not seem likely to him that many of them would survive it. But he thought of Pippin and the flames in Minas Tirith and thrust down his own dread.

All went well that day, and no sight or sound had they of the enemy waiting to waylay them. The Wild Men had put out a screen of wary hunters, so that no orc or roving spy should learn of the movements in the hills. The light was more dim than ever as they drew nearer to the beleaguered city, and the Riders passed in long files like dark shadows of men and horses. Each company was guided by a wild woodman; but old Ghân walked beside the king. The start had been slower than was hoped, for it had taken time for the Riders, walking and leading their horses, to find paths over the thickly wooded ridges behind their camp and down into the hidden Stonewain Valley. It was late in the afternoon when the leaders came to wide grey thickets stretching beyond the eastward side of Amon Dîn, and masking a great gap in the line of hills that from Nardol to Dîn ran east and west. Through the gap the forgotten wain-road long ago had run down, back into the main horse-way from the City through Anórien; but now for many lives of men trees had had their way with it, and it had vanished, broken and buried under the leaves of uncounted years. But the thickets offered to the Riders their last hope of cover before they went into open battle; for beyond them lay the road and the plains of Anduin, while east and southwards the slopes were bare and rocky, as the writhen hills gathered themselves together and climbed up, bastion upon bastion, into the great mass and shoulders of Mindolluin.

The leading company was halted, and as those behind filed up out of the trough of the Stonewain Valley they spread out and passed to camping-places under the grey trees. The king summoned the captains to council. Éomer sent out scouts to spy upon the road; but old Ghân shook his head.

‘No good to send Horse-men,’ he said. ‘Wild Men have already seen all that can be seen in the bad air. They will come soon and speak to me here.’

The captains came; and then out of the trees crept warily other pùkel-shapes so like old Ghân that Merry could hardly tell them apart. They spoke to Ghân in a strange throaty language.

Presently Ghân turned to the king. ‘Wild Men say many things,’ he said. ‘First, be wary! Still many men in camp beyond Dîn, an hour’s walk yonder,’ he waved his arm west towards the black beacon. ‘But none to see between here and Stone-folk’s new walls. Many busy there. Walls stand up no longer: *gorgûn* knock them down with earth-thunder and with clubs of black iron. They are unwary and do not look about them. They think their friends watch all roads!’ At that old Ghân made a curious gurgling noise, and it seemed that he was laughing.

‘Good tidings!’ cried Éomer. ‘Even in this gloom hope gleams again. Our Enemy’s devices oft serve us in his despite. The accursed darkness itself has been a cloak to us. And now, lusting to destroy Gondor and throw it



down stone from stone, his orcs have taken away my greatest fear. The out-wall could have been held long against us. Now we can sweep through—if once we win so far.'

'Once again I thank you, Ghân-buri-Ghân of the woods,' said Théoden. 'Good fortune go with you for tidings and for guidance!'

'Kill *gorgun*! Kill orc-folk! No other words please Wild Men,' answered Ghân. 'Drive away bad air and darkness with bright iron!'

'To do these things we have ridden far,' said the king, 'and we shall attempt them. But what we shall achieve only tomorrow will show.'

Ghân-buri-Ghân squatted down and touched the earth with his horny brow in token of farewell. Then he got up as if to depart. But suddenly he stood looking up like some startled woodland animal snuffling a strange air. A light came in his eyes.

'Wind is changing!' he cried, and with that, in a twinkling as it seemed, he and his fellows had vanished into the glooms, never to be seen by any Rider of Rohan again. Not long after far away eastward the faint drums throbbed again. Yet to no heart in all the host came any fear that the Wild Men were unfaithful, strange and unlovely though they might appear.

'We need no further guidance,' said Elfhelm; 'for there are riders in the host who have ridden down to Mundburg in days of peace. I for one. When we come to the road it will veer south, and there will lie before us still seven leagues ere we reach the wall of the townlands. Along most of that way there is much grass on either side of the road. On that stretch the errand-riders of Gondor reckoned to make their greatest speed. We may ride it swiftly and without great rumour.'

'Then since we must look for fell deeds and the need of all our strength,' said Éomer, 'I counsel that we rest now, and set out hence by night, and so time our going that we come upon the fields when tomorrow is as light as it will be, or when our lord gives the signal.'

To this the king assented, and the captains departed. But soon Elfhelm returned. 'The scouts have found naught to report beyond the Grey Wood, lord,' he said, 'save two men only: two dead men and two dead horses.'

'Well?' said Éomer. 'What of it?'

'This, lord: they were errand-riders of Gondor; Hirgon was one maybe. At least his hand still clasped the Red Arrow, but his head was hewn off. And this also: it would seem by the signs that they were fleeing *westward* when they fell. As I read it, they found the enemy already on the out-wall, or assailing it, when they returned—and that would be two nights ago, if they used fresh horses from the posts, as is their wont. They could not reach the City and turned back.'

'Alas!' said Théoden. 'Then Denethor has heard no news of our riding and will despair of our coming.'

'*Need brooks no delay, yet late is better than never*,' said Éomer. 'And mayhap in this time shall the old saw be proved truer than ever before since men spoke with mouth.'

It was night. On either side of the road the host of Rohan was moving silently. Now the road passing about the skirts of Mindolluin turned southward. Far away and almost straight ahead there was a red glow under the black sky and the sides of the great mountain loomed dark against it. They were drawing near the Rammas of the Pelennor; but the day was not yet come.

The king rode in the midst of the leading company, his household-men about him. Elfhelm's *éored* came next; and now Merry noticed that Dernhelm had left his place and in the darkness was moving steadily forward, until at last he was riding just in rear of the king's guard. There came a check. Merry heard voices in front speaking softly. Out-riders had come back who had ventured forward almost to the wall. They came to the king.

'There are great fires, lord,' said one. 'The City is all set about with flame, and the field is full of foes. But all seem drawn off to the assault. As well as we could guess, there are few left upon the out-wall, and they are heedless, busy in destruction.'

‘Do you remember the Wild Man’s words, lord?’ said another. ‘I live upon the open Wold in days of peace; Widfara is my name, and to me also the air brings messages. Already the wind is turning. There comes a breath out of the South; there is a sea-tang in it, faint though it be. The morning will bring new things. Above the reek it will be dawn when you pass the wall.’

‘If you speak truly, Widfara, then may you live beyond this day in years of blessedness!’ said Théoden. He turned to the men of his household who were near, and he spoke now in a clear voice so that many also of the riders of the first *éored* heard him:

‘Now is the hour come, Riders of the Mark, sons of Eorl! Foes and fire are before you, and your homes far behind. Yet, though you fight upon an alien field, the glory that you reap there shall be your own for ever. Oaths ye have taken: now fulfil them all, to lord and land and league of friendship!’

Men clashed spear upon shield.

‘Éomer, my son! You lead the first *éored*,’ said Théoden; ‘and it shall go behind the king’s banner in the centre. Elfhelm, lead your company to the right when we pass the wall. And Grimbold shall lead his towards the left. Let the other companies behind follow these three that lead, as they have chance. Strike wherever the enemy gathers. Other plans we cannot make, for we know not yet how things stand upon the field. Forth now, and fear no darkness!’

The leading company rode off as swiftly as they could, for it was still deep dark, whatever change Widfara might forebode. Merry was riding behind Dernhelm, clutching with the left hand while with the other he tried to loosen his sword in its sheath. He felt now bitterly the truth of the old king’s words: *in such a battle what would you do, Meriadoc?* Just this,’ he thought: ‘encumber a rider, and hope at best to stay in my seat and not be pounded to death by galloping hoofs!’

It was no more than a league to where the out-walls had stood. They soon reached them; too soon for Merry. Wild cries broke out, and there was some clash of arms, but it was brief. The orcs busy about the walls were few and amazed, and they were quickly slain or driven off. Before the ruin of the north-gate in the Rammas the king halted again. The first *éored* drew up behind him and about him on either side. Dernhelm kept close to the king, though Elfhelm’s company was away on the right. Grimbold’s men turned aside and passed round to a great gap in the wall further eastward.

Merry peered from behind Dernhelm’s back. Far away, maybe ten miles or more, there was a great burning, but between it and the Riders lines of fire blazed in a vast crescent, at the nearest point less than a league distant. He could make out little more on the dark plain, and as yet he neither saw any hope of morning, nor felt any wind, changed or unchanged.

Now silently the host of Rohan moved forward into the field of Gondor, pouring in slowly but steadily, like the rising tide through breaches in a dike that men have thought secure. But the mind and will of the Black Captain were bent wholly on the falling city, and as yet no tidings came to him warning that his designs held any flaw.

After a while the king led his men away somewhat eastward, to come between the fires of the siege and the outer fields. Still they were unchallenged, and still Théoden gave no signal. At last he halted once again. The City was now nearer. A smell of burning was in the air and a very shadow of death. The horses were uneasy. But the king sat upon Snowmane, motionless, gazing upon the agony of Minas Tirith, as if stricken suddenly by anguish, or by dread. He seemed to shrink down, cowed by age. Merry himself felt as if a great weight of horror and doubt had settled on him. His heart beat slowly. Time seemed poised in uncertainty. They were too late! Too late was worse than never! Perhaps Théoden would quail, bow his old head, turn, slink away to hide in the hills.

Then suddenly Merry felt it at last, beyond doubt: a change. Wind was in his face! Light was glimmering. Far, far away, in the South the clouds could be dimly seen as remote grey shapes, rolling up, drifting: morning lay beyond them.

But at that same moment there was a flash, as if lightning had sprung from the earth beneath the City. For a searing second it stood dazzling far off in black and white, its topmost tower like a glittering needle; and then as the darkness closed again there came rolling over the fields a great *boom*.

At that sound the bent shape of the king sprang suddenly erect. Tall and proud he seemed again; and rising in his stirrups he cried in a loud voice, more clear than any there had ever heard a mortal man achieve before:

*Arise, arise, Riders of Théoden!  
Fell deeds awake: fire and slaughter!  
spear shall be shaken, shield be splintered,  
a sword-day, a red day, ere the sun rises!  
Ride now, ride now! Ride to Gondor!*

With that he seized a great horn from Guthláf his banner-bearer, and he blew such a blast upon it that it burst asunder. And straightway all the horns in the host were lifted up in music, and the blowing of the horns of Rohan in that hour was like a storm upon the plain and a thunder in the mountains.

*Ride now, ride now! Ride to Gondor!*

Suddenly the king cried to Snowmane and the horse sprang away. Behind him his banner blew in the wind, white horse upon a field of green, but he outpaced it. After him thundered the knights of his house, but he was ever before them. Éomer rode there, the white horsetail on his helm floating in his speed, and the front of the first *éored* roared like a breaker foaming to the shore, but Théoden could not be overtaken. Fey he seemed, or the battle-fury of his fathers ran like new fire in his veins, and he was borne up on Snowmane like a god of old, even as Oromë<sup>376</sup> the Great in the battle of the Valar when the world was young. His golden shield was uncovered, and lo! it shone like an image of the Sun, and the grass flamed into green about the white feet of his steed. For morning came, morning and a wind from the sea; and darkness was removed, and the hosts of Mordor wailed, and terror took them, and they fled, and died, and the hoofs of wrath rode over them. And then all the host of Rohan burst into song, and they sang as they slew, for the joy of battle was on them, and the sound of their singing that was fair and terrible came even to the City.



## Chapter 6: The Battle Of The Pelennor Fields

But it was no orc-chieftain or brigand that led the assault upon Gondor. The darkness was breaking too soon, before the date that his Master had set for it: fortune had betrayed him for the moment, and the world had turned against him; victory was slipping from his grasp even as he stretched out his hand to seize it. But his arm was long. He was still in command, wielding great powers. King, Ringwraith, Lord of the Nazgûl, he had many weapons. He left the Gate and vanished.

Théoden King of the Mark had reached the road from the Gate to the River, and he turned towards the City that was now less than a mile distant. He slackened his speed a little, seeking new foes, and his knights came about him, and Dernhelm was with them. Ahead nearer the walls Elfhelm's men were among the siege-engines, hewing, slaying, driving their foes into the fire-pits. Well nigh all the northern half of the Pelennor was overrun, and there camps were blazing, orcs were flying towards the River like herds before the hunters; and the Rohirrim went hither and thither at their will. But they had not yet overthrown the siege, nor won the Gate. Many foes stood before it, and on the further half of the plain were other hosts still unfought. Southward beyond the road lay the main force of the Haradrim, and there their horsemen were gathered about the standard of their chieftain. And he looked out, and in the growing light he saw the banner of the king, and that it was far ahead of the battle with few men about it. Then he was filled with a red wrath and shouted aloud, and displaying his standard, black serpent upon scarlet, he came against the white horse and the green with great press of men; and the drawing of the scimitars of the Southrons was like a glitter of stars.

Then Théoden was aware of him, and would not wait for his onset, but crying to Snowmane he charged headlong to greet him. Great was the clash of their meeting. But the white fury of the Northmen burned the hotter, and more skilled was their knighthood with long spears and bitter. Fewer were they but they clove through the Southrons like a fire-bolt in a forest. Right through the press drove Théoden Thengel's son, and his spear was shattered as he threw down their chieftain. Out swept his sword, and he spurred to the standard, hewed staff and bearer; and the black serpent foundered. Then all that was left unslain of their cavalry turned and fled far away.

But lo! suddenly in the midst of the glory of the king his golden shield was dimmed. The new morning was blotted from the sky. Dark fell about him. Horses reared and screamed. Men cast from the saddle lay grovelling on the ground.

'To me! To me!' cried Théoden. 'Up Eorlingas! Fear no darkness!' But Snowmane wild with terror stood up on high, fighting with the air, and then with a great scream he crashed upon his side: a black dart had pierced him. The king fell beneath him.

The great shadow descended like a falling cloud. And behold! it was a winged creature: if bird, then greater than all other birds, and it was naked, and neither quill nor feather did it bear, and its vast pinions were as webs of hide between horned fingers; and it stank. A creature of an older world maybe it was, whose kind, lingering in forgotten mountains cold beneath the Moon, outstayed their day, and in hideous eyrie bred this last untimely brood, apt to evil. And the Dark Lord took it, and nursed it with fell meats, until it grew beyond the measure of all other things that fly; and he gave it to his servant to be his steed. Down, down it came, and then, folding its fingered webs, it gave a croaking cry, and settled upon the body of Snowmane, digging in its claws, stooping its long naked neck.

Upon it sat a shape, black-mantled, huge and threatening. A crown of steel he bore, but between rim and robe naught was there to see, save only a deadly gleam of eyes: the Lord of the Nazgûl. To the air he had returned,

summoning his steed ere the darkness failed, and now he was come again, bringing ruin, turning hope to despair, and victory to death. A great black mace he wielded.

But Théoden was not utterly forsaken. The knights of his house lay slain about him, or else mastered by the madness of their steeds were borne far away. Yet one stood there still: Dernhelm the young, faithful beyond fear; and he wept, for he had loved his lord as a father. Right through the charge Merry had been borne unharmed behind him, until the Shadow came; and then Windfola had thrown them in his terror, and now ran wild upon the plain. Merry crawled on all fours like a dazed beast, and such a horror was on him that he was blind and sick.

‘King’s man! King’s man!’ his heart cried within him. ‘You must stay by him. As a father you shall be to me, you said.’ But his will made no answer, and his body shook. He dared not open his eyes or look up.

Then out of the blackness in his mind he thought that he heard Dernhelm speaking; yet now the voice seemed strange, recalling some other voice that he had known.

‘Begone, foul dwimmerlaik, lord of carrion! Leave the dead in peace!’

A cold voice answered: ‘Come not between the Nazgûl and his prey! Or he will not slay thee in thy turn. He will bear thee away to the houses of lamentation, beyond all darkness, where thy flesh shall be devoured, and thy shrivelled mind be left naked to the Lidless Eye.’

A sword rang as it was drawn. ‘Do what you will; but I will hinder it, if I may.’

‘Hinder me? Thou fool. No living man may hinder me!’

Then Merry heard of all sounds in that hour the strangest. It seemed that Dernhelm laughed, and the clear voice was like the ring of steel. ‘But no living man am I! You look upon a woman. Éowyn I am, Éomund’s daughter. You stand between me and my lord and kin. Begone, if you be not deathless! For living or dark undead, I will smite you, if you touch him.’

The winged creature screamed at her, but the Ringwraith made no answer, and was silent, as if in sudden doubt. Very amazement for a moment conquered Merry’s fear. He opened his eyes and the blackness was lifted from them. There some paces from him sat the great beast, and all seemed dark about it, and above it loomed the Nazgûl Lord like a shadow of despair. A little to the left facing them stood she whom he had called Dernhelm. But the helm of her secrecy had fallen from her, and her bright hair, released from its bonds, gleamed with pale gold upon her shoulders. Her eyes grey as the sea were hard and fell, and yet tears were on her cheek. A sword was in her hand, and she raised her shield against the horror of her enemy’s eyes.

Éowyn it was, and Dernhelm also. For into Merry’s mind flashed the memory of the face that he saw at the riding from Dunharrow: the face of one that goes seeking death, having no hope. Pity filled his heart and great wonder, and suddenly the slow-kindled courage of his race awoke. He clenched his hand. She should not die, so fair, so desperate! At least she should not die alone, unaided.

The face of their enemy was not turned towards him, but still he hardly dared to move, dreading lest the deadly eyes should fall on him. Slowly, slowly he began to crawl aside; but the Black Captain, in doubt and malice intent upon the woman before him, heeded him no more than a worm in the mud.

Suddenly the great beast beat its hideous wings, and the wind of them was foul. Again it leaped into the air, and then swiftly fell down upon Éowyn, shrieking, striking with beak and claw.

Still she did not blench: maiden of the Rohirrim, child of kings, slender but as a steel-blade, fair yet terrible. A swift stroke she dealt, skilled and deadly. The outstretched neck she clove asunder, and the hewn head fell like a stone. Backward she sprang as the huge shape crashed to ruin, vast wings outspread, crumpled on the earth; and with its fall the shadow passed away. A light fell about her, and her hair shone in the sunrise.

Out of the wreck rose the Black Rider, tall and threatening, towering above her. With a cry of hatred that stung the very ears like venom he let fall his mace. Her shield was shivered in many pieces, and her arm was broken; she stumbled to her knees. He bent over her like a cloud, and his eyes glittered; he raised his mace to kill.

But suddenly he too stumbled forward with a cry of bitter pain, and his stroke went wide, driving into the ground. Merry's sword had stabbed him from behind, shearing through the black mantle, and passing up beneath the hauberk had pierced the sinew behind his mighty knee.

'Éowyn! Éowyn!' cried Merry. Then tottering, struggling up, with her last strength she drove her sword between crown and mantle, as the great shoulders bowed before her. The sword broke sparkling into many shards. The crown rolled away with a clang. Éowyn fell forward upon her fallen foe. But lo! the mantle and hauberk were empty. Shapeless they lay now on the ground, torn and tumbled; and a cry went up into the shuddering air, and faded to a shrill wailing, passing with the wind, a voice bodiless and thin that died, and was swallowed up, and was never heard again in that age of this world.

And there stood Meriadoc the hobbit in the midst of the slain, blinking like an owl in the daylight, for tears blinded him; and through a mist he looked on Éowyn's fair head, as she lay and did not move; and he looked on the face of the king, fallen in the midst of his glory. For Snowmane in his agony had rolled away from him again; yet he was the bane of his master.

Then Merry stooped and lifted his hand to kiss it, and lo! Théoden opened his eyes, and they were clear, and he spoke in a quiet voice though laboured.

'Farewell, Master Holbytla!' he said. 'My body is broken. I go to my fathers. And even in their mighty company I shall not now be ashamed. I felled the black serpent. A grim morn, and a glad day, and a golden sunset!'

Merry could not speak, but wept anew. 'Forgive me, lord,' he said at last, 'if I broke your command, and yet have done no more in your service than to weep at our parting.'

The old king smiled. 'Grieve not! It is forgiven. Great heart will not be denied. Live now in blessedness; and when you sit in peace with your pipe, think of me! For never now shall I sit with you in Meduseld, as I promised, or listen to your herb-lore.' He closed his eyes, and Merry bowed beside him. Presently he spoke again. 'Where is Éomer? For my eyes darken, and I would see him ere I go. He must be king after me. And I would send word to Éowyn. She, she would not have me leave her, and now I shall not see her again, dearer than daughter.'

'Lord, lord,' began Merry brokenly, 'she is—'; but at that moment there was a great clamour, and all about them horns and trumpets were blowing. Merry looked round: he had forgotten the war, and all the world beside, and many hours it seemed since the king rode to his fall, though in truth it was only a little while. But now he saw that they were in danger of being caught in the very midst of the great battle that would soon be joined.

New forces of the enemy were hastening up the road from the River; and from under the walls came the legions of Morgul; and from the southward fields came footmen of Harad with horsemen before them, and behind them rose the huge backs of the *mûmakil* with war-towers upon them. But northward the white crest of Éomer led the great front of the Rohirrim which he had again gathered and marshalled; and out of the City came all the strength of men that was in it, and the silver swan of Dol Amroth was borne in the van, driving the enemy from the Gate.

For a moment the thought flitted through Merry's mind: 'Where is Gandalf? Is he not here? Could he not have saved the king and Éowyn?' But thereupon Éomer rode up in haste, and with him came the knights of the household that still lived and had now mastered their horses. They looked in wonder at the carcase of the fell beast that lay there; and their steeds would not go near. But Éomer leaped from the saddle, and grief and dismay fell upon him as he came to the king's side and stood there in silence.

Then one of the knights took the king's banner from the hand of Guthláf the banner-bearer who lay dead, and he lifted it up. Slowly Théoden opened his eyes. Seeing the banner he made a sign that it should be given to Éomer.

'Hail, King of the Mark!' he said. 'Ride now to victory! Bid Éowyn farewell!' And so he died, and knew not that Éowyn lay near him. And those who stood by wept, crying: 'Théoden King! Théoden King!'

But Éomer said to them:

*Mourn not overmuch! Mighty was the fallen,  
meet was his ending. When his mound is raised,  
women then shall weep. War now calls us!*

Yet he himself wept as he spoke. 'Let his knights remain here,' he said, 'and bear his body in honour from the field, lest the battle ride over it! Yea, and all these other of the king's men that lie here.' And he looked at the slain, recalling their names. Then suddenly he beheld his sister Éowyn as she lay, and he knew her. He stood a moment as a man who is pierced in the midst of a cry by an arrow through the heart; and then his face went deathly white, and a cold fury rose in him, so that all speech failed him for a while. A fey mood took him.

'Éowyn, Éowyn!' he cried at last. 'Éowyn, how come you here? What madness or devilry is this? Death, death, death! Death take us all!'

Then without taking counsel or waiting for the approach of the men of the City, he spurred headlong back to the front of the great host, and blew a horn, and cried aloud for the onset. Over the field rang his clear voice calling: 'Death! Ride, ride to ruin and the world's ending!'

And with that the host began to move. But the Rohirrim sang no more. *Death* they cried with one voice loud and terrible, and gathering speed like a great tide their battle swept about their fallen king and passed, roaring away southwards.

And still Meriadoc the hobbit stood there blinking through his tears, and no-one spoke to him, indeed none seemed to heed him. He brushed away the tears, and stooped to pick up the green shield that Éowyn had given him, and he slung it at his back. Then he looked for his sword that he had let fall; for even as he struck his blow his arm was numbed, and now he could only use his left hand. And behold! there lay his weapon, but the blade was smoking like a dry branch that has been thrust in a fire; and as he watched it, it writhed and withered and was consumed.

So passed the sword of the Barrow-downs, work of Westermesse. But glad would he have been to know its fate who wrought it slowly long ago in the North-kingdom when the Dúnedain were young, and chief among their foes was the dread realm of Angmar and its sorcerer king. No other blade, not though mightier hands had wielded it, would have dealt that foe a wound so bitter, cleaving the undead flesh, breaking the spell that knit his unseen sinews to his will.

Men now raised the king, and laying cloaks upon spear-truncheons they made shift to bear him away towards the City; and others lifted Éowyn gently up and bore her after him. But the men of the king's household they could not yet bring from the field; for seven of the king's knights had fallen there, and Déorwine their chief was among them. So they laid them apart from their foes and the fell beast and set spears about them. And afterwards when all was over men returned and made a fire there and burned the carcase of the beast; but for Snowmane they dug a grave and set up a stone upon which was carved in the tongues of Gondor and the Mark:

*Faithful servant yet master's bane,  
Lightfoot's foal, swift Snowmane.*

Green and long grew the grass on Snowmane's Howe, but ever black and bare was the ground where the beast was burned.

Now slowly and sadly Merry walked beside the bearers, and he gave no more heed to the battle. He was weary and full of pain, and his limbs trembled as with a chill. A great rain came out of the Sea, and it seemed that all things wept for Théoden and Éowyn, quenching the fires in the City with grey tears. It was through a mist that presently he saw the van of the men of Gondor approaching. Imrahil, Prince of Dol Amroth, rode up and drew rein before them.

'What burden do you bear, Men of Rohan?' he cried.

'Théoden King,' they answered. 'He is dead. But Éomer King now rides in the battle: he with the white crest in the wind.'

Then the prince went from his horse, and knelt by the bier in honour of the king and his great onset; and he wept. And rising he looked then on Éowyn and was amazed. 'Surely, here is a woman?' he said. 'Have even the women of the Rohirrim come to war in our need?'

'Nay! One only,' they answered. 'The Lady Éowyn is she, sister of Éomer; and we knew naught of her riding until this hour, and greatly we rue it.'

Then the prince seeing her beauty, though her face was pale and cold, touched her hand as he bent to look more closely on her. 'Men of Rohan!' he cried. 'Are there no leeches among you? She is hurt, to the death maybe, but I deem that she yet lives.' And he held the bright-burnished vambrace that was upon his arm before her cold lips, and behold! a little mist was laid on it hardly to be seen.

'Haste now is needed,' he said, and he sent one riding back swiftly to the City to bring aid. But he bowing low to the fallen, bade them farewell, and mounting rode away into battle.

And now the fighting waxed furious on the fields of the Pelennor; and the din of arms rose upon high, with the crying of men and the neighing of horses. Horns were blown and trumpets were braying, and the *mûmakil* were bellowing as they were goaded to war. Under the south walls of the City the footmen of Gondor now drove against the legions of Morgul that were still gathered there in strength. But the horsemen rode eastward to the succour of Éomer: Hùrin the Tall, Warden of the Keys, and the Lord of Lossarnach, and Hirluin of the Green Hills, and Prince Imrahil the fair with his knights all about him.

Not too soon came their aid to the Rohirrim; for fortune had turned against Éomer, and his fury had betrayed him. The great wrath of his onset had utterly overthrown the front of his enemies, and great wedges of his Riders had passed clear through the ranks of the Southrons, discomfiting their horsemen and riding their footmen to ruin. But wherever the *mûmakil* came there the horses would not go, but blenched and swerved away; and the great monsters were unfought, and stood like towers of defence, and the Haradrim rallied about them. And if the Rohirrim at their onset were thrice outnumbered by the Haradrim alone, soon their case became worse; for new strength came now streaming to the field out of Osgiliath. There they had been mustered for the sack of the City and the rape of Gondor, waiting on the call of their Captain. He now was destroyed; but Gothmog the lieutenant of Morgul had flung them into the fray; Easterlings with axes, and Variags of Khand, Southrons in scarlet, and out of Far Harad black men like half-trolls with white eyes and red tongues. Some now hastened up behind the Rohirrim, others held westward to hold off the forces of Gondor and prevent their joining with Rohan.

It was even as the day thus began to turn against Gondor and their hope wavered that a new cry went up in the City, it being then mid-morning, and a great wind blowing, and the rain flying north, and the sun shining. In that clear air watchmen on the walls saw afar a new sight of fear, and their last hope left them.

For Anduin, from the bend at the Harlond, so flowed that from the City men could look down it lengthwise for some leagues, and the far-sighted could see any ships that approached. And looking thither they cried in dismay; for black against the glittering stream they beheld a fleet borne up on the wind: dromunds, and ships of great draught with many oars, and with black sails bellying in the breeze.

'The Corsairs of Umbar!' men shouted. 'The Corsairs of Umbar! Look! The Corsairs of Umbar are coming! So Belfalas is taken, and the Ethir, and Lebennin is gone. The Corsairs are upon us! It is the last stroke of doom!'

And some without order, for none could be found to command them in the City, ran to the bells and tolled the alarm; and some blew the trumpets sounding the retreat. 'Back to the walls!' they cried. 'Back to the walls! Come back to the City before all are overwhelmed!' But the wind that sped the ships blew all their clamour away.

The Rohirrim indeed had no need of news or alarm. All too well they could see for themselves the black sails. For Éomer was now scarcely a mile from the Harlond, and a great press of his first foes was between him and the haven there, while new foes came swirling behind, cutting him off from the Prince. Now he looked to the River, and hope died in his heart, and the wind that he had blessed he now called accursed. But the hosts of Mordor were enheartened, and filled with a new lust and fury they came yelling to the onset.



Stern now was Éomer's mood, and his mind clear again. He let blow the horns to rally all men to his banner that could come thither; for he thought to make a great shield-wall at the last, and stand, and fight there on foot till all fell, and do deeds of song on the fields of Pelennor, though no man should be left in the West to remember the last King of the Mark. So he rode to a green hillock and there set his banner, and the White Horse ran rippling in the wind.

*Out of doubt, out of dark to the day's rising  
I came singing in the sun, sword unsheathing.  
To hope's end I rode and to heart's breaking:  
Now for wrath, now for ruin and a red nightfall!*

These staves he spoke, yet he laughed as he said them. For once more lust of battle was on him; and he was still unscathed, and he was young, and he was king: the lord of a fell people. And lo! even as he laughed at despair he looked out again on the black ships, and he lifted up his sword to defy them.

And then wonder took him, and a great joy; and he cast his sword up in the sunlight and sang as he caught it. And all eyes followed his gaze, and behold! upon the foremost ship a great standard broke, and the wind displayed it as she turned towards the Harlond. There flowered a White Tree, and that was for Gondor; but Seven Stars were about it, and a high crown above it, the signs of Elendil that no lord had borne for years beyond count. And the stars<sup>382</sup> flamed in the sunlight, for they were wrought of gems by Arwen daughter of Elrond; and the crown was bright in the morning, for it was wrought of mithril and gold.

Thus came Aragorn son of Arathorn, Elessar, Isildur's heir, out of the Paths of the Dead, borne upon a wind from the Sea to the kingdom of Gondor; and the mirth of the Rohirrim was a torrent of laughter and a flashing of swords, and the joy and wonder of the City was a music of trumpets and a ringing of bells. But the hosts of Mordor were seized with bewilderment, and a great wizardry it seemed to them that their own ships should be filled with their foes; and a black dread fell on them, knowing that the tides of fate had turned against them and their doom was at hand.

East rode the knights of Dol Amroth driving the enemy before them: troll-men and Variags and orcs that hated the sunlight. South strode Éomer and men fled before his face, and they were caught between the hammer and the anvil. For now men leaped from the ships to the quays of the Harlond and swept north like a storm. There came Legolas, and Gimli wielding his axe, and Halbarad with the standard, and Elladan and Elrohir with stars on their brow, and the dour-handed Dúnedain, Rangers of the North, leading a great valour of the folk of Lebennin and Lamedon and the fiefs of the South. But before all went Aragorn with the Flame of the West, Andúril like a new fire kindled, Narsil re-forged as deadly as of old; and upon his brow was the Star of Elendil.

And so at length Éomer and Aragorn met in the midst of the battle, and they leaned on their swords and looked on one another and were glad.

‘Thus we meet again, though all the hosts of Mordor lay between us,’ said Aragorn. ‘Did I not say so at the Hornburg?’

‘So you spoke,’ said Éomer, ‘but hope oft deceives, and I knew not then that you were a man foresighted. Yet twice blessed is help unlooked for, and never was a meeting of friends more joyful.’ And they clasped hand in hand. ‘Nor indeed more timely,’ said Éomer. ‘You come none too soon, my friend. Much loss and sorrow has befallen us.’

‘Then let us avenge it, ere we speak of it!’ said Aragorn, and they rode back to battle together.

Hard fighting and long labour they had still; for the Southrons were bold men and grim, and fierce in despair; and the Easterlings were strong and war-hardened and asked for no quarter. And so in this place and that, by burned homestead or barn, upon hillock or mound, under wall or on field, still they gathered and rallied and fought until the day wore away.

Then the Sun went at last behind Mindolluin and filled all the sky with a great burning, so that the hills and the mountains were dyed as with blood; fire glowed in the River, and the grass of the Pelennor lay red in the nightfall. And in that hour the great Battle of the field of Gondor was over; and not one living foe was left

within the circuit of the Rammas. All were slain save those who fled to die, or to drown in the red foam of the River. Few ever came eastward to Morgul or Mordor; and to the land of the Haradrim came only a tale from far off: a rumour of the wrath and terror of Gondor.

Aragorn and Éomer and Imrahil rode back towards the Gate of the City, and they were now weary beyond joy or sorrow. These three were unscathed, for such was their fortune and the skill and might of their arms, and few indeed had dared to abide them or look on their faces in the hour of their wrath. But many others were hurt or maimed or dead upon the field. The axes hewed Forlong as he fought alone and unhorsed; and both Duilin of Morthond and his brother were trampled to death when they assailed the *mûmakil*, leading their bowmen close to shoot at the eyes of the monsters. Neither Hirluin the fair would return to Pinnath Gelin, nor Grimbold to Grimslade, nor Halbarad to the Northlands, dour-handed Ranger. No few had fallen, renowned or nameless, captain or soldier; for it was a great battle and the full count of it no tale has told. So long afterward a maker in Rohan said in his song of the Mounds of Mundburg:

*We heard of the horns in the hills ringing,  
the swords shining in the South-kingdom.  
Steeds went striding to the Stoningland  
as wind in the morning. War was kindled.  
There Théoden fell, Thengling mighty,  
to his golden halls and green pastures  
in the Northern fields never returning,  
high lord of the host. Harding and Guthláf,  
Dúnhere and Déorwine, doughty Grimbold,  
Herefara and Herubrand, Horn and Fastred,  
fought and fell there in a far country:  
in the Mounds of Mundburg under mould they lie  
with their league-fellows, lords of Gondor.  
Neither Hirluin the Fair to the hills by the sea,  
nor Forlong the old to the flowering vales  
ever, to Arnach, to his own country  
returned in triumph; nor the tall bowmen,  
Derufin and Duilin, to their dark waters,  
meres of Morthond under mountain-shadows.  
Death in the morning and at day's ending  
lords took and lowly. Long now they sleep  
under grass in Gondor by the Great River.  
Grey now as tears, gleaming silver,  
red then it rolled, roaring water:  
foam dyed with blood flamed at sunset;  
as beacons mountains burned at evening;  
red fell the dew in Rammas Echor.*



## Chapter 7: The Pyre Of Denethor

When the dark shadow at the Gate withdrew Gandalf still sat motionless. But Pippin rose to his feet, as if a great weight had been lifted from him; and he stood listening to the horns, and it seemed to him that they would break his heart with joy. And never in after years could he hear a horn blown in the distance without tears starting in his eyes. But now suddenly his errand returned to his memory, and he ran forward. At that moment Gandalf stirred and spoke to Shadowfax, and was about to ride through the Gate.

‘Gandalf, Gandalf!’ cried Pippin, and Shadowfax halted.

‘What are you doing here?’ said Gandalf. ‘Is it not a law in the City that those who wear the black and silver must stay in the Citadel, unless their lord gives them leave?’

‘He has,’ said Pippin. ‘He sent me away. But I am frightened. Something terrible may happen up there. The Lord is out of his mind, I think. I am afraid he will kill himself, and kill Faramir too. Can’t you do something?’

Gandalf looked through the gaping Gate, and already on the fields he heard the gathering sound of battle. He clenched his hand. ‘I must go,’ he said. ‘The Black Rider is abroad, and he will yet bring ruin on us. I have no time.’

‘But Faramir!’ cried Pippin. ‘He is not dead, and they will burn him alive, if someone does not stop them.’

‘Burn him alive?’ said Gandalf. ‘What is this tale? Be quick!’

‘Denethor has gone to the Tombs,’ said Pippin, ‘and he has taken Faramir, and he says we are all to burn, and he will not wait, and they are to make a pyre and burn him on it, and Faramir as well. And he has sent men to fetch wood and oil. And I have told Beregon, but I’m afraid he won’t dare to leave his post: he is on guard. And what can he do anyway?’ So Pippin poured out his tale, reaching up and touching Gandalf’s knee with trembling hands. ‘Can’t you save Faramir?’

‘Maybe I can,’ said Gandalf; ‘but if I do, then others will die, I fear. Well, I must come, since no other help can reach him. But evil and sorrow will come of this. Even in the heart of our stronghold the Enemy has power to strike us: for his will it is that is at work.’

Then having made up his mind he acted swiftly; and catching up Pippin and setting him before him, he turned Shadowfax with a word. Up the climbing streets of Minas Tirith they clattered, while the noise of war rose behind them. Everywhere men were rising from their despair and dread, seizing their weapons, crying one to another: ‘Rohan has come!’ Captains were shouting, companies were mustering; many already were marching down to the Gate.

They met the Prince Imrahil, and he called to them: ‘Whither now, Mithrandir? The Rohirrim are fighting on the fields of Gondor! We must gather all the strength that we can find.’

‘You will need every man and more,’ said Gandalf. ‘Make all haste. I will come when I can. But I have an errand to the Lord Denethor that will not wait. Take command in the Lord’s absence!’

They passed on; and as they climbed and drew near to the Citadel they felt the wind blowing in their faces, and they caught the glimmer of morning far away, a light growing in the southern sky. But it brought little hope to them, not knowing what evil lay before them, fearing to come too late.

‘Darkness is passing,’ said Gandalf, ‘but it still lies heavy on this City.’

At the gate of the Citadel they found no guard. 'Then Beregonnd has gone,' said Pippin more hopefully. They turned away and hastened along the road to the Closed Door. It stood wide open, and the porter lay before it. He was slain and his key had been taken.

'Work of the Enemy!' said Gandalf. 'Such deeds he loves: friend at war with friend; loyalty divided in confusion of hearts.' Now he dismounted and bade Shadowfax return to his stable. 'For, my friend,' he said, 'you and I should have ridden to the fields long ago, but other matters delay me. Yet come swiftly if I call!'

They passed the Door and walked on down the steep winding road. Light was growing, and the tall columns and carven figures beside the way went slowly by like grey ghosts.

Suddenly the silence was broken, and they heard below them cries and the ringing of swords: such sounds as had not been heard in the hallowed places since the building of the City. At last they came to Rath Dínen and hastened towards the House of the Stewards, looming in the twilight under its great dome.

'Stay! Stay!' cried Gandalf, springing forward to the stone stair before the door. 'Stay this madness!'

For there were the servants of Denethor with swords and torches in their hands; but alone in the porch upon the topmost step stood Beregonnd, clad in the black and silver of the Guard; and he held the door against them. Two of them had already fallen to his sword, staining the hallows with their blood; and the others cursed him, calling him outlaw and traitor to his master.

Even as Gandalf and Pippin ran forward, they heard from within the house of the dead the voice of Denethor crying: 'Haste, haste! Do as I have bidden! Slay me this renegade! Or must I do so myself?' Thereupon the door which Beregonnd held shut with his left hand was wrenched open, and there behind him stood the Lord of the City, tall and fell; a light like flame was in his eyes, and he held a drawn sword.

But Gandalf sprang up the steps, and the men fell back from him and covered their eyes; for his coming was like the incoming of a white light into a dark place, and he came with great anger. He lifted up his hand, and in the very stroke, the sword of Denethor flew up and left his grasp and fell behind him in the shadows of the house; and Denethor stepped backward before Gandalf as one amazed.

'What is this, my lord?' said the wizard. 'The houses of the dead are no places for the living. And why do men fight here in the Hallows when there is war enough before the Gate? Or has our Enemy come even to Rath Dínen?'

'Since when has the Lord of Gondor been answerable to thee?' said Denethor. 'Or may I not command my own servants?'

'You may,' said Gandalf. 'But others may contest your will, when it is turned to madness and evil. Where is your son, Faramir?'

'He lies within,' said Denethor, 'burning, already burning. They have set a fire in his flesh. But soon all shall be burned. The West has failed. It shall all go up in a great fire, and all shall be ended. Ash! Ash and smoke blown away on the wind!'

Then Gandalf seeing the madness that was on him feared that he had already done some evil deed, and he thrust forward, with Beregonnd and Pippin behind him, while Denethor gave back until he stood beside the table within. But there they found Faramir, still dreaming in his fever, lying upon the table. Wood was piled under it, and high all about it, and all was drenched with oil, even the garments of Faramir and the coverlets; but as yet no fire had been set to the fuel. Then Gandalf revealed the strength that lay hid in him, even as the light of his power was hidden under his grey mantle. He leaped up on to the faggots, and raising the sick man lightly he sprang down again, and bore him towards the door. But as he did so Faramir moaned and called on his father in his dream.

Denethor started as one waking from a trance, and the flame died in his eyes, and he wept; and he said: 'Do not take my son from me! He calls for me.'

‘He calls,’ said Gandalf, ‘but you cannot come to him yet. For he must seek healing on the threshold of death, and maybe find it not. Whereas your part is to go out to the battle of your City, where maybe death awaits you. This you know in your heart.’

‘He will not wake again,’ said Denethor. ‘Battle is vain. Why should we wish to live longer? Why should we not go to death side by side?’

‘Authority is not given to you, Steward of Gondor, to order the hour of your death,’ answered Gandalf. ‘And only the heathen kings, under the domination of the Dark Power, did thus, slaying themselves in pride and despair, murdering their kin to ease their own death.’ Then passing through the door he took Faramir from the deadly house and laid him on the bier on which he had been brought, and which had now been set in the porch. Denethor followed him, and stood trembling, looking with longing on the face of his son. And for a moment, while all were silent and still, watching the Lord in his throes, he wavered.

‘Come!’ said Gandalf. ‘We are needed. There is much that you can yet do.’

Then suddenly Denethor laughed. He stood up tall and proud again, and stepping swiftly back to the table he lifted from it the pillow on which his head had lain. Then coming to the doorway he drew aside the covering, and lo! he had between his hands a *palantír*. And as he held it up, it seemed to those that looked on that the globe began to glow with an inner flame, so that the lean face of the Lord was lit as with a red fire, and it seemed cut out of hard stone, sharp with black shadows, noble, proud, and terrible. His eyes glittered.

‘Pride and despair!’ he cried. ‘Didst thou think that the eyes of the White Tower were blind? Nay, I have seen more than thou knowest, Grey Fool. For thy hope is but ignorance. Go then and labour in healing! Go forth and fight! Vanity. For a little space you may triumph on the field, for a day. But against the Power that now arises there is no victory. To this City only the first finger of its hand has yet been stretched. All the East is moving. And even now the wind of thy hope cheats thee and wafts up Anduin a fleet with black sails. The West has failed. It is time for all to depart who would not be slaves.’

‘Such counsels will make the Enemy’s victory certain indeed,’ said Gandalf.

‘Hope on then!’ laughed Denethor. ‘Do I not know thee, Mithrandir? Thy hope is to rule in my stead, to stand behind every throne, north, south, or west. I have read thy mind and its policies. Do I not know that this halfling was commanded by thee to keep silence? That he was brought hither to be a spy within my very chamber? And yet in our speech together I have learned the names and purpose of all thy companions. So! With the left hand thou wouldst use me for a little while as a shield against Mordor, and with the right bring up this Ranger of the North to supplant me.

‘But I say to thee, Gandalf Mithrandir, I will not be thy tool! I am Steward of the House of Anárion. I will not step down to be the dotard chamberlain of an upstart. Even were his claim proved to me, still he comes but of the line of Isildur. I will not bow to such a one, last of a ragged house long bereft of lordship and dignity.’

‘What then would you have,’ said Gandalf, ‘if your will could have its way?’

‘I would have things as they were in all the days of my life,’ answered Denethor, ‘and in the days of my longfathers before me: to be the Lord of this City in peace, and leave my chair to a son after me, who would be his own master and no wizard’s pupil. But if doom denies this to me, then I will have *naught*: neither life diminished, nor love halved, nor honour abated.’

‘To me it would not seem that a Steward who faithfully surrenders his charge is diminished in love or in honour,’ said Gandalf. ‘And at the least you shall not rob your son of his choice while his death is still in doubt.’

At those words Denethor’s eyes flamed again, and taking the Stone under his arm he drew a knife and strode towards the bier. But Beregon sprang forward and set himself before Faramir.

‘So!’ cried Denethor. ‘Thou hadst already stolen half my son’s love. Now thou stealest the hearts of my knights also, so that they rob me wholly of my son at the last. But in this at least thou shalt not defy my will: to rule my own end.’

‘Come hither!’ he cried to his servants. ‘Come, if you are not all recreant!’ Then two of them ran up the steps to him. Swiftly he snatched a torch from the hand of one and sprang back into the house. Before Gandalf could hinder him he thrust the brand amid the fuel, and at once it crackled and roared into flame.

Then Denethor leaped upon the table, and standing there wreathed in fire and smoke he took up the staff of his stewardship that lay at his feet and broke it on his knee. Casting the pieces into the blaze he bowed and laid himself on the table, clasping the *palantír* with both hands upon his breast. And it was said that ever after, if any man looked in that Stone, unless he had a great strength of will to turn it to other purpose, he saw only two aged hands withering in flame.

Gandalf in grief and horror turned his face away and closed the door. For a while he stood in thought, silent upon the threshold, while those outside heard the greedy roaring of the fire within. And then Denethor gave a great cry, and afterwards spoke no more, nor was ever again seen by mortal men.

‘So passes Denethor, son of Ecthelion,’ said Gandalf. Then he turned to Beregond and the Lord’s servants that stood there aghast. ‘And so pass also the days of Gondor that you have known; for good or evil they are ended. Ill deeds have been done here; but let now all enmity that lies between you be put away, for it was contrived by the Enemy and works his will. You have been caught in a net of warring duties that you did not weave. But think, you servants of the Lord, blind in your obedience, that but for the treason of Beregond Faramir, Captain of the White Tower, would now also be burned.

‘Bear away from this unhappy place your comrades who have fallen. And we will bear Faramir, Steward of Gondor, to a place where he can sleep in peace, or die if that be his doom.’

Then Gandalf and Beregond taking up the bier bore it away towards the Houses of Healing, while behind them walked Pippin with downcast head. But the servants of the Lord stood gazing as stricken men at the house of the dead; and even as Gandalf came to the end of Rath Dínen there was a great noise. Looking back they saw the dome of the house crack and smokes issue forth; and then with a rush and rumble of stone it fell in a flurry of fire; but still unabated the flames danced and flickered among the ruins. Then in terror the servants fled and followed Gandalf.

At length they came back to the Steward’s Door, and Beregond looked with grief at the porter. ‘This deed I shall ever rue,’ he said; ‘but a madness of haste was on me, and he would not listen, but drew sword against me.’ Then taking the key that he had wrested from the slain man he closed the door and locked it. ‘This should now be given to the Lord Faramir,’ he said.

‘The Prince of Dol Amroth is in command in the absence of the Lord,’ said Gandalf; ‘but since he is not here, I must take this on myself. I bid you keep the key and guard it, until the City is set in order again.’

Now at last they passed into the high circles of the City, and in the light of morning they went their way towards the Houses of Healing; and these were fair houses set apart for the care of those who were grievously sick, but now they were prepared for the tending of men hurt in battle or dying. They stood not far from the Citadel-gate, in the sixth circle, nigh to its southward wall, and about them was a garden and a greensward with trees, the only such place in the City. There dwelt the few women that had been permitted to remain in Minas Tirith, since they were skilled in healing or in the service of the healers.

But even as Gandalf and his companions came carrying the bier to the main door of the Houses, they heard a great cry that went up from the field before the Gate and rising shrill and piercing into the sky passed, and died away on the wind. So terrible was the cry that for a moment all stood still, and yet when it had passed, suddenly their hearts were lifted up in such a hope as they had not known since the darkness came out of the East; and it seemed to them that the light grew clear and the sun broke through the clouds.

But Gandalf’s face was grave and sad, and bidding Beregond and Pippin to take Faramir into the Houses of Healing, he went up on to the walls nearby; and there like a figure carven in white he stood in the new sun and looked out. And he beheld with the sight that was given to him all that had befallen; and when Éomer rode out from the forefront of his battle and stood beside those who lay upon the field, he sighed, and he cast his cloak about him again, and went from the walls. And Beregond and Pippin found him standing in thought before the door of the Houses when they came out.

They looked at him, and for a while he was silent. At last he spoke. 'My friends,' he said, 'and all you people of this city and of the Western lands! Things of great sorrow and renown have come to pass. Shall we weep or be glad? Beyond hope the Captain of our foes has been destroyed, and you have heard the echo of his last despair. But he has not gone without woe and bitter loss. And that I might have averted but for the madness of Denethor. So long has the reach of our Enemy become! Alas! but now I perceive how his will was able to enter into the very heart of the City.

'Though the Stewards deemed that it was a secret kept only by themselves, long ago I guessed that here in the White Tower, one at least of the Seven Seeing Stones was preserved. In the days of his wisdom Denethor would not presume to use it to challenge Sauron, knowing the limits of his own strength. But his wisdom failed; and I fear that as the peril of his realm grew he looked in the Stone and was deceived: far too often, I guess, since Boromir departed. He was too great to be subdued to the will of the Dark Power, he saw nonetheless only those things which that Power permitted him to see. The knowledge which he obtained was, doubtless, often of service to him; yet the vision of the great might of Mordor that was shown to him fed the despair of his heart until it overthrew his mind.'

'Now I understand what seemed so strange to me!' said Pippin, shuddering at his memories as he spoke. 'The Lord went away from the room where Faramir lay; and it was only when he returned that I first thought he was changed, old and broken.'

'It was in the very hour that Faramir was brought to the Tower that many of us saw a strange light in the topmost chamber,' said Beregon. 'But we have seen that light before, and it has long been rumoured in the City that the Lord would at times wrestle in thought with his Enemy.'

'Alas! then I have guessed rightly,' said Gandalf. 'Thus the will of Sauron entered into Minas Tirith; and thus I have been delayed here. And here I shall still be forced to remain, for I shall soon have other charges, not Faramir only.

'Now I must go down to meet those who come. I have seen a sight upon the field that is very grievous to my heart, and greater sorrow may yet come to pass. Come with me, Pippin! But you, Beregon, should return to the Citadel and tell the chief of the Guard there what has befallen. It will be his duty, I fear, to withdraw you from the Guard; but say to him that, if I may give him counsel, you should be sent to the Houses of Healing, to be the guard and servant of your captain, and to be at his side when he awakes—if that shall ever be again. For by you he was saved from the fire. Go now! I shall return soon.'

With that he turned away and went with Pippin down towards the lower city. And even as they hastened on their way the wind brought a grey rain, and all the fires sank, and there arose a great smoke before them.



## Chapter 8: The Houses Of Healing

A mist was in Merry's eyes of tears and weariness when they drew near the ruined Gate of Minas Tirith. He gave little heed to the wreck and slaughter that lay about all. Fire and smoke and stench was in the air; for many engines had been burned or cast into the fire-pits, and many of the slain also, while here and there lay many carcasses of the great Southron monsters, half-burned, or broken by stone-cast, or shot through the eyes by the valiant archers of Morthond. The flying rain had ceased for a time, and the sun gleamed up above; but all the lower city was still wrapped in a smouldering reek.

Already men were labouring to clear a way through the jetsam of battle; and now out from the Gate came some bearing litters. Gently they laid Éowyn upon soft pillows; but the king's body they covered with a great cloth of gold, and they bore torches about him, and their flames, pale in the sunlight, were fluttered by the wind.

So Théoden and Éowyn came to the City of Gondor, and all who saw them bared their heads and bowed; and they passed through the ash and fume of the burned circle, and went on and up along the streets of stone. To Merry the ascent seemed agelong, a meaningless journey in a hateful dream, going on and on to some dim ending that memory cannot seize.

Slowly the lights of the torches in front of him flickered and went out, and he was walking in a darkness; and he thought: 'This is a tunnel leading to a tomb; there we shall stay for ever.' But suddenly into his dream there fell a living voice.

'Well, Merry! Thank goodness I have found you!'

He looked up and the mist before his eyes cleared a little. There was Pippin! They were face to face in a narrow lane, and but for themselves it was empty. He rubbed his eyes.

'Where is the king?' he said. 'And Éowyn?' Then he stumbled and sat down on a doorstep and began to weep again.

'They have gone up into the Citadel,' said Pippin. 'I think you must have fallen asleep on your feet and taken the wrong turning. When we found that you were not with them, Gandalf sent me to look for you. Poor old Merry! How glad I am to see you again! But you are worn out, and I won't bother you with any talk. But tell me, are you hurt, or wounded?'

'No,' said Merry. 'Well, no, I don't think so. But I can't use my right arm, Pippin, not since I stabbed him. And my sword burned all away like a piece of wood.'

Pippin's face was anxious. 'Well, you had better come with me as quick as you can,' he said. 'I wish I could carry you. You aren't fit to walk any further. They shouldn't have let you walk at all; but you must forgive them. So many dreadful things have happened in the City, Merry, that one poor hobbit coming in from the battle is easily overlooked.'

'It's not always a misfortune being overlooked,' said Merry. 'I was overlooked just now by—no, no, I can't speak of it. Help me, Pippin! It's all going dark again, and my arm is so cold.'

'Lean on me, Merry lad!' said Pippin. 'Come now! Foot by foot. It's not far.'

'Are you going to bury me?' said Merry.

'No, indeed!' said Pippin, trying to sound cheerful, though his heart was wrung with fear and pity. 'No, we are going to the Houses of Healing.'



They turned out of the lane that ran between tall houses and the outer wall of the fourth circle, and they regained the main street climbing up to the Citadel. Step by step they went, while Merry swayed and murmured as one in sleep.

‘I’ll never get him there,’ thought Pippin. ‘Is there no-one to help me? I can’t leave him here.’ Just then to his surprise a boy came running up behind, and as he passed he recognized Bergil Beregond’s son.

‘Hullo, Bergil!’ he called. ‘Where are you going? Glad to see you again, and still alive!’

‘I am running errands for the Healers,’ said Bergil. ‘I cannot stay.’

‘Don’t!’ said Pippin. ‘But tell them up there that I have a sick hobbit, a *perian* mind you, come from the battle-field. I don’t think he can walk so far. If Mithrandir is there, he will be glad of the message.’ Bergil ran on.

‘I’d better wait here,’ thought Pippin. So he let Merry sink gently down on to the pavement in a patch of sunlight, and then he sat down beside him, laying Merry’s head in his lap. He felt his body and limbs gently, and took his friend’s hands in his own. The right hand felt icy to the touch.

It was not long before Gandalf himself came in search of them. He stooped over Merry and caressed his brow; then he lifted him carefully. ‘He should have been borne in honour into this city,’ he said. ‘He has well repaid my trust; for if Elrond had not yielded to me, neither of you would have set out; and then far more grievous would the evils of this day have been.’ He sighed. ‘And yet here is another charge on my hands, while all the time the battle hangs in the balance.’

So at last Faramir and Éowyn and Meriadoc were laid in beds in the Houses of Healing; and there they were tended well. For though all lore was in these latter days fallen from its fullness of old, the leechcraft of Gondor was still wise, and skilled in the healing of wound and hurt, and all such sickness as east of the Sea mortal men were subject to. Save old age only. For that they had found no cure; and indeed the span of their lives had now waned to little more than that of other men, and those among them who passed the tale of five score years with vigour were grown few, save in some houses of purer blood. But now their art and knowledge were baffled; for there were many sick of a malady that would not be healed; and they called it the Black Shadow, for it came from the Nazgûl. And those who were stricken with it fell slowly into an ever deeper dream, and then passed to silence and a deadly cold, and so died. And it seemed to the tenders of the sick that on the Halfling and on the Lady of Rohan this malady lay heavily. Still at whiles as the morning wore away they would speak, murmuring in their dreams; and the watchers listened to all that they said, hoping perhaps to learn something that would help them to understand their hurts. But soon they began to fall down into the darkness, and as the sun turned west a grey shadow crept over their faces. But Faramir burned with a fever that would not abate.

Gandalf went from one to the other full of care, and he was told all that the watchers could hear. And so the day passed, while the great battle outside went on with shifting hopes and strange tidings; and still Gandalf waited and watched and did not go forth; till at last the red sunset filled all the sky, and the light through the windows fell on the grey faces of the sick. Then it seemed to those who stood by that in the glow the faces flushed softly as with health returning, but it was only a mockery of hope.

Then an old wife, Ioreth, the eldest of the women who served in that house, looking on the fair face of Faramir, wept, for all the people loved him. And she said: ‘Alas! if he should die. Would that there were kings in Gondor, as there were once upon a time, they say! For it is said in old lore: *The hands of the king are the hands of a healer*. And so the rightful king could ever be known.’

And Gandalf, who stood by, said: ‘Men may long remember your words, Ioreth! For there is hope in them. Maybe a king has indeed returned to Gondor; or have you not heard the strange tidings that have come to the City?’

‘I have been too busy with this and that to heed all the crying and shouting,’ she answered. ‘All I hope is that those murdering devils do not come to this House and trouble the sick.’

Then Gandalf went out in haste, and already the fire in the sky was burning out, and the smouldering hills were fading, while ash-grey evening crept over the fields.

Now as the sun went down Aragorn and Éomer and Imrahil drew near the City with their captains and knights; and when they came before the Gate Aragorn said:

‘Behold the Sun setting in a great fire! It is a sign of the end and fall of many things, and a change in the tides of the world. But this City and realm has rested in the charge of the Stewards for many long years, and I fear that if I enter it unbidden, then doubt and debate may arise, which should not be while this war is fought. I will not enter in, nor make any claim, until it be seen whether we or Mordor shall prevail. Men shall pitch my tents upon the field, and here I will await the welcome of the Lord of the City.’

But Éomer said: ‘Already you have raised the banner of the Kings and displayed the tokens of Elendil’s House. Will you suffer these to be challenged?’

‘No,’ said Aragorn. ‘But I deem the time unripe; and I have no mind for strife except with our Enemy and his servants.’

And the Prince Imrahil said: ‘Your words, lord, are wise, if one who is a kinsman of the Lord Denethor may counsel you in this matter. He is strong-willed and proud, but old; and his mood has been strange since his son was stricken down. Yet I would not have you remain like a beggar at the door.’

‘Not a beggar,’ said Aragorn. ‘Say a captain of the Rangers, who are unused to cities and houses of stone.’ And he commanded that his banner should be furled; and he did off the Star of the North Kingdom and gave it to the keeping of the sons of Elrond.

Then the Prince Imrahil and Éomer of Rohan left him and passed through the City and the tumult of the people, and mounted to the Citadel; and they came to the Hall of the Tower, seeking the Steward. But they found his chair empty, and before the dais lay Théoden King of the Mark upon a bed of state; and twelve torches stood about it, and twelve guards, knights both of Rohan and Gondor. And the hangings of the bed were of green and white, but upon the king was laid the great cloth of gold up to his breast, and upon that his unsheathed sword, and at his feet his shield. The light of the torches shimmered in his white hair like sun in the spray of a fountain, but his face was fair and young, save that a peace lay on it beyond the reach of youth; and it seemed that he slept.

When they had stood silent for a time beside the king, Imrahil said: ‘Where is the Steward? And where also is Mithrandir?’

And one of the guards answered: ‘The Steward of Gondor is in the Houses of Healing.’

But Éomer said: ‘Where is the Lady Éowyn, my sister; for surely she should be lying beside the king, and in no less honour? Where have they bestowed her?’

And Imrahil said: ‘But the Lady Éowyn was yet living when they bore her hither. Did you not know?’

Then hope unlooked-for came so suddenly to Éomer’s heart, and with it the bite of care and fear renewed, that he said no more, but turned and went swiftly from the hall; and the Prince followed him. And when they came forth evening had fallen and many stars were in the sky. And there came Gandalf on foot and with him one cloaked in grey; and they met before the doors of the Houses of Healing. And they greeted Gandalf and said: ‘We seek the Steward, and men say that he is in this House. Has any hurt befallen him? And the Lady Éowyn, where is she?’

And Gandalf answered: ‘She lies within and is not dead, but is near death. But the Lord Faramir was wounded by an evil dart, as you have heard, and he is now the Steward; for Denethor has departed, and his house is in ashes.’ And they were filled with grief and wonder at the tale that he told.

But Imrahil said: ‘So victory is shorn of gladness, and it is bitter bought, if both Gondor and Rohan are in one day bereft of their lords. Éomer rules the Rohirrim. Who shall rule the City meanwhile? Shall we not send now for the Lord Aragorn?’

And the cloaked man spoke and said: ‘He is come.’ And they saw as he stepped into the light of the lantern by the door that it was Aragorn, wrapped in the grey cloak of Lórien above his mail, and bearing no other token than the green stone of Galadriel. ‘I have come because Gandalf begs me to do so,’ he said. ‘But for the present

I am but the Captain of the Dúnedain of Arnor; and the Lord of Dol Amroth shall rule the City until Faramir awakes. But it is my counsel that Gandalf should rule us all in the days that follow and in our dealings with the Enemy.' And they agreed upon that.

Then Gandalf said: 'Let us not stay at the door, for the time is urgent. Let us enter! For it is only in the coming of Aragorn that any hope remains for the sick that lie in the House. Thus spake Ioreth, wise-woman of Gondor: *The hands of the king are the hands of a healer, and so shall the rightful king be known.*'

Then Aragorn entered first and the others followed. And there at the door were two guards in the livery of the Citadel: one tall, but the other scarce the height of a boy; and when he saw them he cried aloud in surprise and joy.

'Strider! How splendid! Do you know, I guessed it was you in the black ships. But they were all shouting *corsairs* and wouldn't listen to me. How did you do it?'

Aragorn laughed, and took the hobbit by the hand. 'Well met indeed!' he said. 'But there is not time yet for travellers' tales.'

But Imrahil said to Éomer: 'Is it thus that we speak to our kings? Yet maybe he will wear his crown in some other name!'

And Aragorn hearing him, turned and said: 'Verily, for in the high tongue of old I am *Ellessar*, the Elfstone, and *Envinyatar*, the Renewer': and he lifted from his breast the green stone that lay there. 'But Strider shall be the name of my house, if that be ever established. In the high tongue it will not sound so ill, and *Telcontar* I will be and all the heirs of my body.'

And with that they passed into the House; and as they went towards the rooms where the sick were tended Gandalf told of the deeds of Éowyn and Meriadoc. 'For,' he said, 'long have I stood by them, and at first they spoke much in their dreaming, before they sank into the deadly darkness. Also it is given to me to see many things far off.'

Aragorn went first to Faramir, and then to the Lady Éowyn, and last to Merry. When he had looked on the faces of the sick and seen their hurts he sighed. 'Here I must put forth all such power and skill as is given to me,' he said. 'Would that Elrond were here, for he is the eldest of all our race, and has the greater power.'

And Éomer seeing that he was both sorrowful and weary said: 'First you must rest, surely, and at the least eat a little?'

But Aragorn answered: 'Nay, for these three, and most soon for Faramir, time is running out. All speed is needed.'

Then he called to Ioreth and he said: 'You have store in this House of the herbs of healing?'

'Yes, lord,' she answered; 'but not enough, I reckon, for all that will need them. But I am sure I do not know where we shall find more; for all things are amiss in these dreadful days, what with fires and burnings, and the lads that run errands so few, and all the roads blocked. Why, it is days out of count since ever a carrier came in from Lossarnach to the market! But we do our best in this House with what we have, as I am sure your lordship will know.'

'I will judge that when I see,' said Aragorn. 'One thing also is short, time for speech. Have you *athelas*?'

'I do not know, I am sure, lord,' she answered, 'at least not by that name. I will go and ask of the herb-master; he knows all the old names.'

'It is also called *kingsfoil*,' said Aragorn; 'and maybe you know it by that name, for so the country-folk call it in these latter days.'

'Oh that!' said Ioreth. 'Well, if your lordship had named it at first I could have told you. No, we have none of it, I am sure. Why, I have never heard that it had any great virtue; and indeed I have often said to my sisters when we came upon it growing in the woods: "kingsfoil", I said, "'tis a strange name, and I wonder why 'tis called

so; for if I were a king, I would have plants more bright in my garden". Still it smells sweet when bruised, does it not? If sweet is the right word: wholesome, maybe, is nearer.'

'Wholesome verily,' said Aragorn. 'And now, dame, if you love the Lord Faramir, run as quick as your tongue and get me kingsfoil, if there is a leaf in the City.'

'And if not,' said Gandalf, 'I will ride to Lossarnach with Ioreth behind me, and she shall take me to the woods, but not to her sisters. And Shadowfax shall show her the meaning of haste.'

When Ioreth was gone, Aragorn bade the other women to make water hot. Then he took Faramir's hand in his, and laid the other hand upon the sick man's brow. It was drenched with sweat; but Faramir did not move or make any sign, and seemed hardly to breathe.

'He is nearly spent,' said Aragorn turning to Gandalf. 'But this comes not from the wound. See! that is healing. Had he been smitten by some dart of the Nazgûl, as you thought, he would have died that night. This hurt was given by some Southron arrow, I would guess. Who drew it forth? Was it kept?'

'I drew it forth,' said Imrahil, 'and staunched the wound. But I did not keep the arrow, for we had much to do. It was, as I remember, just such a dart as the Southrons use. Yet I believed that it came from the Shadows above, for else his fever and sickness were not to be understood; since the wound was not deep or vital. How then do you read the matter?'

'Weariness, grief for his father's mood, a wound, and over all the Black Breath,' said Aragorn. 'He is a man of staunch will, for already he had come close under the Shadow before ever he rode to battle on the out-walls. Slowly the dark must have crept on him, even as he fought and strove to hold his outpost. Would that I could have been here sooner!'

Thereupon the herb-master entered. 'Your lordship asked for *kingsfoil*, as the rustics name it,' he said; 'or *athelas* in the noble tongue, or to those who know somewhat of the Valinorean. . . .'

'I do so,' said Aragorn, 'and I care not whether you say now *asëa aranion* or *kingsfoil*, so long as you have some.'

'Your pardon lord!' said the man. 'I see you are a lore-master, not merely a captain of war. But alas! sir, we do not keep this thing in the Houses of Healing, where only the gravely hurt or sick are tended. For it has no virtue that we know of, save perhaps to sweeten a fouled air, or to drive away some passing heaviness. Unless, of course, you give heed to rhymes of old days which women such as our good Ioreth still repeat without understanding.'

*When the black breath blows  
and death's shadow grows  
and all lights pass,  
come athelas! come athelas!  
Life to the dying  
In the king's hand lying!*

It is but a doggrel, I fear, garbled in the memory of old wives. Its meaning I leave to your judgement, if indeed it has any. But old folk still use an infusion of the herb for headaches.'

'Then in the name of the king, go and find some old man of less lore and more wisdom who keeps some in his house!' cried Gandalf.

Now Aragorn knelt beside Faramir, and held a hand upon his brow. And those that watched felt that some great struggle was going on. For Aragorn's face grew grey with weariness; and ever and anon he called the name of Faramir, but each time more faintly to their hearing, as if Aragorn himself was removed from them, and walked afar in some dark vale, calling for one that was lost.

And at last Bergil came running in, and he bore six leaves in a cloth. 'It is kingsfoil, Sir,' he said; 'but not fresh, I fear. It must have been culled two weeks ago at the least. I hope it will serve, Sir?' Then looking at Faramir he burst into tears.

But Aragorn smiled. 'It will serve,' he said. 'The worst is now over. Stay and be comforted!' Then taking two leaves, he laid them on his hands and breathed on them, and then he crushed them, and straightway a living freshness filled the room, as if the air itself awoke and tingled, sparkling with joy. And then he cast the leaves into the bowls of steaming water that were brought to him, and at once all hearts were lightened. For the fragrance that came to each was like a memory of dewy mornings of unshadowed sun in some land of which the fair world in spring is itself but a fleeting memory. But Aragorn stood up as one refreshed, and his eyes smiled as he held a bowl before Faramir's dreaming face.

'Well now! Who would have believed it?' said Ioreth to a woman that stood beside her. 'The weed is better than I thought. It reminds me of the roses of Imloth Melui when I was a lass, and no king could ask for better.'

Suddenly Faramir stirred, and he opened his eyes, and he looked on Aragorn who bent over him; and a light of knowledge and love was kindled in his eyes, and he spoke softly. 'My lord, you called me. I come. What does the king command?'

'Walk no more in the shadows, but awake!' said Aragorn. 'You are weary. Rest a while, and take food, and be ready when I return.'

'I will, lord,' said Faramir. 'For who would lie idle when the king has returned?'

'Farewell then for a while!' said Aragorn. 'I must go to others who need me.' And he left the chamber with Gandalf and Imrahil; but Beregon and his son remained behind, unable to contain their joy. As he followed Gandalf and shut the door Pippin heard Ioreth exclaim:

'King! Did you hear that? What did I say? The hands of a healer, I said.' And soon the word had gone out from the House that the king was indeed come among them, and after war he brought healing; and the news ran through the City.

But Aragorn came to Éowyn, and he said: 'Here there is a grievous hurt and a heavy blow. The arm that was broken has been tended with due skill, and it will mend in time, if she has the strength to live. It is the shield-arm that is maimed; but the chief evil comes through the sword-arm. In that there now seems no life, although it is unbroken.

'Alas! For she was pitted against a foe beyond the strength of her mind or body. And those who will take a weapon to such an enemy must be sterner than steel, if the very shock shall not destroy them. It was an evil doom that set her in his path. For she is a fair maiden, fairest lady of a house of queens. And yet I know not how I should speak of her. When I first looked on her and perceived her unhappiness, it seemed to me that I saw a white flower standing straight and proud, shapely as a lily, and yet knew that it was hard, as if wrought by elf-wrights out of steel. Or was it, maybe, a frost that had turned its sap to ice, and so it stood, bitter-sweet, still fair to see, but stricken, soon to fall and die? Her malady begins far back before this day, does it not, Éomer?'

'I marvel that you should ask me, lord,' he answered. 'For I hold you blameless in this matter, as in all else; yet I knew not that Éowyn, my sister, was touched by any frost, until she first looked on you. Care and dread she had, and shared with me, in the days of Wormtongue and the king's bewitchment; and she tended the king in growing fear. But that did not bring her to this pass!'

'My friend,' said Gandalf, 'you had horses, and deeds of arms, and the free fields; but she, born in the body of a maid, had a spirit and courage at least the match of yours. Yet she was doomed to wait upon an old man, whom she loved as a father, and watch him falling into a mean dishonoured dotage; and her part seemed to her more ignoble than that of the staff he leaned on.

'Think you that Wormtongue had poison only for Théoden's ears? *Dotard! What is the house of Eorl but a thatched barn where brigands drink in the reek, and their brats roll on the floor among their dogs?* Have you not heard those words before? Saruman spoke them, the teacher of Wormtongue. Though I do not doubt that Wormtongue at home wrapped their meaning in terms more cunning. My lord, if your sister's love for you, and her will still bent to her duty, had not restrained her lips, you might have heard even such things as these escape them. But who knows what she spoke to the darkness, alone, in the bitter watches of the night, when all her life seemed shrinking, and the walls of her bower closing in about her, a hutch to trammel some wild thing in?'

Then Éomer was silent, and looked on his sister, as if pondering anew all the days of their past life together. But Aragorn said: 'I saw also what you saw, Éomer. Few other griefs amid the ill chances of this world have more bitterness and shame for a man's heart than to behold the love of a lady so fair and brave that cannot be returned. Sorrow and pity have followed me ever since I left her desperate in Dunharrow and rode to the Paths of the Dead; and no fear upon that way was so present as the fear for what might befall her. And yet, Éomer, I say to you that she loves you more truly than me; for you she loves and knows; but in me she loves only a shadow and a thought: a hope of glory and great deeds, and lands far from the fields of Rohan.'

'I have, maybe, the power to heal her body, and to recall her from the dark valley. But to what she will awake: hope, or forgetfulness, or despair, I do not know. And if to despair, then she will die, unless other healing comes which I cannot bring. Alas! for her deeds have set her among the queens of great renown.'

Then Aragorn stooped and looked in her face, and it was indeed white as a lily, cold as frost, and hard as graven stone. But he bent and kissed her on the brow, and called her softly, saying:

Éowyn Éomund's daughter, awake! For your enemy has passed away!'

She did not stir, but now she began again to breathe deeply, so that her breast rose and fell beneath the white linen of the sheet. Once more Aragorn bruised two leaves of *athelas* and cast them into steaming water; and he laved her brow with it, and her right arm lying cold and nerveless on the coverlet.

Then, whether Aragorn had indeed some forgotten power of Westernesse, or whether it was but his words of the Lady Éowyn that wrought on them, as the sweet influence of the herb stole about the chamber it seemed to those who stood by that a keen wind blew through the window, and it bore no scent, but was an air wholly fresh and clean and young, as if it had not before been breathed by any living thing and came new-made from snowy mountains high beneath a dome of stars, or from shores of silver far away washed by seas of foam.

'Awake, Éowyn, Lady of Rohan!' said Aragorn again, and he took her right hand in his and felt it warm with life returning. 'Awake! The shadow is gone and all darkness is washed clean!' Then he laid her hand in Éomer's and stepped away. 'Call her!' he said, and he passed silently from the chamber.

Éowyn, Éowyn!' cried Éomer amid his tears. But she opened her eyes and said: 'Éomer! What joy is this? For they said that you were slain. Nay, but that was only the dark voices in my dream. How long have I been dreaming?'

'Not long, my sister,' said Éomer. 'But think no more on it!'

'I am strangely weary,' she said. 'I must rest a little. But tell me, what of the Lord of the Mark? Alas! Do not tell me that that was a dream; for I know that it was not. He is dead as he foresaw.'

'He is dead,' said Éomer, 'but he bade me say farewell to Éowyn, dearer than daughter. He lies now in great honour in the Citadel of Gondor.'

'That is grievous,' she said. 'And yet it is good beyond all that I dared hope in the dark days, when it seemed that the House of Eorl was sunk in honour less than any shepherd's cot. And what of the king's esquire, the Halfling? Éomer, you shall make him a knight of the Riddermark, for he is valiant!'

'He lies nearby in this House, and I will go to him,' said Gandalf. 'Éomer shall stay here for a while. But do not speak yet of war or woe, until you are made whole again. Great gladness it is to see you wake again to health and hope, so valiant a lady!'

'To health?' said Éowyn. 'It may be so. At least while there is an empty saddle of some fallen Rider that I can fill, and there are deeds to do. But to hope? I do not know.'

Gandalf and Pippin came to Merry's room, and there they found Aragorn standing by the bed. 'Poor old Merry!' cried Pippin, and he ran to the bedside, for it seemed to him that his friend looked worse and a greyness was in his face, as if a weight of years of sorrow lay on him; and suddenly a fear seized Pippin that Merry would die.

'Do not be afraid,' said Aragorn. 'I came in time, and I have called him back. He is weary now, and grieved, and he has taken a hurt like the Lady Éowyn, daring to smite that deadly thing. But these evils can be amended,

so strong and gay a spirit is in him. His grief he will not forget; but it will not darken his heart, it will teach him wisdom.'

Then Aragorn laid his hand on Merry's head, and passing his hand gently through the brown curls, he touched the eyelids, and called him by name. And when the fragrance of *athelas* stole through the room, like the scent of orchards, and of heather in the sunshine full of bees, suddenly Merry awoke, and he said:

'I am hungry. What is the time?'

'Past supper-time now,' said Pippin; 'though I daresay I could bring you something, if they will let me.'

'They will indeed,' said Gandalf. 'And anything else that this Rider of Rohan may desire, if it can be found in Minas Tirith, where his name is in honour.'

'Good!' said Merry. 'Then I would like supper first, and after that a pipe.' At that his face clouded. 'No, not a pipe. I don't think I'll smoke again.'

'Why not?' said Pippin.

'Well,' answered Merry slowly. 'He is dead. It has brought it all back to me. He said he was sorry he had never had a chance of talking herb-lore with me. Almost the last thing he ever said. I shan't ever be able to smoke again without thinking of him, and that day, Pippin, when he rode up to Isengard and was so polite.'

'Smoke then, and think of him!' said Aragorn. 'For he was a gentle heart and a great king and kept his oaths; and he rose out of the shadows to a last fair morning. Though your service to him was brief, it should be a memory glad and honourable to the end of your days.'

Merry smiled. 'Well then,' he said, 'if Strider will provide what is needed, I will smoke and think. I had some of Saruman's best in my pack, but what became of it in the battle, I am sure I don't know.'

'Master Meriadoc,' said Aragorn, 'if you think that I have passed through the mountains and the realm of Gondor with fire and sword to bring herbs to a careless soldier who throws away his gear, you are mistaken. If your pack has not been found, then you must send for the herb-master of this House. And he will tell you that he did not know that the herb you desire had any virtues, but that it is called *westmansweed* by the vulgar, and *galenas* by the noble, and other names in other tongues more learned, and after adding a few half-forgotten rhymes that he does not understand, he will regretfully inform you that there is none in the House, and he will leave you to reflect on the history of tongues. And so now must I. For I have not slept in such a bed as this, since I rode from Dunharrow, nor eaten since the dark before dawn.'

Merry seized his hand and kissed it. 'I am frightfully sorry,' he said. 'Go at once! Ever since that night at Bree we have been a nuisance to you. But it is the way of my people to use light words at such times and say less than they mean. We fear to say too much. It robs us of the right words when a jest is out of place.'

'I know that well, or I would not deal with you in the same way,' said Aragorn. 'May the Shire live for ever unwithered!' And kissing Merry he went out, and Gandalf went with him.

Pippin remained behind. 'Was there ever anyone like him?' he said. 'Except Gandalf, of course. I think they must be related. My dear ass, your pack is lying by your bed, and you had it on your back when I met you. He saw it all the time, of course. And anyway I have some stuff of my own. Come on now! Longbottom Leaf it is. Fill up while I run and see about some food. And then let's be easy for a bit. Dear me! We Tookes and Brandybucks, we can't live long on the heights.'

'No,' said Merry. 'I can't. Not yet, at any rate. But at least, Pippin, we can now see them, and honour them. It is best to love first what you are fitted to love, I suppose: you must start somewhere and have some roots, and the soil of the Shire is deep. Still there are things deeper and higher; and not a gaffer could tend his garden in what he calls peace but for them, whether he knows about them or not. I am glad that I know about them, a little. But I don't know why I am talking like this. Where is that leaf? And get my pipe out of my pack, if it isn't broken.'

Aragorn and Gandalf went now to the Warden of the Houses of Healing, and they counselled him that Faramir and Éowyn should remain there and still be tended with care for many days.

‘The Lady Éowyn,’ said Aragorn, ‘will wish soon to rise and depart; but she should not be permitted to do so, if you can in any way restrain her, until at least ten days be passed.’

‘As for Faramir,’ said Gandalf, ‘he must soon learn that his father is dead. But the full tale of the madness of Denethor should not be told to him, until he is quite healed and has duties to do. See that Beregon and the *perian* who were present do not speak to him of these things yet!’

‘And the other *perian*, Meriadoc, who is under my care, what of him?’ said the Warden.

‘It is likely that he will be fit to arise tomorrow, for a short while,’ said Aragorn. ‘Let him do so, if he wishes. He may walk a little in the care of his friends.’

‘They are a remarkable race,’ said the Warden, nodding his head. ‘Very tough in the fibre, I deem.’

At the doors of the Houses many were already gathered to see Aragorn, and they followed after him; and when at last he had supped, men came and prayed that he would heal their kinsmen or their friends whose lives were in peril through hurt or wound, or who lay under the Black Shadow. And Aragorn arose and went out, and he sent for the sons of Elrond, and together they laboured far into the night. And word went through the City: ‘The King is come again indeed.’ And they named him Elfstone, because of the green stone that he wore, and so the name which it was foretold at his birth that he should bear was chosen for him by his own people.

And when he could labour no more, he cast his cloak about him, and slipped out of the City, and went to his tent just ere dawn and slept for a little. And in the morning the banner of Dol Amroth, a white ship like a swan upon blue water, floated from the Tower, and men looked up and wondered if the coming of the King had been but a dream.





## Chapter 9: The Last Debate

The morning came after the day of battle, and it was fair with light clouds and the wind turning westward. Legolas and Gimli were early abroad, and they begged leave to go up into the City; for they were eager to see Merry and Pippin.

‘It is good to learn that they are still alive,’ said Gimli; ‘for they cost us great pains in our march over Rohan, and I would not have such pains all wasted.’

Together the Elf and the Dwarf entered Minas Tirith, and folk that saw them pass marvelled to see such companions; for Legolas was fair of face beyond the measure of Men, and he sang an elven-song in a clear voice as he walked in the morning; but Gimli stalked beside him, stroking his beard and staring about him.

‘There is some good stone-work here,’ he said as he looked at the walls; ‘but also some that is less good, and the streets could be better contrived. When Aragorn comes into his own, I shall offer him the service of stonewrights of the Mountain, and we will make this a town to be proud of.’

‘They need more gardens,’ said Legolas. ‘The houses are dead, and there is too little here that grows and is glad. If Aragorn comes into his own, the people of the Wood shall bring him birds that sing and trees that do not die.’

At length they came to the Prince Imrahil, and Legolas looked at him and bowed low; for he saw that here indeed was one who had elven-blood in his veins. ‘Hail, lord!’ he said. ‘It is long since the people of Nimrodel left the woodlands of Lórien, and yet still one may see that not all sailed from Amroth’s haven west over water.’

‘So it is said in the lore of my land,’ said the Prince; ‘yet never has one of the fair folk been seen there for years beyond count. And I marvel to see one here now in the midst of sorrow and war. What do you seek?’

‘I am one of the Nine Companions who set out with Mithrandir from Imladris,’ said Legolas; ‘and with this Dwarf, my friend, I came with the Lord Aragorn. But now we wish to see our friends, Meriadoc and Peregrin, who are in your keeping, we are told.’

‘You will find them in the Houses of Healing, and I will lead you thither,’ said Imrahil.

‘It will be enough if you send one to guide us, lord,’ said Legolas. ‘For Aragorn sends this message to you. He does not wish to enter the City again at this time. Yet there is need for the captains to hold council at once, and he prays that you and Éomer of Rohan will come down to his tents, as soon as may be. Mithrandir is already there.’

‘We will come,’ said Imrahil; and they parted with courteous words.

‘That is a fair lord and a great captain of men,’ said Legolas. ‘If Gondor has such men still in these days of fading, great must have been its glory in the days of its rising.’

‘And doubtless the good stone-work is the older and was wrought in the first building,’ said Gimli. ‘It is ever so with the things that Men begin: there is a frost in Spring, or a blight in Summer, and they fail of their promise.’

‘Yet seldom do they fail of their seed,’ said Legolas. ‘And that will lie in the dust and rot to spring up again in times and places unlooked-for. The deeds of Men will outlast us, Gimli.’

‘And yet come to naught in the end but might-have-beens, I guess,’ said the Dwarf.

‘To that the Elves know not the answer,’ said Legolas.

With that the servant of the Prince came and led them to the Houses of Healing; and there they found their friends in the garden, and their meeting was a merry one. For a while they walked and talked, rejoicing for a brief space in peace and rest under the morning high up in the windy circles of the City. Then when Merry became weary, they went and sat upon the wall with the greensward of the Houses of Healing behind them; and away southward before them was the Anduin glittering in the sun, as it flowed away, out of the sight even of Legolas, into the wide flats and green haze of Lebennin and South Ithilien.

And now Legolas fell silent, while the others talked, and he looked out against the sun, and as he gazed he saw white sea-birds beating up the River.

‘Look!’ he cried. ‘Gulls! They are flying far inland. A wonder they are to me and a trouble to my heart. Never in all my life had I met them, until we came to Pelargir, and there I heard them crying in the air as we rode to the battle of the ships. Then I stood still, forgetting war in Middle-earth; for their wailing voices spoke to me of the Sea. The Sea! Alas! I have not yet beheld it. But deep in the hearts of all my kindred lies the sea-longing, which it is perilous to stir. Alas! for the gulls. No peace shall I have again under beech or under elm.’

‘Say not so!’ said Gimli. ‘There are countless things still to see in Middle-earth, and great works to do. But if all the fair folk take to the Havens, it will be a duller world for those who are doomed to stay.’

‘Dull and dreary indeed!’ said Merry. ‘You must not go to the Havens, Legolas. There will always be some folk, big or little, and even a few wise dwarves like Gimli, who need you. At least I hope so. Though I feel somehow that the worst of this war is still to come. How I wish it was all over, and well over!’

‘Don’t be so gloomy!’ cried Pippin. ‘The Sun is shining, and here we are together for a day or two at least. I want to hear more about you all. Come, Gimli! You and Legolas have mentioned your strange journey with Strider about a dozen times already this morning. But you haven’t told me anything about it.’

‘The Sun may shine here,’ said Gimli, ‘but there are memories of that road that I do not wish to recall out of the darkness. Had I known what was before me, I think that not for any friendship would I have taken the Paths of the Dead.’

‘The Paths of the Dead?’ said Pippin. ‘I heard Aragorn say that, and I wondered what he could mean. Won’t you tell us some more?’

‘Not willingly,’ said Gimli. ‘For upon that road I was put to shame: Gimli Glóin’s son, who had deemed himself more tough than Men, and hardier under earth than any Elf. But neither did I prove; and I was held to the road only by the will of Aragorn.’

‘And by the love of him also,’ said Legolas. ‘For all those who come to know him come to love him after their own fashion, even the cold maiden of the Rohirrim. It was at early morn of the day ere you came there, Merry, that we left Dunharrow, and such a fear was on all the folk that none would look on our going, save the Lady Éowyn, who lies now hurt in the House below. There was grief at that parting, and I was grieved to behold it.’

‘Alas! I had heart only for myself,’ said Gimli. ‘Nay! I will not speak of that journey.’

He fell silent; but Pippin and Merry were so eager for news that at last Legolas said: ‘I will tell you enough for your peace; for I felt not the horror, and I feared not the shadows of Men, powerless and frail as I deemed them.’

Swiftly then he told of the haunted road under the mountains, and the dark tryst at Erech, and the great ride thence, ninety leagues and three, to Pelargir on Anduin. ‘Four days and nights, and on into a fifth, we rode from the Black Stone,’ he said. ‘And lo! in the darkness of Mordor my hope rose; for in that gloom the Shadow Host seemed to grow stronger and more terrible to look upon. Some I saw riding, some striding, yet all moving with the same great speed. Silent they were, but there was a gleam in their eyes. In the uplands of Lamedon they overtook our horses, and swept round us, and would have passed us by, if Aragorn had not forbidden them.’

‘At his command they fell back. “Even the shades of Men are obedient to his will,” I thought. “They may serve his needs yet!”’

‘One day of light we rode, and then came the day without dawn, and still we rode on, and Ciril and Ringló we crossed; and on the third day we came to Linhir above the mouth of Gilrain. And there men of Lamedon contested the fords with fell folk of Umbar and Harad who had sailed up the river. But defenders and foes alike gave up the battle and fled when we came, crying out that the King of the Dead was upon them. Only Angbor, Lord of Lamedon, had the heart to abide us; and Aragorn bade him gather his folk and come behind, if they dared, when the Grey Host had passed.

“‘At Pelargir the Heir of Isildur will have need of you,” he said.

‘Thus we crossed over Gilrain, driving the allies of Mordor in rout before us; and then we rested a while. But soon Aragorn arose, saying: “Lo! already Minas Tirith is assailed. I fear that it will fall ere we come to its aid.” So we mounted again before night had passed and went on with all the speed that our horses could endure over the plains of Lebennin.’

Legolas paused and sighed, and turning his eyes southward softly he sang:

*Silver flow the streams from Celos to Erui  
In the green fields of Lebennin!  
Tall grows the grass there. In the wind from the Sea  
The white lilies sway,  
And the golden bells are shaken of mallos and alfirin  
In the green fields of Lebennin,  
In the wind from the Sea!*

‘Green are those fields in the songs of my people; but they were dark then, grey wastes in the blackness before us. And over the wide land, trampling unheeded the grass and the flowers, we hunted our foes through a day and a night, until we came at the bitter end to the Great River at last.

‘Then I thought in my heart that we drew near to the Sea; for wide was the water in the darkness, and sea-birds innumerable cried on its shores. Alas for the wailing of the gulls! Did not the Lady tell me to beware of them? And now I cannot forget them.’

‘For my part I heeded them not,’ said Gimli; ‘for we came then at last upon battle in earnest. There at Pelargir lay the main fleet of Umbar, fifty great ships and smaller vessels beyond count. Many of those that we pursued had reached the havens before us, and brought their fear with them; and some of the ships had put off, seeking to escape down the River or to reach the far shore; and many of the smaller craft were ablaze. But the Haradrim, being now driven to the brink, turned at bay, and they were fierce in despair; and they laughed when they looked on us, for they were a great army still.

‘But Aragorn halted and cried with a great voice: “Now come! By the Black Stone I call you!” And suddenly the Shadow Host that had hung back at the last came up like a grey tide, sweeping all away before it. Faint cries I heard, and dim horns blowing, and a murmur as of countless far voices: it was like the echo of some forgotten battle in the Dark Years long ago. Pale swords were drawn; but I know not whether their blades would still bite, for the Dead needed no longer any weapon but fear. None would withstand them.

‘To every ship they came that was drawn up, and then they passed over the water to those that were anchored; and all the mariners were filled with a madness of terror and leaped overboard, save the slaves chained to the oars. Reckless we rode among our fleeing foes, driving them like leaves, until we came to the shore. And then to each of the great ships that remained Aragorn sent one of the Dúnedain, and they comforted the captives that were aboard, and bade them put aside fear and be free.

‘Ere that dark day ended none of the enemy were left to resist us; all were drowned, or were flying south in the hope to find their own lands upon foot. Strange and wonderful I thought it that the designs of Mordor should be overthrown by such wraiths of fear and darkness. With its own weapons was it worsted!’

‘Strange indeed,’ said Legolas. ‘In that hour I looked on Aragorn and thought how great and terrible a Lord he might have become in the strength of his will, had he taken the Ring to himself. Not for naught does Mordor

fear him. But nobler is his spirit than the understanding of Sauron; for is he not of the children of Lúthien? Never shall that line fail, though the years may lengthen beyond count.'

'Beyond the eyes of the Dwarves are such foretellings,' said Gimli. 'But mighty indeed was Aragorn that day. Lo! all the black fleet was in his hands; and he chose the greatest ship to be his own, and he went up into it. Then he let sound a great concourse of trumpets taken from the enemy; and the Shadow Host withdrew to the shore. There they stood silent, hardly to be seen, save for a red gleam in their eyes that caught the glare of the ships that were burning. And Aragorn spoke in a loud voice to the Dead Men, crying:

"Hear now the words of the Heir of Isildur! Your oath is fulfilled. Go back and trouble not the valleys ever again! Depart and be at rest!"

'And thereupon the King of the Dead stood out before the host and broke his spear and cast it down. Then he bowed low and turned away; and swiftly the whole grey host drew off and vanished like a mist that is driven back by a sudden wind; and it seemed to me that I awoke from a dream.

'That night we rested while others laboured. For there were many captives set free, and many slaves released who had been folk of Gondor taken in raids; and soon also there was a great gathering of men out of Lebennin and the Ethir, and Angbor of Lamedon came up with all the horsemen that he could muster. Now that the fear of the Dead was removed they came to aid us and to look on the Heir of Isildur; for the rumour of that name had run like fire in the dark.

'And that is near the end of our tale. For during that evening and night many ships were made ready and manned; and in the morning the fleet set forth. Long past it now seems, yet it was but the morn of the day ere yesterday, the sixth since we rode from Dunharrow. But still Aragorn was driven by fear that time was too short.

"It is forty leagues and two from Pelargir to the landings at the Harlond," he said. "Yet to the Harlond we must come tomorrow or fail utterly."

'The oars were now wielded by free men, and manfully they laboured; yet slowly we passed up the Great River, for we strove against its stream, and though that is not swift down in the South, we had no help of wind. Heavy would my heart have been, for all our victory at the havens, if Legolas had not laughed suddenly.

"Up with your beard, Durin's son!" he said. "For thus is it spoken: *Oft hope is born, when all is forlorn.*" But what hope he saw from afar he would not tell. When night came it did but deepen the darkness, and our hearts were hot, for away in the North we saw a red glow under the cloud, and Aragorn said: "Minas Tirith is burning."

'But at midnight hope was indeed born anew. Sea-crafty men of the Ethir gazing southward spoke of a change coming with a fresh wind from the Sea. Long ere day the masted ships hoisted sail, and our speed grew, until dawn whitened the foam at our prows. And so it was, as you know, that we came in the third hour of the morning with a fair wind and the Sun unveiled, and we unfurled the great standard in battle. It was a great day and a great hour, whatever may come after.'

'Follow what may, great deeds are not lessened in worth,' said Legolas. 'Great deed was the riding of the Paths of the Dead, and great it shall remain, though none be left in Gondor to sing of it in the days that are to come.'

'And that may well befall,' said Gimli. 'For the faces of Aragorn and Gandalf are grave. Much I wonder what counsels they are taking in the tents there below. For my part, like Merry, I wish that with our victory the war was now over. Yet whatever is still to do, I hope to have a part in it, for the honour of the folk of the Lonely Mountain.'

'And I for the folk of the Great Wood,' said Legolas, 'and for the love of the Lord of the White Tree.'

Then the companions fell silent, but a while they sat there in the high place, each busy with his own thoughts, while the Captains debated.

When the Prince Imrahil had parted from Legolas and Gimli, at once he sent for Éomer; and he went down with him from the City, and they came to the tents of Aragorn that were set up on the field not far from the place

where King Théoden had fallen. And there they took counsel together with Gandalf and Aragorn and the sons of Elrond.

‘My lords,’ said Gandalf, ‘listen to the words of the Steward of Gondor before he died: *You may triumph on the fields of the Pelennor for a day, but against the Power that has now arisen there is no victory.* I do not bid you despair, as he did, but to ponder the truth in these words.

‘The Stones of Seeing do not lie, and not even the Lord of Barad-dûr can make them do so. He can, maybe, by his will choose what things shall be seen by weaker minds, or cause them to mistake the meaning of what they see. Nonetheless it cannot be doubted that when Denethor saw great forces arrayed against him in Mordor, and more still being gathered, he saw that which truly is.

‘Hardly has our strength sufficed to beat off the first great assault. The next will be greater. This war then is without final hope, as Denethor perceived. Victory cannot be achieved by arms, whether you sit here to endure siege after siege, or march out to be overwhelmed beyond the River. You have only a choice of evils; and prudence would counsel you to strengthen such strong places as you have, and there await the onset; for so shall the time before your end be made a little longer.’

‘Then you would have us retreat to Minas Tirith, or Dol Amroth, or to Dunharrow, and there sit like children on sand-castles when the tide is flowing?’ said Imrahil.

‘That would be no new counsel,’ said Gandalf. ‘Have you not done this and little more in all the days of Denethor? But no! I said this would be prudent. I do not counsel prudence. I said victory could not be achieved by arms. I still hope for victory, but not by arms. For into the midst of all these policies comes the Ring of Power, the foundation of Barad-dûr, and the hope of Sauron.

‘Concerning this thing, my lords, you now all know enough for the understanding of our plight, and of Sauron’s. If he regains it, your valour is vain, and his victory will be swift and complete: so complete that none can foresee the end of it while this world lasts. If it is destroyed, then he will fall; and his fall will be so low that none can foresee his arising ever again. For he will lose the best part of the strength that was native to him in his beginning, and all that was made or begun with that power will crumble, and he will be maimed for ever, becoming a mere spirit of malice that gnaws itself in the shadows, but cannot again grow or take shape. And so a great evil of this world will be removed.

‘Other evils there are that may come; for Sauron is himself but a servant or emissary. Yet it is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule.

‘Now Sauron knows all this, and he knows that this precious thing which he lost has been found again; but he does not yet know where it is, or so we hope. And therefore he is now in great doubt. For if we have found this thing, there are some among us with strength enough to wield it. That too he knows. For do I not guess rightly, Aragorn, that you have shown yourself to him in the Stone of Orthanc?’

‘I did so ere I rode from the Hornburg,’ answered Aragorn. ‘I deemed that the time was ripe, and that the Stone had come to me for just such a purpose. It was then ten days since the Ring-bearer went east from Rauros, and the Eye of Sauron, I thought, should be drawn out from his own land. Too seldom has he been challenged since he returned to his Tower. Though if I had foreseen how swift would be his onset in answer, maybe I should not have dared to show myself. Bare time was given me to come to your aid.’

‘But how is this?’ asked Éomer. ‘All is vain, you say, if he has the Ring. Why should he think it not vain to assail us, if we have it?’

‘He is not yet sure,’ said Gandalf, ‘and he has not built up his power by waiting until his enemies are secure, as we have done. Also we could not learn how to wield the full power all in a day. Indeed it can be used only by one master alone, not by many; and he will look for a time of strife, ere one of the great among us makes himself master and puts down the others. In that time the Ring might aid him, if he were sudden.

‘He is watching. He sees much and hears much. His Nazgûl are still abroad. They passed over this field ere the sunrise, though few of the weary and sleeping were aware of them. He studies the signs: the Sword that robbed him of his treasure re-made; the winds of fortune turning in our favour, and the defeat unlooked-for of his first assault; the fall of his great Captain.

‘His doubt will be growing, even as we speak here. His Eye is now straining towards us, blind almost to all else that is moving. So we must keep it. Therein lies all our hope. This, then, is my counsel. We have not the Ring. In wisdom or great folly it has been sent away to be destroyed, lest it destroy us. Without it we cannot by force defeat his force. But we must at all costs keep his Eye from his true peril. We cannot achieve victory by arms, but by arms we can give the Ring-bearer his only chance, frail though it be.

‘As Aragorn has begun, so we must go on. We must push Sauron to his last throw. We must call out his hidden strength, so that he shall empty his land. We must march out to meet him at once. We must make ourselves the bait, though his jaws should close on us. He will take that bait, in hope and in greed, for he will think that in such rashness he sees the pride of the new Ringlord: and he will say: “So! he pushes out his neck too soon and too far. Let him come on, and behold I will have him in a trap from which he cannot escape. There I will crush him, and what he has taken in his insolence shall be mine again for ever.”

‘We must walk open-eyed into that trap, with courage, but small hope for ourselves. For, my lords, it may well prove that we ourselves shall perish utterly in a black battle far from the living lands; so that even if Barad-dûr be thrown down, we shall not live to see a new age. But this, I deem, is our duty. And better so than to perish nonetheless—as we surely shall, if we sit here—and know as we die that no new age shall be.’

They were silent for a while. At length Aragorn spoke. ‘As I have begun, so I will go on. We come now to the very brink, where hope and despair are akin. To waver is to fall. Let none now reject the counsels of Gandalf, whose long labours against Sauron come at last to their test. But for him all would long ago have been lost. Nonetheless I do not yet claim to command any man. Let others choose as they will.’

Then said Elrohir: ‘From the North we came with this purpose, and from Elrond our father we brought this very counsel. We will not turn back.’

‘As for myself,’ said Éomer, ‘I have little knowledge of these deep matters; but I need it not. This I know, and it is enough, that as my friend Aragorn succoured me and my people, so I will aid him when he calls. I will go.’

‘As for me,’ said Imrahil, ‘the Lord Aragorn I hold to be my liege-lord, whether he claim it or no. His wish is to me a command. I will go also. Yet for a while I stand in the place of the Steward of Gondor, and it is mine to think first of its people. To prudence some heed must still be given. For we must prepare against all chances, good as well as evil. Now, it may be that we shall triumph, and while there is any hope of this, Gondor must be protected. I would not have us return with victory to a City in ruins and a land ravaged behind us. And yet we learn from the Rohirrim that there is an army still unfought upon our northern flank.’

‘That is true,’ said Gandalf. ‘I do not counsel you to leave the City all unmanned. Indeed the force that we lead east need not be great enough for any assault in earnest upon Mordor, so long as it be great enough to challenge battle. And it must move soon. Therefore I ask the Captains: what force could we muster and lead out in two days’ time at the latest? And they must be hardy men that go willingly, knowing their peril.’

‘All are weary, and very many have wounds light or grievous,’ said Éomer, ‘and we have suffered much loss of our horses, and that is ill to bear. If we must ride soon, then I cannot hope to lead even two thousands, and yet leave as many for the defence of the City.’

‘We have not only to reckon with those who fought on this field,’ said Aragorn. ‘New strength is on the way from the southern fiefs, now that the coasts have been rid. Four thousands I sent marching from Pelargir through Lossarnach two days ago; and Angbor the fearless rides before them. If we set out in two days more, they will draw nigh ere we depart. Moreover many were bidden to follow me up the River in any craft they could gather; and with this wind they will soon be at hand, indeed several ships have already come to the Harlond. I judge that we could lead out seven thousands of horse and foot, and yet leave the City in better defence than it was when the assault began.’

‘The Gate is destroyed,’ said Imrahil, ‘and where now is the skill to rebuild it and set it up anew?’

‘In Erebor in the Kingdom of Dáin there is such skill,’ said Aragorn; ‘and if all our hopes do not perish, then in time I will send Gimli Glóin’s son to ask for wrights of the Mountain. But men are better than gates, and no gate will endure against our Enemy if men desert it.’

This then was the end of the debate of the lords: that they should set forth on the second morning from that day with seven thousands, if these might be found; and the great part of this force should be on foot, because of the evil lands into which they would go. Aragorn should find some two thousands of those that he had gathered to him in the South; but Imrahil should find three and a half thousands; and Éomer five hundreds of the Rohirrim who were unhorsed but themselves warworthy, and he himself should lead five hundreds of his best Riders on horse; and another company of five hundred horse there should be, among which should ride the sons of Elrond with the Dúnedain and the knights of Dol Amroth: all told six thousand foot and a thousand horse. But the main strength of the Rohirrim that remained horsed and able to fight, some three thousand under the command of Elfhelm, should waylay the West Road against the enemy that was in Anórien. And at once swift riders were sent out to gather what news they could northwards; and eastwards from Osgiliath and the road to Minas Morgul.

And when they had reckoned up all their strength and taken thought for the journeys they should make and the roads they should choose, Imrahil suddenly laughed aloud.

‘Surely,’ he cried, ‘this is the greatest jest in all the history of Gondor: that we should ride with seven thousands, scarce as many as the vanguard of its army in the days of its power, to assail the mountains and the impenetrable gate of the Black Land! So might a child threaten a mail-clad knight with a bow of string and green willow! If the Dark Lord knows so much as you say, Mithrandir, will he not rather smile than fear, and with his little finger crush us like a fly that tries to sting him?’

‘No, he will try to trap the fly and take the sting,’ said Gandalf. ‘And there are names among us that are worth more than a thousand mail-clad knights apiece. No, he will not smile.’

‘Neither shall we,’ said Aragorn. ‘If this be jest, then it is too bitter for laughter. Nay, it is the last move in a great jeopardy, and for one side or the other it will bring the end of the game.’ Then he drew Andúril and held it up glittering in the sun. ‘You shall not be sheathed again until the last battle is fought,’ he said.



## Chapter 10: The Black Gate Opens

Two days later the army of the West was all assembled on the Pelennor. The host of Orcs and Easterlings had turned back out of Anórien, but harried and scattered by the Rohirrim they had broken and fled with little fighting towards Cair Andros; and with that threat destroyed and new strength arriving out of the South the City was as well manned as might be. Scouts reported that no enemies remained upon the roads east as far as the Cross-roads of the Fallen King. All now was ready for the last throw.

Legolas and Gimli were to ride again together in the company of Aragorn and Gandalf, who went in the van with the Dúnedain and the sons of Elrond. But Merry to his shame was not to go with them.

‘You are not fit for such a journey,’ said Aragorn. ‘But do not be ashamed. If you do no more in this war, you have already earned great honour. Peregrin shall go and represent the Shire-folk; and do not grudge him his chance of peril, for though he has done as well as his fortune allowed him, he has yet to match your deed. But in truth all now are in like danger. Though it may be our part to find a bitter end before the Gate of Mordor, if we do so, then you will come also to a last stand, either here or wherever the black tide overtakes you. Farewell!’

And so despondently Merry now stood and watched the mustering of the army. Bergil was with him, and he also was downcast; for his father was to march leading a company of the Men of the City: he could not rejoin the Guard until his case was judged. In that same company Pippin was also to go, as a soldier of Gondor. Merry could see him not far off, a small but upright figure among the tall men of Minas Tirith.

At last the trumpets rang and the army began to move. Troop by troop, and company by company, they wheeled and went off eastward. And long after they had passed away out of sight down the great road to the Causeway, Merry stood there. The last glint of the morning sun on spear and helm twinkled and was lost, and still he remained with bowed head and heavy heart, feeling friendless and alone. Everyone that he cared for had gone away into the gloom that hung over the distant eastern sky; and little hope at all was left in his heart that he would ever see any of them again.

As if recalled by his mood of despair, the pain in his arm returned, and he felt weak and old, and the sunlight seemed thin. He was roused by the touch of Bergil’s hand.

‘Come, Master Perian!’ said the lad. ‘You are still in pain, I see. I will help you back to the Healers. But do not fear! They will come back. The Men of Minas Tirith will never be overcome. And now they have the Lord Elfstone, and Beregond of the Guard too.’

Ere noon the army came to Osgiliath. There all the workers and craftsmen that could be spared were busy. Some were strengthening the ferries and boat-bridges that the enemy had made and in part destroyed when they fled; some gathered stores and booty; and others on the eastern side across the River were throwing up hasty works of defence.

The vanguard passed on through the ruins of Old Gondor, and over the wide River, and on up the long straight road that in the high days had been made to run from the fair Tower of the Sun to the tall Tower of the Moon, which now was Minas Morgul in its accursed vale. Five miles beyond Osgiliath they halted, ending their first day’s march.

But the horsemen pressed on and ere evening they came to the Cross-roads and the great ring of trees, and all was silent. No sign of any enemy had they seen, no cry or call had been heard, no shaft had sped from rock or thicket by the way, yet ever as they went forward they felt the watchfulness of the land increase. Tree and stone, blade and leaf were listening. The darkness had been dispelled, and far away westward sunset was on the



Vale of Anduin, and the white peaks of the mountains blushed in the blue air; but a shadow and a gloom brooded upon the Ephel Dúath.

Then Aragorn set trumpeters at each of the four roads that ran into the ring of trees, and they blew a great fanfare, and the heralds cried aloud: 'The Lords of Gondor have returned and all this land that is theirs they take back.' The hideous orc-head that was set upon the carven figure was cast down and broken in pieces, and the old king's head was raised and set in its place once more, still crowned with white and golden flowers; and men laboured to wash and pare away all the foul scrawls that orcs had put upon the stone.

Now in their debate some had counselled that Minas Morgul should first be assailed, and if they might take it, it should be utterly destroyed. 'And, maybe,' said Imrahil, 'the road that leads thence to the pass above will prove an easier way of assault upon the Dark Lord than his northern gate.'

But against this Gandalf had spoken urgently, because of the evil that dwelt in the valley, where the minds of living men would turn to madness and horror, and because also of the news that Faramir had brought. For if the Ring-bearer had indeed attempted that way, then above all they should not draw the Eye of Mordor thither. So the next day when the main host came up, they set a strong guard upon the Cross-roads to make some defence, if Mordor should send a force over the Morgul Pass, or should bring more men up from the South. For that guard they chose mostly archers who knew the ways of Ithilien and would lie hid in the woods and slopes about the meeting of the ways. But Gandalf and Aragorn rode with the vanguard to the entrance of Morgul Vale and looked on the evil city.

It was dark and lifeless; for the Orcs and lesser creatures of Mordor that had dwelt there had been destroyed in battle, and the Nazgûl were abroad. Yet the air of the valley was heavy with fear and enmity. Then they broke the evil bridge and set red flames in the noisome fields and departed.

The day after, being the third day since they set out from Minas Tirith, the army began its northward march along the road. It was some hundred miles by that way from the Cross-roads to the Morannon, and what might befall them before they came so far none knew. They went openly but heedfully, with mounted scouts before them on the road, and others on foot upon either side, especially on the eastward flank; for there lay dark thickets, and a tumbled land of rocky ghylls and crags, behind which the long grim slopes of the Ephel Dúath clambered up. The weather of the world remained fair, and the wind held in the west, but nothing could waft away the glooms and the sad mists that clung about the Mountains of Shadow; and behind them at whiles great smokes would arise and hover in the upper winds.

Ever and anon Gandalf let blow the trumpets, and the heralds would cry: 'The Lords of Gondor are come! Let all leave this land or yield them up!' But Imrahil said: 'Say not *The Lords of Gondor*. Say *The King Elessar*. For that is true, even though he has not yet sat upon the throne; and it will give the Enemy more thought, if the heralds use that name.' And thereafter thrice a day the heralds proclaimed the coming of the King Elessar. But none answered the challenge.

Nonetheless, though they marched in seeming peace, the hearts of all the army, from the highest to the lowest, were downcast, and with every mile that they went north foreboding of evil grew heavier on them. It was near the end of the second day of their march from the Cross-roads that they first met any offer of battle. For a strong force of Orcs and Easterlings attempted to take their leading companies in an ambush; and that was in the very place where Faramir had waylaid the men of Harad, and the road went in a deep cutting through an out-thrust of the eastward hills. But the Captains of the West were well warned by their scouts, skilled men from Henneth Annûn led by Mablung; and so the ambush was itself trapped. For horsemen went wide about westward and came up on the flank of the enemy and from behind, and they were destroyed or driven east into the hills.

But the victory did little to enhearten the captains. 'It is but a feint,' said Aragorn; 'and its chief purpose, I deem, was rather to draw us on by a false guess of our Enemy's weakness than to do us much hurt, yet.' And from that evening onward the Nazgûl came and followed every move of the army. They still flew high and out of sight of all save Legolas, and yet their presence could be felt, as a deepening of shadow and a dimming of the sun; and though the Ringwraiths did not yet stoop low upon their foes and were silent, uttering no cry, the dread of them could not be shaken off.

So time and the hopeless journey wore away. Upon the fourth day from the Cross-roads and the sixth from Minas Tirith they came at last to the end of the living lands, and began to pass into the desolation that lay before the gates of the Pass of Cirith Gorgor; and they could descry the marshes and the desert that stretched north and west to the Eryn Muil. So desolate were those places and so deep the horror that lay on them that some of the host were unmanned, and they could neither walk nor ride further north.

Aragorn looked at them, and there was pity in his eyes rather than wrath; for these were young men from Rohan, from Westfold far away, or husbandmen from Lossarnach, and to them Mordor had been from childhood a name of evil, and yet unreal, a legend that had no part in their simple life; and now they walked like men in a hideous dream made true, and they understood not this war nor why fate should lead them to such a pass.

‘Go!’ said Aragorn. ‘But keep what honour you may, and do not run! And there is a task which you may attempt and so be not wholly shamed. Take your way south-west till you come to Cair Andros, and if that is still held by enemies, as I think, then re-take it, if you can; and hold it to the last in defence of Gondor and Rohan!’

Then some being shamed by his mercy overcame their fear and went on, and the others took new hope, hearing of a manful deed within their measure that they could turn to, and they departed. And so, since many men had already been left at the Cross-roads, it was with less than six thousands that the Captains of the West came at last to challenge the Black Gate and the might of Mordor.

They advanced now slowly, expecting at every hour some answer to their challenge, and they drew together, since it was but waste of men to send out scouts or small parties from the main host. At nightfall of the fifth day of the march from Morgul Vale they made their last camp, and set fires about it of such dead wood and heath as they could find. They passed the hours of night in wakefulness and they were aware of many things half-seen that walked and prowled all about them, and they heard the howling of wolves. The wind had died and all the air seemed still. They could see little, for though it was cloudless and the waxing moon was four nights old, there were smokes and fumes that rose out of the earth and the white crescent was shrouded in the mists of Mordor.

It grew cold. As morning came the wind began to stir again, but now it came from the North, and soon it freshened to a rising breeze. All the night-walkers were gone, and the land seemed empty. North amid their noisome pits lay the first of the great heaps and hills of slag and broken rock and blasted earth, the vomit of the maggot-folk of Mordor; but south and now near loomed the great rampart of Cirith Gorgor, and the Black Gate amidmost, and the two Towers of the Teeth tall and dark upon either side. For in their last march the Captains had turned away from the old road as it bent east, and avoided the peril of the lurking hills, and so now they were approaching the Morannon from the north-west, even as Frodo had done.

The two vast iron doors of the Black Gate under its frowning arch were fast closed. Upon the battlement nothing could be seen. All was silent but watchful. They were come to the last end of their folly, and stood forlorn and chill in the grey light of early day before towers and walls which their army could not assault with hope, not even if it had brought thither engines of great power, and the Enemy had no more force than would suffice for the manning of the gate and wall alone. Yet they knew that all the hills and rocks about the Morannon were filled with hidden foes, and the shadowy defile beyond was bored and tunnelled by teeming broods of evil things. And as they stood they saw all the Nazgûl gathered together, hovering above the Towers of the Teeth like vultures; and they knew that they were watched. But still the Enemy made no sign.

No choice was left them but to play their part to its end. Therefore Aragorn now set the host in such array as could best be contrived; and they were drawn up on two great hills of blasted stone and earth that orcs had piled in years of labour. Before them towards Mordor lay like a moat a great mire of reeking mud and foul-smelling pools. When all was ordered, the Captains rode forth towards the Black Gate with a great guard of horsemen and the banner and heralds and trumpeters. There was Gandalf as chief herald, and Aragorn with the sons of Elrond, and Éomer of Rohan, and Imrahil; and Legolas and Gimli and Peregrin were bidden to go also, so that all the enemies of Mordor should have a witness.

They came within cry of the Morannon, and unfurled the banner, and blew upon their trumpets; and the heralds stood out and sent their voices up over the battlement of Mordor.

‘Come forth!’ they cried. ‘Let the Lord of the Black Land come forth! Justice shall be done upon him. For wrongfully he has made war upon Gondor and wrested its lands. Therefore the King of Gondor demands that he should atone for his evils, and depart then for ever. Come forth!’

There was a long silence, and from wall and gate no cry or sound was heard in answer. But Sauron had already laid his plans, and he had a mind first to play these mice cruelly before he struck to kill. So it was that, even as the Captains were about to turn away, the silence was broken suddenly. There came a long rolling of great drums like thunder in the mountains, and then a braying of horns that shook the very stones and stunned men’s ears. And thereupon the door of the Black Gate was thrown open with a great clang, and out of it there came an embassy from the Dark Tower.

At its head there rode a tall and evil shape, mounted upon a black horse, if horse it was; for it was huge and hideous, and its face was a frightful mask, more like a skull than a living head, and in the sockets of its eyes and in its nostrils there burned a flame. The rider was robed all in black, and black was his lofty helm; yet this was no Ringwraith but a living man. The Lieutenant of the Tower of Barad-dûr he was, and his name is remembered in no tale; for he himself had forgotten it, and he said: ‘I am the Mouth of Sauron.’ But it is told that he was a renegade, who came of the race of those that are named the Black Númenóreans; for they established their dwellings in Middle-earth during the years of Sauron’s domination, and they worshipped him, being enamoured of evil knowledge. And he entered the service of the Dark Tower when it first rose again, and because of his cunning he grew ever higher in the Lord’s favour; and he learned great sorcery, and knew much of the mind of Sauron; and he was more cruel than any orc.

He it was that now rode out, and with him came only a small company of black-harnessed soldiery, and a single banner, black but bearing on it in red the Evil Eye. Now halting a few paces before the Captains of the West he looked them up and down and laughed.

‘Is there anyone in this rout with authority to treat with me?’ he asked. ‘Or indeed with wit to understand me? Not thou at least!’ he mocked, turning to Aragorn with scorn. ‘It needs more to make a king than a piece of Elvish glass, or a rabble such as this. Why, any brigand of the hills can show as good a following!’

Aragorn said naught in answer, but he took the other’s eye and held it, and for a moment they strove thus; but soon, though Aragorn did not stir nor move hand to weapon, the other quailed and gave back as if menaced with a blow. ‘I am a herald and ambassador, and may not be assailed!’ he cried.

‘Where such laws hold,’ said Gandalf, ‘it is also the custom for ambassadors to use less insolence. But no-one has threatened you. You have naught to fear from us, until your errand is done. But unless your master has come to new wisdom, then with all his servants you will be in great peril.’

‘So!’ said the Messenger. ‘Then thou art the spokesman, old greybeard? Have we not heard of thee at whiles, and of thy wanderings, ever hatching plots and mischief at a safe distance? But this time thou hast stuck out thy nose too far, Master Gandalf; and thou shalt see what comes to him who sets his foolish webs before the feet of Sauron the Great. I have tokens that I was bidden to show to thee—to thee in especial, if thou shouldst dare to come.’ He signed to one of his guards, and he came forward bearing a bundle swathed in black cloths.

The Messenger put these aside, and there to the wonder and dismay of all the Captains he held up first the short sword that Sam had carried, and next a grey cloak with an elven-brooch, and last the coat of mithril-mail that Frodo had worn wrapped in his tattered garments. A blackness came before their eyes, and it seemed to them in a moment of silence that the world stood still, but their hearts were dead and their last hope gone. Pippin who stood behind Prince Imrahil sprang forward with a cry of grief.

‘Silence!’ said Gandalf sternly, thrusting him back; but the Messenger laughed aloud.

‘So you have yet another of these imps with you!’ he cried. ‘What use you find in them I cannot guess; but to send them as spies into Mordor is beyond even your accustomed folly. Still, I thank him, for it is plain that this brat at least has seen these tokens before, and it would be vain for you to deny them now.’

‘I do not wish to deny them,’ said Gandalf. ‘Indeed, I know them all and all their history, and despite your scorn, foul Mouth of Sauron, you cannot say as much. But why do you bring them here?’

‘Dwarf-coat, elf-cloak, blade of the downfallen West, and spy from the little rat-land of the Shire—nay, do not start! We know it well—here are the marks of a conspiracy. Now, maybe he that bore these things was a creature that you would not grieve to lose, and maybe otherwise: one dear to you, perhaps? If so, take swift counsel with what little wit is left to you. For Sauron does not love spies, and what his fate shall be depends now on your choice.’

No-one answered him; but he saw their faces grey with fear and the horror in their eyes, and he laughed again, for it seemed to him that his sport went well. ‘Good, good!’ he said. ‘He was dear to you, I see. Or else his errand was one that you did not wish to fail? It has. And now he shall endure the slow torment of years, as long and slow as our arts in the Great Tower can contrive, and never be released, unless maybe when he is changed and broken, so that he may come to you, and you shall see what you have done. This shall surely be unless you accept my Lord’s terms.’

‘Name the terms,’ said Gandalf steadily, but those nearby saw the anguish in his face, and now he seemed an old and wizened man, crushed, defeated at last. They did not doubt that he would accept.

‘These are the terms,’ said the Messenger, and smiled as he eyed them one by one. ‘The rabble of Gondor and its deluded allies shall withdraw at once beyond the Anduin, first taking oaths never again to assail Sauron the Great in arms, open or secret. All lands east of the Anduin shall be Sauron’s for ever, solely. West of the Anduin as far as the Misty Mountains and the Gap of Rohan shall be tributary to Mordor, and men there shall bear no weapons, but shall have leave to govern their own affairs. But they shall help to rebuild Isengard which they have wantonly destroyed, and that shall be Sauron’s, and there his lieutenant shall dwell: not Saruman, but one more worthy of trust.’

Looking in the Messenger’s eyes they read his thought. He was to be that lieutenant, and gather all that remained of the West under his sway; he would be their tyrant and they his slaves.

But Gandalf said: ‘This is much to demand for the delivery of one servant: that your Master should receive in exchange what he must else fight many a war to gain! Or has the field of Gondor destroyed his hope in war, so that he falls to haggling? And if indeed we rated this prisoner so high, what surety have we that Sauron, the Base Master of Treachery, will keep his part? Where is this prisoner? Let him be brought forth and yielded to us, and then we will consider these demands.’

It seemed then to Gandalf, intent, watching him as a man engaged in fencing with a deadly foe, that for the taking of a breath the Messenger was at a loss; yet swiftly he laughed again.

‘Do not bandy words in your insolence with the Mouth of Sauron!’ he cried. ‘Surety you crave! Sauron gives none. If you sue for his clemency you must first do his bidding. These are his terms. Take them or leave them!’

‘These we will take!’ said Gandalf suddenly. He cast aside his cloak and a white light shone forth like a sword in that black place. Before his upraised hand the foul Messenger recoiled, and Gandalf coming seized and took from him the tokens: coat, cloak, and sword. ‘These we will take in memory of our friend,’ he cried. ‘But as for your terms, we reject them utterly. Get you gone, for your embassy is over and death is near to you. We did not come here to waste words in treating with Sauron, faithless and accursed; still less with one of his slaves. Begone!’

Then the Messenger of Mordor laughed no more. His face was twisted with amazement and anger to the likeness of some wild beast that, as it crouches on its prey, is smitten on the muzzle with a stinging rod. Rage filled him and his mouth slavered, and shapeless sounds of fury came strangling from his throat. But he looked at the fell faces of the Captains and their deadly eyes, and fear overcame his wrath. He gave a great cry, and turned, leaped upon his steed, and with his company galloped madly back to Cirith Gorgor. But as they went his soldiers blew their horns in signal long arranged; and even before they came to the gate Sauron sprang his trap.

Drums rolled and fires leaped up. The great doors of the Black Gate swung back wide. Out of it streamed a great host as swiftly as swirling waters when a sluice is lifted.

The Captains mounted again and rode back, and from the host of Mordor there went up a jeering yell. Dust rose smothering the air, as from nearby there marched up an army of Easterlings that had waited for the signal in the shadows of Ered Lithui beyond the further Tower. Down from the hills on either side of the Morannon poured Orcs innumerable. The men of the West were trapped, and soon, all about the grey mounds where they stood, forces ten times and more than ten times their match would ring them in a sea of enemies. Sauron had taken the proffered bait in jaws of steel.

Little time was left to Aragorn for the ordering of his battle. Upon the one hill he stood with Gandalf, and there fair and desperate was raised the banner of the Tree and Stars. Upon the other hill hard by stood the banners of Rohan and Dol Amroth, White Horse and Silver Swan. And about each hill a ring was made facing all ways, bristling with spear and sword. But in the front towards Mordor where the first bitter assault would come there stood the sons of Elrond on the left with the Dúnedain about them, and on the right the Prince Imrahil with the men of Dol Amroth tall and fair, and picked men of the Tower of Guard.

The wind blew, and the trumpets sang, and arrows whined; but the sun now climbing towards the South was veiled in the reeks of Mordor, and through a threatening haze it gleamed, remote, a sullen red, as if it were the ending of the day, or the end maybe of all the world of light. And out of the gathering mirk the Nazgûl came with their cold voices crying words of death; and then all hope was quenched.

Pippin had bowed crushed with horror when he heard Gandalf reject the terms and doom Frodo to the torment of the Tower; but he had mastered himself, and now he stood beside Beregon in the front rank of Gondor with Imrahil's men. For it seemed best to him to die soon and leave the bitter story of his life, since all was in ruin.

'I wish Merry was here,' he heard himself saying, and quick thoughts raced through his mind, even as he watched the enemy come charging to the assault. 'Well, well, now at any rate I understand poor Denethor a little better. We might die together, Merry and I, and since die we must, why not? Well, as he is not here, I hope he'll find an easier end. But now I must do my best.'

He drew his sword and looked at it, and the intertwining shapes of red and gold; and the flowing characters of Númenor glinted like fire upon the blade. 'This was made for just such an hour,' he thought. 'If only I could smite that foul Messenger with it, then almost I should draw level with old Merry. Well, I'll smite some of this beastly brood before the end. I wish I could see cool sunlight and green grass again!'

Then even as he thought these things the first assault crashed into them. The orcs hindered by the mires that lay before the hills halted and poured their arrows into the defending ranks. But through them there came striding up, roaring like beasts, a great company of hill-trolls out of Gorgoroth. Taller and broader than Men they were, and they were clad only in close-fitting mesh of horny scales, or maybe that was their hideous hide; but they bore round bucklers huge and black and wielded heavy hammers in their knotted hands. Reckless they sprang into the pools and waded across, bellowing as they came. Like a storm they broke upon the line of the men of Gondor, and beat upon helm and head, and arm and shield, as smiths hewing the hot bending iron. At Pippin's side Beregon was stunned and overborne, and he fell; and the great troll-chief that smote him down bent over him, reaching out a clutching claw; for these fell creatures would bite the throats of those that they threw down.

Then Pippin stabbed upwards, and the written blade of Westrenesse pierced through the hide and went deep into the vitals of the troll, and his black blood came gushing out. He toppled forward and came crashing down like a falling rock, burying those beneath him. Blackness and stench and crushing pain came upon Pippin, and his mind fell away into a great darkness.

'So it ends as I guessed it would,' his thought said, even as it fluttered away; and it laughed a little within him ere it fled, almost gay it seemed to be casting off at last all doubt and care and fear. And then even as it winged away into forgetfulness it heard voices, and they seemed to be crying in some forgotten world far above: 'The Eagles are coming! The Eagles are coming!' For one moment more Pippin's thought hovered. 'Bilbo!' it said. 'But no! That came in his tale, long long ago. This is my tale, and it is ended now. Good-bye!' And his thought fled far away and his eyes saw no more.





## Chapter 1: The Tower Of Cirith Ungol

Sam roused himself painfully from the ground. For a moment he wondered where he was, and then all the misery and despair returned to him. He was in the deep dark outside the under-gate of the orcs' stronghold; its brazen doors were shut. He must have fallen stunned when he hurled himself against them; but how long he had lain there he did not know. Then he had been on fire, desperate and furious; now he was shivering and cold. He crept to the doors and pressed his ears against them.

Far within he could hear faintly the voices of orcs clamouring, but soon they stopped or passed out of hearing, and all was still. His head ached and his eyes saw phantom lights in the darkness, but he struggled to steady himself and think. It was clear at any rate that he had no hope of getting into the orc-hold by that gate; he might wait there for days before it was opened, and he could not wait: time was desperately precious. He no longer had any doubt about his duty: he must rescue his master or perish in the attempt.

'The perishing is more likely, and will be a lot easier anyway,' he said grimly to himself, as he sheathed Sting and turned from the brazen doors. Slowly he groped his way back in the dark along the tunnel, not daring to use the elven-light; and as he went he tried to fit together the events since Frodo and he had left the Cross-roads. He wondered what the time was. Somewhere between one day and the next, he supposed; but even of the days he had quite lost count. He was in a land of darkness where the days of the world seemed forgotten, and where all who entered were forgotten too.

'I wonder if they think of us at all,' he said, 'and what is happening to them all away there.' He waved his hand vaguely in the air before him; but he was in fact now facing southwards, as he came back to Shelob's tunnel, not west. Out westward in the world it was drawing to noon upon the fourteenth day of March in the Shire-reckoning, and even now Aragorn was leading the black fleet from Pelargir, and Merry was riding with the Rohirrim down the Stonewain Valley, while in Minas Tirith flames were rising and Pippin watched the madness growing in the eyes of Denethor. Yet amid all their cares and fear the thoughts of their friends turned constantly to Frodo and Sam. They were not forgotten. But they were far beyond aid, and no thought could yet bring any help to Samwise Hamfast's son; he was utterly alone.

He came back at last to the stone door of the orc-passage, and still unable to discover the catch or bolt that held it, he scrambled over as before and dropped softly to the ground. Then he made his way stealthily to the outlet of Shelob's tunnel, where the rags of her great web were still blowing and swaying in the cold airs. For cold they seemed to Sam after the noisome darkness behind; but the breath of them revived him. He crept cautiously out.

All was ominously quiet. The light was no more than that of dusk at a dark day's end. The vast vapours that arose in Mordor and went streaming westward passed low overhead, a great welter of cloud and smoke now lit again beneath with a sullen glow of red.

Sam looked up towards the orc-tower, and suddenly from its narrow windows lights stared out like small red eyes. He wondered if they were some signal. His fear of the orcs, forgotten for a while in his wrath and desperation, now returned. As far as he could see, there was only one possible course for him to take: he must go on and try to find the main entrance to the dreadful tower; but his knees felt weak, and he found that he was trembling. Drawing his eyes down from the tower and the horns of the Cleft before him, he forced his unwilling feet to obey him, and slowly, listening with all his ears, peering into the dense shadows of the rocks beside the way, he retraced his steps, past the place where Frodo fell, and still the stench of Shelob lingered, and then on and up, until he stood again in the very cleft where he had put on the Ring and seen Shagrat's company go by.

There he halted and sat down. For the moment he could drive himself no further. He felt that if once he went beyond the crown of the pass and took one step veritably down into the land of Mordor, that step would be irrevocable. He could never come back. Without any clear purpose he drew out the Ring and put it on again. Immediately he felt the great burden of its weight, and felt afresh, but now more strong and urgent than ever, the malice of the Eye of Mordor, searching, trying to pierce the shadows that it had made for its own defence, but which now hindered it in its unquiet and doubt.

As before, Sam found that his hearing was sharpened, but that to his sight the things of this world seemed thin and vague. The rocky walls of the path were pale, as if seen through a mist, but still at a distance he heard the bubbling of Shelob in her misery; and harsh and clear, and very close it seemed, he heard cries and the clash of metal. He sprang to his feet, and pressed himself against the wall beside the road. He was glad of the Ring, for here was yet another company of orcs on the march. Or so at first he thought. Then suddenly he realized that it was not so, his hearing had deceived him: the orc-cries came from the tower, whose topmost horn was now right above him, on the left hand of the Cleft.

Sam shuddered and tried to force himself to move. There was plainly some devilry going on. Perhaps in spite of all orders the cruelty of the orcs had mastered them, and they were tormenting Frodo, or even savagely hacking him to pieces. He listened; and as he did so a gleam of hope came to him. There could not be much doubt: there was fighting in the tower, the orcs must be at war among themselves, Shagrat and Gorbag had come to blows. Faint as was the hope that his guess brought him, it was enough to rouse him. There might be just a chance. His love for Frodo rose above all other thoughts, and forgetting his peril he cried aloud: 'I'm coming, Mr. Frodo!'

He ran forward to the climbing path, and over it. At once the road turned left and plunged steeply down. Sam had crossed into Mordor.

He took off the Ring, moved it may be by some deep premonition of danger, though to himself he thought only that he wished to see more clearly. 'Better have a look at the worst,' he muttered. 'No good blundering about in a fog!'

Hard and cruel and bitter was the land that met his gaze. Before his feet the highest ridge of the Ephel Dúath fell steeply in great cliffs down into a dark trough, on the further side of which there rose another ridge, much lower, its edge notched and jagged with crags like fangs that stood out black against the red light behind them: it was the grim Morgai, the inner ring of the fences of the land. Far beyond it, but almost straight ahead, across a wide lake of darkness dotted with tiny fires, there was a great burning glow; and from it rose in huge columns a swirling smoke, dusty red at the roots, black above where it merged into the billowing canopy that roofed in all the accursed land.

Sam was looking at Orodruin, the Mountain of Fire. Ever and anon the furnaces far below its ashen cone would grow hot and with a great surging and throbbing pour forth rivers of molten rock from chasms in its sides. Some would flow blazing towards Barad-dûr down great channels; some would wind their way into the stony plain, until they cooled and lay like twisted dragon-shapes vomited from the tormented earth. In such an hour of labour Sam beheld Mount Doom, and the light of it, cut off by the high screen of the Ephel Dúath from those who climbed up the path from the West, now glared against the stark rock faces, so that they seemed to be drenched with blood.

In that dreadful light Sam stood aghast, for now, looking to his left, he could see the Tower of Cirith Ungol in all its strength. The horn that he had seen from the other side was only its topmost turret. Its eastern face stood up in three great tiers from a shelf in the mountain-wall far below; its back was to a great cliff behind, from which it jutted out in pointed bastions, one above the other, diminishing as they rose, with sheer sides of cunning masonry that looked north-east and south-east. About the lowest tier, two hundred feet below where Sam now stood, there was a battlemented wall enclosing a narrow court. Its gate, upon the near south-eastern side, opened on a broad road, the outer parapet of which ran upon the brink of a precipice, until it turned southward and went winding down into the darkness to join the road that came over the Morgul Pass. Then on it went through a jagged rift in the Morgai out into the valley of Gorgoroth and away to Barad-dûr. The narrow upper way on which Sam stood leapt swiftly down by stair and steep path to meet the main road under the frowning walls close to the Tower-gate.



As he gazed at it suddenly Sam understood, almost with a shock, that this stronghold had been built not to keep enemies out of Mordor, but to keep them in. It was indeed one of the works of Gondor long ago, an eastern outpost of the defences of Ithilien, made when, after the Last Alliance, Men of Westergondor kept watch on the evil land of Sauron where his creatures still lurked. But as with Narchost and Carchost, the Towers of the Teeth, so here too the vigilance had failed, and treachery had yielded up the Tower to the Lord of the Ringwraiths, and now for long years it had been held by evil things. Since his return to Mordor, Sauron had found it useful; for he had few servants but many slaves of fear, and still its chief purpose as of old was to prevent escape from Mordor. Though if an enemy were so rash as to try to enter that land secretly, then it was also a last unsleeping guard against any that might pass the vigilance of Morgul and of Shelob.

Only too clearly Sam saw how hopeless it would be for him to creep down under those many-eyed walls and pass the watchful gate. And even if he did so, he could not go far on the guarded road beyond: not even the black shadows, lying deep where the red glow could not reach, would shield him long from the night-eyed orcs. But desperate as that road might be, his task was now far worse: not to avoid the gate and escape, but to enter it, alone.

His thought turned to the Ring, but there was no comfort there, only dread and danger. No sooner had he come in sight of Mount Doom, burning far away, than he was aware of a change in his burden. As it drew near the great furnaces where, in the deeps of time, it had been shaped and forged, the Ring's power grew, and it became more fell, untameable save by some mighty will. As Sam stood there, even though the Ring was not on him but hanging by its chain about his neck, he felt himself enlarged, as if he were robed in a huge distorted shadow of himself, a vast and ominous threat halted upon the walls of Mordor. He felt that he had from now on only two choices: to forbear the Ring, though it would torment him; or to claim it, and challenge the Power that sat in its dark hold beyond the valley of shadows. Already the Ring tempted him, gnawing at his will and reason. Wild fantasies arose in his mind; and he saw Samwise the Strong, Hero of the Age, striding with a flaming sword across the darkened land, and armies flocking to his call as he marched to the overthrow of Barad-dûr. And then all the clouds rolled away, and the white sun shone, and at his command the vale of Gorgoroth became a garden of flowers and trees and brought forth fruit. He had only to put on the Ring and claim it for his own, and all this could be.

In that hour of trial it was the love of his master that helped most to hold him firm; but also deep down in him lived still unconquered his plain hobbit-sense: he knew in the core of his heart that he was not large enough to bear such a burden, even if such visions were not a mere cheat to betray him. The one small garden of a free gardener was all his need and due, not a garden swollen to a realm; his own hands to use, not the hands of others to command.

'And anyway all these notions are only a trick,' he said to himself. 'He'd spot me and cow me, before I could so much as shout out. He'd spot me, pretty quick, if I put the Ring on now, in Mordor. Well, all I can say is: things look as hopeless as a frost in Spring. Just when being invisible would be really useful, I can't use the Ring! And if ever I get any further, it's going to be nothing but a drag and a burden every step. So what's to be done?'

He was not really in any doubt. He knew that he must go down to the gate and not linger any more. With a shrug of his shoulders, as if to shake off the shadow and dismiss the phantoms, he began slowly to descend. With each step he seemed to diminish. He had not gone far before he had shrunk again to a very small and frightened hobbit. He was now passing under the very walls of the Tower, and the cries and sounds of fighting could be heard with his unaided ears. At the moment the noise seemed to be coming from the court behind the outer wall.

Sam was about half way down the path when out of the dark gateway into the red glow there came two orcs running. They did not turn towards him. They were making for the main road; but even as they ran they stumbled and fell to the ground and lay still. Sam had seen no arrows, but he guessed that the orcs had been shot down by others on the battlements or hidden in the shadow of the gate. He went on, hugging the wall on his left. One look upward had shown him that there was no hope of climbing it. The stone-work rose thirty feet, without a crack or ledge, to overhanging courses like inverted steps. The gate was the only way.

He crept on; and as he went he wondered how many orcs lived in the Tower with Shagrat, and how many Gorbag had, and what they were quarrelling about, if that was what was happening. Shagrat's company had seemed to be about forty, and Gorbag's more than twice as large; but of course Shagrat's patrol had only been a part of his garrison. Almost certainly they were quarrelling about Frodo, and the spoil. For a second Sam halted, for suddenly things seemed clear to him, almost as if he had seen them with his eyes. The mithril coat! Of course, Frodo was wearing it, and they would find it. And from what Sam had heard Gorbag would covet it. But the orders of the Dark Tower were at present Frodo's only protection, and if they were set aside, Frodo might be killed out of hand at any moment.

'Come on, you miserable sluggard!' Sam cried to himself. 'Now for it!' He drew Sting and ran towards the open gate. But just as he was about to pass under its great arch he felt a shock: as if he had run into some web like Shelob's, only invisible. He could see no obstacle, but something too strong for his will to overcome barred the way. He looked about, and then within the shadow of the gate he saw the Two Watchers.

They were like great figures seated upon thrones. Each had three joined bodies, and three heads facing outward, and inward, and across the gateway. The heads had vulture-faces, and on their great knees were laid clawlike hands. They seemed to be carved out of huge blocks of stone, immovable, and yet they were aware: some dreadful spirit of evil vigilance abode in them. They knew an enemy. Visible or invisible none could pass unheeded. They would forbid his entry, or his escape.

Hardening his will Sam thrust forward once again, and halted with a jerk, staggering as if from a blow upon his breast and head. Then greatly daring, because he could think of nothing else to do, answering a sudden thought that came to him, he drew slowly out the phial of Galadriel and held it up. Its white light quickened swiftly, and the shadows under the dark arch fled. The monstrous Watchers sat there cold and still, revealed in all their hideous shape. For a moment Sam caught a glitter in the black stones of their eyes, the very malice of which made him quail; but slowly he felt their will waver and crumble into fear.

He sprang past them; but even as he did so, thrusting the phial back into his bosom, he was aware, as plainly as if a bar of steel had snapped to behind him, that their vigilance was renewed. And from those evil heads there came a high shrill cry that echoed in the towering walls before him. Far up above, like an answering signal, a harsh bell clanged a single stroke.

'That's done it!' said Sam. 'Now I've rung the front-door bell! Well, come on somebody!' he cried. 'Tell Captain Shagrat that the great Elf-warrior has called, with his elf-sword too!'

There was no answer. Sam strode forward. Sting glittered blue in his hand. The courtyard lay in deep shadow, but he could see that the pavement was strewn with bodies. Right at his feet were two orc-archers with knives sticking in their backs. Beyond lay many more shapes; some singly as they had been hewn down or shot; others in pairs, still grappling one another, dead in the very throes of stabbing, throttling, biting. The stones were slippery with dark blood.

Two liveries Sam noticed, one marked by the Red Eye, the other by a Moon disfigured with a ghastly face of death; but he did not stop to look more closely. Across the court a great door at the foot of the Tower stood half open, and a red light came through; a large orc lay dead upon the threshold. Sam sprang over the body and went in; and then he peered about at a loss.

A wide and echoing passage led back from the door towards the mountain-side. It was dimly lit with torches flaring in brackets on the walls, but its distant end was lost in gloom. Many doors and openings could be seen on this side and that; but it was empty save for two or three more bodies sprawling on the floor. From what he had heard of the captains' talk Sam knew that, dead or alive, Frodo would most likely be found in a chamber high up in the turret far above; but he might search for a day before he found the way.

'It'll be near the back, I guess,' Sam muttered. 'The whole Tower climbs backwards-like. And anyway I'd better follow these lights.'

He advanced down the passage, but slowly now, each step more reluctant. Terror was beginning to grip him again. There was no sound save the rap of his feet, which seemed to grow to an echoing noise, like the slapping of great hands upon the stones. The dead bodies; the emptiness; the dank black walls that in the torchlight

seemed to drip with blood; the fear of sudden death lurking in doorway or shadow; and behind all his mind the waiting watchful malice at the gate: it was almost more than he could screw himself to face. He would have welcomed a fight—with not too many enemies at a time—rather than this hideous brooding uncertainty. He forced himself to think of Frodo, lying bound or in pain or dead somewhere in this dreadful place. He went on.

He had passed beyond the torchlight, almost to a great arched door at the end of the passage, the inner side of the under-gate, as he rightly guessed, when there came from high above a dreadful choking shriek. He stopped short. Then he heard feet coming. Someone was running in great haste down an echoing stairway overhead.

His will was too weak and slow to restrain his hand. It dragged at the chain and clutched the Ring. But Sam did not put it on; for even as he clasped it to his breast, an orc came clattering down. Leaping out of a dark opening at the right, it ran towards him. It was no more than six paces from him when, lifting its head, it saw him; and Sam could hear its gasping breath and see the glare in its bloodshot eyes. It stopped short aghast. For what it saw was not a small frightened hobbit trying to hold a steady sword: it saw a great silent shape, cloaked in a grey shadow, looming against the wavering light behind; in one hand it held a sword, the very light of which was a bitter pain, the other was clutched at its breast, but held concealed some nameless menace of power and doom.

For a moment the orc crouched, and then with a hideous yelp of fear it turned and fled back as it had come. Never was any dog more heartened when its enemy turned tail than Sam at this unexpected flight. With a shout he gave chase.

‘Yes! The Elf-warrior is loose!’ he cried. ‘I’m coming. Just you show me the way up, or I’ll skin you!’

But the orc was in its own haunts, nimble and well-fed. Sam was a stranger, hungry and weary. The stairs were high and steep and winding. Sam’s breath began to come in gasps. The orc had soon passed out of sight, and now only faintly could be heard the slapping of its feet as it went on and up. Every now and again it gave a yell, and the echo ran along the walls. But slowly all sound of it died away.

Sam plodded on. He felt that he was on the right road, and his spirits had risen a good deal. He thrust the Ring away and tightened his belt. ‘Well, well!’ he said. ‘If only they all take such a dislike to me and my Sting, this may turn out better than I hoped. And anyway it looks as if Shagrat, Gorbag, and company have done nearly all my job for me. Except for that little frightened rat, I do believe there’s nobody left alive in the place!’

And with that he stopped, brought up hard, as if he had hit his head against the stone wall. The full meaning of what he had said struck him like a blow. Nobody left alive! Whose had been that horrible dying shriek? ‘Frodo, Frodo! Master!’ he cried half sobbing. ‘If they’ve killed you, what shall I do? Well, I’m coming at last, right to the top, to see what I must.’

Up, up he went. It was dark save for an occasional torch flaring at a turn, or beside some opening that led into the higher levels of the Tower. Sam tried to count the steps, but after two hundred he lost his reckoning. He was moving quietly now; for he thought that he could hear the sound of voices talking, still some way above. More than one rat remained alive it seemed.

All at once, when he felt that he could pump out no more breath, nor force his knees to bend again, the stair ended. He stood still. The voices were now loud and near. Sam peered about. He had climbed right to the flat roof of the third and highest tier of the Tower: an open space, about twenty yards across, with a low parapet. There the stair was covered by a small domed chamber in the midst of the roof, with low doors facing east and west. Eastward Sam could see the plain of Mordor vast and dark below, and the burning mountain far away. A fresh turmoil was surging in its deep wells, and the rivers of fire blazed so fiercely that even at this distance of many miles the light of them lit the tower-top with a red glare. Westward the view was blocked by the base of the great turret that stood at the back of this upper court and reared its horn high above the crest of the encircling hills. Light gleamed in a window-slit. Its door was not ten yards from where Sam stood. It was open but dark, and from just within its shadow the voices came.

At first Sam did not listen; he took a pace out of the eastward door and looked about. At once he saw that up here the fighting had been fiercest. All the court was choked with dead orcs, or their severed and scattered heads and limbs. The place stank of death. A snarl followed by a blow and a cry sent him darting back into

hiding. An orc-voice rose in anger, and he knew it again at once, harsh, brutal, cold. It was Shagrat speaking, Captain of the Tower.

‘You won’t go again, you say? Curse you, Snaga, you little maggot! If you think I’m so damaged that it’s safe to flout me, you’re mistaken. Come here, and I’ll squeeze your eyes out, like I did to Radbug just now. And when some new lads come, I’ll deal with you: I’ll send you to Shelob.’

‘They won’t come, not before you’re dead anyway,’ answered Snaga surlily. ‘I’ve told you twice that Gorbag’s swine got to the gate first, and none of ours got out. Lagduf and Muzgash ran through, but they were shot. I saw it from a window, I tell you. And they were the last.’

‘Then you must go. I must stay here anyway. But I’m hurt. The Black Pits take that filthy rebel Gorbag!’ Shagrat’s voice trailed off into a string of foul names and curses. ‘I gave him better than I got, but he knifed me, the dung, before I throttled him. You must go, or I’ll eat you. News must get through to Lugalbúrz, or we’ll both be for the Black Pits. Yes, you too. You won’t escape by skulking here.’

‘I’m not going down those stairs again,’ growled Snaga, ‘be you captain or no. Nar! Keep your hands off your knife, or I’ll put an arrow in your guts. You won’t be a captain long when They hear about all these goings-on. I’ve fought for the Tower against those stinking Morgul-rats, but a nice mess you two precious captains have made of things, fighting over the swag.’

‘That’s enough from you,’ snarled Shagrat. ‘I had my orders. It was Gorbag started it, trying to pinch that pretty shirt.’

‘Well, you put his back up, being so high and mighty. And he had more sense than you anyway. He told you more than once that the most dangerous of these spies was still loose, and you wouldn’t listen. And you won’t listen now. Gorbag was right, I tell you. There’s a great fighter about, one of those bloody-handed Elves, or one of the filthy *tarks*.<sup>28</sup> He’s coming here, I tell you. You heard the bell. He’s got past the Watchers, and that’s *tark*’s work. He’s on the stairs. And until he’s off them, I’m not going down. Not if you were a Nazgûl, I wouldn’t.’

‘So that’s it, is it?’ yelled Shagrat. ‘You’ll do this, and you’ll not do that? And when he does come, you’ll bolt and leave me? No, you won’t! I’ll put red maggot-holes in your belly first.’

Out of the turret-door the smaller orc came flying. Behind him came Shagrat, a large orc with long arms that, as he ran crouching, reached to the ground. But one arm hung limp and seemed to be bleeding; the other hugged a large black bundle. In the red glare Sam, cowering behind the stair-door, caught a glimpse of his evil face as it passed: it was scored as if by rending claws and smeared with blood; slaver dripped from its protruding fangs; the mouth snarled like an animal.

As far as Sam could see, Shagrat hunted Snaga round the roof, until ducking and eluding him the smaller orc with a yelp darted back into the turret and disappeared. Then Shagrat halted. Out of the eastward door Sam could see him now by the parapet, panting, his left claw clenching and unclenching feebly. He put the bundle on the floor and with his right claw drew out a long red knife and spat on it. Going to the parapet he leaned over, looking down into the outer court far below. Twice he shouted but no answer came.

Suddenly, as Shagrat was stooped over the battlement, his back to the roof-top, Sam to his amazement saw that one of the sprawling bodies was moving. It was crawling. It put out a claw and clutched the bundle. It staggered up. In its other hand it held a broad-headed spear with a short broken haft. It was poised for a stabbing thrust. But at that very moment a hiss escaped its teeth, a gasp of pain or hate. Quick as a snake Shagrat slipped aside, twisted round, and drove his knife into his enemy’s throat.

‘Got you, Gorbag!’ he cried. ‘Not quite dead, eh? Well, I’ll finish my job now.’ He sprang on to the fallen body, and stamped and trampled it in his fury, stooping now and again to stab and slash it with his knife.

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<sup>28</sup> See Appendix F, p. 1131.

Satisfied at last, he threw back his head and let out a horrible gurgling yell of triumph. Then he licked his knife, and put it between his teeth, and catching up the bundle he came loping towards the near door of the stairs.

Sam had no time to think. He might have slipped out of the other door, but hardly without being seen; and he could not have played hide-and-seek with this hideous orc for long. He did what was probably the best thing he could have done. He sprang out to meet Shagrat with a shout. He was no longer holding the Ring, but it was there, a hidden power, a cowering menace to the slaves of Mordor; and in his hand was Sting, and its light smote the eyes of the orc like the glitter of cruel stars in the terrible elf-countries, the dream of which was a cold fear to all his kind. And Shagrat could not both fight and keep hold of his treasure. He stopped, growling, baring his fangs. Then once more, orc-fashion, he leapt aside, and as Sam sprang at him, using the heavy bundle as both shield and weapon, he thrust it hard into his enemy's face. Sam staggered, and before he could recover, Shagrat darted past and down the stairs.

Sam ran after him, cursing, but he did not go far. Soon the thought of Frodo returned to him, and he remembered that the other orc had gone back into the turret. Here was another dreadful choice, and he had no time to ponder it. If Shagrat got away, he would soon get help and come back. But if Sam pursued him, the other orc might do some horrible deed up there. And anyway Sam might miss Shagrat or be killed by him. He turned quickly and ran back up the stairs. 'Wrong again, I expect,' he sighed. 'But it's my job to go right up to the top first, whatever happens afterwards.'

Away below Shagrat went leaping down the stairs and out over the court and through the gate, bearing his precious burden. If Sam could have seen him and known the grief that his escape would bring, he might have quailed. But now his mind was set on the last stage of his search. He came cautiously to the turret-door and stepped inside. It opened into darkness. But soon his staring eyes were aware of a dim light at his right hand. It came from an opening that led to another stairway, dark and narrow: it appeared to go winding up the turret along the inside of its round outer wall. A torch was glimmering from somewhere up above.

Softly Sam began to climb. He came to the guttering torch, fixed above a door on his left that faced a window-slit looking out westward, one of the red eyes that he and Frodo had seen from down below by the tunnel's mouth. Quickly Sam passed the door and hurried on to the second storey, dreading at any moment to be attacked and to feel throttling fingers seize his throat from behind. He came next to a window looking east and another torch above the door to a passage through the middle of the turret. The door was open, the passage dark save for the glimmer of the torch and the red glare from outside filtering through the window-slit. But here the stair stopped and climbed no further. Sam crept into the passage. On either side there was a low door; both were closed and locked. There was no sound at all.

'A dead end,' muttered Sam; 'and after all my climb! This can't be the top of the tower. But what can I do now?'

He ran back to the lower storey and tried the door. It would not move. He ran up again, and sweat began to trickle down his face. He felt that even minutes were precious, but one by one they escaped; and he could do nothing. He cared no longer for Shagrat or Snaga or any other orc that was ever spawned. He longed only for his master, for one sight of his face or one touch of his hand.

At last, weary and feeling finally defeated, he sat on a step below the level of the passage-floor and bowed his head into his hands. It was quiet, horribly quiet. The torch, that was already burning low when he arrived, sputtered and went out; and he felt the darkness cover him like a tide. And then softly, to his own surprise, there at the vain end of his long journey and his grief, moved by what thought in his heart he could not tell, Sam began to sing.

His voice sounded thin and quavering in the cold dark tower: the voice of a forlorn and weary hobbit that no listening orc could possibly mistake for the clear song of an Elven-lord. He murmured old childish tunes out of the Shire, and snatches of Mr. Bilbo's rhymes that came into his mind like fleeting glimpses of the country of his home. And then suddenly new strength rose in him, and his voice rang out, while words of his own came unbidden to fit the simple tune.

*In western lands beneath the Sun*

*the flowers may rise in Spring,  
the trees may bud, the waters run,  
the merry finches sing.  
Or there maybe 'tis cloudless night  
and swaying beeches bear  
the Elven-stars as jewels white  
amid their branching hair.  
Though here at journey's end I lie  
in darkness buried deep,  
beyond all towers strong and high,  
beyond all mountains steep,  
above all shadows rides the Sun  
and Stars for ever dwell:  
I will not say the Day is done,  
nor bid the Stars farewell.*

'Beyond all towers strong and high,' he began again, and then he stopped short. He thought that he had heard a faint voice answering him. But now he could hear nothing. Yes, he could hear something, but not a voice. Footsteps were approaching. Now a door was being opened quietly in the passage above; the hinges creaked. Sam crouched down listening. The door closed with a dull thud; and then a snarling orc-voice rang out.

'Ho la! You up there, you dunghill rat! Stop your squeaking, or I'll come and deal with you. D'you hear?'

There was no answer.

'All right,' growled Snaga. 'But I'll come and have a look at you all the same, and see what you're up to.'

The hinges creaked again, and Sam, now peering over the corner of the passage-threshold, saw a flicker of light in an open doorway, and the dim shape of an orc coming out. He seemed to be carrying a ladder. Suddenly the answer dawned on Sam: the topmost chamber was reached by a trap-door in the roof of the passage. Snaga thrust the ladder upwards, steadied it, and then clambered out of sight. Sam heard a bolt drawn back. Then he heard the hideous voice speaking again.

'You lie quiet, or you'll pay for it! You've not got long to live in peace, I guess; but if you don't want the fun to begin right now, keep your trap shut, see? There's a reminder for you!' There was a sound like the crack of a whip.

At that rage blazed in Sam's heart to a sudden fury. He sprang up, ran, and went up the ladder like a cat. His head came out in the middle of the floor of a large round chamber. A red lamp hung from its roof; the westward window-slit was high and dark. Something was lying on the floor by the wall under the window, but over it a black orc-shape was straddled. It raised a whip a second time, but the blow never fell.

With a cry Sam leapt across the floor, Sting in hand. The orc wheeled round, but before it could make a move Sam slashed its whip-hand from its arm. Howling with pain and fear but desperate the orc charged head-down at him. Sam's next blow went wide, and thrown off his balance he fell backwards, clutching at the orc as it stumbled over him. Before he could scramble up he heard a cry and a thud. The orc in its wild haste had tripped on the ladder-head and fallen through the open trap-door. Sam gave no more thought to it. He ran to the figure huddled on the floor. It was Frodo.

He was naked, lying as if in a swoon on a heap of filthy rags: his arm was flung up, shielding his head, and across his side there ran an ugly whip-weal.

'Frodo! Mr. Frodo, my dear!' cried Sam, tears almost blinding him. 'It's Sam, I've come!' He half lifted his master and hugged him to his breast. Frodo opened his eyes.

'Am I still dreaming?' he muttered. 'But the other dreams were horrible.'

'You're not dreaming at all, Master,' said Sam. 'It's real. It's me. I've come.'

'I can hardly believe it,' said Frodo, clutching him. 'There was an orc with a whip, and then it turns into Sam! Then I wasn't dreaming after all when I heard that singing down below, and I tried to answer? Was it you?'

'It was indeed, Mr. Frodo. I'd given up hope, almost. I couldn't find you.'

'Well, you have now, Sam, dear Sam,' said Frodo, and he lay back in Sam's gentle arms, closing his eyes, like a child at rest when night-fears are driven away by some loved voice or hand.

Sam felt that he could sit like that in endless happiness; but it was not allowed. It was not enough for him to find his master, he had still to try and save him. He kissed Frodo's forehead. 'Come! Wake up, Mr. Frodo!' he said, trying to sound as cheerful as he had when he drew back the curtains at Bag End on a summer's morning.

Frodo sighed and sat up. 'Where are we? How did I get here?' he asked.

'There's no time for tales till we get somewhere else, Mr. Frodo,' said Sam. 'But you're in the top of that tower you and me saw from away down by the tunnel before the orcs got you. How long ago that was I don't know. More than a day, I guess.'

'Only that?' said Frodo. 'It seems weeks. You must tell me all about it, if we get a chance. Something hit me, didn't it? And I fell into darkness and foul dreams, and woke and found that waking was worse. Orcs were all round me. I think they had just been pouring some horrible burning drink down my throat. My head grew clear, but I was aching and weary. They stripped me of everything; and then two great brutes came and questioned me, questioned me until I thought I should go mad, standing over me, gloating, fingering their knives. I'll never forget their claws and eyes.'

'You won't, if you talk about them, Mr. Frodo,' said Sam. 'And if we don't want to see them again, the sooner we get going the better. Can you walk?'

'Yes, I can walk,' said Frodo, getting up slowly. 'I am not hurt, Sam. Only I feel very tired, and I've a pain here.' He put his hand to the back of his neck above his left shoulder. He stood up, and it looked to Sam as if he was clothed in flame: his naked skin was scarlet in the light of the lamp above. Twice he paced across the floor.

'That's better!' he said, his spirits rising a little. 'I didn't dare to move when I was left alone, or one of the guards came. Until the yelling and fighting began. The two big brutes: they quarrelled, I think. Over me and my things. I lay here terrified. And then all went deadly quiet, and that was worse.'

'Yes, they quarrelled, seemingly,' said Sam. 'There must have been a couple of hundred of the dirty creatures in this place. A bit of a tall order for Sam Gamgee, as you might say. But they've done all the killing of themselves. That's lucky, but it's too long to make a song about, till we're out of here. Now what's to be done? You can't go walking in the Black Land in naught but your skin, Mr. Frodo.'

'They've taken everything, Sam,' said Frodo. 'Everything I had. Do you understand? *Everything!*' He cowered on the floor again with bowed head, as his own words brought home to him the fullness of the disaster, and despair overwhelmed him. 'The quest has failed, Sam. Even if we get out of here, we can't escape. Only Elves can escape. Away, away out of Middle-earth, far away over the Sea. If even that is wide enough to keep the Shadow out.'

'No, *not* everything, Mr. Frodo. And it hasn't failed, not yet. I took it, Mr. Frodo, begging your pardon. And I've kept it safe. It's round my neck now, and a terrible burden it is, too.' Sam fumbled for the Ring and its chain. 'But I suppose you must take it back.' Now it had come to it, Sam felt reluctant to give up the Ring and burden his master with it again.

'You've got it?' gasped Frodo. 'You've got it here? Sam, you're a marvel!' Then quickly and strangely his tone changed. 'Give it to me!' he cried, standing up, holding out a trembling hand. 'Give it me at once! You can't have it!'

'All right, Mr. Frodo,' said Sam, rather startled. 'Here it is!' Slowly he drew the Ring out and passed the chain over his head. 'But you're in the land of Mordor now, sir; and when you get out, you'll see the Fiery Mountain and all. You'll find the Ring very dangerous now, and very hard to bear. If it's too hard a job, I could share it with you, maybe?'

‘No, no!’ cried Frodo, snatching the Ring and chain from Sam’s hands. ‘No you won’t, you thief!’ He panted, staring at Sam with eyes wide with fear and enmity. Then suddenly, clasp the Ring in one clenched fist, he stood aghast. A mist seemed to clear from his eyes, and he passed a hand over his aching brow. The hideous vision had seemed so real to him, half bemused as he was still with wound and fear. Sam had changed before his very eyes into an orc again, leering and pawing at his treasure, a foul little creature with greedy eyes and slobbering mouth. But now the vision had passed. There was Sam kneeling before him, his face wrung with pain, as if he had been stabbed in the heart; tears welled from his eyes.

‘O Sam!’ cried Frodo. ‘What have I said? What have I done? Forgive me! After all you have done. It is the horrible power of the Ring. I wish it had never, never, been found. But don’t mind me, Sam. I must carry the burden to the end. It can’t be altered. You can’t come between me and this doom.’

‘That’s all right, Mr. Frodo,’ said Sam, rubbing his sleeve across his eyes. ‘I understand. But I can still help, can’t I? I’ve got to get you out of here. At once, see! But first you want some clothes and gear, and then some food. The clothes will be the easiest part. As we’re in Mordor, we’d best dress up Mordor-fashion; and anyway there isn’t no choice. It’ll have to be orc-stuff for you, Mr. Frodo, I’m afraid. And for me too. If we go together, we’d best match. Now put this round you!’

Sam unclasped his grey cloak and cast it about Frodo’s shoulders. Then unslinging his pack he laid it on the floor. He drew Sting from its sheath. Hardly a flicker was to be seen upon its blade. ‘I was forgetting this, Mr. Frodo,’ he said. ‘No, they didn’t get everything! You lent me Sting, if you remember, and the Lady’s glass. I’ve got them both still. But lend them to me a little longer, Mr. Frodo. I must go and see what I can find. You stay here. Walk about a bit and ease your legs. I shan’t be long. I shan’t have to go far.’

‘Take care, Sam!’ said Frodo. ‘And be quick! There may be orcs still alive, lurking in wait.’

‘I’ve got to chance it,’ said Sam. He stepped to the trap-door and slipped down the ladder. In a minute his head reappeared. He threw a long knife on the floor.

‘There’s something that might be useful,’ he said. ‘He’s dead: the one that whipped you. Broke his neck, it seems, in his hurry. Now you draw up the ladder, if you can, Mr. Frodo; and don’t you let it down till you hear me call the pass-word. *Elbereth* I’ll call. What the Elves say. No orc would say that.’

Frodo sat for a while and shivered, dreadful fears chasing one another through his mind. Then he got up, drew the grey elven-cloak about him, and to keep his mind occupied, began to walk to and fro, prying and peering into every corner of his prison.

It was not very long, though fear made it seem an hour at least, before he heard Sam’s voice calling softly from below: *Elbereth, Elbereth*. Frodo let down the light ladder. Up came Sam, puffing, heaving a great bundle on his head. He let it fall with a thud.

‘Quick now, Mr. Frodo!’ he said. ‘I’ve had a bit of a search to find anything small enough for the likes of us. We’ll have to make do. But we must hurry. I’ve met nothing alive, and I’ve seen nothing, but I’m not easy. I think this place is being watched. I can’t explain it, but well: it feels to me as if one of those foul flying Riders was about, up in the blackness where he can’t be seen.’

He opened the bundle. Frodo looked in disgust at the contents, but there was nothing for it: he had to put the things on, or go naked. There were long hairy breeches of some unclean beast-fell, and a tunic of dirty leather. He drew them on. Over the tunic went a coat of stout ring-mail, short for a full-sized orc, too long for Frodo and heavy. About it he clasped a belt, at which there hung a short sheath holding a broad-bladed stabbing-sword. Sam had brought several orc-helmets. One of them fitted Frodo well enough, a black cap with iron rim, and iron hoops covered with leather upon which the Evil Eye was painted in red above the beaklike nose-guard.

‘The Morgul-stuff, Gorbag’s gear, was a better fit and better made,’ said Sam; ‘but it wouldn’t do, I guess, to go carrying his tokens into Mordor, not after this business here. Well, there you are, Mr. Frodo. A perfect little orc, if I may make so bold—at least you would be, if we could cover your face with a mask, give you longer arms, and make you bow-legged. This will hide some of the tell-tales.’ He put a large black cloak round Frodo’s shoulders. ‘Now you’re ready! You can pick up a shield as we go.’



‘What about you, Sam?’ said Frodo. ‘Aren’t we going to match?’

‘Well, Mr. Frodo, I’ve been thinking,’ said Sam. ‘I’d best not leave any of my stuff behind, and we can’t destroy it. And I can’t wear orc-mail over all my clothes, can I? I’ll just have to cover up.’

He knelt down and carefully folded his elven-cloak. It went into a surprisingly small roll. This he put into his pack that lay on the floor. Standing up, he slung it behind his back, put an orc-helm on his head, and cast another black cloak about his shoulders. ‘There!’ he said. ‘Now we match, near enough. And now we must be off!’

‘I can’t go all the way at a run, Sam,’ said Frodo with a wry smile. ‘I hope you’ve made inquiries about inns along the road? Or have you forgotten about food and drink?’

‘Save me, but so I had!’ said Sam. He whistled in dismay. ‘Bless me, Mr. Frodo, but you’ve gone and made me that hungry and thirsty! I don’t know when drop or morsel last passed my lips. I’d forgotten it, trying to find you. But let me think! Last time I looked I’d got about enough of that waybread, and of what Captain Faramir gave us, to keep me on my legs for a couple of weeks at a pinch. But if there’s a drop left in my bottle, there’s no more. That’s not going to be enough for two, nohow. Don’t orcs eat, and don’t they drink? Or do they just live on foul air and poison?’

‘No, they eat and drink, Sam. The Shadow that bred them can only mock, it cannot make: not real new things of its own. I don’t think it gave life to the orcs, it only ruined them and twisted them; and if they are to live at all, they have to live like other living creatures. Foul waters and foul meats they’ll take, if they can get no better, but not poison. They’ve fed me, and so I’m better off than you. There must be food and water somewhere in this place.’

‘But there’s no time to look for them,’ said Sam.

‘Well, things are a bit better than you think,’ said Frodo. ‘I have had a bit of luck while you were away. Indeed they did not take everything. I’ve found my food-bag among some rags on the floor. They’ve rummaged it, of course. But I guess they disliked the very look and smell of the *lembas*, worse than Gollum did. It’s scattered about and some of it is trampled and broken, but I’ve gathered it together. It’s not far short of what you’ve got. But they’ve taken Faramir’s food, and they’ve slashed up my water-bottle.’

‘Well, there’s no more to be said,’ said Sam. ‘We’ve got enough to start on. But the water’s going to be a bad business. But come, Mr. Frodo! Off we go, or a whole lake of it won’t do us any good!’

‘Not till you’ve had a mouthful, Sam,’ said Frodo. ‘I won’t budge. Here, take this elven-cake, and drink that last drop in your bottle! The whole thing is quite hopeless, so it’s no good worrying about tomorrow. It probably won’t come.’

At last they started. Down the ladder they climbed, and then Sam took it and laid it in the passage beside the huddled body of the fallen orc. The stair was dark, but on the roof-top the glare of the Mountain could still be seen, though it was dying down now to a sullen red. They picked up two shields to complete their disguise and then went on.

Down the great stairway they plodded. The high chamber of the turret behind, where they had met again, seemed almost homely: they were out in the open again now, and terror ran along the walls. All might be dead in the Tower of Cirith Ungol, but it was steeped in fear and evil still.

At length they came to the door upon the outer court, and they halted. Even from where they stood they felt the malice of the Watchers beating on them, black silent shapes on either side of the gate through which the glare of Mordor dimly showed. As they threaded their way among the hideous bodies of the orcs each step became more difficult. Before they even reached the archway they were brought to a stand. To move an inch further was a pain and weariness to will and limb.

Frodo had no strength for such a battle. He sank to the ground. ‘I can’t go on, Sam,’ he murmured. ‘I’m going to faint. I don’t know what’s come over me.’

‘I do, Mr. Frodo. Hold up now! It’s the gate. There’s some devilry there. But I got through, and I’m going to get out. It can’t be more dangerous than before. Now for it!’

Sam drew out the elven-glass of Galadriel again. As if to do honour to his hardihood, and to grace with splendour his faithful brown hobbit-hand that had done such deeds, the phial blazed<sup>365</sup> forth suddenly, so that all the shadowy court was lit with a dazzling radiance like lightning; but it remained steady and did not pass.

‘*Gilthaniel, A Elbereth!*’ Sam cried. For, why he did not know, his thought sprang back suddenly to the Elves in the Shire, and the song that drove away the Black Rider in the trees.

‘*Aiya elenion ancalima!*’ cried Frodo once again behind him.

The will of the Watchers was broken with a suddenness like the snapping of a cord, and Frodo and Sam stumbled forward. Then they ran. Through the gate and past the great seated figures with their glittering eyes. There was a crack. The keystone of the arch crashed almost on their heels, and the wall above crumbled, and fell in ruin. Only by a hair did they escape. A bell clanged; and from the Watchers there went up a high and dreadful wail. Far up above in the darkness it was answered. Out of the black sky there came dropping like a bolt a winged shape, rending the clouds with a ghastly shriek.



## Chapter 2: The Land Of Shadow

Sam had just wits enough left to thrust the phial back into his breast. ‘Run, Mr. Frodo!’ he cried. ‘No, not that way! There’s a sheer drop over the wall. Follow me!’

Down the road from the gate they fled. In fifty paces, with a swift bend round a jutting bastion of the cliff, it took them out of sight from the Tower. They had escaped for the moment. Cowering back against the rock they drew breath, and then they clutched at their hearts. Perching now on the wall beside the ruined gate the Nazgûl sent out its deadly cries. All the cliffs echoed.

In terror they stumbled on. Soon the road bent sharply eastward again and exposed them for a dreadful moment to view from the Tower. As they flitted across they glanced back and saw the great black shape upon the battlement; then they plunged down between high rock-walls in a cutting that fell steeply to join the Morgul-road. They came to the way-meeting. There was still no sign of orcs, nor of an answer to the cry of the Nazgûl; but they knew that the silence would not last long. At any moment now the hunt would begin.

‘This won’t do, Sam,’ said Frodo. ‘If we were real orcs, we ought to be dashing back to the Tower, not running away. The first enemy we meet will know us. We must get off this road somehow.’

‘But we can’t,’ said Sam, ‘not without wings.’

The eastern faces of the Ephel Dûath were sheer, falling in cliff and precipice to the black trough that lay between them and the inner ridge. A short way beyond the way-meeting, after another steep incline, a flying bridge of stone leapt over the chasm and bore the road across into the tumbled slopes and glens of the Morgai. With a desperate spurt Frodo and Sam dashed along the bridge; but they had hardly reached its further end when they heard the hue and cry begin. Away behind them, now high above on the mountain-side, loomed the Tower of Cirith Ungol, its stones glowing dully. Suddenly its harsh bell clanged again, and then broke into a shattering peal. Horns sounded. And now from beyond the bridge-end came answering cries. Down in the dark trough, cut off from the dying glare of Orodruin, Frodo and Sam could not see ahead, but already they heard the tramp of iron-shod feet, and upon the road there rang the swift clatter of hoofs.

‘Quick, Sam! Over we go!’ cried Frodo. They scrambled on to the low parapet of the bridge. Fortunately there was no longer any dreadful drop into the gulf, for the slopes of the Morgai had already risen almost to the level of the road; but it was too dark for them to guess the depth of the fall.

‘Well, here goes, Mr. Frodo,’ said Sam. ‘Good-bye!’

He let go. Frodo followed. And even as they fell they heard the rush of horsemen sweeping over the bridge and the rattle of orc-feet running up behind. But Sam would have laughed, if he had dared. Half fearing a breaking plunge down on to unseen rocks the hobbits landed, in a drop of no more than a dozen feet, with a thud and a crunch into the last thing that they had expected: a tangle of thorny bushes. There Sam lay still, softly sucking a scratched hand.

When the sound of hoof and foot had passed he ventured a whisper. ‘Bless me, Mr. Frodo, but I didn’t know as anything grew in Mordor! But if I had a’known, this is just what I’d have looked for. These thorns must be a foot long by the feel of them; they’ve stuck through everything I’ve got on. Wish I’d a’put that mailshirt on!’

‘Orc-mail doesn’t keep these thorns out,’ said Frodo. ‘Not even a leather jerkin is any good.’

They had a struggle to get out of the thicket. The thorns and briars were as tough as wire and as clinging as claws. Their cloaks were rent and tattered before they broke free at last.

‘Now down we go, Sam,’ Frodo whispered. ‘Down into the valley quick, and then turn northward, as soon as ever we can.’

Day was coming again in the world outside, and far beyond the glooms of Mordor the Sun was climbing over the eastern rim of Middle-earth; but here all was still dark as night. The Mountain smouldered and its fires went out. The glare faded from the cliffs. The easterly wind that had been blowing ever since they left Ithilien now seemed dead. Slowly and painfully they clambered down, groping, stumbling, scrambling among rock and briar and dead wood in the blind shadows, down and down until they could go no further.

At length they stopped, and sat side by side, their backs against a boulder. Both were sweating. ‘If Shagrat himself was to offer me a glass of water, I’d shake his hand,’ said Sam.

‘Don’t say such things!’ said Frodo. ‘It only makes it worse.’ Then he stretched himself out, dizzy and weary, and he spoke no more for a while. At last with a struggle he got up again. To his amazement he found that Sam was asleep. ‘Wake up, Sam!’ he said. ‘Come on! It’s time we made another effort.’

Sam scrambled to his feet. ‘Well I never!’ he said. ‘I must have dropped off. It’s a long time, Mr. Frodo, since I had a proper sleep, and my eyes just closed down on their own.’

Frodo now led the way, northward as near as he could guess, among the stones and boulders lying thick at the bottom of the great ravine. But presently he stopped again.

‘It’s no good, Sam,’ he said. ‘I can’t manage it. This mail-shirt, I mean. Not in my present state. Even my mithril-coat seemed heavy when I was tired. This is far heavier. And what’s the use of it? We shan’t win through by fighting.’

‘But we may have some to do,’ said Sam. ‘And there’s knives and stray arrows. That Gollum isn’t dead, for one thing. I don’t like to think of you with naught but a bit of leather between you and a stab in the dark.’

‘Look here, Sam dear lad,’ said Frodo: ‘I am tired, weary, I haven’t a hope left. But I have to go on trying to get to the Mountain, as long as I can move. The Ring is enough. This extra weight is killing me. It must go. But don’t think I’m ungrateful. I hate to think of the foul work you must have had among the bodies to find it for me.’

‘Don’t talk about it, Mr. Frodo. Bless you! I’d carry you on my back, if I could. Let it go then!’

Frodo laid aside his cloak and took off the orc-mail and flung it away. He shivered a little. ‘What I really need is something warm,’ he said. ‘It’s gone cold, or else I’ve caught a chill.’

‘You can have my cloak, Mr. Frodo,’ said Sam. He unslung his pack and took out the elven-cloak. ‘How’s this, Mr. Frodo?’ he said. ‘You wrap that orc-rag close round you, and put the belt outside it. Then this can go over all. It don’t look quite orc-fashion, but it’ll keep you warmer; and I daresay it’ll keep you from harm better than any other gear. It was made by the Lady.’

Frodo took the cloak and fastened the brooch. ‘That’s better!’ he said. ‘I feel much lighter. I can go on now. But this blind dark seems to be getting into my heart. As I lay in prison, Sam, I tried to remember the Brandywine, and Woody End, and The Water running through the mill at Hobbiton. But I can’t see them now.’

‘There now, Mr. Frodo, it’s you that’s talking of water this time!’ said Sam. ‘If only the Lady could see us or hear us, I’d say to her: “Your Ladyship, all we want is light and water: just clean water and plain daylight, better than any jewels, begging your pardon.” But it’s a long way to Lórien.’ Sam sighed and waved his hand towards the heights of the Ephel Dúath, now only to be guessed as a deeper blackness against the black sky.

They started off again. They had not gone far when Frodo paused. ‘There’s a Black Rider over us,’ he said. ‘I can feel it. We had better keep still for a while.’

Crouched under a great boulder they sat facing back westward and did not speak for some time. Then Frodo breathed a sigh of relief. ‘It’s passed,’ he said. They stood up, and then they both stared in wonder. Away to their left, southward, against a sky that was turning grey, the peaks and high ridges of the great range began to appear dark and black, visible shapes. Light was growing behind them. Slowly it crept towards the North. There was battle far above in the high spaces of the air. The billowing clouds of Mordor were being driven back, their

edges tattering as a wind out of the living world came up and swept the fumes and smokes towards the dark land of their home. Under the lifting skirts of the dreary canopy dim light leaked into Mordor like pale morning through the grimed window of a prison.

‘Look at it, Mr. Frodo!’ said Sam. ‘Look at it! The wind’s changed. Something’s happening. He’s not having it all his own way. His darkness is breaking up out in the world there. I wish I could see what is going on!’

It was the morning of the fifteenth of March, and over the Vale of Anduin the Sun was rising above the eastern shadow, and the south-west wind was blowing. Théoden lay dying on the Pelennor Fields.

As Frodo and Sam stood and gazed, the rim of light spread all along the line of the Ephel Dúath, and then they saw a shape, moving at a great speed out of the West, at first only a black speck against the glimmering strip above the mountain-tops, but growing, until it plunged like a bolt into the dark canopy and passed high above them. As it went it sent out a long shrill cry, the voice of a Nazgûl; but this cry no longer held any terror for them: it was a cry of woe and dismay, ill tidings for the Dark Tower. The Lord of the Ringwraiths had met his doom.

‘What did I tell you? Something’s happening!’ cried Sam. “‘The war’s going well,” said Shagrat; but Gorbag he wasn’t so sure. And he was right there too. Things are looking up, Mr. Frodo. Haven’t you got some hope now?’

‘Well no, not much, Sam,’ Frodo sighed. ‘That’s away beyond the mountains. We’re going east not west. And I’m so tired. And the Ring is so heavy, Sam. And I begin to see it in my mind all the time, like a great wheel of fire.’

Sam’s quick spirits sank again at once. He looked at his master anxiously, and he took his hand. ‘Come, Mr. Frodo!’ he said. ‘I’ve got one thing I wanted: a bit of light. Enough to help us, and yet I guess it’s dangerous too. Try a bit further, and then we’ll lie close and have a rest. But take a morsel to eat now, a bit of the Elves’ food; it may hearten you.’

Sharing a wafer of *lembas*, and munching it as best they could with their parched mouths, Frodo and Sam plodded on. The light, though no more than a grey dusk, was now enough for them to see that they were deep in the valley between the mountains. It sloped up gently northward, and at its bottom went the bed of a now dry and withered stream. Beyond its stony course they saw a beaten path that wound its way under the feet of the westward cliffs. Had they known, they could have reached it quicker, for it was a track that left the main Morgul-road at the western bridge-end and went down by a long stair cut in the rock to the valley’s bottom. It was used by patrols or by messengers going swiftly to lesser posts and strongholds north-away, between Cirith Ungol and the narrows of Isenmouthe, the iron jaws of Carach Angren.

It was perilous for the hobbits to use such a path, but they needed speed, and Frodo felt that he could not face the toil of scrambling among the boulders or in the trackless glens of the Morgai. And he judged that northward was, maybe, the way that their hunters would least expect them to take. The road east to the plain, or the pass back westward, those they would first search most thoroughly. Only when he was well north of the Tower did he mean to turn and seek for some way to take him east, east on the last desperate stage of his journey. So now they crossed the stony bed and took to the orc-path, and for some time they marched along it. The cliffs at their left were overhung, and they could not be seen from above; but the path made many bends, and at each bend they gripped their sword-hilts and went forward cautiously.

The light grew no stronger, for Orodruin was still belching forth a great fume that, beaten upwards by the opposing airs, mounted higher and higher, until it reached a region above the wind and spread in an immeasurable roof, whose central pillar rose out of the shadows beyond their view. They had trudged for more than an hour when they heard a sound that brought them to a halt. Unbelievable, but unmistakable. Water trickling. Out of a gully on the left, so sharp and narrow that it looked as if the black cliff had been cloven by some huge axe, water came dripping down: the last remains, maybe, of some sweet rain gathered from sunlit seas, but ill-fated to fall at last upon the walls of the Black Land and wander fruitless down into the dust. Here it came out of the rock in a little falling streamlet, and flowed across the path, and turning south ran away swiftly to be lost among the dead stones.

Sam sprang towards it. 'If ever I see the Lady again, I will tell her!' he cried. 'Light and now water!' Then he stopped. 'Let me drink first, Mr. Frodo,' he said.

'All right, but there's room enough for two.'

'I didn't mean that,' said Sam. 'I mean: if it's poisonous, or something that will show its badness quick, well, better me than you, master, if you understand me.'

'I do. But I think we'll trust our luck together, Sam; or our blessing. Still, be careful now, if it's very cold!'

The water was cool but not icy, and it had an unpleasant taste, at once bitter and oily, or so they would have said at home. Here it seemed beyond all praise, and beyond fear or prudence. They drank their fill, and Sam replenished his water-bottle. After that Frodo felt easier, and they went on for several miles, until the broadening of the road and the beginnings of a rough wall along its edge warned them that they were drawing near to another orc-hold.

'This is where we turn aside, Sam,' said Frodo. 'And we must turn east.' He sighed as he looked at the gloomy ridges across the valley. 'I have just about enough strength left to find some hole away up there. And then I must rest a little.'

The river-bed was now some way below the path. They scrambled down to it, and began to cross it. To their surprise they came upon dark pools fed by threads of water trickling down from some source higher up the valley. Upon its outer margins under the westward mountains Mordor was a dying land, but it was not yet dead. And here things still grew, harsh, twisted, bitter, struggling for life. In the glens of the Morgai on the other side of the valley low scrubby trees lurked and clung, coarse grey grass-tussocks fought with the stones, and withered mosses crawled on them; and everywhere great writhing, tangled brambles sprawled. Some had long stabbing thorns, some hooked barbs that rent like knives. The sullen shrivelled leaves of a past year hung on them, grating and rattling in the sad airs, but their maggot-ridden buds were only just opening. Flies, dun or grey, or black, marked like orcs with a red eye-shaped blotch, buzzed and stung; and above the briar-thickets clouds of hungry midges danced and reeled.

'Orc-gear's no good,' said Sam waving his arms. 'I wish I'd got an orc's hide!'

At last Frodo could go no further. They had climbed up a narrow shelving ravine, but they still had a long way to go before they could even come in sight of the last craggy ridge. 'I must rest now, Sam, and sleep if I can,' said Frodo. He looked about, but there seemed nowhere even for an animal to crawl into in this dismal country. At length, tired out, they slunk under a curtain of brambles that hung down like a mat over a low rock-face.

There they sat and made such a meal as they could. Keeping back the precious *lembas* for the evil days ahead, they ate the half of what remained in Sam's bag of Faramir's provision: some dried fruit, and a small slip of cured meat; and they sipped some water. They had drunk again from the pools in the valley, but they were very thirsty again. There was a bitter tang in the air of Mordor that dried the mouth. When Sam thought of water even his hopeful spirit quailed. Beyond the Morgai there was the dreadful plain of Gorgoroth to cross.

'Now you go to sleep first, Mr. Frodo,' he said. 'It's getting dark again. I reckon this day is nearly over.'

Frodo sighed and was asleep almost before the words were spoken. Sam struggled with his own weariness, and he took Frodo's hand; and there he sat silent till deep night fell. Then at last, to keep himself awake, he crawled from the hiding-place and looked out. The land seemed full of creaking and cracking and sly noises, but there was no sound of voice or of foot. Far above the Ephel Dúath in the West the night-sky was still dim and pale. There, peeping among the cloud-wrack above a dark tor high up in the mountains, Sam saw a white star twinkle for a while.<sup>365</sup> The beauty of it smote his heart, as he looked up out of the forsaken land, and hope returned to him. For like a shaft, clear and cold, the thought pierced him that in the end the Shadow was only a small and passing thing: there was light and high beauty for ever beyond its reach. His song in the Tower had been defiance rather than hope; for then he was thinking of himself. Now, for a moment, his own fate, and even his master's, ceased to trouble him. He crawled back into the brambles and laid himself by Frodo's side, and putting away all fear he cast himself into a deep untroubled sleep.

They woke together, hand in hand. Sam was almost fresh, ready for another day; but Frodo sighed. His sleep had been uneasy, full of dreams of fire, and waking brought him no comfort. Still his sleep had not been without all healing virtue: he was stronger, more able to bear his burden one stage further. They did not know the time, nor how long they had slept; but after a morsel of food and a sip of water they went on up the ravine, until it ended in a sharp slope of scree and sliding stones. There the last living things gave up their struggle; the tops of the Morgai were grassless, bare, jagged, barren as a slate.

After much wandering and search they found a way that they could climb, and with a last hundred feet of clawing scramble they were up. They came to a cleft between two dark crags, and passing through found themselves on the very edge of the last fence of Mordor. Below them, at the bottom of a fall of some fifteen hundred feet, lay the inner plain stretching away into a formless gloom beyond their sight.

The wind of the world blew now from the West, and the great clouds were lifted high, floating away eastward; but still only a grey light came to the dreary fields of Gorgoroth. There smokes trailed on the ground and lurked in hollows, and fumes leaked from fissures in the earth.

Still far away, forty miles at least, they saw Mount Doom, its feet founded in ashen ruin, its huge cone rising to a great height, where its reeking head was swathed in cloud. Its fires were now dimmed, and it stood in smouldering slumber, as threatening and dangerous as a sleeping beast. Behind it there hung a vast shadow, ominous as a thunder-cloud, the veils of Barad-dûr that was reared far away upon a long spur of the Ashen Mountains thrust down from the North. The Dark Power was deep in thought, and the Eye turned inward, pondering tidings of doubt and danger: a bright sword, and a stern and kingly face it saw, and for a while it gave little thought to other things; and all its great stronghold, gate on gate, and tower on tower, was wrapped in a brooding gloom.

Frodo and Sam gazed out in mingled loathing and wonder on this hateful land. Between them and the smoking mountain, and about it north and south, all seemed ruinous and dead, a desert burned and choked. They wondered how the Lord of this realm maintained and fed his slaves and his armies. Yet armies he had. As far as their eyes could reach, along the skirts of the Morgai and away southward, there were camps, some of tents, some ordered like small towns. One of the largest of these was right below them. Barely a mile out into the plain it clustered like some huge nest of insects, with straight dreary streets of huts and long low drab buildings. About it the ground was busy with folk going to and fro; a wide road ran from it south-east to join the Morgul-way, and along it many lines of small black shapes were hurrying.

‘I don’t like the look of things at all,’ said Sam. ‘Pretty hopeless, I call it—saving that where there’s such a lot of folk there must be wells or water, not to mention food. And these are Men not Orcs, or my eyes are all wrong.’

Neither he nor Frodo knew anything of the great slave-worked fields away south in this wide realm, beyond the fumes of the Mountain by the dark sad waters of Lake Númen; nor of the great roads that ran away east and south to tributary lands, from which the soldiers of the Tower brought long waggon-trains of goods and booty and fresh slaves. Here in the northward regions were the mines and forges, and the musterings of long-planned war; and here the Dark Power, moving its armies like pieces on the board, was gathering them together. Its first moves, the first feelers of its strength, had been checked upon its western line, southward and northward. For the moment it withdrew them, and brought up new forces, massing them about Cirith Gorgor for an avenging stroke. And if it had also been its purpose to defend the Mountain against all approach, it could scarcely have done more.

‘Well!’ Sam went on. ‘Whatever they have to eat and drink, we can’t get it. There’s no way down that I can see. And we couldn’t cross all that open country crawling with enemies, even if we did get down.’

‘Still we shall have to try,’ said Frodo. ‘It’s no worse than I expected. I never hoped to get across. I can’t see any hope of it now. But I’ve still got to do the best I can. At present that is to avoid being captured as long as possible. So we must still go northwards, I think, and see what it is like where the open plain is narrower.’

‘I guess what it’ll be like,’ said Sam. ‘Where it’s narrower the Orcs and Men will just be packed closer. You’ll see, Mr. Frodo.’

‘I dare say I shall, if we ever get so far,’ said Frodo and turned away.

They soon found that it was impossible to make their way along the crest of the Morgai, or anywhere along its higher levels, pathless as they were and scored with deep ghylls. In the end they were forced to go back down the ravine that they had climbed and seek for a way along the valley. It was rough going, for they dared not cross over to the path on the westward side. After a mile or more they saw, huddled in a hollow at the cliff’s foot, the orc-hold that they had guessed was near at hand: a wall and a cluster of stone huts set about the dark mouth of a cave. There was no movement to be seen, but the hobbits crept by cautiously, keeping as much as they could to the thorn-brakes that grew thickly at this point along both sides of the old water-course.

They went two or three miles further, and the orc-hold was hidden from sight behind them; but they had hardly begun to breathe more freely again when harsh and loud they heard orc-voices. Quickly they slunk out of sight behind a brown and stunted bush. The voices drew nearer. Presently two orcs came into view. One was clad in ragged brown and was armed with a bow of horn; it was of a small breed, black-skinned, with wide and snuffling nostrils: evidently a tracker of some kind. The other was a big fighting-orc, like those of Shagrat’s company, bearing the token of the Eye. He also had a bow at his back and carried a short broad-headed spear. As usual they were quarrelling, and being of different breeds they used the Common Speech after their fashion.

Hardly twenty paces from where the hobbits lurked the small orc stopped. ‘Nar!’ it snarled. ‘I’m going home.’ It pointed across the valley to the orc-hold. ‘No good wearing my nose out on stones any more. There’s not a trace left, I say. I’ve lost the scent through giving way to you. It went up into the hills, not along the valley, I tell you.’

‘Not much use are you, you little snufflers?’ said the big orc. ‘I reckon eyes are better than your snotty noses.’

‘Then what have you seen with them?’ snarled the other. ‘Garn! You don’t even know what you’re looking for.’

‘Whose blame’s that?’ said the soldier. ‘Not mine. That comes from Higher Up. First they say it’s a great Elf in bright armour, then it’s a sort of small dwarf-man, then it must be a pack of rebel Uruk-hai; or maybe it’s all the lot together.’

‘Ar!’ said the tracker. ‘They’ve lost their heads, that’s what it is. And some of the bosses are going to lose their skins too, I guess, if what I hear is true: Tower raided and all, and hundreds of your lads done in, and prisoner got away. If that’s the way you fighters go on, small wonder there’s bad news from the battles.’

‘Who says there’s bad news?’ shouted the soldier.

‘Ar! Who says there isn’t?’

‘That’s cursed rebel-talk, and I’ll stick you, if you don’t shut it down, see?’

‘All right, all right!’ said the tracker. ‘I’ll say no more and go on thinking. But what’s the black sneak got to do with it all? That gobbler with the flapping hands?’

‘I don’t know. Nothing, maybe. But he’s up to no good, nosing around, I’ll wager. Curse him! No sooner had he slipped us and run off than word came he’s wanted alive, wanted quick.’

‘Well, I hope they get him and put him through it,’ growled the tracker. ‘He messed up the scent back there, pinching that cast-off mail-shirt that he found, and paddling all round the place before I could get there.’

‘It saved his life anyhow,’ said the soldier. ‘Why, before I knew he was wanted I shot him, as neat as neat, at fifty paces right in the back; but he ran on.’

‘Garn! You missed him,’ said the tracker. ‘First you shoot wild, then you run too slow, and then you send for the poor trackers. I’ve had enough of you.’ He loped off.

‘You come back,’ shouted the soldier, ‘or I’ll report you!’

‘Who to? Not to your precious Shagrat. He won’t be captain any more.’

‘I’ll give your name and number to the Nazgûl,’ said the soldier lowering his voice to a hiss. ‘One of *them*’s in charge at the Tower now.’



The other halted, and his voice was full of fear and rage. 'You cursed peaching sneakthief!' he yelled. 'You can't do your job, and you can't even stick by your own folk. Go to your filthy Shriekers, and may they freeze the flesh off you! If the enemy doesn't get them first. They've done in Number One, I've heard, and I hope it's true!' The big orc, spear in hand, leapt after him. But the tracker, springing behind a stone, put an arrow in his eye as he ran up, and he fell with a crash. The other ran off across the valley and disappeared.

For a while the hobbits sat in silence. At length Sam stirred. 'Well, I call that neat as neat,' he said. 'If this nice friendliness would spread about in Mordor, half our trouble would be over.'

'Quietly, Sam,' Frodo whispered. 'There may be others about. We have evidently had a very narrow escape, and the hunt was hotter on our tracks than we guessed. But that *is* the spirit of Mordor, Sam; and it has spread to every corner of it. Orcs have always behaved like that, or so all tales say, when they are on their own. But you can't get much hope out of it. They hate us far more, altogether and all the time. If those two had seen us, they would have dropped all their quarrel until we were dead.'

There was another long silence. Sam broke it again, but with a whisper this time. 'Did you hear what they said about *that gobbler*, Mr. Frodo? I told you Gollum wasn't dead yet, didn't I?'

'Yes, I remember. And I wondered how you knew,' said Frodo. 'Well, come now! I think we had better not move out from here again, until it has gone quite dark. So you shall tell me how you know, and all about what happened. If you can do it quietly.'

'I'll try,' said Sam, 'but when I think of that Stinker I get so hot I could shout.'

There the hobbits sat under the cover of the thorny bush, while the drear light of Mordor faded slowly into a deep and starless night; and Sam spoke into Frodo's ear all that he could find words for of Gollum's treacherous attack, the horror of Shelob, and his own adventures with the orcs. When he had finished, Frodo said nothing but took Sam's hand and pressed it. At length he stirred.

'Well, I suppose we must be going on again,' he said. 'I wonder how long it will be before we really are caught and all the toiling and the slinking will be over, and in vain.' He stood up. 'It's dark, and we cannot use the Lady's glass. Keep it safe for me, Sam. I have nowhere to keep it now, except in my hand, and I shall need both hands in the blind night. But Sting I give to you. I have got an orc-blade, but I do not think it will be my part to strike any blow again.'

It was difficult and dangerous moving in the night in the pathless land; but slowly and with much stumbling the two hobbits toiled on hour by hour northward along the eastern edge of the stony valley.

When a grey light crept back over the western heights, long after day had opened in the lands beyond, they went into hiding again and slept a little, turn by turn. In his times of waking Sam was busy with thoughts of food. At last when Frodo roused himself and spoke of eating and making ready for yet another effort, he asked the question that was troubling him most.

'Begging your pardon, Mr. Frodo,' he said, 'but have you any notion how far there is still to go?'

'No, not any clear notion, Sam,' Frodo answered. 'In Rivendell before I set out I was shown a map of Mordor that was made before the Enemy came back here; but I only remember it vaguely. I remember clearest that there was a place in the north where the western range and the northern range send out spurs that nearly meet. That must be twenty leagues at least from the bridge back by the Tower. It might be a good point at which to cross. But of course, if we get there, we shall be further than we were from the Mountain, sixty miles from it, I should think. I guess that we have gone about twelve leagues north from the bridge now. Even if all goes well, I could hardly reach the Mountain in a week. I am afraid, Sam, that the burden will get very heavy, and I shall go still slower as we get nearer.'

Sam sighed. 'That's just as I feared,' he said. 'Well, to say nothing of water, we've got to eat less, Mr. Frodo, or else move a bit quicker, at any rate while we're still in this valley. One more bite and all the food's ended, save the Elves' waybread.'

'I'll try and be a bit quicker, Sam,' said Frodo, drawing a deep breath. 'Come on then! Let's start another march!'

It was not yet quite dark again. They plodded along, on into the night. The hours passed in a weary stumbling trudge with a few brief halts. At the first hint of grey light under the skirts of the canopy of shadow they hid themselves again in a dark hollow under an overhanging stone.

Slowly the light grew, until it was clearer than it yet had been. A strong wind from the West was now driving the fumes of Mordor from the upper airs. Before long the hobbits could make out the shape of the land for some miles about them. The trough between the mountains and the Morgai had steadily dwindled as it climbed upwards, and the inner ridge was now no more than a shelf in the steep faces of the Ephel Dúath; but to the east it fell as sheerly as ever down into Gorgoroth. Ahead the water-course came to an end in broken steps of rock; for out from the main range there sprang a high barren spur, thrusting eastward like a wall. To meet it there stretched out from the grey and misty northern range of Ered Lithui a long jutting arm; and between the ends there was a narrow gap; Carach Angren, the Isenmouthe, beyond which lay the deep dale of Udûn. In that dale behind the Morannon were the tunnels and deep armouries that the servants of Mordor had made for the defence of the Black Gate of their land; and there now their Lord was gathering in haste great forces to meet the onslaught of the Captains of the West. Upon the out-thrust spurs forts and towers were built, and watch-fires burned; and all across the gap an earth-wall had been raised, and a deep trench delved that could be crossed only by a single bridge.

A few miles north, high up in the angle where the western spur branched away from the main range, stood the old castle of Durthang, now one of the many orc-holds that clustered about the dale of Udûn. A road, already visible in the growing light, came winding down from it, until only a mile or two from where the hobbits lay it turned east and ran along a shelf cut in the side of the spur, and so went down into the plain, and on to the Isenmouthe.

To the hobbits as they looked out it seemed that all their journey north had been useless. The plain to their right was dim and smoky, and they could see there neither camps nor troops moving; but all that region was under the vigilance of the forts of Carach Angren.

‘We have come to a dead end, Sam,’ said Frodo. ‘If we go on, we shall only come up to that orc-tower, but the only road to take is that road that comes down from it—unless we go back. We can’t climb up westward, or climb down eastward.’

‘Then we must take the road, Mr. Frodo,’ said Sam. ‘We must take it and chance our luck, if there is any luck in Mordor. We might as well give ourselves up as wander about any more, or try to go back. Our food won’t last. We’ve got to make a dash for it!’

‘All right, Sam,’ said Frodo. ‘Lead me! As long as you’ve got any hope left. Mine is gone. But I can’t dash, Sam. I’ll just plod along after you.’

‘Before you start any more plodding, you need sleep and food, Mr. Frodo. Come and take what you can get of them!’

He gave Frodo water and an additional wafer of the waybread, and he made a pillow of his cloak for his master’s head. Frodo was too weary to debate the matter, and Sam did not tell him that he had drunk the last drop of their water, and eaten Sam’s share of the food as well as his own. When Frodo was asleep Sam bent over him and listened to his breathing and scanned his face. It was lined and thin, and yet in sleep it looked content and unafraid. ‘Well, here goes, Master!’ Sam muttered to himself. ‘I’ll have to leave you for a bit and trust to luck. Water we must have, or we’ll get no further.’

Sam crept out, and flitting from stone to stone with more than hobbit-care, he went down to the water-course, and then followed it for some way as it climbed north, until he came to the rock-steps where long ago, no doubt, its spring had come gushing down in a little waterfall. All now seemed dry and silent; but refusing to despair Sam stooped and listened, and to his delight he caught the sound of trickling. Clambering a few steps up he found a tiny stream of dark water that came out from the hill-side and filled a little bare pool, from which again it spilled, and vanished then under the barren stones.

Sam tasted the water, and it seemed good enough. Then he drank deeply, refilled the bottle, and turned to go back. At that moment he caught a glimpse of a black form or shadow flitting among the rocks away near

Frodo's hiding-place. Biting back a cry, he leapt down from the spring and ran, jumping from stone to stone. It was a wary creature, difficult to see, but Sam had little doubt about it: he longed to get his hands on its neck. But it heard him coming and slipped quickly away. Sam thought he saw a last fleeting glimpse of it, peering back over the edge of the eastward precipice, before it ducked and disappeared.

'Well, luck did not let me down,' muttered Sam, 'but that was a near thing! Isn't it enough to have orcs by the thousand without that stinking villain coming nosing round? I wish he had been shot!' He sat down by Frodo and did not rouse him; but he did not dare to go to sleep himself. At last when he felt his eyes closing and knew that his struggle to keep awake could not go on much longer, he wakened Frodo gently.

'That Gollum's about again, I'm afraid, Mr. Frodo,' he said. 'Leastways, if it wasn't him, then there's two of him. I went away to find some water and spied him nosing round just as I turned back. I reckon it isn't safe for us both to sleep together, and begging your pardon, but I can't hold up my lids much longer.'

'Bless you, Sam!' said Frodo. 'Lie down and take your proper turn! But I'd rather have Gollum than orcs. At any rate he won't give us away to them—not unless he's caught himself.'

'But he might do a bit of robbery and murder on his own,' growled Sam. 'Keep your eyes open, Mr. Frodo! There's a bottle full of water. Drink up. We can fill it again when we go on.' With that Sam plunged into sleep.

Light was fading again when he woke. Frodo sat propped against the rock behind, but he had fallen asleep. The water-bottle was empty. There was no sign of Gollum.

Mordor-dark had returned, and the watch-fires on the heights burned fierce and red, when the hobbits set out again on the most dangerous stage of all their journey. They went first to the little spring, and then climbing warily up they came to the road at the point where it swung east towards the Isenmouthe twenty miles away. It was not a broad road, and it had no wall or parapet along the edge, and as it ran on the sheer drop from its brink became deeper and deeper. The hobbits could hear no movements, and after listening for a while they set off eastward at a steady pace.

After doing some twelve miles, they halted. A short way back the road had bent a little northward and the stretch that they had passed over was now screened from sight. This proved disastrous. They rested for some minutes and then went on; but they had not taken many steps when suddenly in the stillness of the night they heard the sound that all along they had secretly dreaded: the noise of marching feet. It was still some way behind them, but looking back they could see the twinkle of torches coming round the bend less than a mile away, and they were moving fast: too fast for Frodo to escape by flight along the road ahead.

'I feared it, Sam,' said Frodo. 'We've trusted to luck, and it has failed us. We're trapped.' He looked wildly up at the frowning wall, where the road-builders of old had cut the rock sheer for many fathoms above their heads. He ran to the other side and looked over the brink into a dark pit of gloom. 'We're trapped at last!' he said. He sank to the ground beneath the wall of rock and bowed his head.

'Seems so,' said Sam. 'Well, we can but wait and see.' And with that he sat down beside Frodo under the shadow of the cliff.

They did not have to wait long. The orcs were going at a great pace. Those in the foremost files bore torches. On they came, red flames in the dark, swiftly growing. Now Sam too bowed his head, hoping that it would hide his face when the torches reached them; and he set their shields before their knees to hide their feet.

'If only they are in a hurry and will let a couple of tired soldiers alone and pass on!' he thought.

And so it seemed that they would. The leading orcs came loping along, panting, holding their heads down. They were a gang of the smaller breeds being driven unwilling to their Dark Lord's wars; all they cared for was to get the march over and escape the whip. Beside them, running up and down the line, went two of the large fierce *uruks*, cracking lashes and shouting. File after file passed, and the tell-tale torchlight was already some way ahead. Sam held his breath. Now more than half the line had gone by. Then suddenly one of the slave-drivers spied the two figures by the road-side. He flicked a whip at them and yelled: 'Hi, you! Get up!' They did not answer, and with a shout he halted the whole company.

‘Come on, you slugs!’ he cried. ‘This is no time for slouching.’ He took a step towards them, and even in the gloom he recognized the devices on their shields. ‘Deserting, eh?’ he snarled. ‘Or thinking of it? All your folk should have been inside Udûn before yesterday evening. You know that. Up you get and fall in, or I’ll have your numbers and report you.’

They struggled to their feet, and keeping bent, limping like footsore soldiers, they shuffled back towards the rear of the line. ‘No, not at the rear!’ the slave-driver shouted. ‘Three files up. And stay there, or you’ll know it, when I come down the line!’ He sent his long whip-lash cracking over their heads; then with another crack and a yell he started the company off again at a brisk trot.

It was hard enough for poor Sam, tired as he was; but for Frodo it was a torment, and soon a nightmare. He set his teeth and tried to stop his mind from thinking, and he struggled on. The stench of the sweating orcs about him was stifling, and he began to gasp with thirst. On, on they went, and he bent all his will to draw his breath and to make his legs keep going; and yet to what evil end he toiled and endured he did not dare to think. There was no hope of falling out unseen. Now and again the orc-driver fell back and jeered at them.

‘There now!’ he laughed, flicking at their legs. ‘Where there’s a whip there’s a will, my slugs. Hold up! I’d give you a nice freshener now, only you’ll get as much lash as your skins will carry when you come in late to your camp. Do you good. Don’t you know we’re at war?’

They had gone some miles, and the road was at last running down a long slope into the plain, when Frodo’s strength began to give out and his will wavered. He lurched and stumbled. Desperately Sam tried to help him and hold him up, though he felt that he could himself hardly stay the pace much longer. At any moment now he knew that the end would come: his master would faint or fall, and all would be discovered, and their bitter efforts be in vain. ‘I’ll have that big slave-driving devil anyway,’ he thought.

Then just as he was putting his hand to the hilt of his sword, there came an unexpected relief. They were out on the plain now and drawing near the entrance to Udûn. Some way in front of it, before the gate at the bridge-end, the road from the west converged with others coming from the south, and from Barad-dûr. Along all the roads troops were moving; for the Captains of the West were advancing and the Dark Lord was speeding his forces north. So it chanced that several companies came together at the road-meeting, in the dark beyond the light of the watch-fires on the wall. At once there was great jostling and cursing as each troop tried to get first to the gate and the ending of their march. Though the drivers yelled and plied their whips, scuffles broke out and some blades were drawn. A troop of heavy-armed *uruks* from Barad-dûr charged into the Durthang line and threw them into confusion.

Dazed as he was with pain and weariness, Sam woke up, grasped quickly at his chance, and threw himself to the ground, dragging Frodo down with him. Orcs fell over them, snarling and cursing. Slowly on hand and knee the hobbits crawled away out of the turmoil, until at last unnoticed they dropped over the further edge of the road. It had a high kerb by which troop-leaders could guide themselves in black night or fog, and it was banked up some feet above the level of the open land.

They lay still for a while. It was too dark to seek for cover, if indeed there was any to find; but Sam felt that they ought at least to get further away from the highways and out of the range of torchlight.

‘Come on, Mr. Frodo!’ he whispered. ‘One more crawl, and then you can lie still.’

With a last despairing effort Frodo raised himself on his hands, and struggled on for maybe twenty yards. Then he pitched down into a shallow pit that opened unexpectedly before them, and there he lay like a dead thing.



## Chapter 3: Mount Doom

Sam put his ragged orc-cloak under his master's head, and covered them both with the grey robe of Lórien; and as he did so his thoughts went out to that fair land, and to the Elves, and he hoped that the cloth woven by their hands might have some virtue to keep them hidden beyond all hope in this wilderness of fear. He heard the scuffling and cries die down as the troops passed on through the Isenmouthe. It seemed that in the confusion and the mingling of many companies of various kinds they had not been missed, not yet at any rate.

Sam took a sip of water, but pressed Frodo to drink, and when his master had recovered a little he gave him a whole wafer of their precious waybread and made him eat it. Then, too worn out even to feel much fear, they stretched themselves out. They slept a little in uneasy fits; for their sweat grew chill on them, and the hard stones bit them, and they shivered. Out of the north from the Black Gate through Cirith Gorgor there flowed whispering along the ground a thin cold air.

In the morning a grey light came again, for in the high regions the West Wind still blew, but down on the stones behind the fences of the Black Land the air seemed almost dead, chill and yet stifling. Sam looked up out of the hollow. The land all about was dreary, flat and drab-hued. On the roads nearby nothing was moving now; but Sam feared the watchful eyes on the wall of the Isenmouthe, no more than a furlong away northward. South-eastward, far off like a dark standing shadow, loomed the Mountain. Smokes were pouring from it, and while those that rose into the upper air trailed away eastward, great rolling clouds floated down its sides and spread over the land. A few miles to the north-east the foothills of the Ashen Mountains stood like sombre grey ghosts, behind which the misty northern heights rose like a line of distant cloud hardly darker than the lowering sky.

Sam tried to guess the distances and to decide what way they ought to take. 'It looks every step of fifty miles,' he muttered gloomily, staring at the threatening mountain, 'and that'll take a week, if it takes a day, with Mr. Frodo as he is.' He shook his head, and as he worked things out, slowly a new dark thought grew in his mind. Never for long had hope died in his staunch heart, and always until now he had taken some thought for their return. But the bitter truth came home to him at last: at best their provision would take them to their goal; and when the task was done, there they would come to an end, alone, houseless, foodless in the midst of a terrible desert. There could be no return.

'So that was the job I felt I had to do when I started,' thought Sam: 'to help Mr. Frodo to the last step and then die with him? Well, if that is the job then I must do it. But I would dearly like to see Bywater again, and Rosie Cotton and her brothers, and the Gaffer and Marigold and all. I can't think somehow that Gandalf would have sent Mr. Frodo on this errand, if there hadn't a' been any hope of his ever coming back at all. Things all went wrong when he went down in Moria. I wish he hadn't. He would have done something.'

But even as hope died in Sam, or seemed to die, it was turned to a new strength. Sam's plain hobbit-face grew stern, almost grim, as the will hardened in him, and he felt through all his limbs a thrill, as if he was turning into some creature of stone and steel that neither despair nor weariness nor endless barren miles could subdue.

With a new sense of responsibility he brought his eyes back to the ground near at hand, studying the next move. As the light grew a little he saw to his surprise that what from a distance had seemed wide and featureless flats were in fact all broken and tumbled. Indeed the whole surface of the plains of Gorgoroth was pocked with great holes, as if, while it was still a waste of soft mud, it had been smitten with a shower of bolts and huge slingstones. The largest of these holes were rimmed with ridges of broken rock, and broad fissures ran out from them in all directions. It was a land in which it would be possible to creep from hiding to hiding, unseen by all but the most watchful eyes: possible at least for one who was strong and had no need for speed. For the hungry and worn, who had far to go before life failed, it had an evil look.

Thinking of all these things Sam went back to his master. He had no need to rouse him. Frodo was lying on his back with eyes open, staring at the cloudy sky. 'Well, Mr. Frodo,' said Sam, 'I've been having a look round and thinking a bit. There's nothing on the roads, and we'd best be getting away while there's a chance. Can you manage it?'

'I can manage it,' said Frodo. 'I must.'

Once more they started, crawling from hollow to hollow, flitting behind such cover as they could find, but moving always in a slant towards the foothills of the northern range. But as they went the most easterly of the roads followed them, until it ran off, hugging the skirts of the mountains, away into a wall of black shadow far ahead. Neither man nor orc now moved along its flat grey stretches; for the Dark Lord had almost completed the movement of his forces, and even in the fastness of his own realm he sought the secrecy of night, fearing the winds of the world that had turned against him, tearing aside his veils, and troubled with tidings of bold spies that had passed through his fences.

The hobbits had gone a few weary miles when they halted. Frodo seemed nearly spent. Sam saw that he could not go much further in this fashion, crawling, stooping, now picking a doubtful way very slowly, now hurrying at a stumbling run.

'I'm going back on to the road while the light lasts, Mr. Frodo,' he said. 'Trust to luck again! It nearly failed us last time, but it didn't quite. A steady pace for a few more miles, and then a rest.'

He was taking a far greater risk than he knew; but Frodo was too much occupied with his burden and with the struggle in his mind to debate, and almost too hopeless to care. They climbed on to the causeway and trudged along, down the hard cruel road that led to the Dark Tower itself. But their luck held, and for the rest of that day they met no living or moving thing; and when night fell they vanished into the darkness of Mordor. All the land now brooded as at the coming of a great storm: for the Captains of the West had passed the Cross-roads and set flames in the deadly fields of Imlad Morgul.

So the desperate journey went on, as the Ring went south and the banners of the kings rode north. For the hobbits each day, each mile, was more bitter than the one before, as their strength lessened and the land became more evil. They met no enemies by day. At times by night, as they cowered or drowsed uneasily in some hiding beside the road, they heard cries and the noise of many feet or the swift passing of some cruelly ridden steed. But far worse than all such perils was the ever-approaching threat that beat upon them as they went: the dreadful menace of the Power that waited, brooding in deep thought and sleepless malice behind the dark veil about its Throne. Nearer and nearer it drew, looming blacker, like the oncoming of a wall of night at the last end of the world.

There came at last a dreadful nightfall; and even as the Captains of the West drew near to the end of the living lands, the two wanderers came to an hour of blank despair. Four days had passed since they had escaped from the orcs, but the time lay behind them like an ever-darkening dream. All this last day Frodo had not spoken, but had walked half-bowed, often stumbling, as if his eyes no longer saw the way before his feet. Sam guessed that among all their pains he bore the worst, the growing weight of the Ring, a burden on the body and a torment to his mind. Anxiously Sam had noted how his master's left hand would often be raised as if to ward off a blow, or to screen his shrinking eyes from a dreadful Eye that sought to look in them. And sometimes his right hand would creep to his breast, clutching, and then slowly, as the will recovered mastery, it would be withdrawn.

Now as the blackness of night returned Frodo sat, his head between his knees, his arms hanging wearily to the ground where his hands lay feebly twitching. Sam watched him, till night covered them both and hid them from one another. He could no longer find any words to say; and he turned to his own dark thoughts. As for himself, though weary and under a shadow of fear, he still had some strength left. The *lembas* had a virtue without which they would long ago have lain down to die. It did not satisfy desire, and at times Sam's mind was filled with the memories of food, and the longing for simple bread and meats. And yet this waybread of the Elves had a potency that increased as travellers relied on it alone and did not mingle it with other foods. It fed the will, and it gave strength to endure, and to master sinew and limb beyond the measure of mortal kind. But now a new decision must be made. They could not follow this road any longer; for it went on eastward into the great

Shadow, but the Mountain now loomed upon their right, almost due south, and they must turn towards it. Yet still before it there stretched a wide region of fuming, barren, ash-ridden land.

‘Water, water!’ muttered Sam. He had stinted himself, and in his parched mouth his tongue seemed thick and swollen; but for all his care they now had very little left, perhaps half his bottle, and maybe there were still days to go. All would long ago have been spent, if they had not dared to follow the orc-road. For at long intervals on that highway cisterns had been built for the use of troops sent in haste through the waterless regions. In one Sam had found some water left, stale, muddied by the orcs, but still sufficient for their desperate case. Yet that was now a day ago. There was no hope of any more.

At last wearied with his cares Sam drowsed, leaving the morrow till it came; he could do no more. Dream and waking mingled uneasily. He saw lights like gloating eyes, and dark creeping shapes, and he heard noises as of wild beasts or the dreadful cries of tortured things; and he would start up to find the world all dark and only empty blackness all about him. Once only, as he stood and stared wildly round, did it seem that, though now awake, he could still see pale lights like eyes; but soon they flickered and vanished.

The hateful night passed slowly and reluctantly. Such daylight as followed was dim; for here as the Mountain drew near the air was ever mirky, while out from the Dark Tower there crept the veils of Shadow that Sauron wove about himself. Frodo was lying on his back not moving. Sam stood beside him, reluctant to speak, and yet knowing that the word now lay with him: he must set his master’s will to work for another effort. At length, stooping and caressing Frodo’s brow, he spoke in his ear.

‘Wake up, Master!’ he said. ‘Time for another start.’

As if roused by a sudden bell, Frodo rose quickly, and stood up and looked away southwards; but when his eyes beheld the Mountain and the desert he quailed again.

‘I can’t manage it, Sam,’ he said. ‘It is such a weight to carry, such a weight.’

Sam knew before he spoke, that it was vain, and that such words might do more harm than good, but in his pity he could not keep silent. ‘Then let me carry it a bit for you, Master,’ he said. ‘You know I would, and gladly, as long as I have any strength.’

A wild light came into Frodo’s eyes. ‘Stand away! Don’t touch me!’ he cried. ‘It is mine, I say. Be off!’ His hand strayed to his sword-hilt. But then quickly his voice changed. ‘No, no, Sam,’ he said sadly. ‘But you must understand. It is my burden, and no-one else can bear it. It is too late now, Sam dear. You can’t help me in that way again. I am almost in its power now. I could not give it up, and if you tried to take it I should go mad.’

Sam nodded. ‘I understand,’ he said. ‘But I’ve been thinking, Mr. Frodo, there’s other things we might do without. Why not lighten the load a bit? We’re going that way now, as straight as we can make it.’ He pointed to the Mountain. ‘It’s no good taking anything we’re not sure to need.’

Frodo looked again towards the Mountain. ‘No,’ he said, ‘we shan’t need much on that road. And at its end nothing.’ Picking up his orc-shield he flung it away and threw his helmet after it. Then pulling off the grey cloak he undid the heavy belt and let it fall to the ground, and the sheathed sword with it. The shreds of the black cloak he tore off and scattered.

‘There, I’ll be an orc no more,’ he cried, ‘and I’ll bear no weapon, fair or foul. Let them take me, if they will!’

Sam did likewise, and put aside his orc-gear; and he took out all the things in his pack. Somehow each of them had become dear to him, if only because he had borne them so far with so much toil. Hardest of all it was to part with his cooking-gear. Tears welled in his eyes at the thought of casting it away.

‘Do you remember that bit of rabbit, Mr. Frodo?’ he said. ‘And our place under the warm bank in Captain Faramir’s country, the day I saw an oliphaunt?’

‘No, I am afraid not, Sam,’ said Frodo. ‘At least, I know that such things happened, but I cannot see them. No taste of food, no feel of water, no sound of wind, no memory of tree or grass or flower, no image of moon or star are left to me. I am naked in the dark, Sam, and there is no veil between me and the wheel of fire. I begin to see it even with my waking eyes, and all else fades.’

Sam went to him and kissed his hand. 'Then the sooner we're rid of it, the sooner to rest,' he said haltingly, finding no better words to say. 'Talking won't mend nothing,' he muttered to himself, as he gathered up all the things that they had chosen to cast away. He was not willing to leave them lying open in the wilderness for any eyes to see. 'Stinker picked up that orc-shirt, seemingly, and he isn't going to add a sword to it. His hands are bad enough when empty. And he isn't going to mess with my pans!' With that he carried all the gear away to one of the many gaping fissures that scored the land and threw them in. The clatter of his precious pans as they fell down into the dark was like a death-knell to his heart.

He came back to Frodo, and then of his elven-rope he cut a short piece to serve his master as a girdle and bind the grey cloak close about his waist. The rest he carefully coiled and put back in his pack. Beside that he kept only the remnants of their waybread and the water-bottle, and Sting still hanging by his belt; and hidden away in a pocket of his tunic next his breast the phial of Galadriel and the little box that she gave him for his own.

Now at last they turned their faces to the Mountain and set out, thinking no more of concealment, bending their weariness and failing wills only to the one task of going on. In the dimness of its dreary day few things even in that land of vigilance could have espied them, save from close at hand. Of all the slaves of the Dark Lord, only the Nazgûl could have warned him of the peril that crept, small but indomitable, into the very heart of his guarded realm. But the Nazgûl and their black wings were abroad on other errand: they were gathered far away, shadowing the march of the Captains of the West, and thither the thought of the Dark Tower was turned.

That day it seemed to Sam that his master had found some new strength, more than could be explained by the small lightening of the load that he had to carry. In the first marches they went further and faster than he had hoped. The land was rough and hostile, and yet they made much progress, and ever the Mountain drew nearer. But as the day wore on and all too soon the dim light began to fail, Frodo stooped again, and began to stagger, as if the renewed effort had squandered his remaining strength.

At their last halt he sank down and said: 'I'm thirsty, Sam,' and did not speak again. Sam gave him a mouthful of water; only one more mouthful remained. He went without himself; and now as once more the night of Mordor closed over them, through all his thoughts there came the memory of water; and every brook or stream or fount that he had ever seen, under green willow-shades or twinkling in the sun, danced and rippled for his torment behind the blindness of his eyes. He felt the cool mud about his toes as he paddled in the Pool at Bywater with Jolly Cotton and Tom and Nibs, and their sister Rosie. 'But that was years ago,' he sighed, 'and far away. The way back, if there is one, goes past the Mountain.'

He could not sleep and he held a debate with himself. 'Well, come now, we've done better than you hoped,' he said sturdily. 'Began well anyway. I reckon we crossed half the distance before we stopped. One more day will do it.' And then he paused.

'Don't be a fool, Sam Gamgee,' came an answer in his own voice. 'He won't go another day like that, if he moves at all. And you can't go on much longer giving him all the water and most of the food.'

'I can go on a good way though, and I will.'

'Where to?'

'To the Mountain, of course.'

'But what then, Sam Gamgee, what then? When you get there, what are you going to do? He won't be able to do anything for himself.'

To his dismay Sam realized that he had not got an answer to this. He had no clear idea at all. Frodo had not spoken much to him of his errand, and Sam only knew vaguely that the Ring had somehow to be put into the fire. 'The Cracks of Doom,' he muttered, the old name rising to his mind. 'Well, if Master knows how to find them, I don't.'

'There you are!' came the answer. 'It's all quite useless. He said so himself. You are the fool, going on hoping and toiling. You could have lain down and gone to sleep together days ago, if you hadn't been so dogged. But you'll die just the same, or worse. You might just as well lie down now and give it up. You'll never get to the top anyway.'



‘I’ll get there, if I leave everything but my bones behind,’ said Sam. ‘And I’ll carry Mr. Frodo up myself, if it breaks my back and heart. So stop arguing!’

At that moment Sam felt a tremor in the ground beneath him, and he heard or sensed a deep remote rumble as of thunder imprisoned under the earth. There was a brief red flame that flickered under the clouds and died away. The Mountain too slept uneasily.

The last stage of their journey to Orodruin came, and it was a torment greater than Sam had ever thought that he could bear. He was in pain, and so parched that he could no longer swallow even a mouthful of food. It remained dark, not only because of the smokes of the Mountain: there seemed to be a storm coming up, and away to the south-east there was a shimmer of lightnings under the black skies. Worst of all, the air was full of fumes; breathing was painful and difficult, and a dizziness came on them, so that they staggered and often fell. And yet their wills did not yield, and they struggled on.

The Mountain crept up ever nearer, until, if they lifted their heavy heads, it filled all their sight, looming vast before them: a huge mass of ash and slag and burned stone, out of which a sheer-sided cone was raised into the clouds. Before the daylong dusk ended and true night came again they had crawled and stumbled to its very feet.

With a gasp Frodo cast himself on the ground. Sam sat by him. To his surprise he felt tired but lighter, and his head seemed clear again. No more debates disturbed his mind. He knew all the arguments of despair and would not listen to them. His will was set, and only death would break it. He felt no longer either desire or need of sleep, but rather of watchfulness. He knew that all the hazards and perils were now drawing together to a point: the next day would be a day of doom, the day of final effort or disaster, the last gasp.

But when would it come? The night seemed endless and timeless, minute after minute falling dead and adding up to no passing hour, bringing no change. Sam began to wonder if a second darkness had begun and no day would ever reappear. At last he groped for Frodo’s hand. It was cold and trembling. His master was shivering.

‘I didn’t ought to have left my blanket behind,’ muttered Sam; and lying down he tried to comfort Frodo with his arms and body. Then sleep took him, and the dim light of the last day of their quest found them side by side. The wind had fallen the day before as it shifted from the West, and now it came from the North and began to rise; and slowly the light of the unseen Sun filtered down into the shadows where the hobbits lay.

‘Now for it! Now for the last gasp!’ said Sam as he struggled to his feet. He bent over Frodo, rousing him gently. Frodo groaned; but with a great effort of will he staggered up; and then he fell upon his knees again. He raised his eyes with difficulty to the dark slopes of Mount Doom towering above him, and then pitifully he began to crawl forward on his hands.

Sam looked at him and wept in his heart, but no tears came to his dry and stinging eyes. ‘I said I’d carry him, if it broke my back,’ he muttered, ‘and I will!’

‘Come, Mr. Frodo!’ he cried. ‘I can’t carry it for you, but I can carry you and it as well. So up you get! Come on, Mr. Frodo dear! Sam will give you a ride. Just tell him where to go, and he’ll go.’

As Frodo clung upon his back, arms loosely about his neck, legs clasped firmly under his arms, Sam staggered to his feet; and then to his amazement he felt the burden light. He had feared that he would have barely strength to lift his master alone, and beyond that he had expected to share in the dreadful dragging weight of the accursed Ring. But it was not so. Whether because Frodo was so worn by his long pains, wound of knife, and venomous sting, and sorrow, fear, and homeless wandering, or because some gift of final strength was given to him, Sam lifted Frodo with no more difficulty than if he were carrying a hobbit-child pig-a-back in some romp on the lawns or hayfields of the Shire. He took a deep breath and started off.

They had reached the Mountain’s foot on its northern side, and a little to the westward; there its long grey slopes, though broken, were not sheer. Frodo did not speak, and so Sam struggled on as best he could, having no guidance but the will to climb as high as might be before his strength gave out and his will broke. On he toiled, up and up, turning this way and that to lessen the slope, often stumbling forward, and at the last crawling like a snail with a heavy burden on its back. When his will could drive him no further, and his limbs gave way, he stopped and laid his master gently down.

Frodo opened his eyes and drew a breath. It was easier to breathe up here above the reeks that coiled and drifted down below. 'Thank you, Sam,' he said in a cracked whisper. 'How far is there to go?'

'I don't know,' said Sam, 'because I don't know where we're going.'

He looked back, and then he looked up; and he was amazed to see how far his last effort had brought him. The Mountain standing ominous and alone had looked taller than it was. Sam saw now that it was less lofty than the high passes of the Ephel Dúath which he and Frodo had scaled. The confused and tumbled shoulders of its great base rose for maybe three thousand feet above the plain, and above them was reared half as high again its tall central cone, like a vast oast or chimney capped with a jagged crater. But already Sam was more than half way up the base, and the plain of Gorgoroth was dim below him, wrapped in fume and shadow. As he looked up he would have given a shout, if his parched throat had allowed him; for amid the rugged humps and shoulders above him he saw plainly a path or road. It climbed like a rising girdle from the west and wound snakelike about the Mountain, until before it went round out of view it reached the foot of the cone upon its eastern side.

Sam could not see the course immediately above him, where it was lowest, for a steep slope went up from where he stood; but he guessed that if he could only struggle on just a little way further up, they would strike this path. A gleam of hope returned to him. They might conquer the Mountain yet. 'Why, it might have been put there a-purpose!' he said to himself. 'If it wasn't there, I'd have to say I was beaten in the end.'

The path was not put there for the purposes of Sam. He did not know it, but he was looking at Sauron's Road from Barad-dûr to the Sammath Naur, the Chambers of Fire. Out from the Dark Tower's huge western gate it came over a deep abyss by a vast bridge of iron, and then passing into the plain it ran for a league between two smoking chasms, and so reached a long sloping causeway that led up on to the Mountain's eastern side. Thence, turning and encircling all its wide girth from south to north, it climbed at last, high in the upper cone, but still far from the reeking summit, to a dark entrance that gazed back east straight to the Window of the Eye in Sauron's shadow-mantled fortress. Often blocked or destroyed by the tumults of the Mountain's furnaces, always that road was repaired and cleared again by the labours of countless orcs.

Sam drew a deep breath. There was a path, but how he was to get up the slope to it he did not know. First he must ease his aching back. He lay flat beside Frodo for a while. Neither spoke. Slowly the light grew. Suddenly a sense of urgency which he did not understand came to Sam. It was almost as if he had been called: 'Now, now, or it will be too late!' He braced himself and got up. Frodo also seemed to have felt the call. He struggled to his knees.

'I'll crawl, Sam,' he gasped.

So foot by foot, like small grey insects, they crept up the slope. They came to the path and found that it was broad, paved with broken rubble and beaten ash. Frodo clambered on to it, and then moved as if by some compulsion he turned slowly to face the East. Far off the shadows of Sauron hung; but torn by some gust of wind out of the world, or else moved by some great disquiet within, the mantling clouds swirled, and for a moment drew aside; and then he saw, rising black, blacker and darker than the vast shades amid which it stood, the cruel pinnacles and iron crown of the topmost tower of Barad-dûr. One moment only it stared out, but as from some great window immeasurably high there stabbed northward a flame of red, the flicker of a piercing Eye; and then the shadows were furled again and the terrible vision was removed. The Eye was not turned to them: it was gazing north to where the Captains of the West stood at bay, and thither all its malice was now bent, as the Power moved to strike its deadly blow; but Frodo at that dreadful glimpse fell as one stricken mortally. His hand sought the chain about his neck.

Sam knelt by him. Faint, almost inaudibly, he heard Frodo whispering: 'Help me, Sam! Help me, Sam! Hold my hand! I can't stop it.' Sam took his master's hands and laid them together, palm to palm, and kissed them; and then he held them gently between his own. The thought came suddenly to him: 'He's spotted us! It's all up, or it soon will be. Now, Sam Gamgee, this is the end of ends.'

Again he lifted Frodo and drew his hands down to his own breast, letting his master's legs dangle. Then he bowed his head and struggled off along the climbing road. It was not as easy a way to take as it had looked at first. By fortune the fires that had poured forth in the great turmoils when Sam stood upon Cirith Ungol had

flowed down mainly on the southern and western slopes, and the road on this side was not blocked. Yet in many places it had crumbled away or was crossed by gaping rents. After climbing eastward for some time it bent back upon itself at a sharp angle and went westward for a space. There at the bend it was cut deep through a crag of old weathered stone once long ago vomited from the Mountain's furnaces. Panting under his load Sam turned the bend; and even as he did so, out of the corner of his eye, he had a glimpse of something falling from the crag, like a small piece of black stone that had toppled off as he passed.

A sudden weight smote him and he crashed forward, tearing the backs of his hands that still clasped his master's. Then he knew what had happened, for above him as he lay he heard a hated voice.

'Wicked masster!' it hissed. 'Wicked masster cheats us; cheats Sméagol, *gollum*. He musn't go that way. He musn't hurt Preciouss. Give it to Sméagol, yess, give it to us! Give it to uss!'

With a violent heave Sam rose up. At once he drew his sword; but he could do nothing. Gollum and Frodo were locked together. Gollum was tearing at his master, trying to get at the chain and the Ring. This was probably the only thing that could have roused the dying embers of Frodo's heart and will: an attack, an attempt to wrest his treasure from him by force. He fought back with a sudden fury that amazed Sam, and Gollum also. Even so things might have gone far otherwise, if Gollum himself had remained unchanged; but whatever dreadful paths, lonely and hungry and waterless, he had trodden, driven by a devouring desire and a terrible fear, they had left grievous marks on him. He was a lean, starved, haggard thing, all bones and tight-drawn sallow skin. A wild light flamed in his eyes, but his malice was no longer matched by his old griping strength. Frodo flung him off and rose up quivering.

'Down, down!' he gasped, clutching his hand to his breast, so that beneath the cover of his leather shirt he clasped the Ring. 'Down, you creeping thing, and out of my path! Your time is at an end. You cannot betray me or slay me now.'

Then suddenly, as before under the eaves of the Eryn Muil, Sam saw these two rivals with other vision. A crouching shape, scarcely more than the shadow of a living thing, a creature now wholly ruined and defeated, yet filled with a hideous lust and rage; and before it stood stern, untouchable now by pity, a figure robed in white, but at its breast it held a wheel of fire. Out of the fire there spoke a commanding voice.

'Begone, and trouble me no more! If you touch me ever again, you shall be cast yourself into the Fire of Doom.'

The crouching shape backed away, terror in its blinking eyes, and yet at the same time insatiable desire.

Then the vision passed and Sam saw Frodo standing, hand on breast, his breath coming in great gasps, and Gollum at his feet, resting on his knees with his wide-splayed hands upon the ground.

'Look out!' cried Sam. 'He'll spring!' He stepped forward, brandishing his sword. 'Quick, Master!' he gasped. 'Go on! Go on! No time to lose. I'll deal with him. Go on!'

Frodo looked at him as if at one now far away. 'Yes, I must go on,' he said. 'Farewell, Sam! This is the end at last. On Mount Doom doom shall fall. Farewell!' He turned and went on, walking slowly but erect, up the climbing path.

'Now!' said Sam. 'At last I can deal with you!' He leaped forward with drawn blade ready for battle. But Gollum did not spring. He fell flat upon the ground and whimpered.

'Don't kill us,' he wept. 'Don't hurt us with nasty cruel steel! Let us live, yes, live just a little longer. Lost lost! We're lost. And when Precious goes we'll die, yes, die into the dust.' He clawed up the ashes of the path with his long fleshless fingers. 'Dusst!' he hissed.

Sam's hand wavered. His mind was hot with wrath and the memory of evil. It would be just to slay this treacherous, murderous creature, just and many times deserved; and also it seemed the only safe thing to do. But deep in his heart there was something that restrained him: he could not strike this thing lying in the dust, forlorn, ruinous, utterly wretched. He himself, though only for a little while, had borne the Ring, and now dimly he guessed the agony of Gollum's shrivelled mind and body, enslaved to that Ring, unable to find peace or relief ever in life again. But Sam had no words to express what he felt.

‘Oh, curse you, you stinking thing!’ he said. ‘Go away! Be off! I don’t trust you, not as far as I could kick you; but be off. Or I *shall* hurt you, yes, with nasty cruel steel.’

Gollum got up on all fours, and backed away for several paces, and then he turned, and as Sam aimed a kick at him he fled away down the path. Sam gave no more heed to him. He suddenly remembered his master. He looked up the path and could not see him. As fast as he could he trudged up the road. If he had looked back, he might have seen not far below Gollum turn again, and then with a wild light of madness glaring in his eyes come, swiftly but warily, creeping on behind, a slinking shadow among the stones.

The path climbed on. Soon it bent again and with a last eastward course passed in a cutting along the face of the cone and came to the dark door in the Mountain’s side, the door of the Sammath Naur. Far away now rising towards the South the sun, piercing the smokes and haze, burned ominous, a dull bleared disc of red; but all Mordor lay about the Mountain like a dead land, silent, shadow-folded, waiting for some dreadful stroke.

Sam came to the gaping mouth and peered in. It was dark and hot, and a deep rumbling shook the air. ‘Frodo! Master!’ he called. There was no answer. For a moment he stood, his heart beating with wild fears, and then he plunged in. A shadow followed him.

At first he could see nothing. In his great need he drew out once more the phial of Galadriel, but it was pale and cold in his trembling hand and threw no light into that stifling dark. He was come to the heart of the realm of Sauron and the forges of his ancient might, greatest in Middle-earth; all other powers were here subdued. Fearfully he took a few uncertain steps in the dark, and then all at once there came a flash of red that leaped upward, and smote the high black roof. Then Sam saw that he was in a long cave or tunnel that bored into the Mountain’s smoking cone. But only a short way ahead its floor and the walls on either side were cloven by a great fissure, out of which the red glare came, now leaping up, now dying down into darkness; and all the while far below there was a rumour and a trouble as of great engines throbbing and labouring.

The light sprang up again, and there on the brink of the chasm, at the very Crack of Doom, stood Frodo, black against the glare, tense, erect, but still as if he had been turned to stone.

‘Master!’ cried Sam.

Then Frodo stirred and spoke with a clear voice, indeed with a voice clearer and more powerful than Sam had ever heard him use, and it rose above the throb and turmoil of Mount Doom, ringing in the roof and walls.

‘I have come,’ he said. ‘But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!’ And suddenly, as he set it on his finger, he vanished from Sam’s sight. Sam gasped, but he had no chance to cry out, for at that moment many things happened.

Something struck Sam violently in the back, his legs were knocked from under him and he was flung aside, striking his head against the stony floor, as a dark shape sprang over him. He lay still and for a moment all went black.

And far away, as Frodo put on the Ring and claimed it for his own, even in Sammath Naur the very heart of his realm, the Power in Barad-dûr was shaken, and the Tower trembled from its foundations to its proud and bitter crown. The Dark Lord was suddenly aware of him, and his Eye piercing all shadows looked across the plain to the door that he had made; and the magnitude of his own folly was revealed to him in a blinding flash, and all the devices of his enemies were at last laid bare. Then his wrath blazed in consuming flame, but his fear rose like a vast black smoke to choke him. For he knew his deadly peril and the thread upon which his doom now hung.

From all his policies and webs of fear and treachery, from all his stratagems and wars his mind shook free; and throughout his realm a tremor ran, his slaves quailed, and his armies halted, and his captains suddenly steerless, bereft of will, wavered and despaired. For they were forgotten. The whole mind and purpose of the Power that wielded them was now bent with overwhelming force upon the Mountain. At his summons, wheeling with a rending cry, in a last desperate race there flew, faster than the winds, the Nazgûl, the Ringwraiths, and with a storm of wings they hurtled southwards to Mount Doom.

Sam got up. He was dazed, and blood streaming from his head dripped in his eyes. He groped forward, and then he saw a strange and terrible thing. Gollum on the edge of the abyss was fighting like a mad thing with an unseen foe. To and fro he swayed, now so near the brink that almost he tumbled in, now dragging back, falling to the ground, rising, and falling again. And all the while he hissed but spoke no words.

The fires below awoke in anger, the red light blazed, and all the cavern was filled with a great glare and heat. Suddenly Sam saw Gollum's long hands draw upwards to his mouth; his white fangs gleamed, and then snapped as they bit. Frodo gave a cry, and there he was, fallen upon his knees at the chasm's edge. But Gollum, dancing like a mad thing, held aloft the ring, a finger still thrust within its circle. It shone now as if verily it was wrought of living fire.

'Precious, precious, precious!' Gollum cried. 'My Precious! O my Precious!' And with that, even as his eyes were lifted up to gloat on his prize, he stepped too far, toppled, wavered for a moment on the brink, and then with a shriek he fell. Out of the depths came his last wail *Precious*, and he was gone.

There was a roar and a great confusion of noise. Fires leaped up and licked the roof. The throbbing grew to a great tumult, and the Mountain shook. Sam ran to Frodo and picked him up and carried him out to the door. And there upon the dark threshold of the Sammath Naur, high above the plains of Mordor, such wonder and terror came on him that he stood still forgetting all else, and gazed as one turned to stone.

A brief vision he had of swirling cloud, and in the midst of it towers and battlements, tall as hills, founded upon a mighty mountain-throne above immeasurable pits; great courts and dungeons, eyeless prisons sheer as cliffs, and gaping gates of steel and adamant: and then all passed. Towers fell and mountains slid; walls crumbled and melted, crashing down; vast spires of smoke and spouting steams went billowing up, up, until they toppled like an overwhelming wave, and its wild crest curled and came foaming down upon the land. And then at last over the miles between there came a rumble, rising to a deafening crash and roar; the earth shook, the plain heaved and cracked, and Orodruin reeled. Fire belched from its riven summit. The skies burst into thunder seared with lightning. Down like lashing whips fell a torrent of black rain. And into the heart of the storm, with a cry that pierced all other sounds, tearing the clouds asunder, the Nazgûl came, shooting like flaming bolts, as caught in the fiery ruin of hill and sky they crackled, withered, and went out.

'Well, this is the end, Sam Gamgee,' said a voice by his side. And there was Frodo, pale and worn, and yet himself again; and in his eyes there was peace now, neither strain of will, nor madness, nor any fear. His burden was taken away. There was the dear master of the sweet days in the Shire.

'Master!' cried Sam, and fell upon his knees. In all that ruin of the world for the moment he felt only joy, great joy. The burden was gone. His master had been saved; he was himself again, he was free. And then Sam caught sight of the maimed and bleeding hand.

'Your poor hand!' he said. 'And I have nothing to bind it with, or comfort it. I would have spared him a whole hand of mine rather. But he's gone now beyond recall, gone for ever.'

'Yes,' said Frodo. 'But do you remember Gandalf's words: *Even Gollum may have something yet to do?* But for him, Sam, I could not have destroyed the Ring. The Quest would have been in vain, even at the bitter end. So let us forgive him! For the Quest is achieved, and now all is over. I am glad you are here with me. Here at the end of all things, Sam.'



## Chapter 4: The Field Of Cormallen

All about the hills the hosts of Mordor raged. The Captains of the West were foundering in a gathering sea. The sun gleamed red, and under the wings of the Nazgûl the shadows of death fell dark upon the earth. Aragorn stood beneath his banner, silent and stern, as one lost in thought of things long past or far away; but his eyes gleamed like stars that shine the brighter as the night deepens. Upon the hill-top stood Gandalf, and he was white and cold and no shadow fell on him. The onslaught of Mordor broke like a wave on the beleaguered hills, voices roaring like a tide amid the wreck and crash of arms.

As if to his eyes some sudden vision had been given, Gandalf stirred; and he turned, looking back north where the skies were pale and clear. Then he lifted up his hands and cried in a loud voice ringing above the din: *The Eagles are coming!* And many voices answered crying: *The Eagles are coming! The Eagles are coming!* The hosts of Mordor looked up and wondered what this sign might mean.

There came Gwaihir the Windlord, and Landroval his brother, greatest of all the Eagles of the North, mightiest of the descendants of old Thorondor, who built his eyries in the inaccessible peaks of the Encircling Mountains when Middle-earth was young. Behind them in long swift lines came all their vassals from the northern mountains, speeding on a gathering wind. Straight down upon the Nazgûl they bore, stooping suddenly out of the high airs, and the rush of their wide wings as they passed over was like a gale.

But the Nazgûl turned and fled, and vanished into Mordor's shadows, hearing a sudden terrible call out of the Dark Tower; and even at that moment all the hosts of Mordor trembled, doubt clutched their hearts, their laughter failed, their hands shook and their limbs were loosed. The Power that drove them on and filled them with hate and fury was wavering, its will was removed from them; and now looking in the eyes of their enemies they saw a deadly light and were afraid.

Then all the Captains of the West cried aloud, for their hearts were filled with a new hope in the midst of darkness. Out from the beleaguered hills knights of Gondor, Riders of Rohan, Dúnedain of the North, close-serried companies, drove against their wavering foes, piercing the press with the thrust of bitter spears. But Gandalf lifted up his arms and called once more in a clear voice:

'Stand, Men of the West! Stand and wait! This is the hour of doom.' And even as he spoke the earth rocked beneath their feet. Then rising swiftly up, far above the Towers of the Black Gate, high above the mountains, a vast soaring darkness sprang into the sky, flickering with fire. The earth groaned and quaked. The Towers of the Teeth swayed, tottered, and fell down; the mighty rampart crumbled; the Black Gate was hurled in ruin; and from far away, now dim, now growing, now mounting to the clouds, there came a drumming rumble, a roar, a long echoing roll of ruinous noise.

'The realm of Sauron is ended!' said Gandalf. 'The Ring-bearer has fulfilled his Quest.' And as the Captains gazed south to the Land of Mordor, it seemed to them that, black against the pall of cloud, there rose a huge shape of shadow, impenetrable, lightning-crowned, filling all the sky. Enormous it reared above the world, and stretched out towards them a vast threatening hand, terrible but impotent: for even as it leaned over them, a great wind took it, and it was all blown away, and passed; and then a hush fell.

The Captains bowed their heads; and when they looked up again, behold! their enemies were flying and the power of Mordor was scattering like dust in the wind. As when death smites the swollen brooding thing that inhabits their crawling hill and holds them all in sway, ants will wander witless and purposeless and then feebly die, so the creatures of Sauron, orc or troll or beast spell-enslaved, ran hither and thither mindless; and some slew themselves, or cast themselves in pits, or fled wailing back to hide in holes and dark lightless places far from hope. But the Men of Rhûn and of Harad, Easterling and Southron, saw the ruin of their war and the great

majesty and glory of the Captains of the West. And those that were deepest and longest in evil servitude, hating the West, and yet were men proud and bold, in their turn now gathered themselves for a last stand of desperate battle. But the most part fled eastward as they could; and some cast their weapons down and sued for mercy.

Then Gandalf, leaving all such matters of battle and command to Aragorn and the other lords, stood upon the hill-top and called; and down to him came the great eagle, Gwaihir the Windlord, and stood before him.

‘Twice you have borne me, Gwaihir my friend,’ said Gandalf. ‘Thrice shall pay for all, if you are willing. You will not find me a burden much greater than when you bore me from Zirakzigil, where my old life burned away.’

‘I would bear you,’ answered Gwaihir, ‘whither you will, even were you made of stone.’

‘Then come, and let your brother go with us, and some other of your folk who is most swift! For we have need of speed greater than any wind, outmatching the wings of the Nazgûl.’

‘The North Wind blows, but we shall outfly it,’ said Gwaihir. And he lifted up Gandalf and sped away south, and with him went Landroval, and Meneldor young and swift. And they passed over Udûn and Gorgoroth and saw all the land in ruin and tumult beneath them, and before them Mount Doom blazing, pouring out its fire.

‘I am glad that you are here with me,’ said Frodo. ‘Here at the end of all things, Sam.’

‘Yes, I am with you, Master,’ said Sam, laying Frodo’s wounded hand gently to his breast. ‘And you’re with me. And the journey’s finished. But after coming all that way I don’t want to give up yet. It’s not like me, somehow, if you understand.’

‘Maybe not, Sam,’ said Frodo; ‘but it’s like things are in the world. Hopes fail. An end comes. We have only a little time to wait now. We are lost in ruin and downfall, and there is no escape.’

‘Well, Master, we could at least go further from this dangerous place here, from this Crack of Doom, if that’s its name. Now couldn’t we? Come, Mr. Frodo, let’s go down the path at any rate!’

‘Very well, Sam. If you wish to go, I’ll come,’ said Frodo; and they rose and went slowly down the winding road; and even as they passed towards the Mountain’s quaking feet, a great smoke and steam belched from the Sammath Naur, and the side of the cone was riven open, and a huge fiery vomit rolled in slow thunderous cascade down the eastern mountain-side.

Frodo and Sam could go no further. Their last strength of mind and body was swiftly ebbing. They had reached a low ashen hill piled at the Mountain’s foot; but from it there was no more escape. It was an island now, not long to endure, amid the torment of Orodruin. All about it the earth gaped, and from deep rifts and pits smoke and fumes leaped up. Behind them the Mountain was convulsed. Great rents opened in its side. Slow rivers of fire came down the long slopes towards them. Soon they would be engulfed. A rain of hot ash was falling.

They stood now; and Sam still holding his master’s hand caressed it. He sighed. ‘What a tale we have been in, Mr. Frodo, haven’t we?’ he said. ‘I wish I could hear it told! Do you think they’ll say: *Now comes the story of Nine-fingered Frodo and the Ring of Doom?* And then everyone will hush, like we did, when in Rivendell they told us the tale of Beren One-hand and the Great Jewel. I wish I could hear it! And I wonder how it will go on after our part.’

But even while he spoke so, to keep fear away until the very last, his eyes still strayed north, north into the eye of the wind, to where the sky far off was clear, as the cold blast, rising to a gale, drove back the darkness and the ruin of the clouds.

And so it was that Gwaihir saw them with his keen far-seeing eyes, as down the wild wind he came, and daring the great peril of the skies he circled in the air: two small dark figures, forlorn, hand in hand upon a little hill, while the world shook under them, and gasped, and rivers of fire drew near. And even as he espied them and came swooping down, he saw them fall, worn out, or choked with fumes and heat, or stricken down by despair at last, hiding their eyes from death.

Side by side they lay; and down swept Gwaihir, and down came Landroval and Meneldor the swift; and in a dream, not knowing what fate had befallen them, the wanderers were lifted up and borne far away out of the darkness and the fire.

When Sam awoke, he found that he was lying on some soft bed, but over him gently swayed wide beechen boughs, and through their young leaves sunlight glimmered, green and gold. All the air was full of a sweet mingled scent.

He remembered that smell: the fragrance of Ithilien. ‘Bless me!’ he mused. ‘How long have I been asleep?’ For the scent had borne him back to the day when he had lit his little fire under the sunny bank; and for the moment all else between was out of waking memory. He stretched and drew a deep breath. ‘Why, what a dream I’ve had!’ he muttered. ‘I am glad to wake!’ He sat up and then he saw that Frodo was lying beside him, and slept peacefully, one hand behind his head, and the other resting upon the coverlet. It was the right hand, and the third finger was missing.

Full memory flooded back, and Sam cried aloud: ‘It wasn’t a dream! Then where are we?’

And a voice spoke softly behind him: ‘In the land of Ithilien, and in the keeping of the King; and he awaits you.’ With that Gandalf stood before him, robed in white, his beard now gleaming like pure snow in the twinkling of the leafy sunlight. ‘Well, Master Samwise, how do you feel?’ he said.

But Sam lay back, and stared with open mouth, and for a moment, between bewilderment and great joy, he could not answer. At last he gasped: ‘Gandalf! I thought you were dead! But then I thought I was dead myself. Is everything sad going to come untrue? What’s happened to the world?’

‘A great Shadow has departed,’ said Gandalf, and then he laughed, and the sound was like music, or like water in a parched land; and as he listened the thought came to Sam that he had not heard laughter, the pure sound of merriment, for days upon days without count. It fell upon his ears like the echo of all the joys he had ever known. But he himself burst into tears. Then, as a sweet rain will pass down a wind of spring and the sun will shine out the clearer, his tears ceased, and his laughter welled up, and laughing he sprang from his bed.

‘How do I feel?’ he cried. ‘Well, I don’t know how to say it. I feel, I feel’—he waved his arms in the air—‘I feel like spring after winter, and sun on the leaves; and like trumpets and harps and all the songs I have ever heard!’ He stopped and he turned towards his master. ‘But how’s Mr. Frodo?’ he said. ‘Isn’t it a shame about his poor hand? But I hope he’s all right otherwise. He’s had a cruel time.’

‘Yes, I am all right otherwise,’ said Frodo, sitting up and laughing in his turn. ‘I fell asleep again waiting for you, Sam, you sleepy-head. I was awake early this morning, and now it must be nearly noon.’

‘Noon?’ said Sam, trying to calculate. ‘Noon of what day?’

‘The fourteenth of the New Year,’ said Gandalf; ‘or if you like, the eighth day of April in the Shire-reckoning.<sup>29</sup> But in Gondor the New Year will always now begin upon the twenty-fifth of March when Sauron fell, and when you were brought out of the fire to the King. He has tended you, and now he awaits you. You shall eat and drink with him. When you are ready I will lead you to him.’

‘The King?’ said Sam. ‘What king, and who is he?’

‘The King of Gondor and Lord of the Western Lands,’ said Gandalf; ‘and he has taken back all his ancient realm. He will ride soon to his crowning, but he waits for you.’

‘What shall we wear?’ said Sam; for all he could see was the old and tattered clothes that they had journeyed in, lying folded on the ground beside their beds.

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<sup>29</sup> There were thirty days in March (or Rethe) in the Shire calendar.



‘The clothes that you wore on your way to Mordor,’ said Gandalf. ‘Even the orc-rags that you bore in the black land, Frodo, shall be preserved. No silks and linens, nor any armour or heraldry could be more honourable. But later I will find some other clothes, perhaps.’

Then he held out his hands to them, and they saw that one shone with light. ‘What have you got there?’ Frodo cried. ‘Can it be—?’

‘Yes, I have brought your two treasures. They were found on Sam when you were rescued, the Lady Galadriel’s gifts: your glass, Frodo, and your box, Sam. You will be glad to have these safe again.’

When they were washed and clad, and had eaten a light meal, the Hobbits followed Gandalf. They stepped out of the beech-grove in which they had lain, and passed on to a long green lawn, glowing in sunshine, bordered by stately dark-leaved trees laden with scarlet blossom. Behind them they could hear the sound of falling water, and a stream ran down before them between flowering banks, until it came to a greenwood at the lawn’s foot and passed then on under an archway of trees, through which they saw the shimmer of water far away.

As they came to the opening in the wood, they were surprised to see knights in bright mail and tall guards in silver and black standing there, who greeted them with honour and bowed before them. And then one blew a long trumpet, and they went on through the aisle of trees beside the singing stream. So they came to a wide green land, and beyond it was a broad river in a silver haze, out of which rose a long wooded isle, and many ships lay by its shores. But on the field where they now stood a great host was drawn up, in ranks and companies glittering in the sun. And as the Hobbits approached swords were unsheathed, and spears were shaken, and horns and trumpets sang, and men cried with many voices and in many tongues:

*‘Long live the Halflings! Praise them with great praise!*

*Cuio i Pheriain anann! Aglar’ni Pheriannath!*

*Praise them with great praise, Frodo and Samwise!*

*Daur a Berhael, Conin en Annûn! Eglerio!*

*Praise them!*

*Eglerio!*

*A laita te, laita te! Andave laitivalmet!*

*Praise them!*

*Cormacolindor, a laita tárienna!*

*Praise them! The Ring-bearers, praise them with great praise!’*

And so the red blood blushing in their faces and their eyes shining with wonder, Frodo and Sam went forward and saw that amidst the clamorous host were set three high-seats built of green turves. Behind the seat upon the right floated, white on green, a great horse running free; upon the left was a banner, silver upon blue, a ship swan-prowed faring on the sea; but behind the highest throne in the midst of all a great standard was spread in the breeze, and there a white tree flowered upon a sable field beneath a shining crown and seven glittering stars. On the throne sat a mail-clad man, a great sword was laid across his knees, but he wore no helm. As they drew near he rose. And then they knew him, changed as he was, so high and glad of face, kingly, lord of Men, dark-haired with eyes of grey.

Frodo ran to meet him, and Sam followed close behind. ‘Well, if this isn’t the crown of all!’ he said. ‘Strider, or I’m still asleep!’

‘Yes, Sam, Strider,’ said Aragorn. ‘It is a long way, is it not, from Bree, where you did not like the look of me? A long way for us all, but yours has been the darkest road.’

And then to Sam’s surprise and utter confusion he bowed his knee before them; and taking them by the hand, Frodo upon his right and Sam upon his left, he led them to the throne, and setting them upon it, he turned to the men and captains who stood by and spoke, so that his voice rang over all the host, crying:

‘Praise them with great praise!’

And when the glad shout had swelled up and died away again, to Sam’s final and complete satisfaction and pure joy, a minstrel of Gondor stood forth, and knelt, and begged leave to sing. And behold! he said:

‘Lo! lords and knights and men of valour unashamed, kings and princes, and fair people of Gondor, and Riders of Rohan, and ye sons of Elrond, and Dúnedain of the North, and Elf and Dwarf, and greathearts of the Shire, and all free folk of the West, now listen to my lay. For I will sing to you of Frodo of the Nine Fingers and the Ring of Doom.’

And when Sam heard that he laughed aloud for sheer delight, and he stood up and cried: ‘O great glory and splendour! And all my wishes have come true!’ And then he wept.

And all the host laughed and wept, and in the midst of their merriment and tears the clear voice of the minstrel rose like silver and gold, and all men were hushed. And he sang to them, now in the elven-tongue, now in the speech of the West, until their hearts, wounded with sweet words, overflowed, and their joy was like swords, and they passed in thought out to regions where pain and delight flow together and tears are the very wine of blessedness.

And at the last, as the Sun fell from the noon and the shadows of the trees lengthened, he ended. ‘Praise them with great praise!’ he said and knelt. And then Aragorn stood up, and all the host arose, and they passed to pavilions made ready, to eat and drink and make merry while the day lasted.

Frodo and Sam were led apart and brought to a tent, and there their old raiment was taken off, but folded and set aside with honour; and clean linen was given to them. Then Gandalf came and in his arms, to the wonder of Frodo, he bore the sword and the elven-cloak and the mithril-coat that had been taken from him in Mordor. For Sam he brought a coat of gilded mail, and his elven-cloak all healed of the soils and hurts that it had suffered; and then he laid before them two swords.

‘I do not wish for any sword,’ said Frodo.

‘Tonight at least you should wear one,’ said Gandalf.

Then Frodo took the small sword that had belonged to Sam, and had been laid at his side in Cirith Ungol. ‘Sting I gave to you Sam,’ he said.

‘No, master! Mr. Bilbo gave it to you, and it goes with his silver coat; he would not wish anyone else to wear it now.’

Frodo gave way; and Gandalf, as if he were their esquire, knelt and girt the sword-belts about them, and then rising he set circlets of silver upon their heads. And when they were arrayed they went to the great feast; and they sat at the King’s table with Gandalf, and King Éomer of Rohan, and the Prince Imrahil and all the chief captains; and there also were Gimli and Legolas.

But when, after the Standing Silence, wine was brought there came in two esquires to serve the kings; or so they seemed to be: one was clad in the silver and sable of the Guards of Minas Tirith, and the other in white and green. But Sam wondered what such young boys were doing in an army of mighty men. Then suddenly as they drew near and he could see them plainly, he exclaimed:

‘Why, look Mr. Frodo! Look here! Well, if it isn’t Pippin. Mr. Peregrin Took I should say, and Mr. Merry! How they have grown! Bless me! But I can see there’s more tales to tell than ours.’

‘There are indeed,’ said Pippin turning towards him. ‘And we’ll begin telling them, as soon as this feast is ended. In the meantime you can try Gandalf. He’s not so close as he used to be, though he laughs now more than he talks. For the present Merry and I are busy. We are knights of the City and of the Mark, as I hope you observe.’

At last the glad day ended; and when the Sun was gone and the round Moon rode slowly above the mists of Anduin and flickered through the fluttering leaves, Frodo and Sam sat under the whispering trees amid the fragrance of fair Ithilien; and they talked deep into the night with Merry and Pippin and Gandalf, and after a while Legolas and Gimli joined them. There Frodo and Sam learned much of all that had happened to the Company after their fellowship was broken on the evil day at Parth Galen by Rauros Falls; and still there was always more to ask and more to tell.

Orcs, and talking trees, and leagues of grass, and galloping riders, and glittering caves, and white towers and golden halls, and battles, and tall ships sailing, all these passed before Sam's mind until he felt bewildered. But amidst all these wonders he returned always to his astonishment at the size of Merry and Pippin; and he made them stand back to back with Frodo and himself. He scratched his head. 'Can't understand it at your age!' he said. 'But there it is: you're three inches taller than you ought to be, or I'm a dwarf.'

'That you certainly are not,' said Gimli. 'But what did I say? Mortals cannot go drinking ent-draughts and expect no more to come of them than of a pot of beer.'

'Ent-draughts?' said Sam. 'There you go about Ents again; but what they are beats me. Why, it will take weeks before we get all these things sized up!'

'Weeks indeed,' said Pippin. 'And then Frodo will have to be locked up in a tower in Minas Tirith and write it all down. Otherwise he will forget half of it, and poor old Bilbo will be dreadfully disappointed.'

At length Gandalf rose. 'The hands of the King are hands of healing, dear friends,' he said. 'But you went to the very brink of death ere he recalled you, putting forth all his power, and sent you into the sweet forgetfulness of sleep. And though you have indeed slept long and blessedly, still it is now time to sleep again.'

'And not only Sam and Frodo here,' said Gimli, 'but you too, Pippin. I love you, if only because of the pains you have cost me, which I shall never forget. Nor shall I forget finding you on the hill of the last battle. But for Gimli the Dwarf you would have been lost then. But at least I know now the look of a hobbit's foot, though it be all that can be seen under a heap of bodies. And when I heaved that great carcase off you, I made sure you were dead. I could have torn out my beard. And it is only a day yet since you were first up and abroad again. To bed now you go. And so shall I.'

'And I,' said Legolas, 'shall walk in the woods of this fair land, which is rest enough. In days to come, if my Elven-lord allows, some of our folk shall remove hither; and when we come it shall be blessed, for a while. For a while: a month, a life, a hundred years of Men. But Anduin is near, and Anduin leads down to the Sea. To the Sea!

*To the Sea, to the Sea! The white gulls are crying,  
The wind is blowing, and the white foam is flying.  
West, west away, the round sun is falling.  
Grey ship, grey ship, do you hear them calling,  
The voices of my people that have gone before me?  
I will leave, I will leave the woods that bore me;  
For our days are ending and our years failing.  
I will pass the wide waters lonely sailing.  
Long are the waves on the Last Shore falling,  
Sweet are the voices in the Lost Isle calling,  
In Eressëa, in Elvenhome that no man can discover,  
Where the leaves fall not: land of my people for ever!'*

And so singing Legolas went away down the hill.

Then the others also departed, and Frodo and Sam went to their beds and slept. And in the morning they rose again in hope and peace; and they spent many days in Ithilien. For the Field of Cormallen, where the host was now encamped, was near to Henneth Annûn, and the stream that flowed from its falls could be heard in the night as it rushed down through its rocky gate, and passed through the flowery meads into the tides of Anduin by the Isle of Cair Andros. The hobbits wandered here and there visiting again the places that they had passed before; and Sam hoped always in some shadow of the woods or secret glade to catch, maybe, a glimpse of the great Oliphaunt. And when he learned that at the siege of Gondor there had been a great number of these beasts but that they were all destroyed, he thought it a sad loss.

'Well, one can't be everywhere at once, I suppose,' he said. 'But I missed a lot, seemingly.'

In the meanwhile the host made ready for the return to Minas Tirith. The weary rested and the hurt were healed. For some had laboured and fought much with the remnants of the Easterlings and Southrons, until all were subdued. And, latest of all, those returned who had passed into Mordor and destroyed the fortresses in the north of the land.

But at the last when the month of May was drawing near the Captains of the West set out again; and they went aboard ship with all their men, and they sailed from Cair Andros down Anduin to Osgiliath; and there they remained for one day; and the day after they came to the green fields of the Pelennor and saw again the white towers under tall Mindolluin, the City of the Men of Gondor, last memory of Westernesse, that had passed through the darkness and fire to a new day.

And there in the midst of the fields they set up their pavilions and awaited the morning; for it was the Eve of May, and the King would enter his gates with the rising of the Sun.



## Chapter 5: The Steward And The King

Over the city of Gondor doubt and great dread had hung. Fair weather and clear sun had seemed but a mockery to men whose days held little hope, and who looked each morning for news of doom. Their lord was dead and burned, dead lay the King of Rohan in their citadel, and the new king that had come to them in the night was gone again to a war with powers too dark and terrible for any might or valour to conquer. And no news came. After the host left Morgul Vale and took the northward road beneath the shadow of the mountains no messenger had returned nor any rumour of what was passing in the brooding East.

When the Captains were but two days gone, the Lady Éowyn bade the women who tended her to bring her raiment, and she would not be gainsaid, but rose; and when they had clothed her and set her arm in a sling of linen, she went to the Warden of the Houses of Healing.

‘Sir,’ she said, ‘I am in great unrest, and I cannot lie longer in sloth.’

‘Lady,’ he answered, ‘you are not yet healed, and I was commanded to tend you with especial care. You should not have risen from your bed for seven days yet, or so I was bidden. I beg you to go back.’

‘I am healed,’ she said, ‘healed at least in body, save my left arm only, and that is at ease. But I shall sicken anew, if there is naught that I can do. Are there no tidings of war? The women can tell me nothing.’

‘There are no tidings,’ said the Warden, ‘save that the Lords have ridden to Morgul Vale; and men say that the new captain out of the North is their chief. A great lord is that, and a healer; and it is a thing passing strange to me that the healing hand should also wield the sword. It is not thus in Gondor now, though once it was so, if old tales be true. But for long years we healers have only sought to patch the rents made by the men of swords. Though we should still have enough to do without them: the world is full enough of hurts and mischances without wars to multiply them.’

‘It needs but one foe to breed a war, not two, Master Warden,’ answered Éowyn. ‘And those who have not swords can still die upon them. Would you have the folk of Gondor gather you herbs only, when the Dark Lord gathers armies? And it is not always good to be healed in body. Nor is it always evil to die in battle, even in bitter pain. Were I permitted, in this dark hour I would choose the latter.’

The Warden looked at her. Tall she stood there, her eyes bright in her white face, her right hand clenched as she turned and gazed out of his window that opened to the East. He sighed and shook his head. After a pause she turned to him again.

‘Is there no deed to do?’ she said. ‘Who commands in this City?’

‘I do not rightly know,’ he answered. ‘Such things are not my care. There is a marshal over the Riders of Rohan; and the Lord Húrin, I am told, commands the men of Gondor. But the Lord Faramir is by right the Steward of the City.’

‘Where can I find him?’

‘In this house, lady. He was sorely hurt, but is now set again on the way to health. But I do not know—’

‘Will you not bring me to him? Then you will know.’

The Lord Faramir was walking alone in the garden of the Houses of Healing, and the sunlight warmed him, and he felt life run new in his veins; but his heart was heavy, and he looked out over the walls eastward. And coming, the Warden spoke his name, and he turned and saw the Lady Éowyn of Rohan; and he was moved with pity, for he saw that she was hurt, and his clear sight perceived her sorrow and unrest.

‘My lord,’ said the Warden, ‘here is the Lady Éowyn of Rohan. She rode with the king and was sorely hurt, and dwells now in my keeping. But she is not content, and she wishes to speak to the Steward of the City.’

‘Do not misunderstand him, lord,’ said Éowyn. ‘It is not lack of care that grieves me. No houses could be fairer, for those who desire to be healed. But I cannot lie in sloth, idle, caged. I looked for death in battle. But I have not died, and battle still goes on.’

At a sign from Faramir, the Warden bowed and departed. ‘What would you have me do, lady?’ said Faramir. ‘I also am a prisoner of the healers.’ He looked at her, and being a man whom pity deeply stirred, it seemed to him that her loveliness amid her grief would pierce his heart. And she looked at him and saw the grave tenderness in his eyes, and yet knew, for she was bred among men of war, that here was one whom no Rider of the Mark would outmatch in battle.

‘What do you wish?’ he said again. ‘If it lies in my power, I will do it.’

‘I would have you command this Warden, and bid him let me go,’ she said; but though her words were still proud, her heart faltered, and for the first time she doubted herself. She guessed that this tall man, both stern and gentle, might think her merely wayward, like a child that has not the firmness of mind to go on with a dull task to the end.

‘I myself am in the Warden’s keeping,’ answered Faramir. ‘Nor have I yet taken up my authority in the City. But had I done so, I should still listen to his counsel, and should not cross his will in matters of his craft, unless in some great need.’

‘But I do not desire healing,’ she said. ‘I wish to ride to war like my brother Éomer, or better like Théoden the king, for he died and has both honour and peace.’

‘It is too late, lady, to follow the Captains, even if you had the strength,’ said Faramir. ‘But death in battle may come to us all yet, willing or unwilling. You will be better prepared to face it in your own manner, if while there is still time you do as the Healer commanded. You and I, we must endure with patience the hours of waiting.’

She did not answer, but as he looked at her it seemed to him that something in her softened, as though a bitter frost were yielding at the first faint presage of spring. A tear sprang in her eye and fell down her cheek, like a glistening rain-drop. Her proud head drooped a little. Then quietly, more as if speaking to herself than to him: ‘But the healers would have me lie abed seven days yet,’ she said. ‘And my window does not look eastward.’ Her voice was now that of a maiden young and sad.

Faramir smiled, though his heart was filled with pity. ‘Your window does not look eastward?’ he said. ‘That can be amended. In this I will command the Warden. If you will stay in this house in our care, lady, and take your rest, then you shall walk in this garden in the sun, as you will; and you shall look east, whither all our hopes have gone. And here you will find me, walking and waiting, and also looking east. It would ease my care, if you would speak to me, or walk at whiles with me.’

Then she raised her head and looked him in the eyes again; and a colour came in her pale face. ‘How should I ease your care, my lord?’ she said. ‘And I do not desire the speech of living men.’

‘Would you have my plain answer?’ he said.

‘I would.’

‘Then, Éowyn of Rohan, I say to you that you are beautiful. In the valleys of our hills there are flowers fair and bright, and maidens fairer still; but neither flower nor lady have I seen till now in Gondor so lovely, and so sorrowful. It may be that only a few days are left ere darkness falls upon our world, and when it comes I hope to face it steadily; but it would ease my heart, if while the Sun yet shines, I could see you still. For you and I have both passed under the wings of the Shadow, and the same hand drew us back.’

‘Alas, not me, lord!’ she said. ‘Shadow lies on me still. Look not to me for healing! I am a shieldmaiden and my hand is ungentle. But I thank you for this at least, that I need not keep to my chamber. I will walk abroad by the grace of the Steward of the City.’ And she did him a courtesy and walked back to the house. But Faramir for

a long while walked alone in the garden, and his glance now strayed rather to the house than to the eastward walls.

When he returned to his chamber he called for the Warden, and heard all that he could tell of the Lady of Rohan.

‘But I doubt not, lord,’ said the Warden, ‘that you would learn more from the Halfling that is with us; for he was in the riding of the king, and with the Lady at the end, they say.’

And so Merry was sent to Faramir, and while that day lasted they talked long together, and Faramir learned much, more even than Merry put into words; and he thought that he understood now something of the grief and unrest of Éowyn of Rohan. And in the fair evening Faramir and Merry walked in the garden, but she did not come.

But in the morning, as Faramir came from the Houses, he saw her, as she stood upon the walls; and she was clad all in white, and gleamed in the sun. And he called to her, and she came down, and they walked on the grass or sat under a green tree together, now in silence, now in speech. And each day after they did likewise. And the Warden looking from his window was glad in heart, for he was a healer, and his care was lightened; and certain it was that, heavy as was the dread and foreboding of those days upon the hearts of men, still these two of his charges prospered and grew daily in strength.

And so the fifth day came since the Lady Éowyn went first to Faramir; and they stood now together once more upon the walls of the City and looked out. No tidings had yet come, and all hearts were darkened. The weather, too, was bright no longer. It was cold. A wind that had sprung up in the night was blowing now keenly from the North, and it was rising; but the lands about looked grey and drear.

They were clad in warm raiment and heavy cloaks, and over all the Lady Éowyn wore a great blue mantle of the colour of deep summer-night, and it was set with silver stars about hem and throat. Faramir had sent for this robe and had wrapped it about her; and he thought that she looked fair and queenly indeed as she stood there at his side. The mantle was wrought for his mother, Finduilas of Amroth, who died untimely, and was to him but a memory of loveliness in far days and of his first grief; and her robe seemed to him raiment fitting for the beauty and sadness of Éowyn.

But she now shivered beneath the starry mantle, and she looked northward, above the grey hither lands, into the eye of the cold wind where far away the sky was hard and clear.

‘What do you look for, Éowyn?’ said Faramir.

‘Does not the Black Gate lie yonder?’ said she. ‘And must he not now be come thither? It is seven days since he rode away.’

‘Seven days,’ said Faramir. ‘But think not ill of me, if I say to you: they have brought me both a joy and a pain that I never thought to know. Joy to see you; but pain, because now the fear and doubt of this evil time are grown dark indeed. Éowyn, I would not have this world end now, or lose so soon what I have found.’

‘Lose what you have found, lord?’ she answered; but she looked at him gravely and her eyes were kind. ‘I know not what in these days you have found that you could lose. But come, my friend, let us not speak of it! Let us not speak at all! I stand upon some dreadful brink, and it is utterly dark in the abyss before my feet, but whether there is any light behind me I cannot tell. For I cannot turn yet. I wait for some stroke of doom.’

‘Yes, we wait for the stroke of doom,’ said Faramir. And they said no more; and it seemed to them as they stood upon the wall that the wind died, and the light failed, and the Sun was bleared, and all sounds in the City or in the lands about were hushed: neither wind, nor voice, nor bird-call, nor rustle of leaf, nor their own breath could be heard; the very beating of their hearts was stilled. Time halted.

And as they stood so, their hands met and clasped, though they did not know it. And still they waited for they knew not what. Then presently it seemed to them that above the ridges of the distant mountains another vast mountain of darkness rose, towering up like a wave that should engulf the world, and about it lightnings flickered; and then a tremor ran through the earth, and they felt the walls of the City quiver. A sound like a sigh went up from all the lands about them; and their hearts beat suddenly again.

‘It reminds me of Númenor,’ said Faramir, and wondered to hear himself speak.

‘Of Númenor?’ said Éowyn.

‘Yes,’ said Faramir, ‘of the land of Westernesse that foundered, and of the great dark wave climbing over the green lands and above the hills, and coming on, darkness unescapable. I often dream of it.’

‘Then you think that the Darkness is coming?’ said Éowyn. ‘Darkness Unescapable?’ And suddenly she drew close to him.

‘No,’ said Faramir, looking into her face. ‘It was but a picture in the mind. I do not know what is happening. The reason of my waking mind tells me that great evil has befallen and we stand at the end of days. But my heart says nay; and all my limbs are light, and a hope and joy are come to me that no reason can deny. Éowyn, Éowyn, White Lady of Rohan, in this hour I do not believe that any darkness will endure!’ And he stooped and kissed her brow.

And so they stood on the walls of the City of Gondor, and a great wind rose and blew, and their hair, raven and golden, streamed out mingling in the air. And the Shadow departed, and the Sun was unveiled, and light leaped forth; and the waters of Anduin shone like silver, and in all the houses of the City men sang for the joy that welled up in their hearts from what source they could not tell.

And before the Sun had fallen far from the noon out of the East there came a great Eagle flying, and he bore tidings beyond hope from the Lords of the West, crying:

*Sing now, ye people of the Tower of Anor,  
for the Realm of Sauron is ended for ever,  
and the Dark Tower is thrown down.*

*Sing and rejoice, ye people of the Tower of Guard,  
for your watch hath not been in vain,  
and the Black Gate is broken,  
and your King hath passed through,  
and he is victorious.*

*Sing and be glad, all ye children of the West,  
for your King shall come again,  
and he shall dwell among you  
all the days of your life.*

*And the Tree that was withered shall be renewed,  
and he shall plant it in the high places,  
and the City shall be blessed.  
Sing all ye people!*

And the people sang in all the ways of the City.

The days that followed were golden, and Spring and Summer joined and made revel together in the fields of Gondor. And tidings now came by swift riders from Cair Andros of all that was done, and the City made ready for the coming of the King. Merry was summoned and rode away with the wains that took store of goods to Osgiliath and thence by ship to Cair Andros; but Faramir did not go, for now being healed he took upon him his authority and the Stewardship, although it was only for a little while, and his duty was to prepare for one who should replace him.

And Éowyn did not go, though her brother sent word begging her to come to the field of Cormallen. And Faramir wondered at this, but he saw her seldom, being busy with many matters; and she dwelt still in the Houses of Healing and walked alone in the garden, and her face grew pale again, and it seemed that in all the City she only was ailing and sorrowful. And the Warden of the Houses was troubled, and he spoke to Faramir.



Then Faramir came and sought her, and once more they stood on the walls together; and he said to her: 'Éowyn, why do you tarry here, and do not go to the rejoicing in Cormallen beyond Cair Andros, where your brother awaits you?'

And she said: 'Do you not know?'

But he answered: 'Two reasons there may be, but which is true, I do not know.'

And she said: 'I do not wish to play at riddles. Speak plainer!'

'Then if you will have it so, lady,' he said: 'you do not go, because only your brother called for you, and to look on the Lord Aragorn, Elendil's heir, in his triumph would now bring you no joy. Or because I do not go, and you desire still to be near me. And maybe for both these reasons, and you yourself cannot choose between them. Éowyn, do you not love me, or will you not?'

'I wished to be loved by another,' she answered. 'But I desire no man's pity.'

'That I know,' he said. 'You desired to have the love of the Lord Aragorn. Because he was high and puissant, and you wished to have renown and glory and to be lifted far above the mean things that crawl on the earth. And as a great captain may to a young soldier he seemed to you admirable. For so he is, a lord among men, the greatest that now is. But when he gave you only understanding and pity, then you desired to have nothing, unless a brave death in battle. Look at me, Éowyn!'

And Éowyn looked at Faramir long and steadily; and Faramir said: 'Do not scorn pity that is the gift of a gentle heart, Éowyn! But I do not offer you my pity. For you are a lady high and valiant and have yourself won renown that shall not be forgotten; and you are a lady beautiful, I deem, beyond even the words of the elven-tongue to tell. And I love you. Once I pitied your sorrow. But now, were you sorrowless, without fear or any lack, were you the blissful Queen of Gondor, still I would love you. Éowyn, do you not love me?'

Then the heart of Éowyn changed, or else at last she understood it. And suddenly her winter passed, and the sun shone on her.

'I stand in Minas Anor, the Tower of the Sun,' she said; 'and behold! the Shadow has departed! I will be a shieldmaiden no longer, nor vie with the great Riders, nor take joy only in the songs of slaying. I will be a healer, and love all things that grow and are not barren.' And again she looked at Faramir. 'No longer do I desire to be a queen,' she said.

Then Faramir laughed merrily. 'That is well,' he said; 'for I am not a king. Yet I will wed with the White Lady of Rohan, if it be her will. And if she will, then let us cross the River and in happier days let us dwell in fair Ithilien and there make a garden. All things will grow with joy there, if the White Lady comes.'

'Then must I leave my own people, man of Gondor?' she said. 'And would you have your proud folk say of you: "There goes a lord who tamed a wild shieldmaiden of the North! Was there no woman of the race of Númenor to choose?"'

'I would,' said Faramir. And he took her in his arms and kissed her under the sunlit sky, and he cared not that they stood high upon the walls in the sight of many. And many indeed saw them and the light that shone about them as they came down from the walls and went hand in hand to the Houses of Healing.

And to the Warden of the Houses Faramir said: 'Here is the Lady Éowyn of Rohan, and now she is healed.'

And the Warden said: 'Then I release her from my charge and bid her farewell, and may she suffer never hurt nor sickness again. I commend her to the care of the Steward of the City, until her brother returns.'

But Éowyn said: 'Yet now that I have leave to depart, I would remain. For this House has become to me of all dwellings the most blessed.' And she remained there until King Éomer came.

All things were now made ready in the City; and there was great concourse of people, for the tidings had gone out into all parts of Gondor, from Min-Rimmon even to Pinnath Gelin and the far coasts of the sea; and all that could come to the City made haste to come. And the City was filled again with women and fair children that returned to their homes laden with flowers; and from Dol Amroth came the harpers that harped most skilfully in

all the land; and there were players upon viols and upon flutes and upon horns of silver, and clear-voiced singers from the vales of Lebennin.

At last an evening came when from the walls the pavilions could be seen upon the field, and all night lights were burning as men watched for the dawn. And when the sun rose in the clear morning above the mountains in the East, upon which shadows lay no more, then all the bells rang, and all the banners broke and flowed in the wind; and upon the White Tower of the citadel the standard of the Stewards, bright argent like snow in the sun, bearing no charge nor device, was raised over Gondor for the last time.

Now the Captains of the West led their host towards the City, and folk saw them advance in line upon line, flashing and glinting in the sunrise and rippling like silver. And so they came before the Gateway and halted a furlong from the walls. As yet no gates had been set up again, but a barrier was laid across the entrance to the City, and there stood men at arms in silver and black with long swords drawn. Before the barrier stood Faramir the Steward, and Húrin Warden of the Keys, and other captains of Gondor, and the Lady Éowyn of Rohan with Elfhelm the Marshal and many knights of the Mark; and upon either side of the Gate was a great press of fair people in raiment of many colours and garlands of flowers.

So now there was a wide space before the walls of Minas Tirith, and it was hemmed in upon all sides by the knights and the soldiers of Gondor and of Rohan, and by the people of the City and of all parts of the land. A hush fell upon all as out from the host stepped the Dúnedain in silver and grey; and before them came walking slow the Lord Aragorn. He was clad in black mail girt with silver, and he wore a long mantle of pure white clasped at the throat with a great jewel of green that shone from afar; but his head was bare save for a star upon his forehead bound by a slender fillet of silver. With him were Éomer of Rohan, and the Prince Imrahil, and Gandalf robed all in white, and four small figures that many men marvelled to see.

‘Nay, cousin! they are not boys,’ said Ioreth to her kinswoman from Imloth Melui, who stood beside her. ‘Those are *Periain*, out of the far country of the Halflings, where they are princes of great fame, it is said. I should know, for I had one to tend in the Houses. They are small, but they are valiant. Why, cousin, one of them went with only his esquire into the Black Country and fought with the Dark Lord all by himself, and set fire to his Tower, if you can believe it. At least that is the tale in the City. That will be the one that walks with our Elfstone. They are dear friends, I hear. Now he is a marvel, the Lord Elfstone: not too soft in his speech, mind you, but he has a golden heart, as the saying is; and he has the healing hands. “The hands of the king are the hands of a healer”, I said; and that was how it was all discovered. And Mithrandir, he said to me: “Ioreth, men will long remember your words”, and—’

But Ioreth was not permitted to continue the instruction of her kinswoman from the country, for a single trumpet rang, and a dead silence followed. Then forth from the Gate went Faramir with Húrin of the Keys, and no others, save that behind them walked four men in the high helms and armour of the Citadel, and they bore a great casket of black *lebethron* bound with silver.

Faramir met Aragorn in the midst of those there assembled, and he knelt, and said: ‘The last Steward of Gondor begs leave to surrender his office.’ And he held out a white rod; but Aragorn took the rod and gave it back, saying: ‘That office is not ended, and it shall be thine and thy heirs’ as long as my line shall last. Do now thy office!’

Then Faramir stood up and spoke in a clear voice: ‘Men of Gondor, hear now the Steward of this Realm! Behold! one has come to claim the kingship again at last. Here is Aragorn son of Arathorn, chieftain of the Dúnedain of Arnor, Captain of the Host of the West, bearer of the Star<sup>382</sup> of the North, wielder of the Sword Reforged, victorious in battle, whose hands bring healing, the Elfstone, Elessar of the line of Vandalil, Isildur’s son, Elendil’s son of Númenor. Shall he be king and enter into the City and dwell there?’

And all the host and all the people cried *yea* with one voice.

And Ioreth said to her kinswoman: ‘This is just a ceremony such as we have in the City, cousin; for he has already entered, as I was telling you; and he said to me—’ And then again she was obliged to silence, for Faramir spoke again.

‘Men of Gondor, the loremasters tell that it was the custom of old that the king should receive the crown from his father ere he died; or if that might not be, that he should go alone and take it from the hands of his father in the tomb where he was laid. But since things must now be done otherwise, using the authority of the Steward, I have today brought hither from Rath Dinen the crown of Eärnur the last king, whose days passed in the time of our longfathers of old.’

Then the guards stepped forward, and Faramir opened the casket, and he held up an ancient crown. It was shaped like the helms of the Guards of the Citadel, save that it was loftier, and it was all white, and the wings at either side were wrought of pearl and silver in the likeness of the wings of a sea-bird, for it was the emblem of kings who came over the Sea; and seven gems of adamant were set in the circlet, and upon its summit was set a single jewel the light of which went up like a flame.

Then Aragorn took the crown and held it up and said:

*Et Eärello Endoreнна utúlien. Sinome maruvan ar Hildinyar tenn’ Ambar-metta!*

And those were the words that Elendil spoke when he came up out of the Sea on the wings of the wind: ‘Out of the Great Sea to Middle-earth I am come. In this place will I abide, and my heirs, unto the ending of the world.’

Then to the wonder of many Aragorn did not put the crown upon his head, but gave it back to Faramir, and said: ‘By the labour and valour of many I have come into my inheritance. In token of this I would have the Ring-bearer bring the crown to me, and let Mithrandir set it upon my head, if he will; for he has been the mover of all that has been accomplished, and this is his victory.’

Then Frodo came forward and took the crown from Faramir and bore it to Gandalf; and Aragorn knelt, and Gandalf set the White Crown upon his head, and said:

‘Now come the days of the King, and may they be blessed while the thrones of the Valar endure!’

But when Aragorn arose all that beheld him gazed in silence, for it seemed to them that he was revealed to them now for the first time. Tall as the sea-kings of old, he stood above all that were near; ancient of days he seemed and yet in the flower of manhood; and wisdom sat upon his brow, and strength and healing were in his hands, and a light was about him. And then Faramir cried:

‘Behold the King!’

And in that moment all the trumpets were blown, and the King Elessar went forth and came to the barrier, and Húrin of the Keys thrust it back; and amid the music of harp and of viol and of flute and the singing of clear voices the King passed through the flower-laden streets, and came to the Citadel, and entered in; and the banner of the Tree and the Stars was unfurled upon the topmost tower, and the reign of King Elessar began, of which many songs have told.

In his time the City was made more fair than it had ever been, even in the days of its first glory; and it was filled with trees and with fountains, and its gates were wrought of mithril and steel, and its streets were paved with white marble; and the Folk of the Mountain laboured in it, and the Folk of the Wood rejoiced to come there; and all was healed and made good, and the houses were filled with men and women and the laughter of children, and no window was blind nor any courtyard empty; and after the ending of the Third Age of the world into the new age it preserved the memory and the glory of the years that were gone.

In the days that followed his crowning the King sat on his throne in the Hall of the Kings and pronounced his judgements. And embassies came from many lands and peoples, from the East and the South, and from the borders of Mirkwood, and from Dunland in the west. And the King pardoned the Easterlings that had given themselves up, and sent them away free, and he made peace with the peoples of Harad; and the slaves of Mordor he released and gave to them all the lands about Lake Núrn to be their own. And there were brought before him many to receive his praise and reward for their valour; and last the captain of the Guard brought to him Beregon to be judged.

And the King said to Beregon: ‘Beregon, by your sword blood was spilled in the Hallows, where that is forbidden. Also you left your post without leave of Lord or of Captain. For these things, of old, death was the penalty. Now therefore I must pronounce your doom.’

‘All penalty is remitted for your valour in battle, and still more because all that you did was for the love of the Lord Faramir. Nonetheless you must leave the Guard of the Citadel, and you must go forth from the City of Minas Tirith.’

Then the blood left Beregonð’s face, and he was stricken to the heart and bowed his head. But the King said:

‘So it must be, for you are appointed to the White Company, the Guard of Faramir, Prince of Ithilien, and you shall be its captain and dwell in Emyr Arnen in honour and peace, and in the service of him for whom you risked all, to save him from death.’

And then Beregonð, perceiving the mercy and justice of the King, was glad, and kneeling kissed his hand, and departed in joy and content. And Aragorn gave to Faramir Ithilien to be his principedom, and bade him dwell in the hills of Emyr Arnen within sight of the City.

‘For,’ said he, ‘Minas Ithil in Morgul Vale shall be utterly destroyed, and though it may in time to come be made clean, no man may dwell there for many long years.’

And last of all Aragorn greeted Éomer of Rohan, and they embraced, and Aragorn said: ‘Between us there can be no word of giving or taking, nor of reward; for we are brethren. In happy hour did Eorl ride from the North, and never has any league of peoples been more blessed, so that neither has ever failed the other, nor shall fail. Now, as you know, we have laid Théoden the Renowned in a tomb in the Hallows, and there he shall lie for ever among the Kings of Gondor, if you will. Or if you desire it, we will come to Rohan and bring him back to rest with his own people.’

And Éomer answered: ‘Since the day when you rose before me out of the green grass of the downs I have loved you, and that love shall not fail. But now I must depart for a while to my own realm, where there is much to heal and set in order. But as for the Fallen, when all is made ready we will return for him; but here let him sleep a while.’

And Éowyn said to Faramir: ‘Now I must go back to my own land and look on it once again, and help my brother in his labour; but when one whom I long loved as father is laid at last to rest, I will return.’

So the glad days passed; and on the eighth day of May the Riders of Rohan made ready, and rode off by the North-way, and with them went the sons of Elrond. All the road was lined with people to do them honour and praise them, from the Gate of the City to the walls of the Pelennor. Then all others that dwelt afar went back to their homes rejoicing; but in the City there was labour of many willing hands to rebuild and renew and to remove all the scars of war and the memory of the darkness.

The hobbits still remained in Minas Tirith, with Legolas and Gimli; for Aragorn was loth for the fellowship to be dissolved. ‘At last all such things must end,’ he said, ‘but I would have you wait a little while longer: for the end of the deeds that you have shared in has not yet come. A day draws near that I have looked for in all the years of my manhood, and when it comes I would have my friends beside me.’ But of that day he would say no more.

In those days the Companions of the Ring dwelt together in a fair house with Gandalf, and they went to and fro as they wished. And Frodo said to Gandalf: ‘Do you know what this day is that Aragorn speaks of? For we are happy here, and I don’t wish to go; but the days are running away, and Bilbo is waiting; and the Shire is my home.’

‘As for Bilbo,’ said Gandalf, ‘he is waiting for the same day, and he knows what keeps you. And as for the passing of the days, it is now only May and high summer is not yet in; and though all things may seem changed, as if an age of the world had gone by, yet to the trees and the grass it is less than a year since you set out.’

‘Pippin,’ said Frodo, ‘didn’t you say that Gandalf was less close than of old? He was weary of his labours then, I think. Now he is recovering.’

And Gandalf said: ‘Many folk like to know beforehand what is to be set on the table; but those who have laboured to prepare the feast like to keep their secret; for wonder makes the words of praise louder. And Aragorn himself waits for a sign.’

There came a day when Gandalf could not be found, and the Companions wondered what was going forward. But Gandalf took Aragorn out from the City by night, and he brought him to the southern feet of Mount Mindolluin; and there they found a path made in ages past that few now dared to tread. For it led up on to the mountain to a high hallow where only the kings had been wont to go. And they went up by steep ways, until they came to a high field below the snows that clad the lofty peaks, and it looked down over the precipice that stood behind the City. And standing there they surveyed the lands, for the morning was come; and they saw the towers of the City far below them like white pencils touched by the sunlight, and all the Vale of Anduin was like a garden, and the Mountains of Shadow were veiled in a golden mist. Upon the one side their sight reached to the grey Eryn Mui, and the glint of Rauros was like a star twinkling far off; and upon the other side they saw the River like a ribbon laid down to Pelargir, and beyond that was a light on the hem of the sky that spoke of the Sea.

And Gandalf said: 'This is your realm, and the heart of the greater realm that shall be. The Third Age of the world is ended, and the new age is begun; and it is your task to order its beginning and to preserve what may be preserved. For though much has been saved, much must now pass away; and the power of the Three Rings also is ended. And all the lands that you see, and those that lie round about them, shall be dwellings of Men. For the time comes of the Dominion<sup>410</sup> of Men, and the Elder Kindred shall fade or depart.'

'I know it well, dear friend,' said Aragorn; 'but I would still have your counsel.'

'Not for long now,' said Gandalf. 'The Third Age was my age. I was the Enemy of Sauron; and my work is finished. I shall go soon. The burden must lie now upon you and your kindred.'

'But I shall die,' said Aragorn. 'For I am a mortal man, and though being what I am and of the race of the West unmingled, I shall have life far longer than other men, yet that is but a little while; and when those who are now in the wombs of women are born and have grown old, I too shall grow old. And who then shall govern Gondor and those who look to this City as to their queen, if my desire be not granted? The Tree in the Court of the Fountain is still withered and barren. When shall I see a sign that it will ever be otherwise?'

'Turn your face from the green world, and look where all seems barren and cold!' said Gandalf.

Then Aragorn turned, and there was a stony slope behind him running down from the skirts of the snow; and as he looked he was aware that alone there in the waste a growing thing stood. And he climbed to it, and saw that out of the very edge of the snow there sprang a sapling tree no more than three foot high. Already it had put forth young leaves long and shapely, dark above and silver beneath, and upon its slender crown it bore one small cluster of flowers whose white petals shone like the sunlit snow.

Then Aragorn cried: '*Yé! utíviényes!* I have found it! Lo! here is a scion of the Eldest of Trees! But how comes it here? For it is not itself yet seven years old.'

And Gandalf coming looked at it, and said: 'Verily this is a sapling of the line of Nimloth<sup>369</sup> the fair; and that was a seedling of Galathilion, and that a fruit of Telperion<sup>360</sup> of many names, Eldest of Trees. Who shall say how it comes here in the appointed hour? But this is an ancient hallow, and ere the kings failed or the Tree withered in the court, a fruit must have been set here. For it is said that, though the fruit of the Tree comes seldom to ripeness, yet the life within may then lie sleeping through many long years, and none can foretell the time in which it will awake. Remember this. For if ever a fruit ripens, it should be planted, lest the line die out of the world. Here it has lain hidden on the mountain, even as the race of Elendil lay hidden in the wastes of the North. Yet the line of Nimloth is older far than your line, King Elessar.'

Then Aragorn laid his hand gently to the sapling, and lo! it seemed to hold only lightly to the earth, and it was removed without hurt; and Aragorn bore it back to the Citadel. Then the withered tree was uprooted, but with reverence; and they did not burn it, but laid it to rest in the silence of Rath Dinen. And Aragorn planted the new tree in the court by the fountain, and swiftly and gladly it began to grow; and when the month of June entered in it was laden with blossom.

'The sign has been given,' said Aragorn, 'and the day is not far off.' And he set watchmen upon the walls.

It was the day before Midsummer when messengers came from Amon Dín to the City, and they said that there was a riding of fair folk out of the North, and they drew near now to the walls of the Pelennor. And the King said: 'At last they have come. Let all the City be made ready!'

Upon the very Eve of Midsummer, when the sky was blue as sapphire and white stars opened in the East, but the West was still golden, and the air was cool and fragrant, the riders came down the North-way to the gates of Minas Tirith. First rode Elrohir and Elladan with a banner of silver, and then came Glorfindel and Erebor and all the household of Rivendell, and after them came the Lady Galadriel and Celeborn, Lord of Lothlórien, riding upon white steeds and with them many fair folk of their land, grey-cloaked with white gems in their hair; and last came Master Elrond, mighty among Elves and Men, bearing the sceptre<sup>382</sup> of Annúminas, and beside him upon a grey palfrey rode Arwen his daughter, Evenstar of her people.

And Frodo when he saw her come glimmering in the evening, with stars on her brow and a sweet fragrance about her, was moved with great wonder, and he said to Gandalf: 'At last I understand why we have waited! This is the ending. Now not day only shall be beloved, but night too shall be beautiful and blessed and all its fear pass away!'

Then the King welcomed his guests, and they alighted; and Elrond surrendered the sceptre, and laid the hand of his daughter in the hand of the King, and together they went up into the High City, and all the stars flowered in the sky. And Aragorn the King Elessar wedded Arwen Undómiel in the City of the Kings upon the day of Midsummer, and the tale of their long waiting and labours was come to fulfilment.



## Chapter 6: Many Partings

When the days of rejoicing were over at last the Companions thought of returning to their own homes. And Frodo went to the King as he was sitting with the Queen Arwen by the fountain, and she sang a song of Valinor, while the Tree grew and blossomed. They welcomed Frodo and rose to greet him; and Aragorn said:

‘I know what you have come to say, Frodo: you wish to return to your own home. Well, dearest friend, the tree grows best in the land of its sires; but for you in all the lands of the West there will ever be a welcome. And though your people have had little fame in the legends of the great, they will now have more renown than many wide realms that are no more.’

‘It is true that I wish to go back to the Shire,’ said Frodo. ‘But first I must go to Rivendell. For if there could be anything wanting in a time so blessed, I missed Bilbo; and I was grieved when among all the household of Elrond I saw that he was not come.’

‘Do you wonder at that, Ring-bearer?’ said Arwen. ‘For you know the power of that thing which is now destroyed; and all that was done by that power is now passing away. But your kinsman possessed this thing longer than you. He is ancient in years now, according to his kind; and he awaits you, for he will not again make any long journey save one.’

‘Then I beg leave to depart soon,’ said Frodo.

‘In seven days we will go,’ said Aragorn. ‘For we shall ride with you far on the road, even as far as the country of Rohan. In three days now Éomer will return hither to bear Théoden back to rest in the Mark, and we shall ride with him to honour the fallen. But now before you go I will confirm the words that Faramir spoke to you, and you are made free for ever of the realm of Gondor; and all your companions likewise. And if there were any gifts that I could give to match with your deeds you should have them; but whatever you desire you shall take with you, and you shall ride in honour and arrayed as princes of the land.’

But the Queen Arwen said: ‘A gift I will give you. For I am the daughter of Elrond. I shall not<sup>367</sup> go with him now when he departs to the Havens; for mine is the choice of Lúthien, and as she so have I chosen, both the sweet and the bitter. But in my stead you shall go, Ring-bearer, when the time comes, and if you then desire it. If your hurts grieve you still and the memory of your burden is heavy, then you may pass into the West, until all your wounds and weariness are healed. But wear this now in memory of Elfstone and Evenstar with whom your life has been woven!’

And she took a white gem like a star that lay upon her breast hanging upon a silver chain, and she set the chain about Frodo’s neck. ‘When the memory of the fear and the darkness troubles you,’ she said, ‘this will bring you aid.’

In three days, as the King had said, Éomer of Rohan came riding to the City, and with him came an *éored* of the fairest knights of the Mark. He was welcomed; and when they sat all at table in Merethrond, the Great Hall of Feasts, he beheld the beauty of the ladies that he saw and was filled with great wonder. And before he went to his rest he sent for Gimli the Dwarf, and he said to him: ‘Gimli Glóin’s son, have you your axe ready?’

‘Nay, lord,’ said Gimli, ‘but I can speedily fetch it, if there be need.’

‘You shall judge,’ said Éomer. ‘For there are certain rash words concerning the Lady in the Golden Wood that lie still between us. And now I have seen her with my eyes.’

‘Well, lord,’ said Gimli, ‘and what say you now?’

‘Alas!’ said Éomer. ‘I will not say that she is the fairest lady that lives.’

‘Then I must go for my axe,’ said Gimli.

‘But first I will plead this excuse,’ said Éomer. ‘Had I seen her in other company, I would have said all that you could wish. But now I will put Queen Arwen Evenstar first, and I am ready to do battle on my own part with any who deny me. Shall I call for my sword?’

Then Gimli bowed low. ‘Nay, you are excused for my part, lord,’ he said. ‘You have chosen the Evening; but my love is given to the Morning. And my heart forebodes that soon it will pass away for ever.’

At last the day of departure came, and a great and fair company made ready to ride north from the City. Then the kings of Gondor and Rohan went to the Hallows and they came to the tombs in Rath Dínen, and they bore away King Théoden upon a golden bier, and passed through the City in silence. Then they laid the bier upon a great wain with Riders of Rohan all about it and his banner borne before; and Merry being Théoden’s esquire rode upon the wain and kept the arms of the king.

For the other Companions steeds were furnished according to their stature; and Frodo and Samwise rode at Aragorn’s side, and Gandalf rode upon Shadowfax, and Pippin rode with the knights of Gondor; and Legolas and Gimli as ever rode together upon Arod.

In that riding went also Queen Arwen, and Celeborn and Galadriel with their folk, and Elrond and his sons; and the princes of Dol Amroth and of Ithilien, and many captains and knights. Never had any king of the Mark such company upon the road as went with Théoden Thengel’s son to the land of his home.

Without haste and at peace they passed into Anórien, and they came to the Grey Wood under Amon Dîn; and there they heard a sound as of drums beating in the hills, though no living thing could be seen. Then Aragorn let the trumpets be blown; and heralds cried:

‘Behold, the King Elessar is come! The Forest of Drúadan he gives to Ghân-buri-Ghân and to his folk, to be their own for ever; and hereafter let no man enter it without their leave!’

Then the drums rolled loudly, and were silent.

At length after fifteen days of journey the wain of King Théoden passed through the green fields of Rohan and came to Edoras; and there they all rested. The Golden Hall was arrayed with fair hangings and it was filled with light, and there was held the highest feast that it had known since the days of its building. For after three days the Men of the Mark prepared the funeral of Théoden; and he was laid in a house of stone with his arms and many other fair things that he had possessed, and over him was raised a great mound, covered with green turves of grass and of white evermind. And now there were eight mounds on the east-side of the Barrowfield.

Then the Riders of the King’s House upon white horses rode round about the barrow and sang together a song of Théoden Thengel’s son that Gléowine his minstrel made, and he made no other song after. The slow voices of the Riders stirred the hearts even of those who did not know the speech of that people; but the words of the song brought a light to the eyes of the folk of the Mark as they heard again afar the thunder of the hooves of the North and the voice of Eorl crying above the battle upon the Field of Celebrant; and the tale of the kings rolled on, and the horn of Helm was loud in the mountains, until the Darkness came and King Théoden arose and rode through the Shadow to the fire, and died in splendour, even as the Sun, returning beyond hope, gleamed upon Mindolluin in the morning.

*Out of doubt, out of dark, to the day’s rising  
he rode singing in the sun, sword unsheathing.  
Hope he rekindled, and in hope ended;  
over death, over dread, over doom lifted  
out of loss, out of life, unto long glory.*

But Merry stood at the foot of the green mound, and he wept, and when the song was ended he arose and cried:

‘Théoden King, Théoden King! Farewell! As a father you were to me, for a little while. Farewell!’

When the burial was over and the weeping of women was stilled, and Théoden was left at last alone in his barrow, then folk gathered to the Golden Hall for the great feast and put away sorrow; for Théoden had lived to



full years and ended in honour no less than the greatest of his sires. And when the time came that in the custom of the Mark they should drink to the memory of the kings, Éowyn Lady of Rohan came forth, golden as the sun and white as snow, and she bore a filled cup to Éomer.

Then a minstrel and loremaster stood up and named all the names of the Lords of the Mark in their order: Eorl the Young; and Brego builder of the Hall; and Aldor brother of Baldor the hapless; and Fréa, and Fréawine, and Goldwine, and Déor, and Gram; and Helm who lay hid in Helm's Deep when the Mark was overrun; and so ended the nine mounds of the west-side, for in that time the line was broken, and after came the mounds of the east-side: Fréaláf, Helm's sister-son, and Léofa, and Walda, and Folca, and Folcwine, and Fengel, and Thengel, and Théoden the latest. And when Théoden was named Éomer drained the cup. Then Éowyn bade those that served to fill the cups, and all there assembled rose and drank to the new king, crying: 'Hail, Éomer, King of the Mark!'

At the last when the feast drew to an end Éomer arose and said: 'Now this is the funeral feast of Théoden the King; but I will speak ere we go of tidings of joy, for he would not grudge that I should do so, since he was ever a father to Éowyn my sister. Hear then all my guests, fair folk of many realms, such as have never before been gathered in this hall! Faramir, Steward of Gondor, and Prince of Ithilien, asks that Éowyn Lady of Rohan should be his wife, and she grants it full willing. Therefore they shall be trothplighted before you all.'

And Faramir and Éowyn stood forth and set hand in hand; and all there drank to them and were glad. 'Thus,' said Éomer, 'is the friendship of the Mark and of Gondor bound with a new bond, and the more do I rejoice.'

'No niggard are you, Éomer,' said Aragorn, 'to give thus to Gondor the fairest thing in your realm!'

Then Éowyn looked in the eyes of Aragorn, and she said: 'Wish me joy, my liege-lord and healer!'

And he answered: 'I have wished thee joy ever since first I saw thee. It heals my heart to see thee now in bliss.'

When the feast was over, those who were to go took leave of King Éomer. Aragorn and his knights, and the people of Lórien and of Rivendell, made ready to ride; but Faramir and Imrahil remained at Edoras; and Arwen Evenstar remained also, and she said farewell to her brethren. None saw her last meeting<sup>367</sup> with Elrond her father, for they went up into the hills and there spoke long together, and bitter was their parting that should endure beyond the ends of the world.

At the last before the guests set out Éomer and Éowyn came to Merry, and they said: 'Farewell now, Meriadoc of the Shire and Holdwine of the Mark! Ride to good fortune, and ride back soon to our welcome!'

And Éomer said: 'Kings of old would have laden you with gifts that a wain could not bear for your deeds upon the fields of Mundburg; and yet you will take naught, you say, but the arms that were given to you. This I suffer, for indeed I have no gift that is worthy; but my sister begs you to receive this small thing, as a memorial of Dernhelm and of the horns of the Mark at the coming of the morning.'

Then Éowyn gave to Merry an ancient horn, small but cunningly wrought all of fair silver with a baldric of green; and wrights had engraven upon it swift horsemen riding in a line that wound about it from the tip to the mouth; and there were set runes of great virtue.

'This is an heirloom of our house,' said Éowyn. 'It was made by the Dwarves, and came from the hoard of Scatha the Worm. Eorl the Young brought it from the North. He that blows it at need shall set fear in the hearts of his enemies and joy in the hearts of his friends, and they shall hear him and come to him.'

Then Merry took the horn, for it could not be refused, and he kissed Éowyn's hand; and they embraced him, and so they parted for that time.

Now the guests were ready, and they drank the stirrup-cup, and with great praise and friendship they departed, and came at length to Helm's Deep, and there they rested two days. Then Legolas repaid his promise to Gimli and went with him to the Glittering Caves; and when they returned he was silent, and would say only that Gimli alone could find fit words to speak of them. 'And never before has a Dwarf claimed a victory over an Elf in a contest of words,' said he. 'Now therefore let us go to Fangorn and set the score right!'

From Deeping-coomb they rode to Isengard, and saw how the Ents had busied themselves. All the stone-circle had been thrown down and removed, and the land within was made into a garden filled with orchards and trees, and a stream ran through it; but in the midst of all there was a lake of clear water, and out of it the Tower of Orthanc rose still, tall and impregnable, and its black rock was mirrored in the pool.

For a while the travellers sat where once the old gates of Isengard had stood, and there were now two tall trees like sentinels at the beginning of a green-bordered path that ran towards Orthanc; and they looked in wonder at the work that had been done, but no living thing could they see far or near. But presently they heard a voice calling *hoom-hom, hoom-hom*; and there came Treebeard striding down the path to greet them with Quickbeam at his side.

‘Welcome to the Treearth of Orthanc!’ he said. ‘I knew that you were coming, but I was at work up the valley; there is much still to be done. But you have not been idle either away in the south and the east, I hear; and all that I hear is good, very good.’ Then Treebeard praised all their deeds, of which he seemed to have full knowledge; and at last he stopped and looked long at Gandalf.

‘Well, come now!’ he said. ‘You have proved mightiest, and all your labours have gone well. Where now would you be going? And why do you come here?’

‘To see how your work goes, my friend,’ said Gandalf, ‘and to thank you for your aid in all that has been achieved.’

‘*Hoom*, well, that is fair enough,’ said Treebeard; ‘for to be sure Ents have played their part. And not only in dealing with that, *hoom*, that accursed tree-slayer that dwelt here. For there was a great inrush of those, *burárum*, those evileyed-blackhanded-bowlegged-flint-hearted-clawfingered-foulbellied-bloodthirsty, *morimaite-sincachonda*, *hoom*, well, since you are hasty folk and their full name is as long as years of torment, those vermin of orcs; and they came over the River and down from the North and all round the wood of Laurelindórenan, which they could not get into, thanks to the Great ones who are here.’ He bowed to the Lord and Lady of Lórien.

‘And these same foul creatures were more than surprised to meet us out on the Wold, for they had not heard of us before; though that might be said also of better folk. And not many will remember us, for not many escaped us alive, and the River had most of those. But it was well for you, for if they had not met us, then the king of the grassland would not have ridden far, and if he had there would have been no home to return to.’

‘We know it well,’ said Aragorn, ‘and never shall it be forgotten in Minas Tirith or in Edoras.’

‘*Never* is too long a word even for me,’ said Treebeard. ‘Not while your kingdoms last, you mean; but they will have to last long indeed to seem long to Ents.’

‘The New Age begins,’ said Gandalf, ‘and in this age it may well prove that the kingdoms of Men shall outlast you, Fangorn my friend. But now come tell me: what of the task that I set you? How is Saruman? Is he not weary of Orthanc yet? For I do not suppose that he will think you have improved the view from his windows.’

Treebeard gave Gandalf a long look, almost a cunning look, Merry thought. ‘Ah!’ he said. ‘I thought you would come to that. Weary of Orthanc? Very weary at last; but not so weary of his tower as he was weary of my voice. *Hoom!* I gave him some long tales, or at least what might be thought long in your speech.’

‘Then why did he stay to listen? Did you go into Orthanc?’ asked Gandalf.

‘*Hoom*, no, not into Orthanc!’ said Treebeard. ‘But he came to his window and listened, because he could not get news in any other way, and though he hated the news, he was greedy to have it; and I saw that he heard it all. But I added a great many things to the news that it was good for him to think of. He grew very weary. He always was hasty. That was his ruin.’

‘I observe, my good Fangorn,’ said Gandalf, ‘that with great care you say *dwelt*, *was*, *grew*. What about *is*? Is he dead?’

‘No, not dead, so far as I know,’ said Treebeard. ‘But he is gone. Yes, he is gone seven days. I let him go. There was little left of him when he crawled out, and as for that worm-creature of his, he was like a pale shadow. Now

do not tell me, Gandalf, that I promised to keep him safe; for I know it. But things have changed since then. And I kept him until he was safe, safe from doing any more harm. You should know that above all I hate the caging of live things, and I will not keep even such creatures as these caged beyond great need. A snake without fangs may crawl where he will.'

'You may be right,' said Gandalf; 'but this snake had still one tooth left, I think. He had the poison of his voice, and I guess that he persuaded you, even you Treebeard, knowing the soft spot in your heart. Well, he is gone, and there is no more to be said. But the Tower of Orthanc now goes back to the King, to whom it belongs. Though maybe he will not need it.'

'That will be seen later,' said Aragorn. 'But I will give to Ents all this valley to do with as they will, so long as they keep a watch upon Orthanc and see that none enter it without my leave.'

'It is locked,' said Treebeard. 'I made Saruman lock it and give me the keys. Quickbeam has them.'

Quickbeam bowed like a tree bending in the wind and handed to Aragorn two great black keys of intricate shape, joined by a ring of steel. 'Now I thank you once more,' said Aragorn, 'and I bid you farewell. May your forest grow again in peace. When this valley is filled there is room and to spare west of the mountains, where once you walked long ago.'

Treebeard's face became sad. 'Forests may grow,' he said. 'Woods may spread. But not Ents. There are no Entings.'

'Yet maybe there is now more hope in your search,' said Aragorn. 'Lands will lie open to you eastward that have long been closed.'

But Treebeard shook his head and said: 'It is far to go. And there are too many Men there in these days. But I am forgetting my manners! Will you stay here and rest a while? And maybe there are some that would be pleased to pass through Fangorn Forest and so shorten their road home?' He looked at Celeborn and Galadriel.

But all save Legolas said that they must now take their leave and depart either south or west. 'Come, Gimli!' said Legolas. 'Now by Fangorn's leave I will visit the deep places of the Entwood and see such trees as are nowhere else to be found in Middle-earth. You shall come with me and keep your word; and thus we will journey on together to our own lands in Mirkwood and beyond.' To this Gimli agreed, though with no great delight, it seemed.

'Here then at last comes the ending of the Fellowship of the Ring,' said Aragorn. 'Yet I hope that ere long you will return to my land with the help that you promised.'

'We will come, if our own lords allow it,' said Gimli. 'Well, farewell, my hobbits! You should come safe to your own homes now, and I shall not be kept awake for fear of your peril. We will send word when we may, and some of us may yet meet at times; but I fear that we shall not all be gathered together ever again.'

Then Treebeard said farewell to each of them in turn, and he bowed three times slowly and with great reverence to Celeborn and Galadriel. 'It is long, long since we met by stock or by stone, *A vanimar, vanimálion nostari!*' he said. 'It is sad that we should meet only thus at the ending. For the world is changing: I feel it in the water, I feel it in the earth, and I smell it in the air. I do not think we shall meet again.'

And Celeborn said: 'I do not know, Eldest.' But Galadriel said: 'Not in Middle-earth, nor until the lands that lie under the wave are lifted up again. Then in the willow-meads of Tasarinan we may meet in the Spring. Farewell!'

Last of all Merry and Pippin said good-bye to the old Ent, and he grew gayer as he looked at them. 'Well, my merry folk,' he said, 'will you drink another draught with me before you go?'

'Indeed we will,' they said, and he took them aside into the shade of one of the trees, and there they saw that a great stone jar had been set. And Treebeard filled three bowls, and they drank; and they saw his strange eyes looking at them over the rim of his bowl. 'Take care, take care!' he said. 'For you have already grown since I saw you last.' And they laughed and drained their bowls.

‘Well, good-bye!’ he said. ‘And don’t forget that if you hear any news of the Entwives in your land, you will send word to me.’ Then he waved his great hands to all the company and went off into the trees.

The travellers now rode with more speed, and they made their way towards the Gap of Rohan; and Aragorn took leave of them at last close to that very place where Pippin had looked into the Stone of Orthanc. The Hobbits were grieved at this parting; for Aragorn had never failed them and he had been their guide through many perils.

‘I wish we could have a Stone that we could see all our friends in,’ said Pippin, ‘and that we could speak to them from far away!’

‘Only one now remains that you could use,’ answered Aragorn; ‘for you would not wish to see what the Stone of Minas Tirith would show you. But the Palantir of Orthanc the King will keep, to see what is passing in his realm, and what his servants are doing. For do not forget, Peregrin Took, that you are a knight of Gondor, and I do not release you from your service. You are going now on leave, but I may recall you. And remember, dear friends of the Shire, that my realm lies also in the North, and I shall come there one day.’

Then Aragorn took leave of Celeborn and Galadriel; and the Lady said to him: ‘Elfstone, through darkness you have come to your hope, and have now all your desire. Use well the days!’

But Celeborn said: ‘Kinsman, farewell! May your doom be other than mine, and your treasure remain with you to the end!’

With that they parted, and it was then the time of sunset; and when after a while they turned and looked back, they saw the King of the West sitting upon his horse with his knights about him; and the falling Sun shone upon them and made all their harness to gleam like red gold, and the white mantle of Aragorn was turned to a flame. Then Aragorn took the green stone and held it up, and there came a green fire from his hand.

Soon the dwindling company, following the Isen, turned west and rode through the Gap into the waste lands beyond, and then they turned northwards, and passed over the borders of Dunland. The Dunlendings fled and hid themselves, for they were afraid of Elvish folk, though few indeed ever came to their country; but the travellers did not heed them, for they were still a great company and were well provided with all that they needed; and they went on their way at their leisure, setting up their tents when they would.

On the sixth day since their parting from the King they journeyed through a wood climbing down from the hills at the feet of the Misty Mountains that now marched on their right hand. As they came out again into the open country at sundown they overtook an old man leaning on a staff, and he was clothed in rags of grey or dirty white, and at his heels went another beggar, slouching and whining.

‘Well Saruman!’ said Gandalf. ‘Where are you going?’

‘What is that to you?’ he answered. ‘Will you still order my goings, and are you not content with my ruin?’

‘You know the answers,’ said Gandalf: ‘no and no. But in any case the time of my labours now draws to an end. The King has taken on the burden. If you had waited at Orthanc, you would have seen him, and he would have shown you wisdom and mercy.’

‘Then all the more reason to have left sooner,’ said Saruman; ‘for I desire neither of him. Indeed if you wish for an answer to your first question, I am seeking a way out of his realm.’

‘Then once more you are going the wrong way,’ said Gandalf, ‘and I see no hope in your journey. But will you scorn our help? For we offer it to you.’

‘To me?’ said Saruman. ‘Nay, pray do not smile at me! I prefer your frowns. And as for the Lady here, I do not trust her: she always hated me, and schemed for your part. I do not doubt that she has brought you this way to have the pleasure of gloating over my poverty. Had I been warned of your pursuit, I would have denied you the pleasure.’

‘Saruman,’ said Galadriel, ‘we have other errands and other cares that seem to us more urgent than hunting for you. Say rather that you are overtaken by good fortune; for now you have a last chance.’

‘If it be truly the last, I am glad,’ said Saruman; ‘for I shall be spared the trouble of refusing it again. All my hopes are ruined, but I would not share yours. If you have any.’

For a moment his eyes kindled. ‘Go!’ he said. ‘I did not spend long study on these matters for naught. You have doomed yourselves, and you know it. And it will afford me some comfort as I wander to think that you pulled down your own house when you destroyed mine. And now, what ship will bear you back across so wide a sea?’ he mocked. ‘It will be a grey ship, and full of ghosts.’ He laughed, but his voice was cracked and hideous.

‘Get up, you idiot!’ he shouted to the other beggar, who had sat down on the ground; and he struck him with his staff. ‘Turn about! If these fine folk are going our way, then we will take another. Get on, or I’ll give you no crust for your supper!’

The beggar turned and slouched past whimpering: ‘Poor old Gríma! Poor old Gríma! Always beaten and cursed. How I hate him! I wish I could leave him!’

‘Then leave him!’ said Gandalf.

But Wormtongue only shot a glance of his bleared eyes full of terror at Gandalf, and then shuffled quickly past behind Saruman. As the wretched pair passed by the company they came to the hobbits, and Saruman stopped and stared at them; but they looked at him with pity.

‘So you have come to gloat too, have you, my urchins?’ he said. ‘You don’t care what a beggar lacks, do you? For you have all you want, food and fine clothes, and the best weed for your pipes. Oh yes, I know! I know where it comes from. You would not give a pipeful to a beggar, would you?’

‘I would, if I had any,’ said Frodo.

‘You can have what I have got left,’ said Merry, ‘if you will wait a moment.’ He got down and searched in the bag at his saddle. Then he handed to Saruman a leather pouch. ‘Take what there is,’ he said. ‘You are welcome to it; it came from the flotsam of Isengard.’

‘Mine, mine, yes and dearly bought!’ cried Saruman, clutching at the pouch. ‘This is only a repayment in token; for you took more, I’ll be bound. Still, a beggar must be grateful, if a thief returns him even a morsel of his own. Well, it will serve you right when you come home, if you find things less good in the Southfarthing than you would like. Long may your land be short of leaf!’

‘Thank you!’ said Merry. ‘In that case I will have my pouch back, which is not yours and has journeyed far with me. Wrap the weed in a rag of your own.’

‘One thief deserves another,’ said Saruman, and turned his back on Merry, and kicked Wormtongue, and went away towards the wood.

‘Well, I like that!’ said Pippin. ‘Thief indeed! What of our claim for waylaying, wounding, and orc-dragging us through Rohan?’

‘Ah!’ said Sam. ‘And *bought* he said. How, I wonder? And I didn’t like the sound of what he said about the Southfarthing. It’s time we got back.’

‘I’m sure it is,’ said Frodo. ‘But we can’t go any quicker, if we are to see Bilbo. I am going to Rivendell first, whatever happens.’

‘Yes, I think you had better do that,’ said Gandalf. ‘But alas for Saruman! I fear nothing more can be made of him. He has withered altogether. All the same, I am not sure that Treebeard is right: I fancy he could do some mischief still in a small mean way.’

Next day they went on into northern Dunland, where no men now dwelt, though it was a green and pleasant country. September came in with golden days and silver nights, and they rode at ease until they reached the Swanfleet river, and found the old ford, east of the falls where it went down suddenly into the lowlands. Far to the west in a haze lay the meres and eyots through which it wound its way to the Greyflood: there countless swans housed in a land of reeds.

So they passed into Eregion, and at last a fair morning dawned, shimmering above gleaming mists; and looking from their camp on a low hill the travellers saw away in the east the Sun catching three peaks that thrust up into the sky through floating clouds: Caradhras, Celebdil, and Fanuidhol. They were near to the Gates of Moria.

Here now for seven days they tarried, for the time was at hand for another parting which they were loth to make. Soon Celeborn and Galadriel and their folk would turn eastward, and so pass by the Redhorn Gate and down the Dimrill Stair to the Silverlode and to their own country. They had journeyed thus far by the west-ways, for they had much to speak of with Elrond and with Gandalf, and here they lingered still in converse with their friends. Often long after the hobbits were wrapped in sleep they would sit together under the stars, recalling the ages that were gone and all their joys and labours in the world, or holding council, concerning the days to come. If any wanderer had chanced to pass, little would he have seen or heard, and it would have seemed to him only that he saw grey figures, carved in stone, memorials of forgotten things now lost in unpeopled lands. For they did not move or speak with mouth, looking from mind to mind; and only their shining eyes stirred and kindled as their thoughts went to and fro.

But at length all was said, and they parted again for a while, until it was time for the Three Rings to pass away. Quickly fading into the stones and the shadows the grey-cloaked people of Lórien rode towards the mountains; and those who were going to Rivendell sat on the hill and watched, until there came out of the gathering mist a flash; and then they saw no more. Frodo knew that Galadriel had held aloft her ring in token of farewell.

Sam turned away and sighed: 'I wish I was going back to Lórien!'

At last one evening they came over the high moors, suddenly as to travellers it always seemed, to the brink of the deep valley of Rivendell and saw far below the lamps shining in Elrond's house. And they went down and crossed the bridge and came to the doors, and all the house was filled with light and song for joy at Elrond's homecoming.

First of all, before they had eaten or washed or even shed their cloaks, the hobbits went in search of Bilbo. They found him all alone in his little room. It was littered with papers and pens and pencils; but Bilbo was sitting in a chair before a small bright fire. He looked very old, but peaceful, and sleepy.

He opened his eyes and looked up as they came in. 'Hullo, hullo!' he said. 'So you've come back? And tomorrow's my birthday, too. How clever of you! Do you know, I shall be one hundred and twenty-nine? And in one year more, if I am spared, I shall equal the Old Took. I should like to beat him; but we shall see.'

After the celebration of Bilbo's birthday the four hobbits stayed in Rivendell for some days, and they sat much with their old friend, who spent most of his time now in his room, except at meals. For these he was still very punctual as a rule, and he seldom failed to wake up in time for them. Sitting round the fire they told him in turn all that they could remember of their journeys and adventures. At first he pretended to take some notes; but he often fell asleep; and when he woke he would say: 'How splendid! How wonderful! But where were we?' Then they went on with the story from the point where he had begun to nod.

The only part that seemed really to rouse him and hold his attention was the account of the crowning and marriage of Aragorn. 'I was invited to the wedding, of course,' he said. 'And I have waited for it long enough. But somehow, when it came to it, I found I had so much to do here; and packing is such a bother.'

When nearly a fortnight had passed Frodo looked out of his window and saw that there had been a frost in the night, and the cobwebs were like white nets. Then suddenly he knew that he must go, and say good-bye to Bilbo. The weather was still calm and fair, after one of the most lovely summers that people could remember; but October had come, and it must break soon and begin to rain and blow again. And there was still a very long way to go. Yet it was not really the thought of the weather that stirred him. He had a feeling that it was time he went back to the Shire. Sam shared it. Only the night before he had said:

'Well, Mr. Frodo, we've been far and seen a deal, and yet I don't think we've found a better place than this. There's something of everything here, if you understand me: the Shire and the Golden Wood and Gondor and kings' houses and inns and meadows and mountains all mixed. And yet, somehow, I feel we ought to be going soon. I'm worried about my gaffer, to tell you the truth.'

‘Yes, something of everything, Sam, except the Sea,’ Frodo had answered; and he repeated it now to himself: ‘Except the Sea.’

That day Frodo spoke to Elrond, and it was agreed that they should leave the next morning. To their delight Gandalf said: ‘I think I shall come too. At least as far as Bree. I want to see Butterbur.’

In the evening they went to say good-bye to Bilbo. ‘Well, if you must go, you must,’ he said. ‘I am sorry. I shall miss you. It is nice just to know that you are about the place. But I am getting very sleepy.’ Then he gave Frodo his mithril-coat and Sting, forgetting that he had already done so; and he gave him also three books of lore that he had made at various times, written in his spidery hand, and labelled on their red backs: *Translations from the Elvish*, by B.B.

To Sam he gave a little bag of gold. ‘Almost the last drop of the Smaug vintage,’ he said. ‘May come in useful, if you think of getting married, Sam.’ Sam blushed.

‘I have nothing much to give to you young fellows,’ he said to Merry and Pippin, ‘except good advice.’ And when he had given them a fair sample of this, he added a last item in Shire-fashion: ‘Don’t let your heads get too big for your hats! But if you don’t finish growing up soon, you are going to find hats and clothes expensive.’

‘But if you want to beat the Old Took,’ said Pippin, ‘I don’t see why we shouldn’t try and beat the Bullroarer.’

Bilbo laughed, and he produced out of a pocket two beautiful pipes with pearl mouth-pieces and bound with fine-wrought silver. ‘Think of me when you smoke them!’ he said. ‘The Elves made them for me, but I don’t smoke now.’ And then suddenly he nodded and went to sleep for a little; and when he woke up again he said: ‘Now where were we? Yes, of course, giving presents. Which reminds me: what’s become of my ring, Frodo, that you took away?’

‘I have lost it, Bilbo dear,’ said Frodo. ‘I got rid of it, you know.’

‘What a pity!’ said Bilbo. ‘I should have liked to see it again. But no, how silly of me! That’s what you went for, wasn’t it: to get rid of it? But it is all so confusing, for such a lot of other things seem to have got mixed up with it: Aragorn’s affairs, and the White Council, and Gondor, and the Horsemen, and Southrons, and oliphaunts—did you really see one, Sam?—and caves and towers and golden trees, and goodness knows what besides.

‘I evidently came back by much too straight a road from my trip. I think Gandalf might have shown me round a bit. But then the auction would have been over before I got back, and I should have had even more trouble than I did. Anyway it’s too late now; and really I think it’s much more comfortable to sit here and hear about it all. The fire’s very cosy here, and the food’s *very* good, and there are Elves when you want them. What more could one want?

*The Road goes ever on and on  
Out from the door where it began.  
Now far ahead the Road has gone,  
Let others follow it who can!  
Let them a journey new begin,  
But I at last with weary feet  
Will turn towards the lighted inn,  
My evening-rest and sleep to meet.’*

And as Bilbo murmured the last words his head dropped on his chest and he slept soundly.

The evening deepened in the room, and the firelight burned brighter; and they looked at Bilbo as he slept and saw that his face was smiling. For some time they sat in silence; and then Sam looking round at the room and the shadows flickering on the walls, said softly:

‘I don’t think, Mr. Frodo, that he’s done much writing while we’ve been away. He won’t ever write our story now.’

At that Bilbo opened an eye, almost as if he had heard. Then he roused himself. 'You see, I am getting so sleepy,' he said. 'And when I have time to write, I only really like writing poetry. I wonder, Frodo my dear fellow, if you would very much mind tidying things up a bit before you go? Collect all my notes and papers, and my diary too, and take them with you, if you will. You see, I haven't much time for the selection and the arrangement and all that. Get Sam to help, and when you've knocked things into shape, come back, and I'll run over it. I won't be too critical.'

'Of course I'll do it!' said Frodo. 'And of course I'll come back soon: it won't be dangerous any more. There is a real king now, and he will soon put the roads in order.'

'Thank you, my dear fellow!' said Bilbo. 'That really is a very great relief to my mind.' And with that he fell asleep again.

The next day Gandalf and the hobbits took leave of Bilbo in his room, for it was cold out of doors; and then they said farewell to Elrond and all his household.

As Frodo stood upon the threshold, Elrond wished him a fair journey, and blessed him, and he said:

'I think, Frodo, that maybe you will not need to come back, unless you come very soon. For about this time of the year, when the leaves are gold before they fall, look for Bilbo in the woods of the Shire. I shall be with him.'

These words no-one else heard, and Frodo kept them to himself.





## Chapter 7: Homeward Bound

At last the hobbits had their faces turned towards home. They were eager now to see the Shire again; but at first they rode only slowly, for Frodo had been ill at ease. When they came to the Ford of Bruinen, he had halted, and seemed loth to ride into the stream; and they noted that for a while his eyes appeared not to see them or things about him. All that day he was silent. It was the sixth of October.

‘Are you in pain, Frodo?’ said Gandalf quietly as he rode by Frodo’s side.

‘Well, yes I am,’ said Frodo. ‘It is my shoulder. The wound aches, and the memory of darkness is heavy on me. It was a year ago today.’

‘Alas! there are some wounds that cannot be wholly cured,’ said Gandalf.

‘I fear it may be so with mine,’ said Frodo. ‘There is no real going back. Though I may come to the Shire, it will not seem the same; for I shall not be the same. I am wounded with knife, sting, and tooth, and a long burden. Where shall I find rest?’

Gandalf did not answer.

By the end of the next day the pain and unease had passed, and Frodo was merry again, as merry as if he did not remember the blackness of the day before. After that the journey went well, and the days went quickly by; for they rode at leisure, and often they lingered in the fair woodlands where the leaves were red and yellow in the autumn sun. At length they came to Weathertop; and it was then drawing towards evening and the shadow of the hill lay dark on the road. Then Frodo begged them to hasten, and he would not look towards the hill, but rode through its shadow with head bowed and cloak drawn close about him. That night the weather changed, and a wind came from the West laden with rain, and it blew loud and chill, and the yellow leaves whirled like birds in the air. When they came to the Chetwood already the boughs were almost bare, and a great curtain of rain veiled Bree-hill from their sight.

So it was that near the end of a wild and wet evening in the last days of October the five travellers rode up the climbing road and came to the South-gate of Bree. It was locked fast; and the rain blew in their faces, and in the darkening sky low clouds went hurrying by, and their hearts sank a little, for they had expected more welcome.

When they had called many times, at last the Gate-keeper came out, and they saw that he carried a great cudgel. He looked at them with fear and suspicion; but when he saw that Gandalf was there, and that his companions were hobbits, in spite of their strange gear, then he brightened and wished them welcome.

‘Come in!’ he said, unlocking the gate. ‘We won’t stay for news out here in the cold and the wet, a ruffianly evening. But old Barley will no doubt give you a welcome at *The Pony*, and there you’ll hear all there is to hear.’

‘And there you’ll hear later all that we say, and more,’ laughed Gandalf. ‘How is Harry?’

The Gate-keeper scowled. ‘Gone,’ he said. ‘But you’d best ask Barliman. Good evening!’

‘Good evening to you!’ they said, and passed through; and then they noticed that behind the hedge at the road-side a long low hut had been built, and a number of men had come out and were staring at them over the fence. When they came to Bill Ferny’s house they saw that the hedge there was tattered and unkempt, and the windows were all boarded up.

‘Do you think you killed him with that apple, Sam?’ said Pippin.

‘I’m not so hopeful, Mr. Pippin,’ said Sam. ‘But I’d like to know what became of that poor pony. He’s been on my mind many a time, and the wolves howling and all.’

At last they came to *The Prancing Pony*, and that at least looked outwardly unchanged; and there were lights behind the red curtains in the lower windows. They rang the bell, and Nob came to the door, and opened it a crack and peeped through; and when he saw them standing under the lamp he gave a cry of surprise.

‘Mr. Butterbur! Master!’ he shouted. ‘They’ve come back!’

‘Oh have they? I’ll learn them,’ came Butterbur’s voice, and out he came with a rush, and he had a club in his hand. But when he saw who they were he stopped short, and the black scowl on his face changed to wonder and delight.

‘Nob, you woolly-pated ninny!’ he cried. ‘Can’t you give old friends their names? You shouldn’t go scaring me like that, with times as they are. Well, well! And where have you come from? I never expected to see any of you folk again, and that’s a fact: going off into the Wild with that Strider, and all those Black Men about. But I’m right glad to see you, and none more than Gandalf. Come in! Come in! The same rooms as before? They’re free. Indeed most rooms are empty these days, as I’ll not hide from you, for you’ll find it out soon enough. And I’ll see what can be done about supper, as soon as may be; but I’m short-handed at present. Hey, Nob you slowcoach! Tell Bob! Ah, but there I’m forgetting, Bob’s gone: goes home to his folk at nightfall now. Well, take the guests’ ponies to the stables, Nob! And you’ll be taking your horse to his stable yourself, Gandalf, I don’t doubt. A fine beast, as I said when I first set eyes on him. Well, come in! Make yourselves at home!’

Mr. Butterbur had at any rate not changed his manner of talking, and still seemed to live in his old breathless bustle. And yet there was hardly anybody about, and all was quiet; from the Common Room there came a low murmur of no more than two or three voices. And seen closer in the light of two candles that he lit and carried before them the landlord’s face looked rather wrinkled and careworn.

He led them down the passage to the parlour that they had used on that strange night more than a year ago; and they followed him, a little disquieted, for it seemed plain to them that old Barliman was putting a brave face on some trouble. Things were not what they had been. But they said nothing, and waited.

As they expected Mr. Butterbur came to the parlour after supper to see if all had been to their liking. As indeed it had: no change for the worse had yet come upon the beer or the victuals at *The Pony*, at any rate. ‘Now I won’t make so bold as to suggest you should come to the Common Room tonight,’ said Butterbur. ‘You’ll be tired; and there isn’t many folk there this evening, anyway. But if you could spare me half an hour before you go to your beds, I would dearly like to have some talk with you, quiet-like by ourselves.’

‘That is just what we should like, too,’ said Gandalf. ‘We are not tired. We have been taking things easy. We were wet, cold and hungry, but all that you have cured. Come, sit down! And if you have any pipe-weed, we’ll bless you.’

‘Well, if you’d called for anything else, I’d have been happier,’ said Butterbur. ‘That’s just a thing that we’re short of, seeing how we’ve only got what we grow ourselves, and that’s not enough. There’s none to be had from the Shire these days. But I’ll do what I can.’

When he came back he brought them enough to last them for a day or two, a wad of uncut leaf. ‘Southlinch,’ he said, ‘and the best we have; but not the match of Southfarthing, as I’ve always said, though I’m all for Bree in most matters, begging your pardon.’

They put him in a large chair by the wood-fire, and Gandalf sat on the other side of the hearth, and the hobbits in low chairs between them; and then they talked for many times half an hour, and exchanged all such news as Mr. Butterbur wished to hear or give. Most of the things which they had to tell were a mere wonder and bewilderment to their host, and far beyond his vision; and they brought forth few comments other than: ‘You don’t say,’ often repeated in defiance of the evidence of Mr. Butterbur’s own ears. ‘You don’t say, Mr. Baggins, or is it Mr. Underhill? I’m getting so mixed up. You don’t say, Master Gandalf! Well I never! Who’d have thought it in our times!’

But he did say much on his own account. Things were far from well, he would say. Business was not even fair, it was downright bad. 'No-one comes nigh Bree now from Outside,' he said. 'And the inside folks, they stay at home mostly and keep their doors barred. It all comes of those newcomers and gangrels that began coming up the Greenway last year, as you may remember; but more came later. Some were just poor bodies running away from trouble; but most were bad men, full o' thievery and mischief. And there was trouble right here in Bree, bad trouble. Why, we had a real set-to, and there were some folk killed, killed dead! If you'll believe me.'

'I will indeed,' said Gandalf. 'How many?'

'Three and two,' said Butterbur, referring to the big folk and the little. 'There was poor Mat Heathertoos, and Rowlie Appledore, and little Tom Pickthorn from over the Hill; and Willie Banks from up-away, and one of the Underhills from Staddle: all good fellows, and they're missed. And Harry Goatleaf that used to be on the West-gate, and that Bill Ferny, they came in on the strangers' side, and they've gone off with them; and it's my belief they let them in. On the night of the fight, I mean. And that was after we showed them the gates and pushed them out: before the year's end, that was; and the fight was early in the New Year, after the heavy snow we had.'

'And now they're gone for robbers and live outside, hiding in the woods beyond Archet, and out in the wilds north-away. It's like a bit of the bad old times tales tell of, I say. It isn't safe on the road and nobody goes far, and folk lock up early. We have to keep watchers all round the fence and put a lot of men on the gates at nights.'

'Well, no-one troubled us,' said Pippin, 'and we came along slowly, and kept no watch. We thought we'd left all trouble behind us.'

'Ah, that you haven't, Master, more's the pity,' said Butterbur. 'But it's no wonder they left you alone. They wouldn't go for armed folk, with swords and helmets and shields and all. Make them think twice, that would. And I must say it put me aback a bit when I saw you.'

Then the hobbits suddenly realized that people had looked at them with amazement not out of surprise at their return so much as in wonder at their gear. They themselves had become so used to warfare and to riding in well-arrayed companies that they had quite forgotten that the bright mail peeping from under their cloaks, and the helms of Gondor and the Mark, and the fair devices on their shields, would seem outlandish in their own country. And Gandalf, too, was now riding on his tall grey horse, all clad in white with a great mantle of blue and silver over all, and the long sword Glamdring at his side.

Gandalf laughed. 'Well, well,' he said, 'if they are afraid of just five of us, then we have met worse enemies on our travels. But at any rate they will give you peace at night while we stay.'

'How long will that be?' said Butterbur. 'I'll not deny we should be glad to have you about for a bit. You see, we're not used to such troubles; and the Rangers have all gone away, folk tell me. I don't think we've rightly understood till now what they did for us. For there's been worse than robbers about. Wolves were howling round the fences last winter. And there's dark shapes in the woods, dreadful things that it makes the blood run cold to think of. It's been very disturbing, if you understand me.'

'I expect it has,' said Gandalf. 'Nearly all lands have been disturbed these days, very disturbed. But cheer up, Barliman! You have been on the edge of very great troubles, and I am only glad to hear that you have not been deeper in. But better times are coming. Maybe, better than any you remember. The Rangers have returned. We came back with them. And there is a king again, Barliman. He will soon be turning his mind this way.'

'Then the Greenway will be opened again, and his messengers will come north, and there will be comings and goings, and the evil things will be driven out of the waste-lands. Indeed the waste in time will be waste no longer, and there will be people and fields where once there was wilderness.'

Mr. Butterbur shook his head. 'If there's a few decent respectable folk on the roads, that won't do no harm,' he said. 'But we don't want no more rabble and ruffians. And we don't want no outsiders at Bree, nor near Bree at all. We want to be let alone. I don't want a whole crowd o' strangers camping here and settling there and tearing up the wild country.'

‘You will be let alone, Barliman,’ said Gandalf. ‘There is room enough for realms between Isen and Greyflood, or along the shore-lands south of the Brandywine, without anyone living within many days’ ride of Bree. And many folk used to dwell away north, a hundred miles or more from here, at the far end of the Greenway: on the North Downs or by Lake Evendim.’

‘Up away by Deadmen’s Dike?’ said Butterbur, looking even more dubious. ‘That’s haunted land, they say. None but a robber would go there.’

‘The Rangers go there,’ said Gandalf. ‘Deadmen’s Dike, you say. So it has been called for long years; but its right name, Barliman, is Fornost Erain, Norbury of the Kings. And the King will come there again one day; and then you’ll have some fair folk riding through.’

‘Well, that sounds more hopeful, I’ll allow,’ said Butterbur. ‘And it will be good for business, no doubt. So long as he lets Bree alone.’

‘He will,’ said Gandalf. ‘He knows it and loves it.’

‘Does he now?’ said Butterbur looking puzzled. ‘Though I’m sure I don’t know why he should, sitting in his big chair up in his great castle, hundreds of miles away. And drinking wine out of a golden cup, I shouldn’t wonder. What’s *The Pony* to him, or mugs o’ beer? Not but what my beer’s good, Gandalf. It’s been uncommon good, since you came in the autumn of last year and put a good word on it. And that’s been a comfort in trouble, I will say.’

‘Ah!’ said Sam. ‘But he says your beer is always good.’

‘He says?’

‘Of course he does. He’s Strider. The chief of the Rangers. Haven’t you got that into your head yet?’

It went in at last, and Butterbur’s face was a study in wonder. The eyes in his broad face grew round, and his mouth opened wide, and he gasped. ‘Strider!’ he exclaimed when he got back his breath. ‘Him with a crown and all and a golden cup! Well, what are we coming to?’

‘Better times, for Bree at any rate,’ said Gandalf.

‘I hope so, I’m sure,’ said Butterbur. ‘Well, this has been the nicest chat I’ve had in a month of Mondays. And I’ll not deny that I’ll sleep easier tonight and with a lighter heart. You’ve given me a powerful lot to think over, but I’ll put that off until tomorrow. I’m for bed, and I’ve no doubt you’ll be glad of your beds too. Hey, Nob!’ he called, going to the door. ‘Nob, you slowcoach!’

‘Nob!’ he said to himself, slapping his forehead. ‘Now what does that remind me of?’

‘Not another letter you’ve forgotten, I hope, Mr. Butterbur?’ said Merry.

‘Now, now, Mr. Brandybuck, don’t go reminding me of that! But there, you’ve broken my thought. Now where was I? Nob, stables, ah! that was it. I’ve something that belongs to you. If you recollect Bill Ferny and the horsethieving: his pony as you bought, well, it’s here. Come back all of itself, it did. But where it had been to you know better than me. It was as shaggy as an old dog and as lean as a clothes-rail, but it was alive. Nob’s looked after it.’

‘What! My Bill?’ cried Sam. ‘Well, I was born lucky, whatever my gaffer may say. There’s another wish come true! Where is he?’ Sam would not go to bed until he had visited Bill in his stable.

The travellers stayed in Bree all the next day, and Mr. Butterbur could not complain of his business next evening at any rate. Curiosity overcame all fears, and his house was crowded. For a while out of politeness the hobbits visited the Common Room in the evening and answered a good many questions. Bree memories being retentive, Frodo was asked many times if he had written his book.

‘Not yet,’ he answered. ‘I am going home now to put my notes in order.’ He promised to deal with the amazing events at Bree, and so give a bit of interest to a book that appeared likely to treat mostly of the remote and less important affairs ‘away south’.

Then one of the younger folk called for a song. But at that a hush fell, and he was frowned down, and the call was not repeated. Evidently there was no wish for any uncanny events in the Common Room again.

No trouble by day, nor any sound by night, disturbed the peace of Bree while the travellers remained there; but the next morning they got up early, for as the weather was still rainy they wished to reach the Shire before night, and it was a long ride. The Bree folk were all out to see them off, and were in merrier mood than they had been for a year; and those who had not seen the strangers in all their gear before gaped with wonder at them: at Gandalf with his white beard, and the light that seemed to gleam from him, as if his blue mantle was only a cloud over sunshine; and at the four hobbits like riders upon errantry out of almost forgotten tales. Even those who had laughed at all the talk about the King began to think there might be some truth in it.

‘Well, good luck on your road, and good luck to your homecoming!’ said Mr. Butterbur. ‘I should have warned you before that all’s not well in the Shire neither, if what we hear is true. Funny goings on, they say. But one thing drives out another, and I was full of my own troubles. But if I may be so bold, you’ve come back changed from your travels, and you look now like folk as can deal with troubles out of hand. I don’t doubt you’ll soon set all to rights. Good luck to you! And the oftener you come back the better I’ll be pleased.’

They wished him farewell and rode away, and passed through the West-gate and on towards the Shire. Bill the pony was with them, and as before he had a good deal of baggage, but he trotted along beside Sam and seemed well content.

‘I wonder what old Barliman was hinting at,’ said Frodo.

‘I can guess some of it,’ said Sam gloomily. ‘What I saw in the Mirror: trees cut down and all, and my old gaffer turned out of the Row. I ought to have hurried back quicker.’

‘And something’s wrong with the Southfarthing evidently,’ said Merry. ‘There’s a general shortage of pipe-weed.’

‘Whatever it is,’ said Pippin, ‘Lotho will be at the bottom of it: you can be sure of that.’

‘Deep in, but not at the bottom,’ said Gandalf. ‘You have forgotten Saruman. He began to take an interest in the Shire before Mordor did.’

‘Well, we’ve got you with us,’ said Merry, ‘so things will soon be cleared up.’

‘I am with you at present,’ said Gandalf, ‘but soon I shall not be. I am not coming to the Shire. You must settle its affairs yourselves; that is what you have been trained for. Do you not yet understand? My time is over: it is no longer my task to set things to rights, nor to help folk to do so. And as for you, my dear friends, you will need no help. You are grown up now. Grown indeed very high; among the great you are, and I have no longer any fear at all for any of you.’

‘But if you would know, I am turning aside soon. I am going to have a long talk with Bombadil: such a talk as I have not had in all my time. He is a moss-gatherer, and I have been a stone doomed to rolling. But my rolling days are ending, and now we shall have much to say to one another.’

In a little while they came to the point on the East Road where they had taken leave of Bombadil; and they hoped and half expected to see him standing there to greet them as they went by. But there was no sign of him; and there was a grey mist on the Barrow-downs southwards, and a deep veil over the Old Forest far away.

They halted and Frodo looked south wistfully. ‘I should dearly like to see the old fellow again,’ he said. ‘I wonder how he is getting on?’

‘As well as ever, you may be sure,’ said Gandalf. ‘Quite untroubled; and I should guess, not much interested in anything that we have done or seen, unless perhaps in our visits to the Ents. There may be a time later for you to go and see him. But if I were you, I should press on now for home, or you will not come to the Brandywine Bridge before the gates are locked.’

‘But there aren’t any gates,’ said Merry, ‘not on the Road; you know that quite well. There’s the Buckland Gate, of course; but they’ll let me through that at any time.’

‘There weren’t any gates, you mean,’ said Gandalf. ‘I think you will find some now. And you might have more trouble even at the Buckland Gate than you think. But you’ll manage all right. Good-bye, dear friends! Not for the last time, not yet. Good-bye!’

He turned Shadowfax off the Road, and the great horse leaped the green dike that here ran beside it; and then at a cry from Gandalf he was gone, racing towards the Barrow-downs like a wind from the North.

‘Well here we are, just the four of us that started out together,’ said Merry. ‘We have left all the rest behind, one after another. It seems almost like a dream that has slowly faded.’

‘Not to me,’ said Frodo. ‘To me it feels more like falling asleep again.’



## Chapter 8: The Scouring Of The Shire

It was after nightfall when, wet and tired, the travellers came at last to the Brandywine, and they found the way barred. At either end of the Bridge there was a great spiked gate; and on the further side of the river they could see that some new houses had been built: two-storeyed with narrow straight-sided windows, bare and dimly lit, all very gloomy and un-Shirelike.

They hammered on the outer gate and called, but there was at first no answer; and then to their surprise someone blew a horn, and the lights in the windows went out. A voice shouted in the dark:

‘Who’s that? Be off! You can’t come in. Can’t you read the notice: *No admittance between sundown and sunrise?*’

‘Of course we can’t read the notice in the dark,’ Sam shouted back. ‘And if hobbits of the Shire are to be kept out in the wet on a night like this, I’ll tear down your notice when I find it.’

At that a window slammed, and a crowd of hobbits with lanterns poured out of the house on the left. They opened the further gate, and some came over the bridge. When they saw the travellers they seemed frightened.

‘Come along!’ said Merry, recognizing one of the hobbits. ‘If you don’t know me, Hob Hayward, you ought to. I am Merry Brandybuck, and I should like to know what all this is about, and what a Bucklander like you is doing here. You used to be on the Hay Gate.’

‘Bless me! It’s Master Merry, to be sure, and all dressed up for fighting!’ said old Hob. ‘Why, they said you was dead! Lost in the Old Forest by all accounts. I’m pleased to see you alive after all!’

‘Then stop gaping at me through the bars, and open the gate!’ said Merry.

‘I’m sorry, Master Merry, but we have orders.’

‘Whose orders?’

‘The Chief’s up at Bag End.’

‘Chief? Chief? Do you mean Mr. Lotho?’ said Frodo.

‘I suppose so, Mr. Baggins; but we have to say just “the Chief” nowadays.’

‘Do you indeed!’ said Frodo. ‘Well, I am glad he has dropped the Baggins at any rate. But it is evidently high time that the family dealt with him and put him in his place.’

A hush fell on the hobbits beyond the gate. ‘It won’t do no good talking that way,’ said one. ‘He’ll get to hear of it. And if you make so much noise, you’ll wake the Chief’s Big Man.’

‘We shall wake him up in a way that will surprise him,’ said Merry. ‘If you mean that your precious Chief has been hiring ruffians out of the wild, then we’ve not come back too soon.’ He sprang from his pony, and seeing the notice in the light of the lanterns, he tore it down and threw it over the gate. The hobbits backed away and made no move to open it. ‘Come on, Pippin!’ said Merry. ‘Two is enough.’

Merry and Pippin climbed the gate, and the hobbits fled. Another horn sounded. Out of the bigger house on the right a large heavy figure appeared against a light in the doorway.

‘What’s all this,’ he snarled as he came forward. ‘Gate-breaking? You clear out, or I’ll break your filthy little necks!’ Then he stopped, for he had caught the gleam of swords.

‘Bill Ferny,’ said Merry, ‘if you don’t open that gate in ten seconds, you’ll regret it. I shall set steel to you, if you don’t obey. And when you have opened the gates you will go through them and never return. You are a ruffian and a highway-robber.’

Bill Ferny flinched and shuffled to the gate and unlocked it. ‘Give me the key!’ said Merry. But the ruffian flung it at his head and then darted out into the darkness. As he passed the ponies one of them let fly with his heels and just caught him as he ran. He went off with a yelp into the night and was never heard of again.

‘Neat work, Bill,’ said Sam, meaning the pony.

‘So much for your Big Man,’ said Merry. ‘We’ll see the Chief later. In the meantime we want a lodging for the night, and as you seem to have pulled down the Bridge Inn and built this dismal place instead, you’ll have to put us up.’

‘I am sorry, Mr. Merry,’ said Hob, ‘but it isn’t allowed.’

‘What isn’t allowed?’

‘Taking in folk off-hand like, and eating extra food, and all that,’ said Hob.

‘What’s the matter with the place?’ said Merry. ‘Has it been a bad year, or what? I thought it had been a fine summer and harvest.’

‘Well no, the year’s been good enough,’ said Hob. ‘We grows a lot of food, but we don’t rightly know what becomes of it. It’s all these “gatherers” and “sharers”, I reckon, going round counting and measuring and taking off to storage. They do more gathering than sharing, and we never see most of the stuff again.’

‘Oh come!’ said Pippin yawning. ‘This is all too tiresome for me tonight. We’ve got food in our bags. Just give us a room to lie down in. It’ll be better than many places I have seen.’

The hobbits at the gate still seemed ill at ease, evidently some rule or other was being broken; but there was no gainsaying four such masterful travellers, all armed, and two of them uncommonly large and strong-looking. Frodo ordered the gates to be locked again. There was some sense at any rate in keeping a guard, while ruffians were still about. Then the four companions went into the hobbit guard-house and made themselves as comfortable as they could. It was a bare and ugly place, with a mean little grate that would not allow a good fire. In the upper rooms were little rows of hard beds, and on every wall there was a notice and a list of Rules. Pippin tore them down. There was no beer and very little food, but with what the travellers brought and shared out they all made a fair meal; and Pippin broke Rule 4 by putting most of next day’s allowance of wood on the fire.

‘Well now, what about a smoke, while you tell us what has been happening in the Shire?’ he said.

‘There isn’t no pipe-weed now,’ said Hob; ‘at least only for the Chief’s men. All the stocks seem to have gone. We do hear that waggon-loads of it went away down the old road out of the Southfarthing, over Sarn Ford way. That would be the end o’ last year, after you left. But it had been going away quietly before that, in a small way. That Lotho—’

‘Now you shut up, Hob Hayward!’ cried several of the others. ‘You know talk o’ that sort isn’t allowed. The Chief will hear of it, and we’ll all be in trouble.’

‘He wouldn’t hear naught, if some of you here weren’t sneaks,’ rejoined Hob hotly.

‘All right, all right!’ said Sam. ‘That’s quite enough. I don’t want to hear no more. No welcome, no beer, no smoke, and a lot of rules and orc-talk instead. I hoped to have a rest, but I can see there’s work and trouble ahead. Let’s sleep and forget it till morning!’

The new ‘Chief’ evidently had means of getting news. It was a good forty miles from the Bridge to Bag End, but someone made the journey in a hurry. So Frodo and his friends soon discovered.

They had not made any definite plans, but had vaguely thought of going down to Crickhollow together first, and resting there a bit. But now, seeing what things were like, they decided to go straight to Hobbiton. So the next day they set out along the Road and jogged along steadily. The wind had dropped but the sky was grey.



The land looked rather sad and forlorn; but it was after all the first of November and the fag-end of autumn. Still there seemed an unusual amount of burning going on, and smoke rose from many points round about. A great cloud of it was going up far away in the direction of the Woody End.

As evening fell they were drawing near to Frogmorton, a village right on the Road, about twenty-two miles from the Bridge. There they meant to stay the night; *The Floating Log* at Frogmorton was a good inn. But as they came to the east end of the village they met a barrier with a large board saying NO ROAD; and behind it stood a large band of Shirriffs with staves in their hands and feathers in their caps, looking both important and rather scared.

‘What’s all this?’ said Frodo, feeling inclined to laugh.

‘This is what it is, Mr. Baggins,’ said the leader of the Shirriffs, a two-feather hobbit: ‘You’re arrested for Gate-breaking, and Tearing up of Rules, and Assaulting Gate-keepers, and Trespassing, and Sleeping in Shire-buildings without Leave, and Bribing Guards with Food.’

‘And what else?’ said Frodo.

‘That’ll do to go on with,’ said the Shirriff-leader.

‘I can add some more, if you’d like it,’ said Sam. ‘Calling your Chief Names, Wishing to punch his Pimply Face, and Thinking you Shirriffs look a lot of Tom-fools.’

‘There now, Mister, that’ll do. It’s the Chief’s orders that you’re to come along quiet. We’re going to take you to Bywater and hand you over to the Chief’s Men; and when he deals with your case you can have your say. But if you don’t want to stay in the Lockholes any longer than you need, I should cut the say short, if I was you.’

To the discomfiture of the Shirriffs Frodo and his companions all roared with laughter. ‘Don’t be absurd!’ said Frodo. ‘I am going where I please, and in my own time. I happen to be going to Bag End on business, but if you insist on going too, well that is your affair.’

‘Very well, Mr. Baggins,’ said the leader, pushing the barrier aside. ‘But don’t forget I’ve arrested you.’

‘I won’t,’ said Frodo. ‘Never. But I may forgive you. Now I am not going any further today, so if you’ll kindly escort me to *The Floating Log*, I’ll be obliged.’

‘I can’t do that, Mr. Baggins. The inn’s closed. There’s a Shirriff-house at the far end of the village. I’ll take you there.’

‘All right,’ said Frodo. ‘Go on and we’ll follow.’

Sam had been looking the Shirriffs up and down and had spotted one that he knew. ‘Hey, come here Robin Smallburrow!’ he called. ‘I want a word with you.’

With a sheepish glance at his leader, who looked wrathful but did not dare to interfere, Shirriff Smallburrow fell back and walked beside Sam, who got down off his pony.

‘Look here, Cock-robin!’ said Sam. ‘You’re Hobbiton-bred and ought to have more sense, coming a-waylaying Mr. Frodo and all. And what’s all this about the inn being closed?’

‘They’re all closed,’ said Robin. ‘The Chief doesn’t hold with beer. Leastways that is how it started. But now I reckon it’s his Men that has it all. And he doesn’t hold with folk moving about; so if they will or they must, then they has to go to the Shirriff-house and explain their business.’

‘You ought to be ashamed of yourself having anything to do with such nonsense,’ said Sam. ‘You used to like the inside of an inn better than the outside yourself. You were always popping in, on duty or off.’

‘And so I would be still, Sam, if I could. But don’t be hard on me. What can I do? You know how I went for a Shirriff seven years ago, before any of this began. Gave me a chance of walking round the country and seeing folk, and hearing the news, and knowing where the good beer was. But now it’s different.’

‘But you can give it up, stop Shirriffing, if it has stopped being a respectable job,’ said Sam.

‘We’re not allowed to,’ said Robin.

‘If I hear *not allowed* much oftener,’ said Sam, ‘I’m going to get angry.’

‘Can’t say as I’d be sorry to see it,’ said Robin lowering his voice. ‘If we all got angry together something might be done. But it’s these Men, Sam, the Chief’s Men. He sends them round everywhere, and if any of us small folk stand up for our rights, they drag him off to the Lockholes. They took old Flourdumpling, old Will Whitfoot the Mayor, first, and they’ve taken a lot more. Lately it’s been getting worse. Often they beat ’em now.’

‘Then why do you do their work for them?’ said Sam angrily. ‘Who sent you to Frogmorton?’

‘No-one did. We stay here in the big Shirriff-house. We’re the First Eastfarthing Troop now. There’s hundreds of Shirriffs all told, and they want more, with all these new rules. Most of them are in it against their will, but not all. Even in the Shire there are some as like minding other folk’s business and talking big. And there’s worse than that: there’s a few as do spy-work for the Chief and his Men.’

‘Ah! So that’s how you had news of us, is it?’

‘That’s right. We aren’t allowed to send by it now, but they use the old Quick Post service, and keep special runners at different points. One came in from Whitfurrows last night with a “secret message”, and another took it on from here. And a message came back this afternoon saying you was to be arrested and taken to Bywater, not direct to the Lockholes. The Chief wants to see you at once, evidently.’

‘He won’t be so eager when Mr. Frodo has finished with him,’ said Sam.

The Shirriff-house at Frogmorton was as bad as the Bridge-house. It had only one storey, but it had the same narrow windows, and it was built of ugly pale bricks, badly laid. Inside it was damp and cheerless, and supper was served on a long bare table that had not been scrubbed for weeks. The food deserved no better setting. The travellers were glad to leave the place. It was about eighteen miles to Bywater, and they set off at ten o’clock in the morning. They would have started earlier, only the delay so plainly annoyed the Shirriff-leader. The west wind had shifted northward and it was turning colder, but the rain was gone.

It was rather a comic cavalcade that left the village, though the few folk that came out to stare at the ‘get-up’ of the travellers did not seem quite sure whether laughing was allowed. A dozen Shirriffs had been told off as escort to the ‘prisoners’; but Merry made them march in front, while Frodo and his friends rode behind. Merry, Pippin, and Sam sat at their ease laughing and talking and singing, while the Shirriffs stumped along trying to look stern and important. Frodo, however, was silent and looked rather sad and thoughtful.

The last person they passed was a sturdy old gaffer clipping a hedge. ‘Hullo, hullo!’ he jeered. ‘Now who’s arrested who?’

Two of the Shirriffs immediately left the party and went towards him. ‘Leader!’ said Merry. ‘Order your fellows back to their places at once, if you don’t want me to deal with them!’

The two hobbits at a sharp word from the leader came back sulkily. ‘Now get on!’ said Merry, and after that the travellers saw to it that their ponies’ pace was quick enough to push the Shirriffs along as fast as they could go. The sun came out, and in spite of the chilly wind they were soon puffing and sweating.

At the Three-Farthing Stone they gave it up. They had done nearly fourteen miles with only one rest at noon. It was now three o’clock. They were hungry and very footsore and they could not stand the pace.

‘Well, come along in your own time!’ said Merry. ‘We are going on.’

‘Good-bye, Cock-robin!’ said Sam. ‘I’ll wait for you outside *The Green Dragon*, if you haven’t forgotten where that is. Don’t dawdle on the way!’

‘You’re breaking arrest, that’s what you’re doing,’ said the leader ruefully, ‘and I can’t be answerable.’

‘We shall break a good many things yet, and not ask you to answer,’ said Pippin. ‘Good luck to you!’

The travellers trotted on, and as the sun began to sink towards the White Downs far away on the western horizon they came to Bywater by its wide pool; and there they had their first really painful shock. This was

Frodo and Sam's own country, and they found out now that they cared about it more than any other place in the world. Many of the houses that they had known were missing. Some seemed to have been burned down. The pleasant row of old hobbit-holes in the bank on the north side of the Pool were deserted, and their little gardens that used to run down bright to the water's edge were rank with weeds. Worse, there was a whole line of the ugly new houses all along Pool Side, where the Hobbiton Road ran close to the bank. An avenue of trees had stood there. They were all gone. And looking with dismay up the road towards Bag End they saw a tall chimney of brick in the distance. It was pouring out black smoke into the evening air.

Sam was beside himself. 'I'm going right on, Mr. Frodo!' he cried. 'I'm going to see what's up. I want to find my gaffer.'

'We ought to find out first what we're in for, Sam,' said Merry. 'I guess that the "Chief" will have a gang of ruffians handy. We had better find someone who will tell us how things are round here.'

But in the village of Bywater all the houses and holes were shut, and no-one greeted them. They wondered at this, but they soon discovered the reason of it. When they reached *The Green Dragon*, the last house on the Hobbiton side, now lifeless and with broken windows, they were disturbed to see half a dozen large ill-favoured Men lounging against the inn-wall; they were squint-eyed and sallow-faced.

'Like that friend of Bill Ferny's at Bree,' said Sam.

'Like many that I saw at Isengard,' muttered Merry.

The ruffians had clubs in their hands and horns by their belts, but they had no other weapons, as far as could be seen. As the travellers rode up they left the wall and walked into the road, blocking the way.

'Where d'you think you're going?' said one, the largest and most evil-looking of the crew. 'There's no road for you any further. And where are those precious Shirriffs?'

'Coming along nicely,' said Merry. 'A little footsore, perhaps. We promised to wait for them here.'

'Garn, what did I say?' said the ruffian to his mates. 'I told Sharkey it was no good trusting those little fools. Some of our chaps ought to have been sent.'

'And what difference would that have made, pray?' said Merry. 'We are not used to footpads in this country, but we know how to deal with them.'

'Footpads, eh?' said the man. 'So that's your tone, is it? Change it, or we'll change it for you. You little folk are getting too uppish. Don't you trust too much in the Boss's kind heart. Sharkey's come now, and he'll do what Sharkey says.'

'And what may that be?' said Frodo quietly.

'This country wants waking up and setting to rights,' said the ruffian, 'and Sharkey's going to do it; and make it hard, if you drive him to it. You need a bigger Boss. And you'll get one before the year is out, if there's any more trouble. Then you'll learn a thing or two, you little rat-folk.'

'Indeed. I am glad to hear of your plans,' said Frodo. 'I am on my way to call on Mr. Lotho, and he may be interested to hear of them too.'

The ruffian laughed. 'Lotho! He knows all right. Don't you worry. He'll do what Sharkey says. Because if a Boss gives trouble, we can change him. See? And if little folks try to push in where they're not wanted, we can put them out of mischief. See?'

'Yes, I see,' said Frodo. 'For one thing, I see that you're behind the times and the news here. Much has happened since you left the South. Your day is over, and all other ruffians'. The Dark Tower has fallen, and there is a King in Gondor. And Isengard has been destroyed, and your precious master is a beggar in the wilderness. I passed him on the road. The King's messengers will ride up the Greenway now, not bullies from Isengard.'

The man stared at him and smiled. 'A beggar in the wilderness!' he mocked. 'Oh, is he indeed? Swagger it, swagger it, my little cock-a-whoop. But that won't stop us living in this fat little country where you have lazed

long enough. And’—he snapped his fingers in Frodo’s face—‘King’s messengers! That for them! When I see one, I’ll take notice, perhaps.’

This was too much for Pippin. His thoughts went back to the Field of Cormallen, and here was a squint-eyed rascal calling the Ring-bearer ‘little cock-a-whoop’. He cast back his cloak, flashed out his sword, and the silver and sable of Gondor gleamed on him as he rode forward.

‘I am a messenger of the King,’ he said. ‘You are speaking to the King’s friend, and one of the most renowned in all the lands of the West. You are a ruffian and a fool. Down on your knees in the road and ask pardon, or I will set this troll’s bane in you!’

The sword glinted in the westering sun. Merry and Sam drew their swords also and rode up to support Pippin; but Frodo did not move. The ruffians gave back. Scaring Bree-land peasants, and bullying bewildered hobbits, had been their work. Fearless hobbits with bright swords and grim faces were a great surprise. And there was a note in the voices of these newcomers that they had not heard before. It chilled them with fear.

‘Go!’ said Merry. ‘If you trouble this village again, you will regret it.’ The three hobbits came on, and then the ruffians turned and fled, running away up the Hobbiton Road; but they blew their horns as they ran.

‘Well, we’ve come back none too soon,’ said Merry.

‘Not a day too soon. Perhaps too late, at any rate to save Lotho,’ said Frodo. ‘Miserable fool, but I am sorry for him.’

‘Save Lotho? Whatever do you mean?’ said Pippin. ‘Destroy him, I should say.’

‘I don’t think you quite understand things, Pippin,’ said Frodo. ‘Lotho never meant things to come to this pass. He has been a wicked fool, but he’s caught now. The ruffians are on top, gathering, robbing and bullying, and running or ruining things as they like, in his name. And not in his name even for much longer. He’s a prisoner in Bag End now, I expect, and very frightened. We ought to try and rescue him.’

‘Well I am staggered!’ said Pippin. ‘Of all the ends to our journey that is the very last I should have thought of: to have to fight half-orcs and ruffians in the Shire itself—to rescue Lotho Pimple!’

‘Fight?’ said Frodo. ‘Well, I suppose it may come to that. But remember: there is to be no slaying of hobbits, not even if they have gone over to the other side. Really gone over, I mean; not just obeying ruffians’ orders because they are frightened. No hobbit has ever killed another on purpose in the Shire, and it is not to begin now. And nobody is to be killed at all, if it can be helped. Keep your tempers and hold your hands to the last possible moment!’

‘But if there are many of these ruffians,’ said Merry, ‘it will certainly mean fighting. You won’t rescue Lotho, or the Shire, just by being shocked and sad, my dear Frodo.’

‘No,’ said Pippin. ‘It won’t be so easy scaring them a second time. They were taken by surprise. You heard that horn-blowing? Evidently there are other ruffians near at hand. They’ll be much bolder when there’s more of them together. We ought to think of taking cover somewhere for the night. After all we’re only four, even if we are armed.’

‘I’ve an idea,’ said Sam. ‘Let’s go to old Tom Cotton’s down South Lane! He always was a stout fellow. And he has a lot of lads that were all friends of mine.’

‘No!’ said Merry. ‘It’s no good “getting under cover”. That is just what people have been doing, and just what these ruffians like. They will simply come down on us in force, corner us, and then drive us out, or burn us in. No, we have got to do something at once.’

‘Do what?’ said Pippin.

‘Raise the Shire!’ said Merry. ‘Now! Wake all our people! They hate all this, you can see: all of them except perhaps one or two rascals, and a few fools that want to be important, but don’t at all understand what is really going on. But Shire-folk have been so comfortable so long they don’t know what to do. They just want a match,

though, and they'll go up in fire. The Chief's Men must know that. They'll try to stamp on us and put us out quick. We've only got a very short time.

'Sam, you can make a dash for Cotton's farm, if you like. He's the chief person round here, and the sturdiest. Come on! I am going to blow the horn of Rohan, and give them all some music they have never heard before.'

They rode back to the middle of the village. There Sam turned aside and galloped off down the lane that led south to Cotton's. He had not gone far when he heard a sudden clear horn-call go up ringing into the sky. Far over hill and field it echoed; and so compelling was that call that Sam himself almost turned and dashed back. His pony reared and neighed.

'On, lad! On!' he cried. 'We'll be going back soon.' Then he heard Merry change the note, and up went the Horn-cry of Buckland, shaking the air.

*Awake! Awake! Fear, Fire, Foes! Awake!*

*Fire, Foes! Awake!*

Behind him Sam heard a hubbub of voices and a great din and slamming of doors. In front of him lights sprang out in the gloaming; dogs barked; feet came running. Before he got to the lane's end there was Farmer Cotton with three of his lads, Young Tom, Jolly, and Nick, hurrying towards him. They had axes in their hands, and barred the way.

'Nay! It's not one of them ruffians,' Sam heard the farmer say. 'It's a hobbit by the size of it, but all dressed up queer. Hey!' he cried. 'Who are you, and what's all this to-do?'

'It's Sam, Sam Gamgee. I've come back.'

Farmer Cotton came up close and stared at him in the twilight. 'Well!' he exclaimed. 'The voice is right, and your face is no worse than it was, Sam. But I should a' passed you in the street in that gear. You've been in foreign parts, seemingly. We feared you were dead.'

'That I ain't!' said Sam. 'Nor Mr. Frodo. He's here and his friends. And that's the to-do. They're raising the Shire. We're going to clear out these ruffians, and their Chief too. We're starting now.'

'Good, good!' cried Farmer Cotton. 'So it's begun at last! I've been itching for trouble all this year, but folks wouldn't help. And I've had the wife and Rosie to think of. These ruffians don't stick at nothing. But come on now, lads! Bywater is up! We must be in it!'

'What about Mrs. Cotton and Rosie?' said Sam. 'It isn't safe yet for them to be left all alone.'

'My Nibs is with them. But you can go and help him, if you have a mind,' said Farmer Cotton with a grin. Then he and his sons ran off towards the village.

Sam hurried to the house. By the large round door at the top of the steps from the wide yard stood Mrs. Cotton and Rosie, and Nibs in front of them grasping a hay-fork.

'It's me!' shouted Sam as he trotted up. 'Sam Gamgee! So don't try prodding me, Nibs. Anyway, I've a mail-shirt on me.'

He jumped down from his pony and went up the steps. They stared at him in silence. 'Good evening, Mrs. Cotton!' he said. 'Hullo, Rosie!'

'Hullo, Sam!' said Rosie. 'Where've you been? They said you were dead; but I've been expecting you since the spring. You haven't hurried, have you?'

'Perhaps not,' said Sam abashed. 'But I'm hurrying now. We're setting about the ruffians, and I've got to get back to Mr. Frodo. But I thought I'd have a look and see how Mrs. Cotton was keeping, and you, Rosie.'

'We're keeping nicely, thank you,' said Mrs. Cotton. 'Or should be, if it weren't for these thieving ruffians.'

'Well, be off with you!' said Rosie. 'If you've been looking after Mr. Frodo all this while, what d'you want to leave him for, as soon as things look dangerous?'

This was too much for Sam. It needed a week's answer, or none. He turned away and mounted his pony. But as he started off, Rosie ran down the steps.

'I think you look fine, Sam,' she said. 'Go on now! But take care of yourself, and come straight back as soon as you have settled the ruffians!'

When Sam got back he found the whole village roused. Already, apart from many younger lads, more than a hundred sturdy hobbits were assembled with axes, and heavy hammers, and long knives, and stout staves; and a few had hunting-bows. More were still coming in from outlying farms.

Some of the village-folk had lit a large fire, just to enliven things, and also because it was one of the things forbidden by the Chief. It burned bright as night came on. Others at Merry's orders were setting up barriers across the road at each end of the village. When the Shirriffs came up to the lower one they were dumbfounded; but as soon as they saw how things were, most of them took off their feathers and joined in the revolt. The others slunk away.

Sam found Frodo and his friends by the fire talking to old Tom Cotton, while an admiring crowd of Bywater folk stood round and stared.

'Well, what's the next move?' said Farmer Cotton.

'I can't say,' said Frodo, 'until I know more. How many of these ruffians are there?'

'That's hard to tell,' said Cotton. 'They moves about and comes and goes. There's sometimes fifty of them in their sheds up Hobbiton way; but they go out from there roving round, thieving or "gathering" as they call it. Still there's seldom less than a score round the Boss, as they names him. He's at Bag End, or was; but he don't go outside the grounds now. No-one's seen him at all, in fact, for a week or two; but the Men don't let no-one go near.'

'Hobbiton's not their only place, is it?' said Pippin.

'No, more's the pity,' said Cotton. 'There's a good few down south in Longbottom and by Sarn Ford, I hear; and some more lurking in the Woody End; and they've sheds at Waymeet. And then there's the Lockholes, as they call 'em: the old storage-tunnels at Michel Delving that they've made into prisons for those as stand up to them. Still I reckon there's not above three hundred of them in the Shire all told, and maybe less. We can master them, if we stick together.'

'Have they got any weapons?' asked Merry.

'Whips, knives, and clubs, enough for their dirty work: that's all they've showed so far,' said Cotton. 'But I dare say they've got other gear, if it comes to fighting. Some have bows, anyway. They've shot one or two of our folk.'

'There you are, Frodo!' said Merry. 'I knew we should have to fight. Well, they started the killing.'

'Not exactly,' said Cotton. 'Leastways not the shooting. Took's started that. You see, your dad, Mr. Peregrin, he's never had no truck with this Lotho, not from the beginning: said that if anyone was going to play the chief at this time of day, it would be the right Thain of the Shire and no upstart. And when Lotho sent his Men they got no change out of him. Took's are lucky, they've got those deep holes in the Green Hills, the Great Smials and all, and the ruffians can't come at 'em; and they won't let the ruffians come on their land. If they do, Took's hunt 'em. Took's shot three for prowling and robbing. After that the ruffians turned nastier. And they keep a pretty close watch on Tookland. No-one gets in nor out of it now.'

'Good for the Took's!' cried Pippin. 'But someone is going to get in again, now. I am off to the Smials. Anyone coming with me to Tuckborough?'

Pippin rode off with half a dozen lads on ponies. 'See you soon!' he cried. 'It's only fourteen miles or so over the fields. I'll bring you back an army of Took's in the morning.' Merry blew a horn-call after them as they rode off into the gathering night. The people cheered.

‘All the same,’ said Frodo to all those who stood near, ‘I wish for no killing; not even of the ruffians, unless it must be done, to prevent them from hurting hobbits.’

‘All right!’ said Merry. ‘But we shall be having a visit from the Hobbiton gang any time now, I think. They won’t come just to talk things over. We’ll try to deal with them neatly, but we must be prepared for the worst. Now I’ve got a plan.’

‘Very good,’ said Frodo. ‘You make the arrangements.’

Just then some hobbits, who had been sent out towards Hobbiton, came running in. ‘They’re coming!’ they said. ‘A score or more. But two have gone off west across country.’

‘To Waymeet, that’ll be,’ said Cotton, ‘to fetch more of the gang. Well, it’s fifteen mile each way. We needn’t trouble about them just yet.’

Merry hurried off to give orders. Farmer Cotton cleared the street, sending everyone indoors, except the older hobbits who had weapons of some sort. They had not long to wait. Soon they could hear loud voices, and then the tramping of heavy feet. Presently a whole squad of the ruffians came down the road. They saw the barrier and laughed. They did not imagine that there was anything in this little land that would stand up to twenty of their kind together.

The hobbits opened the barrier and stood aside. ‘Thank you!’ the Men jeered. ‘Now run home to bed before you’re whipped.’ Then they marched along the street shouting: ‘Put those lights out! Get indoors and stay there! Or we’ll take fifty of you to the Lockholes for a year. Get in! The Boss is losing his temper.’

No-one paid any heed to their orders; but as the ruffians passed, they closed in quietly behind and followed them. When the Men reached the fire there was Farmer Cotton standing all alone warming his hands.

‘Who are you, and what d’you think you’re doing?’ said the ruffian-leader.

Farmer Cotton looked at him slowly. ‘I was just going to ask you that,’ he said. ‘This isn’t your country, and you’re not wanted.’

‘Well, you’re wanted anyhow,’ said the leader. ‘We want you. Take him lads! Lockholes for him, and give him something to keep him quiet!’

The Men took one step forward and stopped short. There rose a roar of voices all round them, and suddenly they were aware that Farmer Cotton was not all alone. They were surrounded. In the dark on the edge of the firelight stood a ring of hobbits that had crept up out of the shadows. There was nearly two hundred of them, all holding some weapon.

Merry stepped forward. ‘We have met before,’ he said to the leader, ‘and I warned you not to come back here. I warn you again: you are standing in the light and you are covered by archers. If you lay a finger on this farmer, or on anyone else, you will be shot at once. Lay down any weapons that you have!’

The leader looked round. He was trapped. But he was not scared, not now with a score of his fellows to back him. He knew too little of hobbits to understand his peril. Foolishly he decided to fight. It would be easy to break out.

‘At ’em, lads!’ he cried. ‘Let ’em have it!’

With a long knife in his left hand and a club in the other he made a rush at the ring, trying to burst out back towards Hobbiton. He aimed a savage blow at Merry who stood in his way. He fell dead with four arrows in him.

That was enough for the others. They gave in. Their weapons were taken from them, and they were roped together, and marched off to an empty hut that they had built themselves, and there they were tied hand and foot, and locked up under guard. The dead leader was dragged off and buried.

‘Seems almost too easy after all, don’t it?’ said Cotton. ‘I said we could master them. But we needed a call. You came back in the nick o’ time, Mr. Merry.’

‘There’s more to be done still,’ said Merry. ‘If you’re right in your reckoning, we haven’t dealt with a tithe of them yet. But it’s dark now. I think the next stroke must wait until morning. Then we must call on the Chief.’

‘Why not now?’ said Sam. ‘It’s not much more than six o’clock. And I want to see my gaffer. D’you know what’s come of him, Mr. Cotton?’

‘He’s not too well, and not too bad, Sam,’ said the farmer. ‘They dug up Bagshot Row, and that was a sad blow to him. He’s in one of them new houses that the Chief’s Men used to build while they still did any work other than burning and thieving: not above a mile from the end of Bywater. But he comes around to me, when he gets a chance, and I see he’s better fed than some of the poor bodies. All against *The Rules*, of course. I’d have had him with me, but that wasn’t allowed.’

‘Thank’ee indeed, Mr. Cotton, and I’ll never forget it,’ said Sam. ‘But I want to see him. That Boss and that Sharkey, as they spoke of, they might do a mischief up there before the morning.’

‘All right, Sam,’ said Cotton. ‘Choose a lad or two, and go and fetch him to my house. You’ll not have need to go near the old Hobbiton village over Water. My Jolly here will show you.’

Sam went off. Merry arranged for look-outs round the village and guards at the barriers during the night. Then he and Frodo went off with Farmer Cotton. They sat with the family in the warm kitchen, and the Cottons asked a few polite questions about their travels, but hardly listened to the answers: they were far more concerned with events in the Shire.

‘It all began with Pimple, as we call him,’ said Farmer Cotton; ‘and it began as soon as you’d gone off, Mr. Frodo. He’d funny ideas, had Pimple. Seems he wanted to own everything himself, and then order other folk about. It soon came out that he already did own a sight more than was good for him; and he was always grabbing more, though where he got the money was a mystery: mills and malt-houses and inns, and farms, and leaf-plantations. He’d already bought Sandyman’s mill before he came to Bag End, seemingly.’

‘Of course he started with a lot of property in the Southfarthing which he had from his dad; and it seems he’d been selling a lot o’ the best leaf, and sending it away quietly for a year or two. But at the end o’ last year he began sending away loads of stuff, not only leaf. Things began to get short, and winter coming on, too. Folk got angry, but he had his answer. A lot of Men, ruffians mostly, came with great waggons, some to carry off the goods south-away, and others to stay. And more came. And before we knew where we were they were planted here and there all over the Shire, and were felling trees and digging and building themselves sheds and houses just as they liked. At first goods and damage was paid for by Pimple; but soon they began lording it around and taking what they wanted.

‘Then there was a bit of trouble, but not enough. Old Will the Mayor set off for Bag End to protest, but he never got there. Ruffians laid hands on him and took and locked him up in a hole in Michel Delving, and there he is now. And after that, it would be soon after New Year, there wasn’t no more Mayor, and Pimple called himself Chief Shirriff, or just Chief, and did as he liked; and if anyone got “uppish” as they called it, they followed Will. So things went from bad to worse. There wasn’t no smoke left, save for the Men; and the Chief didn’t hold with beer, save for his Men, and closed all the inns; and everything except Rules got shorter and shorter, unless one could hide a bit of one’s own when the ruffians went round gathering stuff up “for fair distribution”: which meant they got it and we didn’t, except for the leavings which you could have at the Shirriff-houses, if you could stomach them. All very bad. But since Sharkey came it’s been plain ruination.’

‘Who is this Sharkey?’ said Merry. ‘I heard one of the ruffians speak of him.’

‘The biggest ruffian o’ the lot, seemingly,’ answered Cotton. ‘It was about last harvest, end o’ September maybe, that we first heard of him. We’ve never seen him, but he’s up at Bag End; and he’s the real Chief now, I guess. All the ruffians do what he says; and what he says is mostly: hack, burn, and ruin; and now it’s come to killing. There’s no longer even any bad sense in it. They cut down trees and let ’em lie, they burn houses and build no more.

‘Take Sandyman’s mill now. Pimple knocked it down almost as soon as he came to Bag End. Then he brought in a lot o’ dirty-looking Men to build a bigger one and fill it full o’ wheels and outlandish contraptions. Only that fool Ted was pleased by that, and he works there cleaning wheels for the Men, where his dad was the



Miller and his own master. Pimple's idea was to grind more and faster, or so he said. He's got other mills like it. But you've got to have grist before you can grind; and there was no more for the new mill to do than for the old. But since Sharkey came they don't grind no more corn at all. They're always a-hammering and a-letting out a smoke and a stench, and there isn't no peace even at night in Hobbiton. And they pour out filth a purpose; they've fouled all the lower Water, and it's getting down into Brandywine. If they want to make the Shire into a desert, they're going the right way about it. I don't believe that fool of a Pimple's behind all this. It's Sharkey, I say.'

'That's right!' put in Young Tom. 'Why, they even took Pimple's old ma, that Lobelia, and he was fond of her, if no-one else was. Some of the Hobbiton folk, they saw it. She comes down the lane with her old umberella. Some of the ruffians were going up with a big cart.'

"Where be you a-going?" says she.

"To Bag End," says they.

"What for?" says she.

"To put up some sheds for Sharkey," says they.

"Who said you could?" says she.

"Sharkey," says they. "So get out o' the road, old hagling!"

"I'll give you Sharkey, you dirty thieving ruffians!" says she, and ups with her umberella and goes for the leader, near twice her size. So they took her. Dragged her off to the Lockholes, at her age too. They've took others we miss more, but there's no denying she showed more spirit than most.'

Into the middle of this talk came Sam, bursting in with his gaffer. Old Gamgee did not look much older, but he was a little deafer.

'Good evening, Mr. Baggins!' he said. 'Glad indeed I am to see you safe back. But I've a bone to pick with you, in a manner o' speaking, if I may make so bold. You didn't never ought to have a' sold Bag End, as I always said. That's what started all the mischief. And while you've been trapessing in foreign parts, chasing Black Men up mountains from what my Sam says, though what for he don't make clear, they've been and dug up Bagshot Row and ruined my taters!'

'I am very sorry, Mr. Gamgee,' said Frodo. 'But now I've come back, I'll do my best to make amends.'

'Well, you can't say fairer than that,' said the Gaffer. 'Mr. *Frodo* Baggins is a real gentlehobbit, I always have said, whatever you may think of some others of the name, begging your pardon. And I hope my Sam's behaved hisself and given satisfaction?'

'Perfect satisfaction, Mr. Gamgee,' said Frodo. 'Indeed, if you will believe it, he's now one of the most famous people in all the lands, and they are making songs about his deeds from here to the Sea and beyond the Great River.' Sam blushed, but he looked gratefully at Frodo, for Rosie's eyes were shining and she was smiling at him.

'It takes a lot o' believing,' said the Gaffer, 'though I can see he's been mixing in strange company. What's come of his weskit? I don't hold with wearing ironmongery, whether it wears well or no.'

Farmer Cotton's household and all his guests were up early next morning. Nothing had been heard in the night, but more trouble would certainly come before the day was old. 'Seems as if none o' the ruffians were left up at Bag End,' said Cotton; 'but the gang from Waymeet will be along any time now.'

After breakfast a messenger from the Tookland rode in. He was in high spirits. 'The Thain has raised all our country,' he said, 'and the news is going like fire all ways. The ruffians that were watching our land have fled off south, those that escaped alive. The Thain has gone after them, to hold off the big gang down that way; but he's sent Mr. Peregrin back with all the other folk he can spare.'

The next news was less good. Merry, who had been out all night, came riding in about ten o'clock. 'There's a big band about four miles away,' he said. 'They're coming along the road from Waymeet, but a good many

stray ruffians have joined up with them. There must be close on a hundred of them; and they're fire-raising as they come. Curse them!

'Ah! This lot won't stay to talk, they'll kill, if they can,' said Farmer Cotton. 'If Tooks don't come sooner, we'd best get behind cover and shoot without arguing. There's got to be some fighting before this is settled, Mr. Frodo.'

The Tooks did come sooner. Before long they marched in, a hundred strong, from Tuckborough and the Green Hills with Pippin at their head. Merry now had enough sturdy hobbitry to deal with the ruffians. Scouts reported that they were keeping close together. They knew that the countryside had risen against them, and plainly meant to deal with the rebellion ruthlessly, at its centre in Bywater. But however grim they might be, they seemed to have no leader among them who understood warfare. They came on without any precautions. Merry laid his plans quickly.

The ruffians came tramping along the East Road, and without halting turned up the Bywater Road, which ran for some way sloping up between high banks with low hedges on top. Round a bend, about a furlong from the main road, they met a stout barrier of old farm-carts upturned. That halted them. At the same moment they became aware that the hedges on both sides, just above their heads, were all lined with hobbits. Behind them other hobbits now pushed out some more waggons that had been hidden in a field, and so blocked the way back. A voice spoke to them from above.

'Well, you have walked into a trap,' said Merry. 'Your fellows from Hobbiton did the same, and one is dead and the rest are prisoners. Lay down your weapons! Then go back twenty paces and sit down. Any who try to break out will be shot.'

But the ruffians could not now be cowed so easily. A few of them obeyed, but were immediately set on by their fellows. A score or more broke back and charged the waggons. Six were shot, but the remainder burst out, killing two hobbits, and then scattering across country in the direction of the Woody End. Two more fell as they ran. Merry blew a loud horn-call, and there were answering calls from a distance.

'They won't get far,' said Pippin. 'All that country is alive with our hunters now.'

Behind, the trapped Men in the lane, still about four score, tried to climb the barrier and the banks, and the hobbits were obliged to shoot many of them or hew them with axes. But many of the strongest and most desperate got out on the west side, and attacked their enemies fiercely, being now more bent on killing than escaping. Several hobbits fell, and the rest were wavering, when Merry and Pippin, who were on the east side, came across and charged the ruffians. Merry himself slew the leader, a great squint-eyed brute like a huge orc. Then he drew his forces off, encircling the last remnant of the Men in a wide ring of archers.

At last all was over. Nearly seventy of the ruffians lay dead on the field, and a dozen were prisoners. Nineteen hobbits were killed, and some thirty were wounded. The dead ruffians were laden on waggons and hauled off to an old sand-pit nearby and there buried: in the Battle Pit, as it was afterwards called. The fallen hobbits were laid together in a grave on the hill-side, where later a great stone was set up with a garden about it. So ended the Battle of Bywater, 1419, the last battle fought in the Shire, and the only battle since the Greenfields,<sup>384</sup> 1147, away up in the Northfarthing. In consequence, though it happily cost very few lives, it has a chapter to itself in the Red Book, and the names of all those who took part were made into a Roll, and learned by heart by Shire-historians. The very considerable rise in the fame and fortune of the Cottons dates from this time; but at the top of the Roll in all accounts stand the names of Captains Meriadoc and Peregrin.

Frodo had been in the battle, but he had not drawn sword, and his chief part had been to prevent the hobbits in their wrath at their losses, from slaying those of their enemies who threw down their weapons. When the fighting was over, and the later labours were ordered, Merry, Pippin, and Sam joined him, and they rode back with the Cottons. They ate a late midday meal, and then Frodo said with a sigh: 'Well, I suppose it is time now that we dealt with the "Chief"'

'Yes indeed; the sooner the better,' said Merry. 'And don't be too gentle! He's responsible for bringing in these ruffians, and for all the evil they have done.'

Farmer Cotton collected an escort of some two dozen sturdy hobbits. 'For it's only a guess that there is no ruffians left at Bag End,' he said. 'We don't know.' Then they set out on foot. Frodo, Sam, Merry, and Pippin led the way.

It was one of the saddest hours in their lives. The great chimney rose up before them; and as they drew near the old village across the Water, through rows of new mean houses along each side of the road, they saw the new mill in all its frowning and dirty ugliness: a great brick building straddling the stream, which it fouled with a steaming and stinking outflow. All along the Bywater Road every tree had been felled.

As they crossed the bridge and looked up the Hill they gasped. Even Sam's vision in the Mirror had not prepared him for what they saw. The Old Grange on the west side had been knocked down, and its place taken by rows of tarred sheds. All the chestnuts were gone. The banks and hedgerows were broken. Great waggons were standing in disorder in a field beaten bare of grass. Bagshot Row was a yawning sand and gravel quarry. Bag End up beyond could not be seen for a clutter of large huts.

'They've cut it down!' cried Sam. 'They've cut down the Party Tree!' He pointed to where the tree had stood under which Bilbo had made his Farewell Speech. It was lying lopped and dead in the field. As if this was the last straw Sam burst into tears.

A laugh put an end to them. There was a surly hobbit lounging over the low wall of the mill-yard. He was grimy-faced and black-handed. 'Don't 'ee like it, Sam?' he sneered. 'But you always was soft. I thought you'd gone off in one o' them ships you used to prattle about, sailing, sailing. What d'you want to come back for? We've work to do in the Shire now.'

'So I see,' said Sam. 'No time for washing, but time for wall-propping. But see here, Master Sandyman, I've a score to pay in this village, and don't you make it any longer with your jeering, or you'll foot a bill too big for your purse.'

Ted Sandyman spat over the wall. 'Garn!' he said. 'You can't touch me. I'm a friend o' the Boss's. But he'll touch you all right, if I have any more of your mouth.'

'Don't waste any more words on the fool, Sam!' said Frodo. 'I hope there are not many more hobbits that have become like this. It would be a worse trouble than all the damage the Men have done.'

'You are dirty and insolent, Sandyman,' said Merry. 'And also very much out of your reckoning. We are just going up the Hill to remove your precious Boss. We have dealt with his Men.'

Ted gaped, for at that moment he first caught sight of the escort that at a sign from Merry now marched over the bridge. Dashing back into the mill he ran out with a horn and blew it loudly.

'Save your breath!' laughed Merry. 'I've a better.' Then lifting up his silver horn he winded it, and its clear call rang over the Hill; and out of the holes and sheds and shabby houses of Hobbiton the hobbits answered, and came pouring out, and with cheers and loud cries they followed the company up the road to Bag End.

At the top of the lane the party halted, and Frodo and his friends went on; and they came at last to the once beloved place. The garden was full of huts and sheds, some so near the old westward windows that they cut off all their light. There were piles of refuse everywhere. The door was scarred; the bell-chain was dangling loose, and the bell would not ring. Knocking brought no answer. At length they pushed and the door yielded. They went in. The place stank and was full of filth and disorder: it did not appear to have been used for some time.

'Where is that miserable Lotho hiding?' said Merry. They had searched every room and found no living thing save rats and mice. 'Shall we turn on the others to search the sheds?'

'This is worse than Mordor!' said Sam. 'Much worse in a way. It comes home to you, as they say; because it is home, and you remember it before it was all ruined.'

'Yes, this is Mordor,' said Frodo. 'Just one of its works. Saruman was doing its work all the time, even when he thought he was working for himself. And the same with those that Saruman tricked, like Lotho.'

Merry looked round in dismay and disgust. 'Let's get out!' he said. 'If I had known all the mischief he had caused, I should have stuffed my pouch down Saruman's throat.'

‘No doubt, no doubt! But you did not, and so I am able to welcome you home.’ There standing at the door was Saruman himself, looking well-fed and well-pleased; his eyes gleamed with malice and amusement.

A sudden light broke on Frodo. ‘Sharkey!’ he cried.

Saruman laughed. ‘So you have heard the name, have you? All my people used to call me that in Isengard, I believe. A sign of affection, possibly.<sup>30</sup> But evidently you did not expect to see me here.’

‘I did not,’ said Frodo. ‘But I might have guessed. A little mischief in a mean way: Gandalf warned me that you were still capable of it.’

‘Quite capable,’ said Saruman, ‘and more than a little. You made me laugh, you hobbit-lordlings, riding along with all those great people, so secure and so pleased with your little selves. You thought you had done very well out of it all, and could now just amble back and have a nice quiet time in the country. Saruman’s home could be all wrecked, and he could be turned out, but no-one could touch yours. Oh no! Gandalf would look after your affairs.’

Saruman laughed again. ‘Not he! When his tools have done their task he drops them. But you must go dangling after him, dawdling and talking, and riding round twice as far as you needed. “Well,” thought I, “if they’re such fools, I will get ahead of them and teach them a lesson. One ill turn deserves another.” It would have been a sharper lesson, if only you had given me a little more time and more Men. Still I have already done much that you will find it hard to mend or undo in your lives. And it will be pleasant to think of that and set it against my injuries.’

‘Well, if that is what you find pleasure in,’ said Frodo, ‘I pity you. It will be a pleasure of memory only, I fear. Go at once and never return!’

The hobbits of the villages had seen Saruman come out of one of the huts, and at once they came crowding up to the door of Bag End. When they heard Frodo’s command, they murmured angrily:

‘Don’t let him go! Kill him! He’s a villain and a murderer. Kill him!’

Saruman looked round at their hostile faces and smiled. ‘Kill him!’ he mocked. ‘Kill him, if you think there are enough of you, my brave hobbits!’ He drew himself up and stared at them darkly with his black eyes. ‘But do not think that when I lost all my goods I lost all my power! Whoever strikes me shall be accursed. And if my blood stains the Shire, it shall wither and never again be healed.’

The hobbits recoiled. But Frodo said: ‘Do not believe him! He has lost all power, save his voice that can still daunt you and deceive you, if you let it. But I will not have him slain. It is useless to meet revenge with revenge: it will heal nothing. Go, Saruman, by the speediest way!’

‘Worm! Worm!’ Saruman called; and out of a nearby hut came Wormtongue, crawling, almost like a dog. ‘To the road again, Worm!’ said Saruman. ‘These fine fellows and lordlings are turning us adrift again. Come along!’

Saruman turned to go, and Wormtongue shuffled after him. But even as Saruman passed close to Frodo a knife flashed in his hand, and he stabbed swiftly. The blade turned on the hidden mail-coat and snapped. A dozen hobbits, led by Sam, leaped forward with a cry and flung the villain to the ground. Sam drew his sword.

‘No, Sam!’ said Frodo. ‘Do not kill him even now. For he has not hurt me. And in any case I do not wish him to be slain in this evil mood. He was great once, of a noble kind that we should not dare to raise our hands against. He is fallen, and his cure is beyond us; but I would still spare him, in the hope that he may find it.’

Saruman rose to his feet, and stared at Frodo. There was a strange look in his eyes of mingled wonder and respect and hatred. ‘You have grown, Halfling,’ he said. ‘Yes, you have grown very much. You are wise, and cruel. You have robbed my revenge of sweetness, and now I must go hence in bitterness, in debt to your mercy.’

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<sup>30</sup> It was probably Orkish in origin: *sharkû*, ‘old man’.

I hate it and you! Well, I go and I will trouble you no more. But do not expect me to wish you health and long life. You will have neither. But that is not my doing. I merely foretell.'

He walked away, and the hobbits made a lane for him to pass; but their knuckles whitened as they gripped on their weapons. Wormtongue hesitated, and then followed his master.

'Wormtongue!' called Frodo. 'You need not follow him. I know of no evil you have done to me. You can have rest and food here for a while, until you are stronger and can go your own ways.'

Wormtongue halted and looked back at him, half prepared to stay. Saruman turned. 'No evil?' he cackled. 'Oh no! Even when he sneaks out at night it is only to look at the stars. But did I hear someone ask where poor Lotho is hiding? You know, don't you, Worm? Will you tell them?'

Wormtongue cowered down and whimpered: 'No, no!'

'Then I will,' said Saruman. 'Worm killed your Chief, poor little fellow, your nice little Boss. Didn't you, Worm? Stabbed him in his sleep, I believe. Buried him, I hope; though Worm has been very hungry lately. No, Worm is not really nice. You had better leave him to me.'

A look of wild hatred came into Wormtongue's red eyes. 'You told me to; you made me do it,' he hissed.

Saruman laughed. 'You do what Sharkey says, always, don't you, Worm? Well, now he says: follow!' He kicked Wormtongue in the face as he grovelled, and turned and made off. But at that something snapped: suddenly Wormtongue rose up, drawing a hidden knife, and then with a snarl like a dog he sprang on Saruman's back, jerked his head back, cut his throat, and with a yell ran off down the lane. Before Frodo could recover or speak a word, three hobbit-bows twanged and Wormtongue fell dead.

To the dismay of those that stood by, about the body of Saruman a grey mist gathered, and rising slowly to a great height like smoke from a fire, as a pale shrouded figure it loomed over the Hill. For a moment it wavered, looking to the West; but out of the West came a cold wind, and it bent away, and with a sigh dissolved into nothing.

Frodo looked down at the body with pity and horror, for as he looked it seemed that long years of death were suddenly revealed in it, and it shrank, and the shrivelled face became rags of skin upon a hideous skull. Lifting up the skirt of the dirty cloak that sprawled beside it, he covered it over, and turned away.

'And that's the end of that,' said Sam. 'A nasty end, and I wish I needn't have seen it; but it's a good riddance.'

'And the very last end of the War, I hope,' said Merry.

'I hope so,' said Frodo and sighed. 'The very last stroke. But to think that it should fall here, at the very door of Bag End! Among all my hopes and fears at least I never expected that.'

'I shan't call it the end, till we've cleared up the mess,' said Sam gloomily. 'And that'll take a lot of time and work.'



## Chapter 9: The Grey Havens

The clearing up certainly needed a lot of work, but it took less time than Sam had feared. The day after the battle Frodo rode to Michel Delving and released the prisoners from the Lockholes. One of the first that they found was poor Fredegar Bolger, Fatty no longer. He had been taken when the ruffians smoked out a band of rebels that he led from their hidings up in the Brockenbores by the hills of Scary.

‘You would have done better to come with us after all, poor old Fredegar!’ said Pippin, as they carried him out too weak to walk.

He opened an eye and tried gallantly to smile. ‘Who’s this young giant with the loud voice?’ he whispered. ‘Not little Pippin! What’s your size in hats now?’

Then there was Lobelia. Poor thing, she looked very old and thin when they rescued her from a dark and narrow cell. She insisted on hobbling out on her own feet; and she had such a welcome, and there was such clapping and cheering when she appeared, leaning on Frodo’s arm but still clutching her umbrella, that she was quite touched, and drove away in tears. She had never in her life been popular before. But she was crushed by the news of Lotho’s murder, and she would not return to Bag End. She gave it back to Frodo, and went to her own people, the Bracegirdles of Hardbottle.

When the poor creature died next spring—she was after all more than a hundred years old—Frodo was surprised and much moved: she had left all that remained of her money and of Lotho’s for him to use in helping hobbits made homeless by the troubles. So that feud was ended.

Old Will Whitfoot had been in the Lockholes longer than any, and though he had perhaps been treated less harshly than some, he needed a lot of feeding up before he could look the part of Mayor; so Frodo agreed to act as his Deputy, until Mr. Whitfoot was in shape again. The only thing that he did as Deputy Mayor was to reduce the Shirriffs to their proper functions and numbers. The task of hunting out the last remnant of the ruffians was left to Merry and Pippin, and it was soon done. The southern gangs, after hearing the news of the Battle of Bywater, fled out of the land and offered little resistance to the Thain. Before the Year’s End the few survivors were rounded up in the woods, and those that surrendered were shown to the borders.

Meanwhile the labour of repair went on apace, and Sam was kept very busy. Hobbits can work like bees when the mood and the need comes on them. Now there were thousands of willing hands of all ages, from the small but nimble ones of the hobbit lads and lasses to the well-worn and horny ones of the gaffers and gammers. Before Yule not a brick was left standing of the new Shirriff-houses or of anything that had been built by ‘Sharkey’s Men’; but the bricks were used to repair many an old hole, to make it snugger and drier. Great stores of goods and food, and beer, were found that had been hidden away by the ruffians in sheds and barns and deserted holes, and especially in the tunnels at Michel Delving and in the old quarries at Scary; so that there was a great deal better cheer that Yule than anyone had hoped for.

One of the first things done in Hobbiton, before even the removal of the new mill, was the clearing of the Hill and Bag End, and the restoration of Bagshot Row. The front of the new sand-pit was all levelled and made into a large sheltered garden, and new holes were dug in the southward face, back into the Hill, and they were lined with brick. The Gaffer was restored to Number Three; and he said often and did not care who heard it:

‘It’s an ill wind as blows nobody no good, as I always say. And All’s well as ends Better!’

There was some discussion of the name that the new row should be given. *Battle Gardens* was thought of, or *Better Smials*. But after a while in sensible hobbit-fashion it was just called *New Row*. It was a purely Bywater joke to refer to it as Sharkey’s End.

The trees were the worst loss and damage, for at Sharkey's bidding they had been cut down recklessly far and wide over the Shire; and Sam grieved over this more than anything else. For one thing, this hurt would take long to heal, and only his great-grandchildren, he thought, would see the Shire as it ought to be.

Then suddenly one day, for he had been too busy for weeks to give a thought to his adventures, he remembered the gift of Galadriel. He brought the box out and showed it to the other Travellers (for so they were now called by everyone), and asked their advice.

'I wondered when you would think of it,' said Frodo. 'Open it!'

Inside it was filled with a grey dust, soft and fine, in the middle of which was a seed, like a small nut with a silver shale. 'What can I do with this?' said Sam.

'Throw it in the air on a breezy day and let it do its work!' said Pippin.

'On what?' said Sam.

'Choose one spot as a nursery, and see what happens to the plants there,' said Merry.

'But I'm sure the Lady would not like me to keep it all for my own garden, now so many folk have suffered,' said Sam.

'Use all the wits and knowledge you have of your own, Sam,' said Frodo, 'and then use the gift to help your work and better it. And use it sparingly. There is not much here, and I expect every grain has a value.'

So Sam planted saplings in all the places where specially beautiful or beloved trees had been destroyed, and he put a grain of the precious dust in the soil at the root of each. He went up and down the Shire in this labour; but if he paid special attention to Hobbiton and Bywater no-one blamed him. And at the end he found that he still had a little of the dust left; so he went to the Three-Farthing Stone, which is as near the centre of the Shire as no matter, and cast it in the air with his blessing. The little silver nut he planted in the Party Field where the tree had once been; and he wondered what would come of it. All through the winter he remained as patient as he could, and tried to restrain himself from going round constantly to see if anything was happening.

Spring surpassed his wildest hopes. His trees began to sprout and grow, as if time was in a hurry and wished to make one year do for twenty. In the Party Field a beautiful young sapling leaped up: it had silver bark and long leaves and burst into golden flowers in April. It was indeed a *mallorn*, and it was the wonder of the neighbourhood. In after years, as it grew in grace and beauty, it was known far and wide and people would come long journeys to see it: the only *mallorn* west of the Mountains and east of the Sea, and one of the finest in the world.

Altogether 1420 in the Shire was a marvellous year. Not only was there wonderful sunshine and delicious rain, in due times and perfect measure, but there seemed something more: an air of richness and growth, and a gleam of a beauty beyond that of mortal summers that flicker and pass upon this Middle-earth. All the children born or begotten in that year, and there were many, were fair to see and strong, and most of them had a rich golden hair that had before been rare among hobbits. The fruit was so plentiful that young hobbits very nearly bathed in strawberries and cream; and later they sat on the lawns under the plum-trees and ate, until they had made piles of stones like small pyramids or the heaped skulls of a conqueror, and then they moved on. And no-one was ill, and everyone was pleased, except those who had to mow the grass.

In the Southfarthing the vines were laden, and the yield of 'leaf' was astonishing; and everywhere there was so much corn that at Harvest every barn was stuffed. The Northfarthing barley was so fine that the beer of 1420 malt was long remembered and became a byword. Indeed a generation later one might hear an old gaffer in an inn, after a good pint of well-earned ale, put down his mug with a sigh: 'Ah! that was proper fourteen-twenty, that was!'

Sam stayed at first at the Cottons' with Frodo; but when the New Row was ready he went with the Gaffer. In addition to all his other labours he was busy directing the cleaning up and restoring of Bag End; but he was often away in the Shire on his forestry work. So he was not at home in early March and did not know that Frodo had been ill. On the thirteenth of that month Farmer Cotton found Frodo lying on his bed; he was clutching a white gem that hung on a chain about his neck and he seemed half in a dream.

‘It is gone for ever,’ he said, ‘and now all is dark and empty.’

But the fit passed, and when Sam got back on the twenty-fifth, Frodo had recovered, and he said nothing about himself. In the meanwhile Bag End had been set in order, and Merry and Pippin came over from Crickhollow bringing back all the old furniture and gear, so that the old hole soon looked very much as it always had done.

When all was at last ready Frodo said: ‘When are you going to move in and join me, Sam?’

Sam looked a bit awkward.

‘There is no need to come yet, if you don’t want to,’ said Frodo. ‘But you know the Gaffer is close at hand, and he will be very well looked after by Widow Rumble.’

‘It’s not that, Mr. Frodo,’ said Sam, and he went very red.

‘Well, what is it?’

‘It’s Rosie, Rose Cotton,’ said Sam. ‘It seems she didn’t like my going abroad at all, poor lass; but as I hadn’t spoken, she couldn’t say so. And I didn’t speak, because I had a job to do first. But now I have spoken, and she says: “Well, you’ve wasted a year, so why wait longer?” “Wasted?” I says. “I wouldn’t call it that.” Still I see what she means. I feel torn in two, as you might say.’

‘I see,’ said Frodo: ‘you want to get married, and yet you want to live with me in Bag End too? But my dear Sam, how easy! Get married as soon as you can, and then move in with Rosie. There’s room enough in Bag End for as big a family as you could wish for.’

And so it was settled. Sam Gamgee married Rose Cotton in the spring of 1420 (which was also famous for its weddings), and they came and lived at Bag End. And if Sam thought himself lucky, Frodo knew that he was more lucky himself; for there was not a hobbit in the Shire that was looked after with such care. When the labours of repair had all been planned and set going he took to a quiet life, writing a great deal and going through all his notes. He resigned the office of Deputy Mayor at the Free Fair that Midsummer, and dear old Will Whitfoot had another seven years of presiding at Banquets.

Merry and Pippin lived together for some time at Crickhollow, and there was much coming and going between Buckland and Bag End. The two young Travellers cut a great dash in the Shire with their songs and their tales and their finery, and their wonderful parties. ‘Lordly’ folk called them, meaning nothing but good; for it warmed all hearts to see them go riding by with their mail-shirts so bright and their shields so splendid, laughing and singing songs of far away; and if they were now large and magnificent, they were unchanged otherwise, unless they were indeed more fairspoken and more jovial and full of merriment than ever before.

Frodo and Sam, however, went back to ordinary attire, except that when there was need they both wore long grey cloaks, finely woven and clasped at the throat with beautiful brooches; and Mr. Frodo wore always a white jewel on a chain that he often would finger.

All things now went well, with hope always of becoming still better; and Sam was as busy and as full of delight as even a hobbit could wish. Nothing for him marred that whole year, except for some vague anxiety about his master. Frodo dropped quietly out of all the doings of the Shire, and Sam was pained to notice how little honour he had in his own country. Few people knew or wanted to know about his deeds and adventures; their admiration and respect were given mostly to Mr. Meriadoc and Mr. Peregrin and (if Sam had known it) to himself. Also in the autumn there appeared a shadow of old troubles.

One evening Sam came into the study and found his master looking very strange. He was very pale and his eyes seemed to see things far away.

‘What’s the matter, Mr. Frodo?’ said Sam.

‘I am wounded,’ he answered, ‘wounded; it will never really heal.’

But then he got up, and the turn seemed to pass, and he was quite himself the next day. It was not until afterwards that Sam recalled that the date was October the sixth. Two years before on that day it was dark in the dell under Weathertop.



Time went on, and 1421 came in. Frodo was ill again in March, but with a great effort he concealed it, for Sam had other things to think about. The first of Sam and Rosie's children was born on the twenty-fifth of March, a date that Sam noted.

'Well, Mr. Frodo,' he said. 'I'm in a bit of a fix. Rose and me had settled to call him Frodo, with your leave; but it's not *him*, it's *her*. Though as pretty a maidchild as anyone could hope for, taking after Rose more than me, luckily. So we don't know what to do.'

'Well, Sam,' said Frodo, 'what's wrong with the old customs? Choose a flower name like Rose. Half the maidchildren in the Shire are called by such names, and what could be better?'

'I suppose you're right, Mr. Frodo,' said Sam. 'I've heard some beautiful names on my travels, but I suppose they're a bit too grand for daily wear and tear, as you might say. The Gaffer, he says: "Make it short, and then you won't have to cut it short before you can use it." But if it's to be a flower-name, then I don't trouble about the length: it must be a beautiful flower, because, you see, I think she is very beautiful, and is going to be beautifuller still.'

Frodo thought for a moment. 'Well, Sam, what about *elanor*, the sun-star, you remember the little golden flower in the grass of Lothlórien?'

'You're right again, Mr. Frodo!' said Sam delighted. 'That's what I wanted.'

Little Elanor was nearly six months old, and 1421 had passed to its autumn, when Frodo called Sam into the study.

'It will be Bilbo's Birthday on Thursday, Sam,' he said. 'And he will pass the Old Took. He will be a hundred and thirty-one!'

'So he will!' said Sam. 'He's a marvel!'

'Well, Sam,' said Frodo, 'I want you to see Rose and find out if she can spare you, so that you and I can go off together. You can't go far or for a long time now, of course,' he said a little wistfully.

'Well, not very well, Mr. Frodo.'

'Of course not. But never mind. You can see me on my way. Tell Rose that you won't be away very long, not more than a fortnight; and you'll come back quite safe.'

'I wish I could go all the way with you to Rivendell, Mr. Frodo, and see Mr. Bilbo,' said Sam. 'And yet the only place I really want to be in is here. I am that torn in two.'

'Poor Sam! It will feel like that, I am afraid,' said Frodo. 'But you will be healed. You were meant to be solid and whole, and you will be.'

In the next day or two Frodo went through his papers and his writings with Sam, and he handed over his keys. There was a big book with plain red leather covers; its tall pages were now almost filled. At the beginning there were many leaves covered with Bilbo's thin wandering hand; but most of it was written in Frodo's firm flowing script. It was divided into chapters but Chapter 80 was unfinished, and after that were some blank leaves. The title page had many titles on it, crossed out one after another, so:

*My Diary. My Unexpected Journey. There and Back Again. And What Happened After.*

*Adventures of Five Hobbits. The Tale of the Great Ring, compiled by Bilbo Baggins from his own observations and the accounts of his friends. What we did in the War of the Ring.*

Here Bilbo's hand ended and Frodo had written:

THE DOWNFALL  
OF THE  
LORD OF THE RINGS  
AND THE  
RETURN OF THE KING

(as seen by the Little People; being the memoirs of Bilbo and Frodo of the Shire, supplemented by the accounts of their friends and the learning of the Wise.)

Together with extracts from Books of Lore translated by Bilbo in Rivendell.

‘Why, you have nearly finished it, Mr. Frodo!’ Sam exclaimed. ‘Well, you have kept at it, I must say.’

‘I have quite finished, Sam,’ said Frodo. ‘The last pages are for you.’

On September the twenty-first they set out together, Frodo on the pony that had borne him all the way from Minas Tirith, and was now called Strider; and Sam on his beloved Bill. It was a fair golden morning, and Sam did not ask where they were going: he thought he could guess.

They took the Stock Road over the hills and went towards the Woody End, and they let their ponies walk at their leisure. They camped in the Green Hills, and on September the twenty-second they rode gently down into the beginning of the trees as afternoon was wearing away.

‘If that isn’t the very tree you hid behind when the Black Rider first showed up, Mr. Frodo!’ said Sam pointing to the left. ‘It seems like a dream now.’

It was evening, and the stars were glimmering in the eastern sky as they passed the ruined oak and turned and went on down the hill between the hazel-thickets. Sam was silent, deep in his memories. Presently he became aware that Frodo was singing softly to himself, singing the old walking-song, but the words were not quite the same.

*Still round the corner there may wait  
A new road or a secret gate;  
And though I oft have passed them by,  
A day will come at last when I  
Shall take the hidden paths that run  
West of the Moon, East of the Sun.*

And as if in answer, from down below, coming up the road out of the valley, voices sang:

*A! Elbereth Gilthoniel!  
silivren penna míriel  
o menel aglar elenath,  
Gilthoniel, A! Elbereth!  
We still remember, we who dwell  
In this far land beneath the trees  
The starlight on the Western Seas.*

Frodo and Sam halted and sat silent in the soft shadows, until they saw a shimmer as the travellers came towards them.

There was Gildor and many fair Elven folk; and there to Sam’s wonder rode Elrond and Galadriel. Elrond wore a mantle of grey and had a star upon his forehead, and a silver harp was in his hand, and upon his finger was a ring of gold with a great blue stone, Vilya, mightiest of the Three. But Galadriel sat upon a white palfrey and was robed all in glimmering white, like clouds about the Moon; for she herself seemed to shine with a soft light. On her finger was Nenya, the ring wrought of *mithril*, that bore a single white stone flickering like a frosty star. Riding slowly behind on a small grey pony, and seeming to nod in his sleep, was Bilbo himself.

Elrond greeted them gravely and graciously, and Galadriel smiled upon them. ‘Well, Master Samwise,’ she said. ‘I hear and see that you have used my gift well. The Shire shall now be more than ever blessed and beloved.’ Sam bowed, but found nothing to say. He had forgotten how beautiful the Lady was.

Then Bilbo woke up and opened his eyes. ‘Hullo, Frodo!’ he said. ‘Well, I have passed the Old Took today! So that’s settled. And now I think I am quite ready to go on another journey. Are you coming?’

‘Yes, I am coming,’ said Frodo. ‘The Ring-bearers should go together.’

‘Where are you going, Master?’ cried Sam, though at last he understood what was happening.

‘To the Havens, Sam,’ said Frodo.

‘And I can’t come.’

‘No, Sam. Not yet anyway, not further than the Havens. Though you too were a Ring-bearer, if only for a little while. Your time may come. Do not be too sad, Sam. You cannot be always torn in two. You will have to be one and whole, for many years. You have so much to enjoy and to be, and to do.’

‘But,’ said Sam, and tears started in his eyes, ‘I thought you were going to enjoy the Shire, too, for years and years, after all you have done.’

‘So I thought too, once. But I have been too deeply hurt, Sam. I tried to save the Shire, and it has been saved, but not for me. It must often be so, Sam, when things are in danger: someone has to give them up, lose them, so that others may keep them. But you are my heir: all that I had and might have had I leave to you. And also you have Rose, and Elanor; and Frodo-lad will come, and Rosie-lass, and Merry, and Goldilocks, and Pippin; and perhaps more that I cannot see. Your hands and your wits will be needed everywhere. You will be the Mayor, of course, as long as you want to be, and the most famous gardener in history; and you will read things out of the Red Book, and keep alive the memory of the age that is gone, so that people will remember the Great Danger and so love their beloved land all the more. And that will keep you as busy and as happy as anyone can be, as long as your part of the Story goes on.

‘Come now, ride with me!’

Then Elrond and Galadriel rode on; for the Third Age was over, and the Days of the Rings were passed, and an end was come of the story and song of those times. With them went many Elves of the High Kindred who would no longer stay in Middle-earth; and among them, filled with a sadness that was yet blessed and without bitterness, rode Sam, and Frodo, and Bilbo, and the Elves delighted to honour them.

Though they rode through the midst of the Shire all the evening and all the night, none saw them pass, save the wild creatures; or here and there some wanderer in the dark who saw a swift shimmer under the trees, or a light and shadow flowing through the grass as the Moon went westward. And when they had passed from the Shire, going about the south skirts of the White Downs, they came to the Far Downs, and to the Towers, and looked on the distant Sea; and so they rode down at last to Mithlond, to the Grey Havens in the long firth of Lune.

As they came to the gates Círdan the Shipwright came forth to greet them. Very tall he was, and his beard was long, and he was grey and old, save that his eyes were keen as stars; and he looked at them and bowed, and said: ‘All is now ready.’

Then Círdan led them to the Havens, and there was a white ship lying, and upon the quay beside a great grey horse stood a figure robed all in white awaiting them. As he turned and came towards them Frodo saw that Gandalf now wore openly on his hand the Third Ring, Narya the Great, and the stone upon it was red as fire. Then those who were to go were glad, for they knew that Gandalf also would take ship with them.

But Sam was now sorrowful at heart, and it seemed to him that if the parting would be bitter, more grievous still would be the long road home alone. But even as they stood there, and the Elves were going aboard, and all was being made ready to depart, up rode Merry and Pippin in great haste. And amid his tears Pippin laughed.

‘You tried to give us the slip once before and failed, Frodo,’ he said. ‘This time you have nearly succeeded, but you have failed again. It was not Sam, though, that gave you away this time, but Gandalf himself!’

‘Yes,’ said Gandalf; ‘for it will be better to ride back three together than one alone. Well, here at last, dear friends, on the shores of the Sea comes the end of our fellowship in Middle-earth. Go in peace! I will not say: do not weep; for not all tears are an evil.’

Then Frodo kissed Merry and Pippin, and last of all Sam, and went aboard; and the sails were drawn up, and the wind blew, and slowly the ship slipped away down the long grey firth; and the light of the glass of Galadriel that Frodo bore glimmered and was lost. And the ship went out into the High Sea and passed on into the West, until at last on a night of rain Frodo smelled a sweet fragrance on the air and heard the sound of singing that

came over the water. And then it seemed to him that as in his dream in the house of Bombadil, the grey rain-curtain turned all to silver glass and was rolled back, and he beheld white shores and beyond them a far green country under a swift sunrise.

But to Sam the evening deepened to darkness as he stood at the Haven; and as he looked at the grey sea he saw only a shadow on the waters that was soon lost in the West. There still he stood far into the night, hearing only the sigh and murmur of the waves on the shores of Middle-earth, and the sound of them sank deep into his heart. Beside him stood Merry and Pippin, and they were silent.

At last the three companions turned away, and never again looking back they rode slowly homewards; and they spoke no word to one another until they came back to the Shire, but each had great comfort in his friends on the long grey road.

At last they rode over the downs and took the East Road, and then Merry and Pippin rode on to Buckland; and already they were singing again as they went. But Sam turned to Bywater, and so came back up the Hill, as day was ending once more. And he went on, and there was yellow light, and fire within; and the evening meal was ready, and he was expected. And Rose drew him in, and set him in his chair, and put little Elanor upon his lap.

He drew a deep breath. 'Well, I'm back,' he said.

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# UNFINISHED TALES

## OF NÚMENOR AND MIDDLE-EARTH



J.R.R. TOLKIEN

[illegible]

J.R.R. TOLKIEN  
**UNFINISHED TALES**

of Númenor and Middle-earth

edited by

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*Unfinished Tales of Númenor and Middle-earth* is a collection of narratives ranging in time from the Elder Days of Middle-earth to the end of the War of the Ring, and comprising such various elements as Gandalf's lively account of how it was that he came to send the Dwarves to the celebrated party at Bag-End, the emergence of the sea-god Ulmo before the eyes of Tuor on the coast of Beleriand, and an exact description of the military organisation of the Riders of Rohan. The book contains the only story that survived from the long ages of Númenor before its downfall, and all that is known of such matters as the Five Wizards, the Palantíri, or the legend of Amroth.

Writing of the Appendices to *The Lord of the Rings* J. R. R. Tolkien said in 1955: 'Those who enjoy the book as a "heroic romance" only, and find "unexplained vistas" part of the literary effect, will neglect the Appendices, very properly.' *Unfinished Tales* is avowedly for those who, on the contrary, have not yet sufficiently explored Middle-earth, its languages, its legends, its politics, and its kings.

Christopher Tolkien has edited and introduces this collection. He has also redrawn the map for *The Lord of the Rings* to a larger scale and reproduced the only [map](#) of Númenor that J. R. R. Tolkien ever made.





## Note

[Note to this unofficial compilation: The note below has been retained from the source text although it does not apply to this version. Here indents have been removed (because I hate to see space wasted on a small screen) and quoted text (*i.e.*, Christopher quoting his father's writing) is rendered in *italics*. P.L.]

It has been necessary to distinguish author and editor in different ways in different parts of this book, since the incidence of commentary is very various. The author appears in larger type in the primary texts throughout; if the editor intrudes into one of these texts he is in smaller type indented from the margin (e.g. [p. 380](#)). In *The History of Galadriel and Celeborn*, however, where the editorial text is predominant, the reverse indentation is employed. In the Appendices (and also in *The Further Course of the Narrative* of 'Aldarion and Erendis', [pp. 264ff.](#)) both author and editor are in the smaller type, with citations from the author indented (e.g. [p. 198](#)).

Notes to texts in the Appendices are given as footnotes rather than as numbered references; and the author's own annotation of a text at a particular point is indicated throughout by the words '[Author's note]'.



## Introduction

The problems that confront one given responsibility for the writings of a dead author are hard to resolve. Some persons in this position may elect to make no material whatsoever available for publication, save perhaps for work that was in a virtually finished state at the time of the author's death. In the case of the unpublished writings of J. R. R. Tolkien this might seem at first sight the proper course; since he himself, peculiarly critical and exacting of his own work, would not have dreamt of allowing even the more completed narratives in this book to appear without much further refinement.

On the other hand, the nature and scope of his invention seems to me to place even his abandoned stories in a peculiar position. That *The Silmarillion* should remain unknown was for me out of the question, despite its disordered state, and despite my father's known if very largely unfulfilled intentions for its transformation; and in that case I presumed, after long hesitation, to present the work not in the form of an historical study, a complex of divergent texts interlinked by commentary, but as a completed and cohesive entity. The narratives in this book are indeed on an altogether different footing: taken together they constitute no whole, and the book is no more than a collection of writings, disparate in form, intent, finish, and date of composition (and in my own treatment of them), concerned with Númenor and Middle-earth. But the argument for their publication is not different in its nature, though it is of lesser force, from that which I held to justify the publication of *The Silmarillion*. Those who would not have forgone the images of Melkor with Ungoliant looking down from the summit of Hyarmentir upon 'the fields and pastures of Yavanna, gold beneath the tall wheat of the gods'; of the shadows of Fingolfin's host cast by the first moonrise in the West; of Beren lurking in wolf's shape beneath the throne of Morgoth; or of the light of the Silmaril suddenly revealed in the darkness of the Forest of Neldoreth—they will find, I believe, that imperfections of form in these tales are much outweighed by the voice (heard now for the last time) of Gandalf, teasing the lordly Saruman at the meeting of the White Council in the year 2851, or describing in Minas Tirith after the end of the War of the Ring how it was that he came to send the Dwarves to the celebrated party at Bag-End; by the arising of Ulmo Lord of Waters out of the sea at Vinyamar; by Mablung of Doriath hiding 'like a vole' beneath the ruins of the bridge at Nargothrond; or by the death of Isildur as he floundered up out of the mud of Anduin.

Many of the pieces in this collection are elaborations of matters told more briefly, or at least referred to, elsewhere; and it must be said at once that much in the book will be found unrewarding by readers of *The Lord of the Rings* who, holding that the historical structure of Middle-earth is a means and not an end, the mode of the narrative and not its purpose, feel small desire of further exploration for its own sake, do not wish to know how the Riders of the Mark of Rohan were organised, and would leave the Wild Men of the Drúadan Forest firmly where they found them. My father would certainly not have thought them wrong. He said in a letter written in March 1955, before the publication of the third volume of *The Lord of the Rings*:

*I now wish that no appendices had been promised! For I think their appearance in truncated and compressed form will satisfy nobody: certainly not me; clearly from the (appalling mass of) letters I receive not those people who like that kind of thing—astonishingly many; while those who enjoy the book as an 'heroic romance' only, and find 'unexplained vistas' part of the literary effect, will neglect the appendices, very properly.*

*I am not now at all sure that the tendency to treat the whole thing as a kind of vast game is really good—certainly not for me, who find that kind of thing only too fatally attractive. It is, I suppose, a tribute to the curious effect that story has, when based on very elaborate and detailed workings of geography, chronology, and language, that so many should clamour for sheer 'information', or 'lore'.*

In a letter of the following year he wrote:

. . . . while many like you demand maps, others wish for geological indications rather than places; many want Elvish grammars, phonologies, and specimens; some want metrics and prosodies . . . Musicians want tunes, and musical notation; archaeologists want ceramics and metallurgy; botanists want a more accurate description of the mallorn, of elanor, niphredil, alfirin, mallos, and symbelmyne; historians want more details about the social and political structure of Gondor; general enquirers want information about the Wainriders, the Harad, Dwarvish origins, the Dead Men, the Beornings, and the missing two wizards (out of five).

But whatever view may be taken of this question, for some, as for myself, there is a value greater than the mere uncovering of curious detail in learning that Vëantur the Númenórean brought his ship *Entulessë*, the ‘Return’, into the Grey Havens on the spring winds of the six hundredth year of the Second Age, that the tomb of Elendil the Tall was set by Isildur his son on the summit of the beacon-hill Halifirien, that the Black Rider whom the Hobbits saw in the foggy darkness on the far side of Bucklebury Ferry was Khamûl, chief of the Ringwraiths of Dol Guldur—or even that the childlessness of Tarannon twelfth King of Gondor (a fact recorded in an Appendix to *The Lord of the Rings*) was associated with the hitherto wholly mysterious cats of Queen Berúthiel.

The construction of the book has been difficult, and in the result is somewhat complex. The narratives are all ‘unfinished’, but to a greater or lesser degree, and in different senses of the word, and have required different treatment; I shall say something below about each one in turn, and here only call attention to some general features.

The most important is the question of ‘consistency’, best illustrated from the section entitled *The History of Galadriel and Celeborn*. This is an ‘Unfinished Tale’ in a larger sense: not a narrative that comes to an abrupt halt, as in *Of Tuor and his Coming to Gondolin*, nor a series of fragments, as in *Cirion and Eorl*, but a primary strand in the history of Middle-earth that never received a settled definition, let alone a final written form. The inclusion of the unpublished narratives and sketches of narrative on this subject therefore entails at once the acceptance of the history not as a fixed, independently-existing reality which the author ‘reports’ (in his ‘persona’ as translator and redactor), but as a growing and shifting conception in his mind. When the author has ceased to publish his works himself, after subjecting them to his own detailed criticism and comparison, the further knowledge of Middle-earth to be found in his unpublished writings will often conflict with what is already ‘known’; and new elements set into the existing edifice will in such cases tend to contribute less to the history of the invented world itself than to the history of its invention. In this book I have accepted from the outset that this must be so; and except in minor details such as shifts in nomenclature (where retention of the manuscript form would lead to disproportionate confusion or disproportionate space in elucidation) I have made no alterations for the sake of consistency with published works, but rather drawn attention throughout to conflicts and variations. In this respect therefore ‘*Unfinished Tales*’ is essentially different from *The Silmarillion*, where a primary though not exclusive objective in the editing was to achieve cohesion both internal and external; and except in a few specified cases I have indeed treated the published form of *The Silmarillion* as a fixed point of reference of the same order as the writings published by my father himself, without taking into account the innumerable ‘unauthorised’ decisions between variants and rival versions that went into its making.

In content the book is entirely narrative (or descriptive): I have excluded all writings about Middle-earth and Aman that are of a primarily philosophic or speculative nature, and where such matters from time to time arise I have not pursued them. I have imposed a simple structure of convenience by dividing the texts into Parts corresponding to the first Three Ages of the World, there being in this inevitably some overlap, as with the legend of Amroth and its discussion in *The History of Galadriel and Celeborn*. The fourth part is an appendage, and may require some excuse in a book called ‘*Unfinished Tales*’, since the pieces it contains are generalised and discursive essays with little or no element of ‘story’. The section on *The Driedain* did indeed owe its original inclusion to the story of *The Faithful Stone* which forms a small part of it; and this section led me to introduce those on *The Istari* and *The Palantíri*, since they (especially the former) are matters about which many people have expressed curiosity, and this book seemed a convenient place to expound what there is to tell.

The notes may seem to be in some places rather thick on the ground, but it will be seen that where clustered most densely (as in *The Disaster of the Gladden Fields*) they are due less to the editor than to the author, who in his later work tended to compose in this way, driving several subjects abreast by means of interlaced notes. I have throughout tried to make it clear what is editorial and what is not. And because of this abundance of original material appearing in the notes and appendices I have thought it best not to restrict the page-references in the Index to the texts themselves but to cover all parts of the book except the Introduction.

I have throughout assumed on the reader's part a fair knowledge of the published works of my father (more especially *The Lord of the Rings*), for to have done otherwise would have greatly enlarged the editorial element, which may well be thought quite sufficient already. I have, however, included short defining statements with almost all the primary entries in the Index, in the hope of saving the reader from constant reference elsewhere. If I have been inadequate in explanation or unintentionally obscure, Mr Robert Foster's *Complete Guide to Middle-earth* supplies, as I have found through frequent use, an admirable work of reference.

Page-references to *The Silmarillion* are to the hardback edition; to *The Lord of the Rings* by title of the volume, book, and chapter.

There follow now primarily bibliographical notes on the individual pieces.

## Part One

### *I. Of Tuor And His Coming To Gondolin*

My father said more than once that 'The Fall of Gondolin' was the first of the tales of the First Age to be composed, and there is no evidence to set against his recollection. In a letter of 1964 he declared that he wrote it "out of my head" during sick-leave from the army in 1917', and at other times he gave the date as 1916 or 1916-17. In a letter to me written in 1944 he said: 'I first began to write [*The Silmarillion*] in army huts, crowded, filled with the noise of gramophones': and indeed some lines of verse in which appear the Seven Names of Gondolin are scribbled on the back of a piece of paper setting out 'the chain of responsibility in a battalion'. The earliest manuscript is still in existence, filling two small school exercise-books; it was written rapidly in pencil, and then, for much of its course, overlaid with writing in ink, and heavily emended. On the basis of this text my mother, apparently in 1917, wrote out a fair copy; but this in turn was further substantially emended, at some time that I cannot determine, but probably in 1919-20, when my father was in Oxford on the staff of the then still uncompleted Dictionary. In the spring of 1920 he was invited to read a paper to the Essay Club of his college (Exeter); and he read 'The Fall of Gondolin'. The notes of what he intended to say by way of introduction to his 'essay' still survive. In these he apologised for not having been able to produce a critical paper, and went on: 'Therefore I must read something already written, and in desperation I have fallen back on this Tale. It has of course never seen the light before . . . A complete cycle of events in an Elfness of my own imagining has for some time past grown up (rather, has been constructed) in my mind. Some of the episodes have been scribbled down . . . This tale is not the best of them, but it is the only one that has so far been revised at all and that, insufficient as that revision has been, I dare read aloud.'

The tale of Tuor and the Exiles of Gondolin (as 'The Fall of Gondolin' is entitled in the early MSS) remained untouched for many years, though my father at some stage, probably between 1926 and 1930, wrote a brief, compressed version of the story to stand as part of *The Silmarillion* (a title which, incidentally, first appeared in his letter to *The Observer* of 20 February 1938); and this was changed subsequently to bring it into harmony with altered conceptions in other parts of the book. Much later he began work on an entirely refashioned account, entitled 'Of Tuor and the Fall of Gondolin'. It seems very likely that this was written in 1951, when *The Lord of the Rings* was finished but its publication doubtful. Deeply changed in style and bearings, yet retaining many of the essentials of the story written in his youth, 'Of Tuor and the Fall of Gondolin' would have given in fine detail the whole legend that constitutes the brief 23<sup>rd</sup> chapter of the published *Silmarillion*; but, grievously, he went no further than the coming of Tuor and Voronwë to the last gate and Tuor's sight of Gondolin across the plain of Tumladen. To his reasons for abandoning it there is no clue.

This is the text that is given here. To avoid confusion I have retitled it 'Of Tuor and his Coming to Gondolin', since it tells nothing of the fall of the city. As always with my father's writings there are variant readings, and

in one short section (the approach to and passage of the river Sirion by Tuor and Voronwë) several competing forms; some minor editorial work has therefore been necessary.

It is thus the remarkable fact that the only full account that my father ever wrote of the story of Tuor's sojourn in Gondolin, his union with Idril Celebrindal, the birth of Eärendil, the treachery of Maeglin, the sack of the city, and the escape of the fugitives—a story that was a central element in his imagination of the First Age—was the narrative composed in his youth. There is no question, however, that that (most remarkable) narrative is not suitable for inclusion in this book. It is written in the extreme archaistic style that my father employed at that time, and it inevitably embodies conceptions out of keeping with the world of *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Silmarillion* in its published form. It belongs with the rest of the earliest phase of the mythology, 'the Book of Lost Tales': itself a very substantial work, of the utmost interest to one concerned with the origins of Middle-earth, but requiring to be presented in a lengthy and complex study if at all.

## ***II. The Tale Of The Children Of Húrin***

The development of the legend of Túrin Turambar is in some respects the most tangled and complex of all the narrative elements in the story of the First Age. Like the tale of Tuor and the Fall of Gondolin it goes back to the very beginnings, and is extant in an early prose narrative (one of the 'Lost Tales') and in a long, unfinished poem in alliterative verse. But whereas the later 'long version' of *Tuor* never proceeded very far, my father carried the later 'long version' of *Túrin* much nearer completion. This is called *Narn i Hîn Húrin*; and this is the narrative that is given in the present book.

There are however great differences in the course of the long *Narn* in the degree to which the narrative approaches a perfected or final form. The concluding section (from The Return of Túrin to Dor-lómin to The Death of Túrin) has undergone only marginal editorial alteration; while the first section (to the end of Túrin in Doriath) required a good deal of revision and selection, and in some places some slight compression, the original texts being scrappy and disconnected. But the central section of the narrative (Túrin among the outlaws, Mîm the Petty-dwarf, the land of Dor-Cúarthol, the death of Beleg at Túrin's hand, and Túrin's life in Nargothrond) constituted a much more difficult editorial problem. The *Narn* is here at its least finished, and in places diminishes to outlines of possible turns in the story. My father was still evolving this part when he ceased to work on it; and the shorter version for *The Silmarillion* was to wait on the final development of the *Narn*. In preparing the text of *The Silmarillion* for publication I derived, by necessity, much of this section of the tale of Túrin from these very materials, which are of quite extraordinary complexity in their variety and interrelations.

For the first part of this central section, as far as the beginning of Túrin's sojourn in Mîm's dwelling on Amon Rûdh, I have contrived a narrative, in scale commensurate with other parts of the *Narn*, out of the existing materials (with one gap, see [p. 124](#) and [note 75](#)); but from that point onwards (see [p. 135](#)) until Túrin's coming to Ivrin after the fall of Nargothrond I have found it unprofitable to attempt it. The gaps in the *Narn* are here too large, and could only be filled from the published text of *The Silmarillion*; but in an Appendix ([pp. 193ff.](#)) I have cited isolated fragments from this part of the projected larger narrative.

In the third section of the *Narn* (beginning with The Return of Túrin to Dor-lómin) a comparison with *The Silmarillion* ([pp. 215-26](#)) will show many close correspondences, and even identities of wording; while in the first section there are two extended passages that I have excluded from the present text (see [p. 76](#) and [note 64](#), and [p. 86](#) and [note 65](#)), since they are close variants of passages that appear elsewhere and are included in the published *Silmarillion*. This overlapping and interrelation between one work and another may be explained in different ways, from different points of view. My father delighted in re-telling on different scales; but some parts did not call for more extended treatment in a larger version, and there was no need to rephrase for the sake of it. Again, when all was still fluid and the final organisation of the distinct narratives still a long way off, the same passage might be experimentally placed in either. But an explanation can be found at a different level. Legends like that of Túrin Turambar had been given a particular poetic form long ago—in this case, the *Narn i Hîn Húrin* of the poet Dîrhavel—and phrases, or even whole passages, from it (especially at moments of great rhetorical intensity, such as Túrin's address to his sword before his death) would be preserved intact by those who afterwards made condensations of the history of the Elder Days (as *The Silmarillion* is conceived to be).



## Part Two

### *I. A Description Of The Island Of Númenor*

Although descriptive rather than narrative, I have included selections from my father's account of Númenor, more especially as it concerns the physical nature of the Island, since it clarifies and naturally accompanies the tale of Aldarion and Erendis. This account was certainly in existence by 1965, and was probably written not long before that.

I have redrawn the map from a little rapid sketch, the only one, as it appears, that my father ever made of Númenor. Only names or features found on the original have been entered on the redrawing. In addition, the original shows another haven on the Bay of Andúnië, not far to the westward of Andúnië itself; the name is hard to read, but is almost certainly *Almaida*. This does not, so far as I am aware, occur elsewhere.

### *II. Aldarion And Erendis*

This story was left in the least developed state of all the pieces in this collection, and has in places required a degree of editorial rehandling that made me doubt the propriety of including it. However, its very great interest as the single story (as opposed to records and annals) that survived at all from the long ages of Númenor before the narrative of its end (the *Akallabêth*), and as a story unique in its content among my father's writings, persuaded me that it would be wrong to omit it from this collection of '*Unfinished Tales*'.

To appreciate the necessity for such editorial treatment it must be explained that my father made much use, in the composition of narrative, of 'plot-outlines', paying meticulous attention to the dating of events, so that these outlines have something of the appearance of annal-entries in a chronicle. In the present case there are no less than five of these schemes, varying constantly in their relative fullness at different points and not infrequently disagreeing with each other at large and in detail. But these schemes always had a tendency to move into pure narrative, especially by the introduction of short passages of direct speech; and in the fifth and latest of the outlines for the story of Aldarion and Erendis the narrative element is so pronounced that the text runs to some sixty manuscript pages.

This movement away from a staccato annalistic style in the present tense into fullblown narrative was however very gradual, as the writing of the outline progressed; and in the earlier part of the story I have rewritten much of the material in the attempt to give some degree of stylistic homogeneity throughout its course. This rewriting is entirely a matter of wording, and never alters meaning or introduces unauthentic elements.

The latest 'scheme', the text primarily followed, is entitled *The Shadow of the Shadow: the Tale of the Mariner's Wife; and the Tale of the Queen Shepherdess*. The manuscript ends abruptly, and I can offer no certain explanation of why my father abandoned it. A typescript made to this point was completed in January 1965. There exists also a typescript of two pages that I judge to be the latest of all these materials; it is evidently the beginning of what was to be a finished version of the whole story, and provides the text on pp. 223-5 in this book (where the plot-outlines are at their most scanty). It is entitled *Indis i-Kiryamo 'The Mariner's Wife': a tale of ancient Númenóre, which tells of the first rumour of the Shadow*.

At the end of this narrative (p. 264) I have set out such scanty indications as can be given of the further course of the story.

### *III. The Line Of Elros: Kings Of Númenor*

Though in form purely a dynastic record, I have included this because it is an important document for the history of the Second Age, and a great part of the extant material concerning that Age finds a place in the texts and commentary in this book. It is a fine manuscript in which the dates of the Kings and Queens of Númenor and of their reigns have been copiously and sometimes obscurely emended: I have endeavoured to give the latest formulation. The text introduces several minor chronological puzzles, but also allows clarification of some apparent errors in the Appendices to *The Lord of the Rings*.

The genealogical table of the earlier generations of the [Line of Elros](#) is taken from several closely-related tables that derive from the same period as the discussion of the laws of succession in Númenor (pp. 268-9). There are

some slight variations in minor names: thus *Vardilmë* appears also as *Vardilyë*, and *Yávien* as *Yávië*. The forms given in my table I believe to be later.

#### ***IV. The History Of Galadriel And Celeborn***

This section of the book differs from the others (save those in [Part Four](#)) in that there is here no single text but rather an essay incorporating citations. This treatment was enforced by the nature of the materials; as is made clear in the course of the essay, a history of Galadriel can only be a history of my father's changing conceptions, and the 'unfinished' nature of the tale is not in this case that of a particular piece of writing. I have restricted myself to the presentation of his unpublished writings on the subject, and forgone any discussion of the larger questions that underlie the development; for that would entail consideration of the entire relation between the Valar and the Elves, from the initial decision (described in *The Silmarillion*) to summon the Eldar to Valinor, and many other matters besides, concerning which my father wrote much that falls outside the scope of this book.

The history of Galadriel and Celeborn is so interwoven with other legends and histories—of Lothlórien and the Silvan Elves, of Amroth and Nimrodel, of Celebrimbor and the making of the Rings of Power, of the war against Sauron and the Númenórean intervention—that it cannot be treated in isolation, and thus this section of the book, together with its five Appendices, brings together virtually all the unpublished materials for the history of the Second Age in Middle-earth (and the discussion in places inevitably extends into the Third). It is said in the Tale of Years given in [Appendix B](#) to *The Lord of the Rings*: 'These were the dark years for Men of Middle-earth, but the years of the glory of Númenor. Of events in Middle-earth the records are few and brief, and their dates are often uncertain.' But even that little surviving from the 'dark years' changed as my father's contemplation of it grew and changed; and I have made no attempt to smooth away inconsistency, but rather exhibited it and drawn attention to it.

Divergent versions need not indeed always be treated solely as a question of settling the priority of composition; and my father as 'author' or 'inventor' cannot always in these matters be distinguished from the 'recorder' of ancient traditions handed down in diverse forms among different peoples through long ages (when Frodo met Galadriel in Lórien, more than sixty centuries had passed since she went east over the Blue Mountains from the ruin of Beleriand). 'Of this two things are said, though which is true only those Wise could say who now are gone.'

In his last years my father wrote much concerning the etymology of names in Middle-earth. In these highly discursive essays there is a good deal of history and legend embedded; but being ancillary to the main philological purpose, and introduced as it were in passing, it has required extraction. It is for this reason that this part of the book is largely made up of short citations, with further material of the same kind placed in the Appendices.

### **Part Three**

#### ***I. The Disaster Of The Gladden Fields***

This is a 'late' narrative—by which I mean no more, in the absence of any indication of precise date, than that it belongs in the final period of my father's writing on Middle-earth, together with *Cirion and Eorl*, *The Battles of the Fords of Isen*, *The Drúedain*, and the philological essays excerpted in *The History of Galadriel and Celeborn*, rather than to the time of the publication of *The Lord of the Rings* and the years following it. There are two versions: a rough typescript of the whole (clearly the first stage of composition), and a good typescript incorporating many changes that breaks off at the point where Elendur urged Isildur to flee ([p. 355](#)). The editorial hand has here had little to do.

#### ***II. Cirion And Eorl And The Friendship Of Gondor And Rohan***

I judge these fragments to belong to the same period as *The Disaster of the Gladden Fields*, when my father was greatly interested in the earlier history of Gondor and Rohan; they were doubtless intended to form parts of a substantial history, developing in detail the summary accounts given in [Appendix A](#) to *The Lord of the Rings*.

The material is in the first stage of composition, very disordered, full of variants, breaking off into rapid jottings that are in part illegible.

### ***III. The Quest Of Erebor***

In a letter written in 1964 my father said:

*There are, of course, quite a lot of links between The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings that are not clearly set out. They were mostly written or sketched out, but cut out to lighten the boat: such as Gandalf's exploratory journeys, his relations with Aragorn and Gondor; all the movements of Gollum, until he took refuge in Moria, and so on. I actually wrote in full an account of what really happened before Gandalf's visit to Bilbo and the subsequent 'Unexpected Party', as seen by Gandalf himself. It was to have come in during a looking-back conversation in Minas Tirith; but it had to go, and is only represented in brief in Appendix A pp. 358-60, though the difficulties that Gandalf had with Thorin are omitted.*

This account of Gandalf's is given here. The complex textual situation is described in the [Appendix](#) to the narrative, where I have given substantial extracts from an earlier version.

### ***IV. The Hunt For The Ring***

There is much writing bearing on the events of the year [3018](#) of the Third Age, which are otherwise known from the Tale of Years and the reports of Gandalf and others to the Council of Elrond; and these writings are clearly those referred to as 'sketched out' in the letter just [cited](#). I have given them the title [The Hunt for the Ring](#). The manuscripts themselves, in great though hardly exceptional confusion, are sufficiently described on [p. 442](#); but the question of their date (for I believe them all, and also those of [Concerning Gandalf, Saruman, and the Shire](#), given as the third element in this section, to derive from the same time) may be mentioned here. They were written after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, for there are references to the pagination of the printed text; but they differ in the dates they give for certain events from those in the [Tale of Years](#) in Appendix B. The explanation is clearly that they were written after the publication of the first volume but before that of the third, containing the Appendices.

### ***V. The Battles Of The Fords Of Isen***

This, together with the account of the military organisation of the Rohirrim and the history of Isengard given in an Appendix to the text, belongs with other late pieces of severe historical analysis; it presented relatively little difficulty of a textual kind, and is only unfinished in the most obvious sense.

## **Part Four**

### ***I. The Drúedain***

Towards the end of his life my father revealed a good deal more about the Wild Men of the Drúadan Forest in Anórien and the statues of the Púkel-men on the road up to Dunharrow. The account given here, telling of the Drúedain in Beleriand in the First Age, and containing the story of 'The Faithful Stone', is drawn from a long, discursive, and unfinished essay concerned primarily with the interrelations of the languages of Middle-earth. As will be seen, the Drúedain were to be drawn back into the history of the earlier Ages; but of this there is necessarily no trace in the published *Silmarillion*.

### ***II. The Istari***

It was proposed soon after the acceptance of *The Lord of the Rings* for publication that there should be an index at the end of the third volume, and it seems that my father began to work on it in the summer of 1954, after the first two volumes had gone to press. He wrote of the matter in a letter of 1956: 'An index of names was to be produced, which by etymological interpretation would also provide quite a large Elvish vocabulary . . . I worked at it for months, and indexed the first two volumes (it was the chief cause of the delay of Volume III), until it became clear that size and cost were ruinous.'

In the event there was no index to *The Lord of the Rings* until the second edition of 1966, but my father's original rough draft has been preserved. From it I derived the plan of my index to *The Silmarillion*, with



translation of names and brief explanatory statements, and also, both there and in the index to this book, some of the translations and the wording of some of the ‘definitions’. From it comes also the ‘essay on the Istari’ with which this section of the book opens—an entry wholly uncharacteristic of the original index in its length, if characteristic of the way in which my father often worked.

For the other citations in this section I have given in the text itself such indications of date as can be provided.

### **III. The Palantíri**

For the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings* (1966) my father made substantial emendations to a passage in *The Two Towers*, III 11 ‘The Palantír’ (three-volume hardback edition p. 203), and some others in the same connection in *The Return of the King*, V 7 ‘The Pyre of Denethor’ (edition cited p. 132), though these emendations were not incorporated in the text until the second impression of the revised edition (1967). This section of the present book is derived from writings on the *palantíri* associated with this revision; I have done no more than assemble them into a continuous essay.

### **IV. The Map Of Middle-Earth**

[Note: Omitted from this compilation because the original source map in the HarperCollins eBook was small and of very low quality. P.L.]

My first intention was to include in this book the [map](#) that accompanies *The Lord of the Rings* with the addition to it of further names; but it seemed to me on reflection that it would be better to copy my original map and take the opportunity to remedy some of its minor defects (to remedy the major ones being beyond my powers). I have therefore redrawn it fairly exactly, on a scale half as large again (that is to say, the new map as drawn is half as large again as the old map in its published dimensions). The area shown is smaller, but the only features lost are the Havens of Umbar and the Cape of Forochel.<sup>31</sup> This has allowed of a different and larger mode of lettering, and a great gain in clarity.

All the more important place-names that occur in this book but not in *The Lord of the Rings* are included, such as *Lond Daer*, *Dríwaith Iaur*, *Edhellond*, *the Undeeps*, *Greylin*; and a few others that might have been, or should have been, shown on the original map, such as the rivers *Harnen* and *Carnen*, *Annúminas*, *Eastfold*, *Westfold*, the *Mountains of Angmar*. The mistaken inclusion of *Rhudaur* alone has been corrected by the addition of *Cardolan* and *Arthedain*, and I have shown the little island of *Himling* off the far north-western coast, which appears on one of my father’s sketch-maps and on my own first draft. *Himling* was the earlier form of *Himring* (the great hill on which Maedhros son of Fëanor had his fortress in *The Silmarillion*), and though the fact is nowhere referred to it is clear that Himring’s top rose above the waters that covered drowned Beleriand. Some way to the west of it was a larger island named *Tol Fuin*, which must be the highest part of *Taur-nu-Fuin*. In general, but not in all cases, I have preferred the Sindarin name (if known), but I have usually given the translated name as well when that is much used. It may be noted that ‘The Northern Waste’, marked at the head of my original map, seems in fact certainly to have been intended as an equivalent to *Forodwaith*.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> I have little doubt now that the water marked on my original map as ‘The Ice bay of Forochel’ was in fact only a small part of the Bay (referred to in *The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A ([I, iii](#))), as ‘immense’), which extended much further to the north-east: its northern and western shores being formed by the great Cape of Forochel, of which the tip, unnamed, appears on my original map. In one of my father’s map-sketches the northern coast of Middle-earth is shown stretching in a great curve east-north-east from the Cape, the most northerly point being some 700 miles north of Carn Dûm.

<sup>32</sup> *Forodwaith* only occurs once in *The Lord of the Rings* (Appendix A ([I, iii](#))) and there refers to ancient inhabitants of the Northlands, of whom the Snowmen of Forochel were a remnant; but the Sindarin word (*g*)*waith* was used both of regions and of the peoples inhabiting them (cf. *Enedwaith*). In one of my father’s sketch-maps *Forodwaith* seems to be explicitly equated with ‘The Northern Waste’, and in another is translated ‘Northerland’.

I have thought it desirable to mark in the entire length of the Great Road linking Arnor and Gondor, although its course between Edoras and the Fords of Isen is conjectural (as also is the precise placing of Lond Daer and Edhellond).

Lastly, I would emphasize that the exact preservation of the style and detail (other than nomenclature and lettering) of the map that I made in haste twenty-five years ago does not argue any belief in the excellence of its conception or execution. I have long regretted that my father never replaced it by one of his own making. However, as things turned out it became, for all its defects and oddities, 'the Map', and my father himself always used it as a basis afterwards (while frequently noticing its inadequacies). The various sketch-maps that he made, and from which mine was derived, are now a part of the history of the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*. I have thought it best therefore, so far as my own contribution to these matters extends, to let my original design stand, since it does at least represent the structure of my father's conceptions with tolerable faithfulness.

[illegible]

# PART ONE



# THE FIRST AGE

[illegible]



## Of Tuor And His Coming To Gondolin

*Rían, wife of Huor, dwelt with the people of the House of Hador; but when rumour came to Dor-lómin of the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, and yet she could hear no news of her lord, she became distraught and wandered forth into the wild alone. There she would have perished, but the Grey-elves came to her aid. For there was a dwelling of this people in the mountains westward of Lake Mithrim; and thither they led her, and she was there delivered of a son before the end of the Year of Lamentation.*

*And Rían said to the Elves: 'Let him be called Tuor, for that name his father chose, ere war came between us. And I beg of you to foster him, and to keep him hidden in your care; for I forebode that great good, for Elves and Men, shall come from him. But I must go in search of Huor, my lord.'*

*Then the Elves pitied her; but one Annael, who alone of all that went to war from that people had returned from the Nirnaeth, said to her: 'Alas, lady, it is known now that Huor fell at the side of Húrin his brother; and he lies, I deem, in the great hill of slain that the Orcs have raised upon the field of battle.'*

*Therefore Rían arose and left the dwelling of the Elves, and she passed through the land of Mithrim and came at last to the Haudh-en-Ndengin in the waste of Anfauglith, and there she laid her down and died. But the Elves cared for the infant son of Huor, and Tuor grew up among them; and he was fair of face, and golden-haired after the manner of his father's kin, and he became strong and tall and valiant, and being fostered by the Elves he had lore and skill no less than the princes of the Edain, ere ruin came upon the North.*

*But with the passing of the years the life of the former folk of Hithlum, such as still remained, Elves or Men, became ever harder and more perilous. For as is elsewhere told, Morgoth broke his pledges to the Easterlings that had served him, and he denied to them the rich lands of Beleriand which they had coveted, and he drove away these evil folk into Hithlum, and there commanded them to dwell. And though they loved Morgoth no longer, they served him still in fear, and hated all the Elven-folk; and they despised the remnant of the House of Hador (the aged and women and children, for the most part), and they oppressed them, and wedded their women by force, and took their lands and goods, and enslaved their children. Orcs came and went about the land as they would, pursuing the lingering Elves into the fastnesses of the mountains, and taking many captive to the mines of Angband to labour as the thralls of Morgoth.*

*Therefore Annael led his small people to the caves of Androth, and there they lived a hard and wary life, until Tuor was sixteen years of age and was become strong and able to wield arms, the axe and bow of the Grey-elves; and his heart grew hot within him at the tale of the griefs of his people, and he wished to go forth and avenge them on the Orcs and Easterlings. But Annael forbade this.*

*'Far hence, I deem, your doom lies, Tuor son of Huor,' he said. 'And this land shall not be freed from the shadow of Morgoth until Thangorodrim itself be overthrown. Therefore we are resolved at last to forsake it, and to depart into the South; and with us you shall go.'*

*'But how shall we escape the net of our enemies?' said Tuor. 'For the marching of so many together will surely be marked.'*

*'We shall not march through the land openly,' said Annael; 'and if our fortune is good we shall come to the secret way which we call Annon-in-Gelydh, the Gate of the Noldor; for it was made by the skill of that people, long ago in the days of Turgon.'*

*At that name Tuor was stirred, though he knew not why; and he questioned Annael concerning Turgon. 'He is a son of Fingolfin,' said Annael, 'and is now accounted High King of the Noldor, since the fall of Fingon. For he*

*lives yet, most feared of the foes of Morgoth, and he escaped from the ruin of the Nirnaeth, when Húrin of Dor-lómin and Huor your father held the passes of Sirion behind him.'*

*'Then I will go and seek Turgon,' said Tuor; 'for surely he will lend me aid for my father's sake?'*

*'That you cannot,' said Annael. 'For his stronghold is hidden from the eyes of Elves and Men, and we know not where it stands. Of the Noldor some, maybe, know the way thither, but they will speak of it to none. Yet if you would have speech with them, then come with me, as I bid you; for in the far havens of the South you may meet with wanderers from the Hidden Kingdom.'*

*Thus it came to pass that the Elves forsook the caves of Androth, and Tuor went with them. But their enemies kept watch upon their dwellings, and were soon aware of their march; and they had not gone far from the hills into the plain before they were assailed by a great force of Orcs and Easterlings, and they were scattered far and wide, fleeing into the gathering night. But Tuor's heart was kindled with the fire of battle, and he would not flee, but boy as he was he wielded the axe as his father before him, and for long he stood his ground and slew many that assailed him; but at the last he was overwhelmed and taken captive and led before Lorgan the Easterling. Now this Lorgan was held the chieftain of the Easterlings and claimed to rule all Dor-lómin as a fief under Morgoth; and he took Tuor to be his slave. Hard and bitter then was his life; for it pleased Lorgan to treat Tuor the more evilly as he was of the kin of the former lords, and he sought to break, if he could, the pride of the House of Hador. But Tuor saw wisdom, and endured all pains and taunts with watchful patience; so that in time his lot was somewhat lightened, and at the least he was not starved, as were many of Lorgan's unhappy thralls. For he was strong and skilful, and Lorgan fed his beasts of burden well, while they were young and could work.*

*But after three years of thralldom Tuor saw at last a chance of escape. He was come now almost to his full stature, taller and swifter than any of the Easterlings; and being sent with other thralls on an errand of labour into the woods he turned suddenly on the guards and slew them with an axe, and fled into the hills. The Easterlings hunted him with dogs, but without avail; for wellnigh all the hounds of Lorgan were his friends, and if they came up with him they would fawn upon him, and then run homeward at his command. Thus he came back at last to the caves of Androth and dwelt there alone. And for four years he was an outlaw in the land of his fathers, grim and solitary; and his name was feared, for he went often abroad, and slew many of the Easterlings that he came upon. Then they set a great price upon his head; but they did not dare to come to his hiding-place, even with strength of men, for they feared the Elven-folk, and shunned the caves where they had dwelt. Yet it is said that Tuor's journeys were not made for the purpose of vengeance; rather he sought ever for the Gate of the Noldor, of which Annael had spoken. But he found it not, for he knew not where to look, and such few of the Elves as lingered still in the mountains had not heard of it.*

*Now Tuor knew that, though fortune still favoured him, yet in the end the days of an outlaw are numbered, and are ever few and without hope. Nor was he willing to live thus for ever a wild man in the houseless hills, and his heart urged him ever to great deeds. Herein, it is said, the power of Ulmo was shown. For he gathered tidings of all that passed in Beleriand, and every stream that flowed from Middle-earth to the Great Sea was to him a messenger, both to and fro; and he remained also in friendship, as of old, with Círdan and the Shipwrights at the Mouths of Sirion.<sup>33</sup> And at this time most of all Ulmo gave heed to the fates of the House of Hador, for in his deep counsels he purposed that they should play great part in his designs for the succour of the Exiles; and he knew well of the plight of Tuor, for Annael and many of his folk had indeed escaped from Dor-lómin and come at last to Círdan in the far South.*

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<sup>33</sup> In *The Silmarillion* p. 196 it is said that when the Havens of Brithombar and Eglarest were destroyed in the year after the Nirnaeth Arnoediad those of the Elves of the Falas that escaped went with Círdan to the Isle of Balar, 'and they made a refuge for all that could come thither; for they kept a foothold also at the Mouths of Sirion, and there many light and swift ships lay hid in the creeks and waters where the reeds were dense as a forest'.

*Thus it came to pass that on a day in the beginning of the year (twenty and three since the Nirnaeth) Tuor sat by a spring that trickled forth near to the door of the cave where he dwelt; and he looked out westward towards the cloudy sunset. Then suddenly it came into his heart that he would wait no longer, but would arise and go. 'I will leave now the grey land of my kin that are no more,' he cried, 'and I will go in search of my doom! But whither shall I turn? Long have I sought the Gate and found it not.'*

*Then he took up the harp which he bore ever with him, being skilled in playing upon its strings, and heedless of the peril of his clear voice alone in the waste he sang an elven-song of the North for the uplifting of hearts. And even as he sang the well at his feet began to boil with great increase of water, and it overflowed, and a rill ran noisily down the rocky hillside before him. And Tuor took this as a sign, and he arose at once and followed after it. Thus he came down from the tall hills of Mithrim and passed out into the northward plain of Dor-lómin; and ever the stream grew as he followed it westward, until after three days he could descry in the west the long grey ridges of Ered Lómin that in those regions marched north and south, fencing off the far coastlands of the Western Shores. To those hills in all his journeys Tuor had never come.*

*Now the land became more broken and stony again, as it approached the hills, and soon it began to rise before Tuor's feet, and the stream went down into a cloven bed. But even as dim dusk came on the third day of his journey, Tuor found before him a wall of rock, and there was an opening therein like a great arch; and the stream passed in and was lost. Then Tuor was dismayed, and he said: 'So my hope has cheated me! The sign in the hills has led me only to a dark end in the midst of the land of my enemies.' And grey at heart he sat among the rocks on the high bank of the stream, keeping watch through a bitter fireless night; for it was yet but the month of Súlimë, and no stir of spring had come to that far northern land, and a shrill wind blew from the East.*

*But even as the light of the coming sun shone pale in the far mists of Mithrim, Tuor heard voices, and looking down he saw in amazement two Elves that waded in the shallow water; and as they climbed up steps hewn in the bank, Tuor stood up and called to them. At once they drew their bright swords and sprang towards him. Then he saw that they were grey-cloaked but mail-clad under; and he marvelled, for they were fairer and more fell to look upon, because of the light of their eyes, than any of the Elven-folk that he yet had known. He stood to his full height and awaited them; but when they saw that he drew no weapon, but stood alone and greeted them in the Elven-tongue, they sheathed their swords and spoke courteously to him. And one said: 'Gelmir and Arminas we are, of Finarfin's people. Are you not one of the Edain of old that dwelt in these lands ere the Nirnaeth? And indeed of the kindred of Hador and Húrin I deem you; for so the gold of your head declares you.'*

*And Tuor answered: 'Yea, I am Tuor, son of Huor, son of Galdor, son of Hador; but now at last I desire to leave this land where I am outlawed and kinless.'*

*'Then,' said Gelmir, 'if you would escape and find the havens in the South, already your feet have been guided on the right road.'*

*'So I thought,' said Tuor. 'For I followed a sudden spring of water in the hills, until it joined this treacherous stream. But now I know not whither to turn, for it has gone into darkness.'*

*'Through darkness one may come to the light,' said Gelmir.*

*'Yet one will walk under the Sun while one may,' said Tuor. 'But since you are of that people, tell me if you can where lies the Gate of the Noldor. For I have sought it long, ever since Annael my foster-father of the Grey-elves spoke of it to me.'*

*Then the Elves laughed, and said: 'Your search is ended; for we have ourselves just passed that Gate. There it stands before you!' And they pointed to the arch into which the water flowed. 'Come now! Through darkness you shall come to the light. We will set your feet on the road, but we cannot guide you far; for we are sent back to the lands whence we fled upon an urgent errand.' 'But fear not,' said Gelmir: 'a great doom is written upon your brow, and it shall lead you far from these lands, far indeed from Middle-earth, as I guess.'*

*Then Tuor followed the Noldor down the steps and waded in the cold water, until they passed into the shadow beyond the arch of stone. And then Gelmir brought forth one of those lamps for which the Noldor were renowned; for they were made of old in Valinor, and neither wind nor water could quench them, and when they*



were unhooded they sent forth a clear blue light from a flame imprisoned in white crystal.<sup>34</sup> Now by the light that Gelmir held above his head Tuor saw that the river began to go suddenly down a smooth slope into a great tunnel, but beside its rock-hewn course there ran long flights of steps leading on and downward into a deep gloom beyond the beam of the lamp.

When they had come to the foot of the rapids they stood under a great dome of rock, and there the river rushed over a steep fall with a great noise that echoed in the vault, and it passed then on again beneath another arch into a further tunnel. Beside the falls the Noldor halted, and bade Tuor farewell.

‘Now we must return and go our ways with all speed,’ said Gelmir; ‘for matters of great peril are moving in Beleriand.’

‘Is then the hour come when Turgon shall come forth?’ said Tuor.

Then the Elves looked at him in amazement. ‘That is a matter which concerns the Noldor rather than the sons of Men,’ said Arminas. ‘What know you of Turgon?’

‘Little,’ said Tuor; ‘save that my father aided his escape from the Nirnaeth, and that in his hidden stronghold dwells the hope of the Noldor. Yet, though I know not why, ever his name stirs in my heart, and comes to my lips. And had I my will, I would go in search of him, rather than tread this dark way of dread. Unless, perhaps, this secret road is the way to his dwelling?’

‘Who shall say?’ answered the Elf. ‘For since the dwelling of Turgon is hidden, so also are the ways thither. I know them not, though I have sought them long. Yet if I knew them, I would not reveal them to you, nor to any among Men.’

But Gelmir said: ‘Yet I have heard that your House has the favour of the Lord of Waters. And if his counsels lead you to Turgon, then surely shall you come to him, whithersoever you turn. Follow now the road to which the water has brought you from the hills, and fear not! You shall not walk long in darkness. Farewell! And think not that our meeting was by chance; for the Dweller in the Deep moves many things in this land still. Anar kaluva tielyanna!’<sup>35</sup>

With that the Noldor turned and went back up the long stairs; but Tuor stood still, until the light of their lamp was lost, and he was alone in a darkness deeper than night amid the roaring of the falls. Then summoning his courage he set his left hand to the rock-wall, and felt his way forward, slowly at first, and then more quickly, as he became more used to the darkness and found nothing to hinder him. And after a great while, as it seemed to him, when he was weary and yet unwilling to rest in the black tunnel, he saw far before him a light; and hastening on he came to a tall and narrow cleft, and followed the noisy stream between its leaning walls out

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<sup>34</sup> The blue-shining lamps of the Noldorin Elves are referred to elsewhere, though they do not appear in the published text of *The Silmarillion*. In earlier versions of the tale of Túrin, Gwindor, the Elf of Nargothrond who escaped from Angband and was found by Beleg in the forest of Taur-nu-Fuin, possessed one of these lamps (it can be seen in my father’s painting of that meeting, see *Pictures by J. R. R. Tolkien*, 1979, no. 37); and it was the overturning and uncovering of Gwindor’s lamp so that its light shone out that showed Túrin the face of Beleg whom he had killed. In a note on the story of Gwindor they are called ‘Fëanorian lamps’, of which the Noldor themselves did not know the secret; and they are there described as ‘crystals hung in a fine chain net, the crystals being ever shining with an inner blue radiance’.

<sup>35</sup> ‘The sun shall shine upon your path.’

In the very much briefer story told in *The Silmarillion*, there is no account of how Tuor found the Gate of the Noldor, nor any mention of the Elves Gelmir and Arminas. They appear however in the tale of Túrin (*The Silmarillion* p. 212) as the messengers who brought Ulmo’s warning to Nargothrond; and there they are said to be of the people of Finarfin’s son Angrod, who after the Dagor Bragollach dwelt in the south with Círdan the Shipwright. In a longer version of the story of their coming to Nargothrond, Arminas, comparing Túrin unfavourably with his kinsman, speaks of having met Tuor ‘in the wastes of Dor-lómin’; see p. 208.

*into a golden evening. For he was come into a deep ravine with tall sheer sides, and it ran straight towards the West; and before him the setting sun, going down through a clear sky, shone into the ravine and kindled its walls with yellow fire, and the waters of the river glittered like gold as they broke and foamed upon many gleaming stones.*

*In that deep place Tuor went on now in great hope and delight, finding a path beneath the southern wall, where there lay a long and narrow strand. And when night came, and the river rushed on unseen, save for a glint of high stars mirrored in dark pools, then he rested, and slept; for he felt no fear beside that water, in which the power of Ulmo ran.*

*With the coming of day he went on again without haste. The sun rose behind his back and set before his face, and where the water foamed among the boulders or rushed over sudden falls, at morning and evening rainbows were woven across the stream. Wherefore he named that ravine Cirith Ninniach.*

*Thus Tuor journeyed slowly for three days, drinking the cold water but desiring no food, though there were many fish that shone as gold and silver, or gleamed with colours like to the rainbows in the spray above. And on the fourth day the channel grew wider, and its walls lower and less sheer; but the river ran deeper and more strongly, for high hills now marched on either side, and fresh waters spilled from them into Cirith Ninniach over shimmering falls. There long while Tuor sat, watching the swirling of the stream and listening to its endless voice, until night came again and stars shone cold and white in the dark lane of sky above him. Then he lifted up his voice, and plucked the strings of his harp, and above the noise of the water the sound of his song and the sweet thrilling of the harp were echoed in the stone and multiplied, and went forth and rang in the night-clad hills, until all the empty land was filled with music beneath the stars. For though he knew it not, Tuor was now come to the Echoing Mountains of Lammoth about the Firth of Drengist. There once long ago Fëanor had landed from the sea, and the voices of his host were swelled to a mighty clamour upon the coasts of the North ere the rising of the Moon.<sup>36</sup>*

*Then Tuor was filled with wonder and stayed his song, and slowly the music died in the hills, and there was silence. And then amid the silence he heard in the air above him a strange cry; and he knew not of what creature that cry came. Now he said: 'It is a fay-voice,' now: 'Nay, it is a small beast that is wailing in the waste'; and then, hearing it again, he said: 'Surely, it is the cry of some nightfaring bird that I know not.' And it seemed to him a mournful sound, and yet he desired nonetheless to hear it and follow it, for it called him, he knew not whither.*

*The next morning he heard the same voice above his head, and looking up he saw three great white birds beating down the ravine against the westerly wind, and their strong wings shone in the new-risen sun, and as they passed over him they wailed aloud. Thus for the first time he beheld the great gulls, beloved of the Teleri. Then Tuor arose to follow them, and so that he might better mark whither they flew he climbed the cliff upon his left hand, and stood upon the top, and felt a great wind out of the West rush against his face; and his hair streamed from his head. And he drank deep of that new air, and said: 'This uplifts the heart like the drinking of cool wine!' But he knew not that the wind came fresh from the Great Sea.*

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<sup>36</sup> In *The Silmarillion* pp. 80-1 it is told that when Morgoth and Ungoliant struggled in this region for possession of the Silmarils 'Morgoth sent forth a terrible cry, that echoed in the mountains. Therefore that region was called Lammoth; for the echoes of his voice dwelt there ever after, so that any who cried aloud in that land awoke them, and all the waste between the hills and the sea was filled with a clamour as of voices in anguish.' Here, on the other hand, the conception is rather that any sound uttered there was magnified in its own nature; and this idea is clearly also present at the beginning of ch. 13 of *The Silmarillion*, where (in a passage very similar to the present) 'even as the Noldor set foot upon the strand their cries were taken up into the hills and multiplied, so that a clamour as of countless mighty voices filled all the coasts of the North'. It seems that according to the one 'tradition' Lammoth and Ered Lómin (Echoing Mountains) were so named from their retaining the echoes of Morgoth's dreadful cry in the toils of Ungoliant; while according to the other the names are simply descriptive of the nature of sounds in that region.



Now Tuor went on once more, seeking the gulls, high above the river; and as he went the sides of the ravine drew together again, and he came to a narrow channel, and it was filled with a great noise of water. And looking down Tuor saw a great marvel, as it seemed to him; for a wild flood came up the narrows and strove with the river that would still press on, and a wave like a wall rose up almost to the cliff-top, crowned with foam-crests flying in the wind. Then the river was thrust back, and the incoming flood swept roaring up the channel, drowning it in deep water, and the rolling of the boulders was like thunder as it passed. Thus Tuor was saved by the call of the sea-birds from death in the rising tide; and that was very great because of the season of the year and of the high wind from the sea.

But now Tuor was dismayed by the fury of the strange waters, and he turned aside and went away southward, and so came not to the long shores of the Firth of Drengist, but wandered still for some days in a rugged country bare of trees; and it was swept by a wind from the sea, and all that grew there, herb or bush, leaned ever to the dawn because of the prevalence of that wind from the West. In this way Tuor passed into the borders of Nevrast, where once Turgon had dwelt; and at last at unawares (for the cliff-tops at the margin of the land were higher than the slopes behind) he came suddenly to the black brink of Middle-earth, and saw the Great Sea, Belegaer the Shoreless. And at that hour the sun went down beyond the rim of the world, as a mighty fire; and Tuor stood alone upon the cliff with outspread arms, and a great yearning filled his heart. It is said that he was the first of Men to reach the Great Sea, and that none, save the Eldar, have ever felt more deeply the longing that it brings.

Tuor tarried many days in Nevrast, and it seemed good to him, for that land, being fenced by mountains from the North and East and nigh to the sea, was milder and more kindly than the plains of Hithlum. He was long used to dwell alone as a hunter in the wild, and he found no lack of food; for spring was busy in Nevrast, and the air was filled with the noise of birds, both those that dwelt in multitudes upon the shores and those that teemed in the marshes of Linaewen in the midst of the hollow land; but in those days no voice of Elves or Men was heard in all the solitude.

To the borders of the great mere Tuor came, but its waters were beyond his reach, because of the wide mires and the pathless forests of reeds that lay all about; and soon he turned away, and went back to the coast, for the Sea drew him, and he was not willing to dwell long where he could not hear the sound of its waves. And in the shorelands Tuor first found traces of the Noldor of old. For among the tall and sea-hewn cliffs south of Drengist there were many coves and sheltered inlets, with beaches of white sand among the black gleaming rocks, and leading down to such places Tuor found often winding stairs cut in the living stone; and by the water-edge were ruined quays, built of great blocks hewn from the cliffs, where elven-ships had once been moored. In those regions Tuor long remained, watching the ever-changing sea, while through spring and summer the slow year wore on, and darkness deepened in Beleriand, and the autumn of the doom of Nargothrond drew near.

And, maybe, birds saw from afar the fell winter that was to come;<sup>37</sup> for those that were wont to go south gathered early to depart, and others that used to dwell in the North came from their homes to Nevrast. And one day, as Tuor sat upon the shore, he heard the rush and whine of great wings, and he looked up and saw seven white swans flying in a swift wedge southward. But as they came above him they wheeled and flew suddenly down, and alighted with a great splash and churning of water.

Now Tuor loved swans, which he knew on the grey pools of Mithrim; and the swan moreover had been the token of Annael and his foster-folk. He rose therefore to greet the birds, and called to them, marvelling to behold that they were greater and prouder than any of their kind that he had seen before; but they beat their wings and uttered harsh cries, as if they were wroth with him and would drive him from the shore. Then with a

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<sup>37</sup> Cf. *The Silmarillion* p. 215: 'And Túrin hastened along the ways to the north, through the lands now desolate between Narog and Teiglin, and the Fell Winter came down to meet him; for in that year snow fell ere autumn was passed, and spring came late and cold.'

great noise they rose again from the water and flew above his head, so that the rush of their wings blew upon him as a whistling wind; and wheeling in a wide circle they ascended into the high air and went away south.

Then Tuor cried aloud: 'Here now comes another sign that I have tarried too long!' And straightway he climbed to the cliff-top, and there he beheld the swans still wheeling on high; but when he turned southward and set out to follow them, they flew swiftly away.

Now Tuor journeyed south along the coast for full seven days, and each morning he was aroused by the rush of wings above him in the dawn, and each day the swans flew on as he followed after. And as he went the great cliffs became lower, and their tops were clothed deep with flowering turf; and away eastward there were woods turning yellow in the waning of the year. But before him, drawing ever nearer, he saw a line of great hills that barred his way, marching westward until they ended in a tall mountain: a dark and cloud-helmed tower reared upon mighty shoulders above a great green cape thrust out into the sea.

Those grey hills were indeed the western outliers of Ered Wethrin, the north-fence of Beleriand, and the mountain was Mount Taras, westernmost of all the towers of that land, whose head a mariner would first descry across the miles of the sea, as he drew near to the mortal shores. Beneath its long slopes in bygone days Turgon had dwelt in the halls of Vinyamar, eldest of all the works of stone that the Noldor built in the lands of their exile. There it still stood, desolate but enduring, high upon great terraces that looked towards the sea. The years had not shaken it, and the servants of Morgoth had passed it by; but wind and rain and frost had graven it, and upon the coping of its walls and the great shingles of its roof there was a deep growth of grey-green plants that, living upon the salt air, thrived even in the cracks of barren stone.

Now Tuor came to the ruins of a lost road, and he passed amid green mounds and leaning stones, and so came as the day was waning to the old hall and its high and windy courts. No shadow of fear or evil lurked there, but an awe fell upon him, thinking of those that had dwelt there and had gone, none knew whither: the proud people, deathless but doomed, from far beyond the Sea. And he turned and looked, as often their eyes had looked, out across the glitter of the unquiet waters to the end of sight. Then he turned back again, and saw that the swans had alighted on the highest terrace, and stood before the west-door of the hall; and they beat their wings, and it seemed to him that they beckoned him to enter. Then Tuor went up the wide stairs, now half-hidden in thrift and campion, and he passed under the mighty lintel and entered the shadows of the house of Turgon; and he came at last to a high-pillared hall. If great it had appeared from without, now vast and wonderful it seemed to Tuor from within, and for awe he wished not to awake the echoes in its emptiness. Nothing could he see there, save at the eastern end a high seat upon a dais, and softly as he might he paced towards it; but the sound of his feet rang upon the paved floor as the steps of doom, and echoes ran before him along the pillared aisles.

As he stood before the great chair in the gloom, and saw that it was hewn of a single stone and written with strange signs, the sinking sun drew level with a high window under the westward gable, and a shaft of light smote the wall before him, and glittered as it were upon burnished metal. Then Tuor marvelling saw that on the wall behind the throne there hung a shield and a great hauberk, and a helm and a long sword in a sheath. The hauberk shone as it were wrought of silver untarnished, and the sunbeam gilded it with sparks of gold. But the shield was of a shape strange to Tuor's eyes, for it was long and tapering; and its field was blue, in the midst of which was wrought an emblem of a white swan's wing. Then Tuor spoke, and his voice rang as a challenge in the roof: 'By this token I will take these arms unto myself, and upon myself whatsoever doom they bear.'<sup>38</sup> And

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<sup>38</sup> In *The Silmarillion* p. 126 it is told that when Ulmo appeared to Turgon at Vinyamar and bade him go to Gondolin, he said: 'Thus it may come to pass that the curse of the Noldor shall find thee too ere the end, and treason awake within thy walls. Then they shall be in peril of fire. But if this peril draweth nigh indeed, then even from Nevrastron one shall come to warn thee, and from him beyond ruin and fire hope shall be born for Elves and Men. Leave therefore in this house arms and a sword, that in years to come he may find them, and thus shalt thou know him, and not be deceived.' And Ulmo declared to Turgon of what kind and stature should be the helm and mail and sword that he left behind.

*he lifted down the shield and found it light and wieldy beyond his guess; for it was wrought, it seemed, of wood, but overlaid by the craft of elven-smiths with plates of metal, strong yet thin as foil, whereby it had been preserved from worm and weather.*

*Then Tuor arrayed himself in the hauberk, and set the helm upon his head, and he girt himself with the sword; black were sheath and belt with clasps of silver. Thus armed he went forth from Turgon's hall, and stood upon the high terraces of Taras in the red light of the sun. None were there to see him, as he gazed westward, gleaming in silver and gold, and he knew not that in that hour he appeared as one of the Mighty of the West, and fit to be the father of the kings of the Kings of Men beyond the Sea, as it was indeed his doom to be;<sup>39</sup> but in the taking of those arms a change came upon Tuor son of Huor, and his heart grew great within him. And as he stepped down from the doors the swans did him reverence, and plucking each a great feather from their wings they proffered them to him, laying their long necks upon the stone before his feet; and he took the seven feathers and set them in the crest of his helm, and straightway the swans arose and flew north in the sunset, and Tuor saw them no more.*

*Now Tuor felt his feet drawn to the sea-strand, and he went down by long stairs to a wide shore upon the north side of Taras-ness; and as he went he saw that the sun was sinking low into a great black cloud that came up over the rim of the darkening sea; and it grew cold, and there was a stirring and murmur as of a storm to come. And Tuor stood upon the shore, and the sun was like a smoky fire behind the menace of the sky; and it seemed to him that a great wave rose far off and rolled towards the land, but wonder held him, and he remained there unmoved. And the wave came towards him, and upon it lay a mist of shadow. Then suddenly as it drew near it curled, and broke, and rushed forward in long arms of foam; but where it had broken there stood dark against the rising storm a living shape of great height and majesty.*

*Then Tuor bowed in reverence, for it seemed to him that he beheld a mighty king. A tall crown he wore like silver, from which his long hair fell down as foam glimmering in the dusk; and as he cast back the grey mantle that hung about him like a mist, behold! he was clad in a gleaming coat, close-fitted as the mail of a mighty fish, and in a kirtle of deep green that flashed and flickered with sea-fire as he strode slowly towards the land. In this manner the Dweller of the Deep, whom the Noldor name Ulmo, Lord of Waters, showed himself to Tuor son of Huor of the House of Hador beneath Vinyamar.*

*He set no foot upon the shore, but standing knee-deep in the shadowy sea he spoke to Tuor, and then for the light of his eyes and for the sound of his deep voice that came as it seemed from the foundations of the world, fear fell upon Tuor and he cast himself down upon the sand.*

*'Arise, Tuor, son of Huor!' said Ulmo. 'Fear not my wrath, though long have I called to thee unheard; and setting out at last thou hast tarried on thy journey hither. In the Spring thou shouldst have stood here; but now a fell winter cometh soon from the land of the Enemy. Haste thou must learn, and the pleasant road that I designed for thee must be changed. For my counsels have been scorned,<sup>40</sup> and a great evil creeps upon the Valley of Sirion, and already a host of foes is come between thee and thy goal.'*

*'What then is my goal, Lord?' said Tuor.*

*'That which thy heart hath ever sought,' answered Ulmo: 'to find Turgon, and look upon the hidden city. For thou art arrayed thus to be my messenger, even in the arms which long ago I decreed for thee. Yet now thou must under shadow pass through peril. Wrap thyself therefore in this cloak, and cast it never aside, until thou come to thy journey's end.'*

*Then it seemed to Tuor that Ulmo parted his grey mantle, and cast to him a lappet, and as it fell about him it was for him a great cloak wherein he might wrap himself over all, from head to foot.*

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<sup>39</sup> Tuor was the father of Eärendil, who was the father of Elros Tar-Minyatur, the first King of Númenor.

<sup>40</sup> This must refer to the warning of Ulmo brought to Nargothrond by Gelmir and Arminas; see pp. 205ff.

*'Thus thou shalt walk under my shadow,' said Ulmo. 'But tarry no more; for in the lands of Anar and in the fires of Melkor it will not endure. Wilt thou take up my errand?'*

*'I will, Lord,' said Tuor.*

*'Then I will set words in thy mouth to say unto Turgon,' said Ulmo. 'But first I will teach thee, and some things thou shalt hear which no Man else hath heard, nay, not even the mighty among the Eldar.' And Ulmo spoke to Tuor of Valinor and its darkening, and the Exile of the Noldor, and the Doom of Mandos, and the hiding of the Blessed Realm. 'But behold!' said he, 'in the armour of Fate (as the Children of Earth name it) there is ever a rift, and in the walls of Doom a breach, until the full-making, which ye call the End. So it shall be while I endure, a secret voice that gainsayeth, and a light where darkness was decreed. Therefore, though in the days of this darkness I seem to oppose the will of my brethren, the Lords of the West, that is my part among them, to which I was appointed ere the making of the World. Yet Doom is strong, and the shadow of the Enemy lengthens; and I am diminished, until in Middle-earth I am become now no more than a secret whisper. The waters that run westward wither, and their springs are poisoned, and my power withdraws from the land; for Elves and Men grow blind and deaf to me because of the might of Melkor. And now the Curse of Mandos hastens to its fulfilment, and all the works of the Noldor shall perish, and every hope which they build shall crumble. The last hope alone is left, the hope that they have not looked for and have not prepared. And that hope lieth in thee; for so I have chosen.'*

*'Then shall Turgon not stand against Morgoth, as all the Eldar yet hope?' said Tuor. 'And what wouldst thou of me, Lord, if I come now to Turgon? For though I am indeed willing to do as my father and stand by that king in his need, yet of little avail shall I be, a mortal man alone, among so many and so valiant of the High Folk of the West.'*

*'If I choose to send thee, Tuor son of Huor, then believe not that thy one sword is not worth the sending. For the valour of the Edain the Elves shall ever remember as the ages lengthen, marvelling that they gave life so freely of which they had on earth so little. But it is not for thy valour only that I send thee, but to bring into the world a hope beyond thy sight, and a light that shall pierce the darkness.'*

*And as Ulmo said these things the mutter of the storm rose to a great cry, and the wind mounted, and the sky grew black; and the mantle of the Lord of Waters streamed out like a flying cloud. 'Go now,' said Ulmo, 'lest the Sea devour thee! For Ossë obeys the will of Mandos, and he is wroth, being a servant of the Doom.'*

*'As thou commandest,' said Tuor. 'But if I escape the Doom, what words shall I say unto Turgon?'*

*'If thou come to him,' answered Ulmo, 'then the words shall arise in thy mind, and thy mouth shall speak as I would. Speak and fear not! And thereafter do as thy heart and valour lead thee. Hold fast to my mantle, for thus shalt thou be guarded. And I will send one to thee out of the wrath of Ossë, and thus shalt thou be guided: yea, the last mariner of the last ship that shall seek into the West until the rising of the Star. Go now back to the land!'*

*Then there was a noise of thunder, and lightning flared over the sea; and Tuor beheld Ulmo standing among the waves as a tower of silver flickering with darting flames; and he cried against the wind:*

*'I go, Lord! Yet now my heart yearneth rather to the Sea.'*

*And thereupon Ulmo lifted up a mighty horn, and blew upon it a single great note, to which the roaring of the storm was but a windflaw upon a lake. And as he heard that note, and was encompassed by it, and filled with it, it seemed to Tuor that the coasts of Middle-earth vanished, and he surveyed all the waters of the world in a great vision: from the veins of the lands to the mouths of the rivers, and from the strands and estuaries out into the deep. The Great Sea he saw through its unquiet regions teeming with strange forms, even to its lightless depths, in which amid the everlasting darkness there echoed voices terrible to mortal ears. Its measureless plains he surveyed with the swift sight of the Valar, lying windless under the eye of Anar, or glittering under the*



horned Moon, or lifted in hills of wrath that broke upon the Shadowy Isles,<sup>41</sup> until remote upon the edge of sight, and beyond the count of leagues, he glimpsed a mountain, rising beyond his mind's reach into a shining cloud, and at its feet a long surf glimmering. And even as he strained to hear the sound of those far waves, and to see clearer that distant light, the note ended, and he stood beneath the thunder of the storm, and lightning many-branched rent asunder the heavens above him. And Ulmo was gone, and the sea was in tumult, as the wild waves of Ossë rode against the walls of Nevrast.

Then Tuor fled from the fury of the sea, and with labour he won his way back to the high terraces; for the wind drove him against the cliff, and when he came out upon the top it bent him to his knees. Therefore he entered again the dark and empty hall for shelter, and he sat nightlong in the stone seat of Turgon. The very pillars trembled for the violence of the storm, and it seemed to Tuor that the wind was full of wailing and wild cries. Yet being weary he slept at times, and his sleep was troubled with many dreams, of which naught remained in waking memory save one: a vision of an isle, and in the midst of it was a steep mountain, and behind it the sun went down, and shadows sprang into the sky; but above it there shone a single dazzling star.

After this dream Tuor fell into a deep sleep, for before the night was over the tempest passed, driving the black clouds into the East of the world. He awoke at length in the grey light, and arose, and left the high seat, and as he went down the dim hall he saw that it was filled with sea-birds driven in by the storm; and he went out as the last stars were fading in the West before the coming day. Then he saw that the great waves in the night had ridden high upon the land, and had cast their crests above the cliff-tops, and weed and shingle-drift were flung even upon the terraces before the doors. And Tuor looked down from the lowest terrace and saw, leaning against its wall among the stones and the seawrack, an Elf, clad in a grey cloak sodden with the sea. Silent he sat, gazing beyond the ruin of the beaches out over the long ridges of the waves. All was still, and there was no sound save the roaring of the surf below.

As Tuor stood and looked at the silent grey figure he remembered the words of Ulmo, and a name untaught came to his lips, and he called aloud: 'Welcome, Voronwë! I await you.'<sup>42</sup>

Then the Elf turned and looked up, and Tuor met the piercing glance of his sea-grey eyes, and knew that he was of the high folk of the Noldor. But fear and wonder grew in his gaze as he saw Tuor standing high upon the wall above him, clad in his great cloak like a shadow out of which the elven-mail gleamed upon his breast.

A moment thus they stayed, each searching the face of the other, and then the Elf stood up and bowed low before Tuor's feet. 'Who are you, lord?' he said. 'Long have I laboured in the unrelenting sea. Tell me: have great tidings befallen since I walked the land? Is the Shadow overthrown? Have the Hidden People come forth?'

'Nay,' Tuor answered. 'The Shadow lengthens, and the Hidden remain hid.'

Then Voronwë looked at him long in silence. 'But who are you?' he asked again. 'For many years ago my people left this land, and none have dwelt here since. And now I perceive that despite your raiment you are not of them, as I thought, but are of the kindred of Men.'

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<sup>41</sup> The Shadowy Isles are very probably the Enchanted Isles described at the end of *The Silmarillion* ch. 11, which were 'strung as a net in the Shadowy Seas from the north to the south' at the time of the Hiding of Valinor.

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *The Silmarillion* p. 196: 'At the bidding of Turgon [after the Nirnaeth Arnoediad] Círdan built seven swift ships, and they sailed out into the West; but no tidings of them came ever back to Balar, save of one, and the last. The mariners of that ship toiled long in the sea, and returning at last in despair they foundered in a great storm within sight of the coasts of Middle-earth; but one of them was saved by Ulmo from the wrath of Ossë, and the waves bore him up, and cast him ashore in Nevrast. His name was Voronwë; and he was one of those that Turgon sent forth as messengers from Gondolin.'; Cf. also *The Silmarillion* p. 239.

*'I am,' said Tuor. 'And are you not the last mariner of the last ship that sought the West from the Havens of Círdan?'*

*'I am,' said the Elf. 'Voronwë son of Aranwë am I. But how you know my name and fate I understand not.'*

*'I know, for the Lord of Waters spoke to me yestereve,' answered Tuor, 'and he said that he would save you from the wrath of Ossë, and send you hither to be my guide.'*

*Then in fear and wonder Voronwë cried: 'You have spoken with Ulmo the Mighty? Then great indeed must be your worth and doom! But whither should I guide you, lord? For surely a king of Men you must be, and many must wait upon your word.'*

*'Nay, I am an escaped thrall,' said Tuor, 'and I am an outlaw alone in an empty land. But I have an errand to Turgon the Hidden King. Know you by what road I may find him?'*

*'Many are outlaw and thrall in these evil days who were not born so,' answered Voronwë. 'A lord of Men by right you are, I deem. But were you the highest of all your folk, no right would you have to seek Turgon, and vain would be your quest. For even were I to lead you to his gates, you could not enter in.'*

*'I do not bid you to lead me further than the gate,' said Tuor. 'There Doom shall strive with the Counsel of Ulmo. And if Turgon will not receive me, then my errand will be ended, and Doom shall prevail. But as for my right to seek Turgon: I am Tuor son of Huor and kin to Húrin, whose names Turgon will not forget. And I seek also by the command of Ulmo. Will Turgon forget that which he spoke to him of old: Remember that the last hope of the Noldor cometh from the Sea? Or again: When peril is nigh one shall come from Nevrast to warn thee?<sup>43</sup> I am he that should come, and I am arrayed thus in the gear that was prepared for me.'*

*Tuor marvelled to hear himself speak so, for the words of Ulmo to Turgon at his going from Nevrast were not known to him before, nor to any save the Hidden People. Therefore the more amazed was Voronwë; but he turned away, and looked toward the Sea, and he sighed.*

*'Alas!' he said. 'I wish never again to return. And often have I vowed in the deeps of the sea that, if ever I set foot on land again, I would dwell at rest far from the Shadow in the North, or by the Havens of Círdan, or maybe in the fair fields of Nan-tathren, where the spring is sweeter than heart's desire. But if evil has grown while I have wandered, and the last peril approaches them, then I must go to my people.' He turned back to Tuor. 'I will lead you to the hidden gates,' he said; 'for the wise will not gainsay the counsels of Ulmo.'*

*'Then we will go together, as we are counselled,' said Tuor. 'But mourn not, Voronwë! For my heart says to you that far from the Shadow your long road shall lead you, and your hope shall return to the Sea.'<sup>44</sup>*

*'And yours also,' said Voronwë. 'But now we must leave it, and go in haste.'*

*'Yea,' said Tuor. 'But whither will you lead me, and how far? Shall we not first take thought how we may fare in the wild, or if the way be long, how pass the harbourless winter?'*

*But Voronwë would answer nothing clearly concerning the road. 'You know the strength of Men,' he said. 'As for me, I am of the Noldor, and long must be the hunger and cold the winter that shall slay the kin of those who passed the Grinding Ice. Yet how think you that we could labour countless days in the salt wastes of the sea? Or have you not heard of the waybread of the Elves? And I keep still that which all mariners hold until the last.' Then he showed beneath his cloak a sealed wallet clasped upon his belt. 'No water nor weather will harm*

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<sup>43</sup> The words of Ulmo to Turgon appear in *The Silmarillion* [ch. 15](#) in the form: 'Remember that the true hope of the Noldor lieth in the West and cometh from the Sea,' and 'But if this peril draweth nigh indeed, then even from Nevrast one shall come to warn thee.'

<sup>44</sup> Nothing is told in *The Silmarillion* of the further fate of Voronwë after his return to Gondolin with Tuor; but in the original story ('Of Tuor and the Exiles of Gondolin') he was one of those who escaped from the sack of the city—as is implied by the words of Tuor here.

*it while it is sealed. But we must husband it until great need; and doubtless an outlaw and hunter may find other food ere the year worsens.'*

*'Maybe,' said Tuor. 'But not in all lands is it safe to hunt, be the game never so plentiful. And hunters tarry on the road.'*

*Now Tuor and Voronwë made ready to depart. Tuor took with him the small bow and arrows that he had brought, beside the gear that he had taken from the hall; but his spear, upon which his name was written in the eleven-runes of the North, he set upon the wall in token that he had passed. No arms had Voronwë save a short sword only.*

*Before the day was broad they left the ancient dwelling of Turgon, and Voronwë led Tuor about, westward of the steep slopes of Taras, and across the great cape. There once the road from Nevrast to Brithombar had passed, that now was but a green track between old turf-clad dikes. So they came into Beleriand, and the north region of the Falas; and turning eastward they sought the dark eaves of Ered Wethrin, and there they lay hid and rested until day had waned to dusk. For though the ancient dwellings of the Falathrim, Brithombar and Eglarest, were still far distant, Orcs now dwelt there and all the land was infested by the spies of Morgoth: he feared the ships of Círdan that would come at times raiding to the shores, and join with the forays sent forth from Nargothrond.*

*Now as they sat shrouded in their cloaks as shadows under the hills, Tuor and Voronwë spoke much together. And Tuor questioned Voronwë concerning Turgon, but Voronwë would tell little of such matters, and spoke rather of the dwellings upon the Isle of Balar, and of the Lisgardh, the land of reeds at the Mouths of Sirion.*

*'There now the numbers of the Eldar increase,' he said, 'for ever more flee thither of either kin from the fear of Morgoth, weary of war. But I forsook not my people of my own choice. For after the Bragollach and the breaking of the Siege of Angband doubt first came into Turgon's heart that Morgoth might prove too strong. In that year he sent out the first of his folk that passed his gates from within: a few only, upon a secret errand. They went down Sirion to the shores about the Mouths, and there built ships. But it availed them nothing, save to come to the great Isle of Balar and there establish lonely dwellings, far from the reach of Morgoth. For the Noldor have not the art of building ships that will long endure the waves of Belegaer the Great.'*<sup>45</sup>

*'But when later Turgon heard of the ravaging of the Falas and the sack of the ancient Havens of the Shipwrights that lie away there before us, and it was told that Círdan had saved a remnant of his people and sailed away south to the Bay of Balar, then he sent out messengers anew. That was but a little while ago, yet it seems in memory the longest portion of my life. For I was one of those that he sent, being young in years among the Eldar. I was born here in Middle-earth in the land of Nevrast. My mother was of the Grey-elves of the Falas, and akin to Círdan himself—there was much mingling of the peoples in Nevrast in the first days of Turgon's kingship—and I have the sea-heart of my mother's people. Therefore I was among the chosen, since our errand was to Círdan, to seek his aid in our shipbuilding, that some message and prayer for aid might*

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<sup>45</sup> Cf. *The Silmarillion* p. 159: '[Turgon] believed also that the ending of the Siege was the beginning of the downfall of the Noldor, unless aid should come; and he sent companies of the Gondolindrim in secret to the mouths of Sirion and the Isle of Balar. There they built ships, and set sail into the uttermost West upon Turgon's errand, seeking for Valinor, to ask for pardon and aid of the Valar; and they besought the birds of the sea to guide them. But the seas were wild and wide, and shadow and enchantment lay upon them; and Valinor was hidden. Therefore none of the messengers of Turgon came into the West, and many were lost and few returned.'

In one of the 'constituent texts' of *The Silmarillion* it is said that although the Noldor 'had not the art of shipbuilding, and all the craft that they built foundered or were driven back by the winds', yet after the Dagor Bragollach 'Turgon ever maintained a secret refuge upon the Isle of Balar', and when after the Nirnaeth Arnoediad Círdan and the remnant of his people fled from Brithombar and Eglarest to Balar 'they mingled with Turgon's outpost there'. But this element in the story was rejected, and thus in the published text of *The Silmarillion* there is no reference to the establishment of dwellings on Balar by Elves from Gondolin.

come to the Lords of the West ere all was lost. But I tarried on the way. For I had seen little of the lands of Middle-earth, and we came to Nan-tathren in the spring of the year. Lovely to heart's enchantment is that land, Tuor, as you shall find, if ever your feet go upon the southward roads down Sirion. There is the cure of all sea-longing, save for those whom Doom will not release. There Ulmo is but the servant of Yavanna, and the earth has brought to life a wealth of fair things that is beyond the thought of hearts in the hard hills of the North. In that land Narog joins Sirion, and they haste no more, but flow broad and quiet through living meads; and all about the shining river are flaglilies like a blossoming forest, and the grass is filled with flowers, like gems, like bells, like flames of red and gold, like a waste of many-coloured stars in a firmament of green. Yet fairest of all are the willows of Nantathren, pale green, or silver in the wind, and the rustle of their innumerable leaves is a spell of music: day and night would flicker by uncounted, while still I stood knee-deep in grass and listened. There I was enchanted, and forgot the Sea in my heart. There I wandered, naming new flowers, or lay adream amid the singing of the birds, and the humming of bees and flies; and there I might still dwell in delight, forsaking all my kin, whether the ships of the Teleri or the swords of the Noldor, but my doom would not so. Or the Lord of Waters himself, maybe; for he was strong in that land.

'Thus it came into my heart to make a raft of willow-boughs and move upon the bright bosom of Sirion; and so I did, and so I was taken. For on a day, as I was in the midst of the river, a sudden wind came and caught me, and bore me away out of the Land of Willows down to the Sea. Thus I came last of the messengers to Círdan; and of the seven ships that he built at Turgon's asking all but one were then full-wrought. And one by one they set sail into the West, and none yet has ever returned, nor has any news of them been heard.

'But the salt air of the sea now stirred anew the heart of my mother's kin within me, and I rejoiced in the waves, learning all ship-lore, as were it already stored in the mind. So when the last ship, and the greatest, was made ready, I was eager to be gone, saying within my thought: "If the words of the Noldor be true, then in the West there are meads with which the Land of Willows cannot compare. There is no withering nor any end of Spring. And perhaps even I, Voronwë, may come thither. And at the worst to wander on the waters is better far than the Shadow in the North." And I feared not, for the ships of the Teleri no water may drown.

'But the Great Sea is terrible, Tuor son of Huor; and it hates the Noldor, for it works the Doom of the Valar. Worse things it holds than to sink into the abyss and so perish: loathing, and loneliness, and madness; terror of wind and tumult, and silence, and shadows where all hope is lost and all living shapes pass away. And many shores evil and strange it washes, and many islands of danger and fear infest it. I will not darken your heart, son of Middle-earth, with the tale of my labour seven years in the Great Sea from the North even into the South, but never to the West. For that is shut against us.

'At the last, in black despair, weary of all the world, we turned and fled from the doom that so long had spared us, only to strike us the more cruelly. For even as we descried a mountain from afar, and I cried: "Lo! There is Taras, and the land of my birth," the wind awoke, and great clouds thunder-laden came up from the West. Then the waves hunted us like living things filled with malice, and the lightnings smote us; and when we were broken down to a helpless hull the seas leaped upon us in fury. But as you see, I was spared; for it seemed to me that there came a wave, greater and yet calmer than all the others, and it took me and lifted me from the ship, and bore me high upon its shoulders, and rolling to the land it cast me upon the turf, and then drained away, pouring back over the cliff in a great waterfall. There but one hour had I sat when you came upon me, still dazed by the sea. And still I feel the fear of it, and the bitter loss of all my friends that went with me so long and so far, beyond the sight of mortal lands.'

Voronwë sighed, and spoke then softly as if to himself. 'But very bright were the stars upon the margin of the world, when at times the clouds about the West were drawn aside. Yet whether we saw only clouds still more remote, or glimpsed indeed, as some held, the Mountains of the Pelóri about the lost strands of our long home, I know not. Far, far away they stand, and none from mortal lands shall come there ever again, I deem.' Then Voronwë fell silent; for night had come, and the stars shone white and cold.

Soon after Tuor and Voronwë arose and turned their backs toward the sea, and set out upon their long journey in the dark; of which there is little to tell, for the shadow of Ulmo was upon Tuor, and none saw them pass, by wood or stone, by field or fen, between the setting and the rising of the sun. But ever warily they went, shunning the night-eyed hunters of Morgoth, and forsaking the trodden ways of Elves and Men. Voronwë chose their path



and Tuor followed. He asked no vain questions, but noted well that they went ever eastward along the march of the rising mountains, and turned never southward: at which he wondered, for he believed, as did well nigh all Elves and Men, that Turgon dwelt far from the battles of the North.

Slow was their going by twilight or by night in the pathless wilds, and the fell winter came down swiftly from the realm of Morgoth. Despite the shelter of the hills the winds were strong and bitter, and soon the snow lay deep upon the heights, or whirled through the passes, and fell upon the woods of Núath ere the full-shedding of their withered leaves.<sup>46</sup> Thus though they set out before the middle of Narquelië, the Hísimë came in with biting frost even as they drew nigh to the Sources of Narog.

There at the end of a weary night in the grey of dawn they halted; and Voronwë was dismayed, looking about him in grief and fear. Where once the fair pool of Ivrin had lain in its great stone basin carved by falling waters, and all about it had been a tree-clad hollow under the hills, now he saw a land defiled and desolate. The trees were burned or uprooted; and the stone-marges of the pool were broken, so that the waters of Ivrin strayed and wrought a great barren marsh amid the ruin. All now was but a welter of frozen mire, and a reek of decay lay like a foul mist upon the ground.

‘Alas! Has the evil come even here?’ Voronwë cried. ‘Once far from the threat of Angband was this place; but ever the fingers of Morgoth grope further.’

‘It is even as Ulmo spoke to me,’ said Tuor: ‘The springs are poisoned, and my power withdraws from the waters of the land.’

‘Yet,’ said Voronwë, ‘a malice has been here with strength greater than that of Orcs. Fear lingers in this place.’ And he searched about the edges of the mire, until suddenly he stood still and cried again: ‘Yea, a great evil!’ And he beckoned to Tuor, and Tuor coming saw a slot like a huge furrow that passed away southward, and at either side, now blurred, now sealed hard and clear by frost, the marks of great clawed feet. ‘See!’ said Voronwë, and his face was pale with dread and loathing. ‘Here not long since was the Great Worm of Angband, most fell of all the creatures of the Enemy! Late already is our errand to Turgon. There is need of haste.’

Even as he spoke thus, they heard a cry in the woods, and they stood still as grey stones, listening. But the voice was a fair voice, though filled with grief, and it seemed that it called ever upon a name, as one that searches for another who is lost. And as they waited one came through the trees, and they saw that he was a tall Man, armed, clad in black, with a long sword drawn; and they wondered, for the blade of the sword also was black, but the edges shone bright and cold. Woe was graven in his face, and when he beheld the ruin of Ivrin he cried aloud in grief, saying: ‘Ivrin, Faelivrin! Gwindor and Beleg! Here once I was healed. But now never shall I drink the draught of peace again.’

Then he went swiftly away towards the North, as one in pursuit, or on an errand of great haste, and they heard him cry Faelivrin, Finduilas! until his voice died away in the woods.<sup>47</sup> But they knew not that Nargothrond had fallen, and this was Túrin son of Húrin, the Blacksword. Thus only for a moment, and never again, did the paths of those kinsmen, Túrin and Tuor, draw together.

When the Blacksword had passed, Tuor and Voronwë held on their way for a while, though day had come; for the memory of his grief was heavy upon them, and they could not endure to remain beside the defilement of Ivrin. But before long they sought a hiding-place, for all the land was filled now with a foreboding of evil. They slept little and uneasily, and as the day wore it grew dark and a great snow fell, and with the night came a

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<sup>46</sup> The woods of Núath are not mentioned in *The Silmarillion* and are not marked on the map that accompanies it. They extended westward from the upper waters of the Narog towards the source of the river Nenning.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *The Silmarillion* pp. 209-10: ‘Finduilas daughter of Orodreth the King knew [Gwindor] and welcomed him, for she had loved him before the Nirnaeth, and so greatly did Gwindor love her beauty that he named her Faelivrin, which is the gleam of the sun on the pools of Ivrin.’

grinding frost. Thereafter the snow and ice relented not at all, and for five months the Fell Winter, long remembered, held the North in bonds. Now Tuor and Voronwë were tormented by the cold, and feared to be revealed by the snow to hunting enemies, or to fall into hidden dangers treacherously cloaked. Nine days they held on, ever slower and more painfully, and Voronwë turned somewhat north, until they crossed the three well-streams of Teiglin; and then he bore eastward again, leaving the mountains, and went warily, until they passed Glithui and came to the stream of Malduin, and it was frozen black.<sup>48</sup>

Then Tuor said to Voronwë: 'Fell is this frost, and death draws near to me, if not to you.' For they were now in evil case: it was long since they had found any food in the wild, and the waybread was dwindling; and they were cold and weary. 'Ill is it to be trapped between the Doom of the Valar and the Malice of the Enemy,' said Voronwë. 'Have I escaped the mouths of the sea but to lie under the snow?'

But Tuor said: 'How far is it now to go? For at last, Voronwë, you must forgo your secrecy with me. Do you lead me straight, and whither? For if I must spend my last strength, I would know to what that may avail.'

'I have led you as straight as I safely might,' answered Voronwë. 'Know then now that Turgon dwells still in the north of the land of the Eldar, though that is believed by few. Already we draw nigh to him. Yet there are many leagues still to go, even as a bird might fly; and for us Sirion is yet to cross, and great evil, maybe, lies between. For we must come soon to the Highway that ran of old down from the Minas of King Finrod to Nargothrond.<sup>49</sup> There the servants of the Enemy will walk and watch.'

'I counted myself the hardiest of Men,' said Tuor, 'and I have endured many winters' woe in the mountains; but I had a cave at my back and fire then, and I doubt now my strength to go much further thus hungry through the fell weather. But let us go on as far as we may before hope fails.'

'No other choice have we,' said Voronwë, 'unless it be to lay us down here and seek the snow-sleep.'

Therefore all through that bitter day they toiled on, deeming the peril of foes less than the winter; but ever as they went they found less snow, for they were now going southward again down into the Vale of Sirion, and the Mountains of Dor-lómin were left far behind. In the deepening dusk they came to the Highway at the bottom of a tall wooded bank. Suddenly they were aware of voices, and looking out warily from the trees they saw a red light below. A company of Orcs was encamped in the midst of the road, huddled about a large wood-fire.

'Gurth an Glamhoth!' Tuor muttered.<sup>50</sup> 'Now the sword shall come from under the cloak. I will risk death for mastery of that fire, and even the meat of Orcs would be a prize.'

'Nay!' said Voronwë. 'On this quest only the cloak will serve. You must forgo the fire, or else forgo Turgon. This band is not alone in the wild: cannot your mortal sight see the far flame of other posts to the north and to the south? A tumult will bring a host upon us. Harken to me, Tuor! It is against the law of the Hidden Kingdom that any should approach the gates with foes at their heels; and that law I will not break, neither for Ulmo's bidding, nor for death. Rouse the Orcs, and I leave you.'

'Then let them be,' said Tuor. 'But may I live yet to see the day when I need not sneak aside from a handful of Orcs like a cowed dog.'

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<sup>48</sup> The river Glithui is not mentioned in *The Silmarillion* and is not named on the map, though it is shown: a tributary of the Teiglin joining that river some way north of the inflowing of the Malduin.

<sup>49</sup> This road is referred to in *The Silmarillion*, p. 205: 'The ancient road . . . that led through the long defile of Sirion, past the isle where Minas Tirith of Finrod had stood, and so through the land between Malduin and Sirion, and on through the eaves of Brethil to the Crossings of Teiglin.'

<sup>50</sup> 'Death to the Glamhoth!' This name, though it does not occur in *The Silmarillion* or in *The Lord of the Rings*, was a general term in the Sindarin language for Orcs. The meaning is 'din-horde', 'host of tumult'; cf. Gandalf's sword *Glamdring*, and *Tol-in-Gaurhoth*, the Isle of (the host of) Werewolves.

*'Come then!' said Voronwë. 'Debate no more, or they will scent us. Follow me!'*

*He crept then away through the trees, southward down the wind, until they were midway between that Orc-fire and the next upon the road. There he stood still a long while listening.*

*'I hear none moving on the road,' he said, 'but we know not what may be lurking in the shadows.' He peered forward into the gloom and shuddered. 'The air is evil,' he muttered. 'Alas! Yonder lies the land of our quest and hope of life, but death walks between.'*

*'Death is all about us,' said Tuor. 'But I have strength left only for the shortest road. Here I must cross, or perish. I will trust to the mantle of Ulmo, and you also it shall cover. Now I will lead!'*

*So saying he stole to the border of the road. Then clasping Voronwë close he cast about them both the folds of the grey cloak of the Lord of Waters, and stepped forth.*

*All was still. The cold wind sighed as it swept down the ancient road. Then suddenly it too fell silent. In the pause Tuor felt a change in the air, as if the breath from the land of Morgoth had failed a while, and faint as a memory of the Sea came a breeze from the West. As a grey mist on the wind they passed over the stony street and entered a thicket on its eastern brink.*

*All at once from near at hand there came a wild cry, and many others along the borders of the road answered it. A harsh horn blared, and there was the sound of running feet. But Tuor held on. He had learned enough of the tongue of the Orcs in his captivity to know the meaning of those cries: the watchers had scented them and heard them, but they were not seen. The hunt was out. Desperately he stumbled and crept forward with Voronwë at his side, up a long slope deep in whin and whortleberry among knots of rowan and low birch. At the top of the ridge they halted, listening to the shouts behind and the crashing of the Orcs in the under-growth below.*

*Beside them was a boulder that reared its head out of a tangle of heath and brambles, and beneath it was such a lair as a hunted beast might seek and hope there to escape pursuit, or at the least with its back to stone to sell its life dearly. Down into the dark shadow Tuor drew Voronwë, and side by side under the grey cloak they lay and panted like tired foxes. No word they spoke; all their heed was in their ears.*

*The cries of the hunters grew fainter; for the Orcs thrust never deep into the wild lands at either hand, but swept rather down and up the road. They recked little of stray fugitives, but spies they feared and the scouts of armed foes; for Morgoth had set a guard on the highway, not to ensnare Tuor and Voronwë (of whom as yet he knew nothing) nor any coming from the West, but to watch for the Blacksword, lest he should escape and pursue the captives of Nargothrond, bringing help, it might be, out of Doriath.*

*The night passed, and the brooding silence lay again upon the empty lands. Weary and spent Tuor slept beneath Ulmo's cloak; but Voronwë crept forth and stood like a stone, silent, unmoving, piercing the shadows with his Elvish eyes. At the break of day he woke Tuor, and he creeping out saw that the weather had indeed for a time relented, and the black clouds were rolled aside. There was a red dawn, and he could see far before him the tops of strange mountains glinting against the eastern fire.*

*Then Voronwë said in a low voice: 'Alae! Ered en Echoriath, ered e-mbar nín!'<sup>51</sup> For he knew that he looked on the Encircling Mountains and the walls of the realm of Turgon. Below them, eastward, in a deep and shadowy vale lay Sirion the fair, renowned in song; and beyond, wrapped in mist, a grey land climbed from the river to the broken hills at the mountains' feet. 'Yonder lies Dimbar,' said Voronwë. 'Would we were there! For there our foes seldom dare to walk. Or so it was, while the power of Ulmo was strong in Sirion. But all may now be*

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<sup>51</sup> *Echoriath*: the Encircling Mountains about the plain of Gondolin.

*Ered e-mbar nín*: the mountains of my home.

changed<sup>52</sup>—save the peril of the river: it is already deep and swift, and even for the Eldar dangerous to cross. But I have led you well; for there gleams the Ford of Brithiach, yet a little southward, where the East Road that of old ran all the way from Taras in the West made the passage of the river. None now dare to use it save in desperate need, neither Elf nor Man nor Orc, since that road leads to Dungortheb and the land of dread between the Gorgoroth and the Girdle of Melian; and long since has it faded into the wild, or dwindled to a track among weeds and trailing thorns.<sup>53</sup>

Then Tuor looked as Voronwë pointed, and far away he caught the glimmer as of open waters under the brief light of dawn; but beyond loomed a darkness, where the great forest of Brethil climbed away southward into a distant highland. Now warily they made their way down the valley-side, until at last they came to the ancient road descending from the waymeet on the borders of Brethil, where it crossed the highway from Nargothrond. Then Tuor saw that they were come close to Sirion. The banks of its deep channel fell away in that place, and its waters, choked by a great waste of stones,<sup>54</sup> were spread out into broad shallows, full of the murmur of fretting streams. Then after a little the river gathered together again, and delving a new bed flowed away towards the forest, and far off vanished into a deep mist that his eye could not pierce; for there lay, though he knew it not, the north march of Doriath within the shadow of the Girdle of Melian.

At once Tuor would hasten to the ford, but Voronwë restrained him, saying: 'Over the Brithiach we may not go in open day, nor while any doubt of pursuit remains.'

'Then shall we sit here and rot?' said Tuor. 'For such doubt will remain while the realm of Morgoth endures. Come! Under the shadow of the cloak of Ulmo we must go forward.'

Still Voronwë hesitated, and looked back westward; but the track behind was deserted, and all about was quiet save for the rush of the waters. He looked up, and the sky was grey and empty, for not even a bird was moving. Then suddenly his face brightened with joy, and he cried aloud: 'It is well! The Brithiach is guarded still by the enemies of the Enemy. The Orcs will not follow us here; and under the cloak we may pass now without more doubt.'

'What new thing have you seen?' said Tuor.

'Short is the sight of Mortal Men!' said Voronwë. 'I see the Eagles of the Crissaegrim; and they are coming hither. Watch a while!'

Then Tuor stood at gaze; and soon high in the air he saw three shapes beating on strong wings down from the distant mountain-peaks now wreathed again in cloud. Slowly they descended in great circles, and then stooped suddenly upon the wayfarers; but before Voronwë could call to them they turned with a wide sweep and rush, and flew northward along the line of the river.

'Now let us go,' said Voronwë. 'If there be any Orc nearby, he will lie cowering nose to ground, until the eagles have gone far away.'

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<sup>52</sup> In *The Silmarillion*, pp. 200-1, Beleg of Doriath said to Túrin (at a time some years before that of the present narrative) that Orcs had made a road through the Pass of Anach, 'and Dimbar which used to be in peace is falling under the Black Hand'.

<sup>53</sup> By this road Maeglin and Aredhel fled to Gondolin pursued by Eöl (*The Silmarillion* ch. 16); and afterwards Celegorm and Curufin took it when they were expelled from Nargothrond (*ibid.*, p. 176). Only in the present text is there any mention of its westward extension to Turgon's ancient home at Vinyamar under Mount Taras; and its course is not marked on the map from its junction with the old south road to Nargothrond at the north-western edge of Brethil.

<sup>54</sup> The name *Brithiach* contains the element *brith*, 'gravel', as also in the river *Brithon* and the haven of *Brithombar*.



Swiftly down a long slope they hastened, and passed over the Brithiach, walking often dryfoot upon shelves of shingle, or wading in the shoals no more than knee-deep. The water was clear and very cold, and there was ice upon the shallow pools, where the wandering streams had lost their way among the stones; but never, not even in the Fell Winter of the Fall of Nargothrond, could the deadly breath of the North freeze the main flood of Sirion.<sup>55</sup>

On the far side of the ford they came to a gully, as it were the bed of an old stream, in which no water now flowed; yet once, it seemed, a torrent had cloven its deep channel, coming down from the north out of the mountains of the Echoriath, and bearing thence all the stones of the Brithiach down into Sirion.

‘At last beyond hope we find it!’ cried Voronwë. ‘See! Here is the mouth of the Dry River, and that is the road we must take.’<sup>56</sup> Then they passed into the gully, and as it turned north and the slopes of the land went steeply up, so its sides rose upon either hand, and Tuor stumbled in the dim light among the stones with which its rough bed was strewn. ‘If this is a road,’ he said, ‘it is an evil one for the weary.’

‘Yet it is the road to Turgon,’ said Voronwë. ‘Then the more do I marvel,’ said Tuor, ‘that its entrance lies open and unguarded. I had looked to find a great gate, and strength of guard.’

‘That you shall yet see,’ said Voronwë. ‘This is but the approach. A road I named it; yet upon it none have passed for more than three hundred years, save messengers few and secret, and all the craft of the Noldor has been expended to conceal it, since the Hidden People entered in. Does it lie open? Would you have known it, if you had not had one of the Hidden Kingdom for a guide? Or would you have guessed it to be but the work of the weathers and the waters of the wilderness? And are there not the Eagles, as you have seen? They are the folk of Thorondor, who dwelt once even on Thangorodrim ere Morgoth grew so mighty, and dwell now in the Mountains of Turgon since the fall of Fingolfin.’<sup>57</sup> They alone save the Noldor know the Hidden Kingdom and guard the skies above it, though as yet no servant of the Enemy has dared to fly into the high airs; and they bring much news to the King of all that moves in the lands without. Had we been Orcs, doubt not that we should have been seized, and cast from a great height upon the pitiless rocks.’

‘I doubt it not,’ said Tuor. ‘But it comes into my mind to wonder also whether news will not now come to Turgon of our approach swifter than we. And if that be good or ill, you alone can say.’

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<sup>55</sup> In a parallel version of the text at this point, almost certainly rejected in favour of the one printed, the travellers did not cross the Sirion by the Ford of Brithiach, but reached the river several leagues to the north of it. ‘They trod a toilsome path to the brink of the river, and there Voronwë cried: “See a wonder! Both good and ill does it forebode. Sirion is frozen, though no tale tells of the like since the coming of the Eldar out of the East. Thus we may pass and save many weary miles, too long for our strength. Yet thus also others may have passed, or may follow.”’ They crossed the river on the ice unhindered, and ‘thus did the counsels of Ulmo turn the malice of the Enemy to avail, for the way was shortened, and at the end of their hope and strength Tuor and Voronwë came at last to the Dry River at its issuing from the skirts of the mountains’.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. *The Silmarillion* p. 125: ‘But there was a deep way under the mountains delved in the darkness of the world by waters that flowed out to join the streams of Sirion; and this way Turgon found, and so came to the green plain amid the mountains, and saw the island-hill that stood there of hard smooth stone; for the vale had been a great lake in ancient days.’

<sup>57</sup> It is not said in *The Silmarillion* that the great eagles ever dwelt on Thangorodrim. In ch. 13 (p. 110) Manwë ‘sent forth the race of Eagles, commanding them to dwell in the crags of the North, and to keep watch upon Morgoth’; while in ch. 18 (p. 154) Thorondor ‘came hasting from his eyrie among the peaks of the Crissaegrim’ for the rescue of Fingolfin’s body before the gates of Angband. Cf. also *The Return of the King* VI 4: ‘Old Thorondor, who built his eyries in the inaccessible peaks of the Encircling Mountains when Middle-earth was young.’ In all probability the conception of Thorondor’s dwelling at first upon Thangorodrim, which is found also in an early *Silmarillion* text, was later abandoned.

*'Neither good nor ill,' said Voronwë. 'For we cannot pass the Guarded Gate unmarked, be we looked for or no; and if we come there the Guards will need no report that we are not Orcs. But to pass we shall need a greater plea than that. For you do not guess, Tuor, the peril that we then shall face. Blame me not, as one unwarned, for what may then betide; may the power of the Lord of Waters be shown indeed! For in that hope alone have I been willing to guide you, and if it fails then more surely shall we die than by all the perils of wild and winter.'*

*But Tuor said: 'Forebode no more. Death in the wild is certain; and death at the Gate is yet in doubt to me, for all your words. Lead me still on!'*

*Many miles they toiled on in the stones of the Dry River, until they could go no further, and the evening brought darkness into the deep cleft; they climbed out then on to the east bank, and they had now come into the tumbled hills that lay at the feet of the mountains. And looking up Tuor saw that they towered up in a fashion other than that of any mountains that he had seen; for their sides were like sheer walls, piled each one above and behind the lower, as were they great towers of many-storeyed precipices. But the day had waned, and all the lands were grey and misty, and the Vale of Sirion was shrouded in shadow. Then Voronwë led him to a shallow cave in a hillside that looked out over the lonely slopes of Dimbar, and they crept within, and there they lay hid; and they ate their last crumbs of food, and were cold, and weary, but slept not. Thus did Tuor and Voronwë come in the dusk of the eighteenth day of Hisimë, the thirty-seventh of their journey, to the towers of the Echoriath and the threshold of Turgon, and by the power of Ulmo escaped both the Doom and the Malice.*

*When the first glimmer of day filtered grey amid the mists of Dimbar they crept back into the Dry River, and soon after its course turned eastward, winding up to the very walls of the mountains; and straight before them there loomed a great precipice, rising sheer and sudden from a steep slope upon which grew a tangled thicket of thorn-trees. Into this thicket the stony channel entered, and there it was still dark as night; and they halted, for the thorns grew far down the sides of the gully, and their lacing branches were a dense roof above it, so low that often Tuor and Voronwë must crawl under like beasts stealing back to their lair.*

*But at last, as with great labour they came to the very foot of the cliff, they found an opening, as it were the mouth of a tunnel worn in the hard rock by waters flowing from the heart of the mountains. They entered, and within there was no light, but Voronwë went steadily forward, while Tuor followed with his hand upon his shoulder, bending a little, for the roof was low. Thus for a time they went on blindly, step by step, until presently they felt the ground beneath their feet had become level and free from loose stones. Then they halted and breathed deeply, as they stood listening. The air seemed fresh and wholesome, and they were aware of a great space around and above them; but all was silent, and not even the drip of water could be heard. It seemed to Tuor that Voronwë was troubled and in doubt, and he whispered: 'Where then is the Guarded Gate? Or have we indeed now passed it?'*

*'Nay,' said Voronwë. 'Yet I wonder, for it is strange that any incomer should creep thus far unchallenged. I fear some stroke in the dark.'*

*But their whispers aroused the sleeping echoes, and they were enlarged and multiplied, and ran in the roof and the unseen walls, hissing and murmuring as the sound of many stealthy voices. And even as the echoes died in the stone, Tuor heard out of the heart of the darkness a voice speak in the Elven-tongues: first in the High Speech of the Noldor, which he knew not; and then in the tongue of Beleriand, though in a manner somewhat strange to his ears, as of a people long sundered from their kin.<sup>58</sup>*

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<sup>58</sup> In *The Silmarillion* nothing is said specifically concerning the speech of the Elves of Gondolin; but this passage suggests that for some of them the High Speech (Quenya) was in ordinary use. It is stated in a late linguistic essay that Quenya was in daily use in Turgon's house, and was the childhood speech of Eärendil; but that 'for most of the people of Gondolin it had become a language of books, and as the other Noldor they used Sindarin in daily speech'. Cf. *The Silmarillion* p. 129: after the edict of Thingol 'the Exiles took the Sindarin tongue in all their daily uses, and the High Speech of the West was spoken only by the lords of the Noldor among themselves. Yet that speech lived ever as a language of lore, wherever any of that people dwelt.'

*'Stand!' it said. 'Stir not! Or you will die, be you foes or friends.'*

*'We are friends,' said Voronwë.*

*'Then do as we bid,' said the voice.*

*The echo of their voices rolled into silence. Voronwë and Tuor stood still, and it seemed to Tuor that many slow minutes passed, and a fear was in his heart such as no other peril of his road had brought. Then there came the beat of feet, growing to a tramping loud as the march of trolls in that hollow place. Suddenly an elven-lantern was unhooded, and its bright ray was turned upon Voronwë before him, but nothing else could Tuor see save a dazzling star in the darkness; and he knew that while that beam was upon him he could not move, neither to flee nor to run forward.*

*For a moment they were held thus in the eye of the light, and then the voice spoke again, saying: 'Show your faces!' And Voronwë cast back his hood, and his face shone in the ray, hard and clear, as if graven in stone; and Tuor marvelled to see its beauty. Then he spoke proudly, saying: 'Know you not whom you see? I am Voronwë son of Aranwë of the House of Fingolfin. Or am I forgotten in my own land after a few years? Far beyond the thought of Middle-earth I have wandered, yet I remember your voice, Elemmakil.'*

*'Then Voronwë will remember also the laws of his land,' said the voice. 'Since by command he went forth, he has the right to return. But not to lead hither any stranger. By that deed his right is void, and he must be led as a prisoner to the king's judgement. As for the stranger, he shall be slain or held captive at the judgement of the Guard. Lead him hither that I may judge.'*

*Then Voronwë led Tuor towards the light, and as they drew near many Noldor, mail-clad and armed, stepped forward out of the darkness and surrounded them with drawn swords. And Elemmakil, captain of the Guard, who bore the bright lamp, looked long and closely at them.*

*'This is strange in you, Voronwë,' he said. 'We were long friends. Why then would you set me thus cruelly between the law and my friendship? If you had led hither unbidden one of the other houses of the Noldor, that were enough. But you have brought to knowledge of the Way a mortal Man—for by his eyes I perceive his kin. Yet free can he never again go, knowing the secret; and as one of alien kin that has dared to enter, I should slay him—even though he be your friend and dear to you.'*

*'In the wide lands without, Elemmakil, many strange things may befall one, and tasks unlooked for be laid on one,' Voronwë answered. 'Other shall the wanderer return than as he set forth. What I have done, I have done under command greater than the law of the Guard. The King alone should judge me, and him that comes with me.'*

*Then Tuor spoke, and feared no longer. 'I come with Voronwë son of Aranwë, because he was appointed to be my guide by the Lord of Waters. To this end was he delivered from the wrath of the Sea and the Doom of the Valar. For I bear from Ulmo an errand to the son of Fingolfin, and to him will I speak it.'*

*Thereat Elemmakil looked in wonder upon Tuor. 'Who then are you?' he said. 'And whence come you?'*

*'I am Tuor son of Huor of the House of Hador and the kindred of Húrin, and these names, I am told, are not unknown in the Hidden Kingdom. From Nevrast I have come through many perils to seek it.'*

*'From Nevrast?' said Elemmakil. 'It is said that none dwell there, since our people departed.'*

*'It is said truly,' answered Tuor. 'Empty and cold stand the courts of Vinyamar. Yet thence I come. Bring me now to him that built those halls of old.'*

*'In matters so great judgement is not mine,' said Elemmakil. 'Therefore I will lead you to the light where more may be revealed, and I will deliver you to the Warden of the Great Gate.'*

*Then he spoke in command, and Tuor and Voronwë were set between tall guards, two before and three behind them; and their captain led them from the cavern of the Outer Guard, and they passed, as it seemed, into a straight passage, and there walked long upon a level floor, until a pale light gleamed ahead. Thus they came at length to a wide arch with tall pillars upon either hand, hewn in the rock, and between hung a great portcullis of crossed wooden bars, marvellously carved and studded with nails of iron.*

*Elemmakil touched it, and it rose silently, and they passed through; and Tuor saw that they stood at the end of a ravine, the like of which he had never before beheld or imagined in his thought, long though he had walked in the wild mountains of the North; for beside the Orfalch Echor Cirith Ninniach was but a groove in the rock. Here the hands of the Valar themselves, in ancient wars of the world's beginning, had wrested the great mountains asunder, and the sides of the rift were sheer as if axe-cloven, and they towered up to heights unguessable. There far aloft ran a ribbon of sky, and against its deep blue stood black peaks and jagged pinnacles, remote but hard, cruel as spears. Too high were those mighty walls for the winter sun to overlook, and though it was now full morning faint stars glimmered above the mountain-tops, and down below all was dim, but for the pale light of lamps set beside the climbing road. For the floor of the ravine sloped steeply up, eastward, and upon the left hand Tuor saw beside the stream-bed a wide way, laid and paved with stone, winding upward till it vanished into shadow.*

*'You have passed the First Gate, the Gate of Wood,' said Elemmakil. 'There lies the way. We must hasten.'*

*How far that deep road ran Tuor could not guess, and as he stared onward a great weariness came upon him like a cloud. A chill wind hissed over the faces of the stones, and he drew his cloak close about him. 'Cold blows the wind from the Hidden Kingdom!' he said.*

*'Yea, indeed,' said Voronwë; 'to a stranger it might seem that pride has made the servants of Turgon pitiless. Long and hard seem the leagues of the Seven Gates to the hungry and wayworn.'*

*'If our law were less stern, long ago guile and hatred would have entered and destroyed us. That you know well,' said Elemmakil. 'But we are not pitiless. Here there is no food, and the stranger may not go back through a gate that he has passed. Endure then a little, and at the Second Gate you shall be eased.'*

*'It is well,' said Tuor, and he went forward as he was bidden. After a little he turned, and saw that Elemmakil alone followed with Voronwë. 'There is no need more of guards,' said Elemmakil, reading his thought. 'From the Orfalch there is no escape for Elf or Man, and no returning.'*

*Thus they went on up the steep way, sometimes by long stairs, sometimes by winding slopes, under the daunting shadow of the cliff, until some half-league from the Wooden Gate Tuor saw that the way was barred by a great wall built across the ravine from side to side, with stout towers of stone at either hand. In the wall was a great archway above the road, but it seemed that masons had blocked it with a single mighty stone. As they drew near its dark and polished face gleamed in the light of a white lamp that hung above the midst of the arch.*

*'Here stands the Second Gate, the Gate of Stone,' said Elemmakil; and going up to it he thrust lightly upon it. It turned upon an unseen pivot, until its edge was towards them, and the way was open upon either side; and they passed through, into a court where stood many armed guards clad in grey. No word was spoken, but Elemmakil led his charges to a chamber beneath the northern tower; and there food and wine was brought to them, and they were permitted to rest a while.*

*'Scant may the fare seem,' said Elemmakil to Tuor. 'But if your claim be proved, hereafter it shall richly be amended.'*

*'It is enough,' said Tuor. 'Faint were the heart that needed better healing.' And indeed such refreshment did he find in the drink and food of the Noldor that soon he was eager to go on.*

*After a little space they came to a wall yet higher and stronger than before, and in it was set the Third Gate, the Gate of Bronze: a great twofold door hung with shields and plates of bronze, wherein were wrought many figures and strange signs. Upon the wall above its lintel were three square towers, roofed and clad with copper that by some device of smith-craft were ever bright and gleamed as fire in the rays of the red lamps ranged like torches along the wall. Again silently they passed the gate, and saw in the court beyond a yet greater company of guards in mail that glowed like dull fire; and the blades of their axes were red. Of the kindred of the Sindar of Nevrast for the most part were those that held this gate.*

*Now they came to the most toilsome road, for in the midst of the Orfalch the slope was at the steepest, and as they climbed Tuor saw the mightiest of the walls looming dark above him. Thus at last they drew near the Fourth Gate, the Gate of Writhen Iron. High and black was the wall, and lit with no lamps. Four towers of iron stood upon it, and between the two inner towers was set an image of a great eagle wrought in iron, even the*



likeness of King Thorondor himself, as he would alight upon a mountain from the high airs. But as Tuor stood before the gate it seemed to his wonder that he was looking through boughs and stems of imperishable trees into a pale glade of the Moon. For a light came through the trceries of the gate, which were wrought and hammered into the shapes of trees with writhing roots and woven branches laden with leaves and flowers. And as he passed through he saw how this could be; for the wall was of great thickness, and there was not one grill but three in line, so set that to one who approached in the middle of the way each formed part of the device; but the light beyond was the light of day.

For they had climbed now to a great height above the lowlands where they began, and beyond the Iron Gate the road ran almost level. Moreover, they had passed the crown and heart of the Echoriath, and the mountain-towers now fell swiftly down towards the inner hills, and the ravine opened wider, and its sides became less sheer. Its long shoulders were mantled with white snow, and the light of the sky snow-mirrored came white as moonlight through a glimmering mist that filled the air.

Now they passed through the lines of the Iron Guards that stood behind the Gate; black were their mantles and their mail and long shields, and their faces were masked with vizors bearing each an eagle's beak. Then Elemmakil went before them and they followed him into the pale light; and Tuor saw beside the way a sward of grass, where like stars bloomed the white flowers of uilos, the Evermind that knows no season and withers not;<sup>59</sup> and thus in wonder and lightening of heart he was brought to the Gate of Silver.

The wall of the Fifth Gate was built of white marble, and was low and broad, and its parapet was a trellis of silver between five great globes of marble; and there stood many archers robed in white. The gate was in shape as three parts of a circle, and wrought of silver and pearl of Nevrast in likenesses of the Moon; but above the Gate upon the midmost globe stood an image of the White Tree Telperion, wrought of silver and malachite, with flowers made of great pearls of Balar.<sup>60</sup> And beyond the Gate in a wide court paved with marble, green and white, stood archers in silver mail and white-crested helms, a hundred upon either hand. Then Elemmakil led Tuor and Voronwë through their silent ranks, and they entered upon a long white road, that ran straight towards the Sixth Gate; and as they went the grass-sward became wider, and among the white stars of uilos there opened many small flowers like eyes of gold.

So they came to the Golden Gate, the last of the ancient gates of Turgon that were wrought before the Nirnaeth; and it was much like the Gate of Silver, save that the wall was built of yellow marble, and the globes and parapet were of red gold; and there were six globes, and in the midst upon a golden pyramid was set an image of Laurelin, the Tree of the Sun, with flowers wrought of topaz in long clusters upon chains of gold. And the Gate itself was adorned with discs of gold, many-rayed, in likenesses of the Sun, set amid devices of garnet and topaz and yellow diamonds. In the court beyond were arrayed three hundred archers with long bows, and their mail was gilded, and tall golden plumes rose from their helmets; and their great round shields were red as flame.

Now sunlight fell upon the further road, for the walls of the hills were low on either side, and green, but for the snows upon their tops; and Elemmakil hastened forward, for the way was short to the Seventh Gate, named the Great, the Gate of Steel that Maeglin wrought after the return from the Nirnaeth, across the wide entrance to the Orfalch Echor.

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<sup>59</sup> These were the flowers that bloomed abundantly on the burial mounds of the Kings of Rohan below Edoras, and which Gandalf named in the language of the Rohirrim (as translated into Old English) *simbelmynë*, that is 'Evermind', 'for they blossom in all the seasons of the year, and grow where dead men rest'. (*The Two Towers* III 6.) The Elvish name *uilos* is only given in this passage, but the word is found also in *Amon Uilos*, as the Quenya name *Oiolossë* ('Ever-snow-white', the Mountain of Manwë) was rendered into Sindarin. In 'Cirion and Eorl' the flower is given another Elvish name, *alfirin* (p. 393).

<sup>60</sup> In *The Silmarillion* p. 92 it is said that Thingol rewarded the Dwarves of Belegost with many pearls: 'These Círdan gave to him, for they were got in great number in the shallow waters about the Isle of Balar.'

No wall stood there, but on either hand were two round towers of great height, many-windowed, tapering in seven storeys to a turret of bright steel, and between the towers there stood a mighty fence of steel that rusted not, but glittered cold and white. Seven great pillars of steel there were, tall with the height and girth of strong young trees, but ending in a bitter spike that rose to the sharpness of a needle; and between the pillars were seven cross-bars of steel, and in each space seven times seven rods of steel upright, with heads like the broad blades of spears. But in the centre, above the midmost pillar and the greatest, was raised a mighty image of the king-helm of Turgon, the Crown of the Hidden Kingdom, set about with diamonds.

No gate or door could Tuor see in this mighty hedge of steel, but as he drew near through the spaces between its bars there came, as it seemed to him, a dazzling light, and he shaded his eyes, and stood still in dread and wonder. But Elemmakil went forward, and no gate opened to his touch; but he struck upon a bar, and the fence rang like a harp of many strings, giving forth clear notes in harmony that ran from tower to tower.

Straightway there issued riders from the towers, but before those of the north tower came one upon a white horse; and he dismounted and strode towards them. And high and noble as was Elemmakil, greater and more lordly was Ecthelion, Lord of the Fountains, at that time Warden of the Great Gate.<sup>61</sup> All in silver was he clad, and upon his shining helm there was set a spike of steel pointed with a diamond; and as his esquire took his shield it shimmered as if it were bedewed with drops of rain, that were indeed a thousand studs of crystal.

Elemmakil saluted him and said: 'Here have I brought Voronwë Aranwion, returning from Balar; and here is the stranger that he has led hither, who demands to see the King.'

Then Ecthelion turned to Tuor, but he drew his cloak about him and stood silent, facing him; and it seemed to Voronwë that a mist mantled Tuor and his stature was increased, so that the peak of his high hood over-topped the helm of the Elf-lord, as it were the crest of a grey sea-wave riding to the land. But Ecthelion bent his bright glance upon Tuor, and after a silence he spoke gravely, saying:<sup>62</sup> 'You have come to the Last Gate. Know then that no stranger who passes it shall ever go out again, save by the door of death.'

'Speak not ill-boding! If the messenger of the Lord of Waters go by that door, then all those who dwell here will follow him. Lord of the Fountains, hinder not the messenger of the Lord of Waters!'

Then Voronwë and all those who stood near looked again in wonder at Tuor, marvelling at his words and voice. And to Voronwë it seemed as if he heard a great voice, but as of one who called from afar off. But to Tuor it seemed that he listened to himself speaking, as if another spoke with his mouth.

For a while Ecthelion stood silent, looking at Tuor, and slowly awe filled his face, as if in the grey shadow of Tuor's cloak he saw visions from far away. Then he bowed, and went to the fence and laid hands upon it, and gates opened inward on either side of the pillar of the Crown. Then Tuor passed through, and coming to a high sward that looked out over the valley beyond, he beheld a vision of Gondolin amid the white snow. And so entranced was he that for long he could look at nothing else; for he saw before him at last the vision of his desire out of dreams of longing.

Thus he stood and spoke no word. Silent upon either hand stood a host of the army of Gondolin; all of the seven kinds of the Seven Gates were there represented; but their captains and chieftains were upon horses, white and grey. Then even as they gazed on Tuor in wonder, his cloak fell down, and he stood there before them in the mighty livery of Nevrast. And many were there who had seen Turgon himself set these things upon the wall behind the High Seat of Vinyamar.

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<sup>61</sup> Ecthelion of the Fountain is mentioned in *The Silmarillion* as one of Turgon's captains who guarded the flanks of the host of Gondolin in their retreat down Sirion from the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, and as the slayer of Gothmog Lord of Balrogs, by whom he himself was slain, in the assault on the city.

<sup>62</sup> From this point the carefully-written, though much-emended, manuscript ceases, and the remainder of the narrative is hastily scribbled on a scrap of paper.

*Then Ecthelion said at last: 'Now no further proof is needed; and even the name he claims as son of Huor matters less than this clear truth, that he comes from Ulmo himself.'*<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Here the narrative finally comes to an end, and there remain only some hasty jottings indicating the course of the story:

Tuor asked the name of the City, and was told its seven names. (It is notable, and no doubt intentional, that the name Gondolin is never once used in the narrative until the very end (p. 66): always it is called the Hidden Kingdom or the Hidden City.) Ecthelion gave orders for the sounding of the signal, and trumpets were blown on the towers of the Great Gate, echoing in the hills. After a hush, they heard far off answering trumpets blown upon the city walls. Horses were brought (a grey horse for Tuor); and they rode to Gondolin.

A description of Gondolin was to follow, of the stairs up to its high platform, and its great gate; of the mounds (this word is uncertain) of mallorns, birches, and evergreen trees; of the Place of the Fountain, the King's tower on a pillared arcade, the King's house, and the banner of Fingolfin. Now Turgon himself would appear, 'tallest of all the Children of the World, save Thingol', with a white and gold sword in a ruel-bone (ivory) sheath, and welcome Tuor. Maeglin would be seen standing on the right of the throne, and Idril the King's daughter seated on the left; and Tuor would speak the message of Ulmo either 'in the hearing of all' or 'in the council-chamber'.

Other disjointed notes indicate that there was to be a description of Gondolin as seen by Tuor from far off; that Ulmo's cloak would vanish when Tuor spoke the message of Turgon; that it would be explained why there was no Queen of Gondolin; and that it was to be emphasized, either when Tuor first set eyes upon Idril or at some earlier point, that he had known or even seen few women in his life. Most of the women and all the children of Annael's company in Mithrim were sent away south; and as a thrall Tuor had seen only the proud and barbaric women of the Easterlings, who treated him as a beast, or the unhappy slaves forced to labour from childhood, for whom he had only pity.

It may be noted that later mentions of mallorns in Númenor, Lindon, and Lothlórien do not suggest, though they do not deny, that those trees flourished in Gondolin in the Elder Days (see pp. 216, 217), and that the wife of Turgon, Elenwë, was lost long before in the crossing of the Helcaraxë by the host of Fingolfin (*The Silmarillion* p. 90).



## Narn I Hîn Húrin (The Tale Of The Children Of Húrin)

### The Childhood Of Túrin

*Hador Goldenhead was a lord of the Edain and well-beloved by the Eldar. He dwelt while his days lasted under the lordship of Fingolfîn, who gave to him wide lands in that region of Hithlum which was called Dor-lómin. His daughter Glóredhel wedded Haldir son of Halmir, lord of the Men of Brethil; and at the same feast his son Galdor the Tall wedded Hareth, the daughter of Halmir.*

*Galdor and Hareth had two sons, Húrin and Huor. Húrin was by three years the elder, but he was shorter in stature than other men of his kin; in this he took after his mother's people, but in all else he was like Hador his grandfather, fair of face and golden-haired, strong in body and fiery of mood. But the fire in him burned steadily, and he had great endurance of will. Of all Men of the North he knew most of the counsels of the Noldor. Huor his brother was tall, the tallest of all the Edain save his own son Tuor only, and a swift runner; but if the race were long and hard Húrin would be the first home, for he ran as strongly at the end of the course as at the beginning. There was great love between the brothers, and they were seldom apart in their youth.*

*Húrin wedded Morwen, the daughter of Baragund son of Bregolas of the House of Bëor; and she was thus of close kin to Beren One-hand. Morwen was dark-haired and tall, and for the light of her glance and the beauty of her face men called her Eledhwen, the elven-fair; but she was somewhat stern of mood and proud. The sorrows of the House of Bëor saddened her heart; for she came as an exile to Dor-lómin from Dorthonion after the ruin of the Bragollach.*

*Túrin was the name of the eldest child of Húrin and Morwen, and he was born in that year in which Beren came to Doriath and found Lúthien Tinúviel, Thingol's daughter. Morwen bore a daughter also to Húrin, and she was named Urwen; but she was called Lalaith, which is Laughter, by all that knew her in her short life.*

*Huor wedded Rían, the cousin of Morwen; she was the daughter of Belegund son of Bregolas. By hard fate was she born into such days, for she was gentle of heart and loved neither hunting nor war. Her love was given to trees and to the flowers of the wild, and she was a singer and a maker of songs. Two months only had she been wedded to Huor when he went with his brother to the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, and she never saw him again.<sup>64</sup>*

*In the years after the Dagor Bragollach and the fall of Fingolfin the shadow of the fear of Morgoth lengthened. But in the four hundred and sixty-ninth year after the return of the Noldor to Middle-earth there was a stirring of hope among Elves and Men; for the rumour ran among them of the deeds of Beren and Lúthien, and the putting to shame of Morgoth even upon his throne in Angband, and some said that Beren and Lúthien yet lived, or had returned from the Dead. In that year also the great counsels of Maedhros were almost complete, and with the reviving strength of the Eldar and the Edain the advance of Morgoth was stayed, and the Orcs were driven back from Beleriand. Then some began to speak of victories to come, and of redressing the Battle of the Bragollach, when Maedhros should lead forth the united hosts, and drive Morgoth underground, and seal the Doors of Angband.*

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<sup>64</sup> At this point in the text of the Narn there is a passage describing the sojourn of Húrin and Huor in Gondolin. This is very closely based on the story told in one of the 'constituent texts' of *The Silmarillion*—so closely as to be no more than a variant, and I have not given it again here. The story can be read in *The Silmarillion* pp. 158-9.

*But the wiser were uneasy still, fearing that Maedhros revealed his growing strength too soon, and that Morgoth would be given time enough to take counsel against him. 'Ever will some new evil be hatched in Angband beyond the guess of Elves and Men,' they said. And in the autumn of that year, to point their words, there came an ill wind from the North under leaden skies. The Evil Breath it was called, for it was pestilent; and many sickened and died in the fall of the year in the northern lands that bordered on the Anfauglith, and they were for the most part the children or the rising youth in the houses of Men.*

*In that year Túrin son of Húrin was yet only five years old, and Urwen his sister was three in the beginning of spring. Her hair was like the yellow lilies in the grass as she ran in the fields, and her laughter was like the sound of the merry stream that came singing out of the hills past the walls of her father's house. Nen Lalaith it was named, and after it all the people of the household called the child Lalaith, and their hearts were glad while she was among them.*

*But Túrin was loved less than she. He was dark-haired as his mother, and promised to be like her in mood also; for he was not merry, and spoke little, though he learned to speak early and ever seemed older than his years. Túrin was slow to forget injustice or mockery; but the fire of his father was also in him, and he could be sudden and fierce. Yet he was quick to pity, and the hurts or sadness of living things might move him to tears; and he was like his father in this also, for Morwen was stern with others as with herself. He loved his mother, for her speech to him was forthright and plain; but his father he saw little, for Húrin was often long away from home with the host of Fingon that guarded Hithlum's eastern borders, and when he returned his quick speech, full of strange words and jests and half-meanings, bewildered Túrin and made him uneasy. At that time all the warmth of his heart was for Lalaith his sister; but he played with her seldom, and liked better to guard her unseen and to watch her going upon grass or under tree, as she sang such songs as the children of the Edain made long ago when the tongue of the Elves was still fresh upon their lips.*

*'Fair as an Elf-child is Lalaith,' said Húrin to Morwen; 'but briefer, alas! And so fairer, maybe, or dearer.' And Túrin hearing these words pondered them, but could not understand them. For he had seen no Elf-children. None of the Eldar at that time dwelt in his father's lands, and once only had he seen them, when King Fingon and many of his lords had ridden through Dor-lómin and passed over the bridge of Nen Lalaith, glittering in silver and white.*

*But before the year was out the truth of his father's words was shown; for the Evil Breath came to Dor-lómin, and Túrin took sick, and lay long in a fever and dark dream. And when he was healed, for such was his fate and the strength of life that was in him, he asked for Lalaith. But his nurse answered: 'Speak no more of Lalaith, son of Húrin; but of your sister Urwen you must ask tidings of your mother.'*

*And when Morwen came to him, Túrin said to her: 'I am no longer sick, and I wish to see Urwen; but why must I not say Lalaith any more?'*

*'Because Urwen is dead, and laughter is stilled in this house,' she answered. 'But you live, son of Morwen; and so does the Enemy who has done this to us.'*

*She did not seek to comfort him any more than herself; for she met her grief in silence and coldness of heart. But Húrin mourned openly, and he took up his harp and would make a song of lamentation; but he could not, and he broke his harp, and going out he lifted up his hand towards the North, crying: 'Marrer of Middle-earth, would that I might see thee face to face, and mar thee as my lord Fingolfin did!'*

*But Túrin wept bitterly at night alone, though to Morwen he never again spoke the name of his sister. To one friend only he turned at that time, and to him he spoke of his sorrow and the emptiness of the house. This friend was named Sador, a house-man in the service of Húrin; he was lame, and of small account. He had been a woodman, and by ill-luck or the mishandling of his axe he had hewn his right foot, and the footless leg had shrunken; and Túrin called him Labadal, which is 'Hopafot', though the name did not displease Sador, for it was given in pity and not in scorn. Sador worked in the outbuildings, to make or mend things of little worth that were needed in the house, for he had some skill in the working of wood; and Túrin would fetch him what he lacked, to spare his leg, and sometimes he would carry off secretly some tool or piece of timber that he found unwatched, if he thought his friend might use it. Then Sador smiled, but bade him return the gifts to their places; 'Give with a free hand, but give only your own,' he said. He rewarded as he could the kindness of the*



child, and carved for him the figures of men and beasts; but Túrin delighted most in Sador's tales, for he had been a young man in the days of the Bragollach, and loved now to dwell upon the short days of his full manhood before his maiming.

'That was a great battle, they say, son of Húrin. I was called from my tasks in the wood in the need of that year; but I was not in the Bragollach, or I might have got my hurt with more honour. For we came too late, save to bear back the bier of the old lord, Hador, who fell in the guard of King Fingolfin. I went for a soldier after that, and I was in Eithel Sirion, the great fort of the Elf-kings, for many years; or so it seems now, and the dull years since have little to mark them. In Eithel Sirion I was when the Black King assailed it, and Galdor your father's father was the captain there in the King's stead. He was slain in that assault; and I saw your father take up his lordship and his command, though but new-come to manhood. There was a fire in him that made the sword hot in his hand, they said. Behind him we drove the Orcs into the sand; and they have not dared to come within sight of the walls since that day. But alas! my love of battle was sated, for I had seen spilled blood and wounds enough; and I got my leave to come back to the woods that I yearned for. And there I got my hurt; for a man that flies from his fear may find that he has only taken a short cut to meet it.'

In this way Sador would speak to Túrin as he grew older; and Túrin began to ask many questions that Sador found hard to answer, thinking that others nearer akin should have had the teaching. And one day Túrin said to him: 'Was Lalaith indeed like an Elf-child, as my father said? And what did he mean, when he said that she was briefer?'

'Very like,' said Sador; 'for in their first youth the children of Men and Elves seem close akin. But the children of Men grow more swiftly, and their youth passes soon; such is our fate.'

Then Túrin asked him: 'What is fate?'

'As to the fate of Men,' said Sador, 'you must ask those that are wiser than Labadal. But as all can see, we weary soon and die; and by mischance many meet death even sooner. But the Elves do not weary, and they do not die save by great hurt. From wounds and griefs that would slay Men they may be healed; and even when their bodies are marred they return again, some say. It is not so with us.'

'Then Lalaith will not come back?' said Túrin. 'Where has she gone?'

'She will not come back,' said Sador. 'But where she has gone no man knows; or I do not.'

'Has it always been so? Or do we suffer some curse of the wicked King, perhaps, like the Evil Breath?'

'I do not know. A darkness lies behind us, and out of it few tales have come. The fathers of our fathers may have had things to tell, but they did not tell them. Even their names are forgotten. The Mountains stand between us and the life that they came from, flying from no man now knows what.'

'Were they afraid?' said Túrin.

'It may be,' said Sador. 'It may be that we fled from the fear of the Dark, only to find it here before us, and nowhere else to fly to but the Sea.'

'We are not afraid any longer,' said Túrin, 'not all of us. My father is not afraid, and I will not be; or at least, as my mother, I will be afraid and not show it.'

It seemed then to Sador that Túrin's eyes were not like the eyes of a child, and he thought: 'Grief is a hone to a hard mind.' But aloud he said: 'Son of Húrin and Morwen, how it will be with your heart Labadal cannot guess; but seldom and to few will you show what is in it.'

Then Túrin said: 'Perhaps it is better not to tell what you wish, if you cannot have it. But I wish, Labadal, that I were one of the Eldar. Then Lalaith might come back, and I should still be here, even if she were long away. I shall go as a soldier with an Elf-king as soon as I am able, as you did, Labadal.'

'You may learn much of them,' said Sador, and he sighed. 'They are a fair folk and wonderful, and they have a power over the hearts of Men. And yet I think sometimes that it might have been better if we had never met them, but had walked in lowlier ways. For already they are ancient in knowledge; and they are proud and

*enduring. In their light we are dimmed, or we burn with too quick a flame, and the weight of our doom lies the heavier on us.'*

*'But my father loves them,' said Túrin, 'and he is not happy without them. He says that we have learned nearly all that we know from them, and have been made a nobler people; and he says that the Men that have lately come over the Mountains are hardly better than Orcs.'*

*'That is true,' answered Sador; 'true at least of some of us. But the up-climbing is painful, and from high places it is easy to fall low.'*

*At this time Túrin was almost eight years old, in the month of Gwaeron in the reckoning of the Edain, in the year that cannot be forgotten. Already there were rumours among his elders of a great mustering and gathering of arms, of which Túrin heard nothing; and Húrin, knowing her courage and her guarded tongue, often spoke with Morwen of the designs of the Elven-kings, and of what might befall, if they went well or ill. His heart was high with hope, and he had little fear for the outcome of the battle; for it did not seem to him that any strength in Middle-earth could overthrow the might and splendour of the Eldar. 'They have seen the Light in the West,' he said, 'and in the end Darkness must flee from their faces.' Morwen did not gainsay him; for in Húrin's company the hopeful ever seemed the more likely. But there was knowledge of Elven-lore in her kindred also, and to herself she said: 'And yet did they not leave the Light, and are they not now shut out from it? It may be that the Lords of the West have put them out of their thought; and how then can even the Elder Children overcome one of the Powers?'*

*No shadow of such doubt seemed to lie upon Húrin Thalion; yet one morning in the spring of that year he awoke as after unquiet sleep, and a cloud lay on his brightness that day; and in the evening he said suddenly: 'When I am summoned, Morwen Eledhwen, I shall leave in your keeping the heir of the House of Hador. The lives of Men are short, and in them there are many ill chances, even in time of peace.'*

*'That has ever been so,' she answered. 'But what lies under your words?'*

*'Prudence, not doubt,' said Húrin; yet he looked troubled. 'But one who looks forward must see this: that things will not remain as they were. This will be a great throw, and one side must fall lower than it now stands. If it be the Elven-kings that fall, then it must go evilly with the Edain; and we dwell nearest to the Enemy. But if things do go ill, I will not say to you: Do not be afraid! For you fear what should be feared, and that only; and fear does not dismay you. But I say: Do not wait! I shall return to you as I may, but do not wait! Go south as swiftly as you can; and I shall follow, and I shall find you, though I have to search through all Beleriand.'*

*'Beleriand is wide, and houseless for exiles,' said Morwen. 'Whither should I flee, with few or with many?'*

*Then Húrin thought for a while in silence. 'There is my mother's kin in Brethil,' he said. 'That is some thirty leagues, as the eagle flies.'*

*'If such an evil time should indeed come, what help would there be in Men?' said Morwen. 'The House of Bëor has fallen. If the great House of Hador falls, in what holes shall the little Folk of Haleth creep?'*

*'They are few and unlearned, but do not doubt their valour,' said Húrin. 'Where else is hope?'*

*'You do not speak of Gondolin,' said Morwen.*

*'No, for that name has never passed my lips,' said Húrin. 'Yet the word is true that you have heard: I have been there. But I tell you now truly, as I have told no other, and will not: I do not know where it stands.'*

*'But you guess, and guess near, I think,' said Morwen.*

*'It may be so,' said Húrin. 'But unless Turgon himself released me from my oath, I could not tell that guess, even to you; and therefore your search would be vain. But were I to speak, to my shame, you would at best but come at a shut gate; for unless Turgon comes out to war (and of that no word has been heard, and it is not hoped) no-one will come in.'*

*'Then if your kin are not hopeful, and your friends deny you,' said Morwen, 'I must take counsel for myself; and to me now comes the thought of Doriath. Last of all defences will the Girdle of Melian be broken, I think;*

*and the House of Bëor will not be despised in Doriath. Am I not now kin of the king? For Beren son of Barahir was grandson of Bregor, as was my father also.'*

*'My heart does not lean to Thingol,' said Húrin. 'No help will come from him to King Fingon; and I know not what shadow falls on my spirit when Doriath is named.'*

*'At the name of Brethil my heart also is darkened,' said Morwen.*

*Then suddenly Húrin laughed, and he said: 'Here we sit debating things beyond our reach, and shadows that come out of dream. Things will not go so ill; but if they do, then to your courage and counsel all is committed. Do then what your heart bids you; but do it swiftly. And if we gain our ends, then the Elven-kings are resolved to restore all the fiefs of Bëor's house to his heirs; and a high inheritance will come to our son.'*

*That night Túrin half-woke, and it seemed to him that his father and mother stood beside his bed, and looked down on him in the light of the candles that they held; but he could not see their faces.*

*On the morning of Túrin's birthday Húrin gave his son a gift, an Elf-wrought knife, and the hilt and the sheath were silver and black; and he said: 'Heir of the House of Hador, here is a gift for the day. But have a care! It is a bitter blade, and steel serves only those that can wield it. It will cut your hand as willingly as aught else.' And setting Túrin on a table he kissed his son, and said: 'You overtop me already, son of Morwen; soon you will be as high on your own feet. In that day many may fear your blade.'*

*Then Túrin ran from the room and went away alone, and in his heart there was a warmth like the warmth of the sun upon the cold earth that sets growth astir. He repeated to himself his father's words, Heir of the House of Hador; but other words came also to his mind: Give with a free hand, but give of your own. And he went to Sador and cried: 'Labadal, it is my birthday, the birthday of the heir of the House of Hador! And I have brought you a gift to mark the day. Here is a knife, just such as you need; it will cut anything that you wish, as fine as a hair.'*

*Then Sador was troubled, for he knew well that Túrin had himself received the knife that day; but men held it a grievous thing to refuse a free-given gift from any hand. He spoke then to him gravely: 'You come of a generous kin, Túrin son of Húrin. I have done nothing to equal your gift, and I cannot hope to do better in the days that are left to me; but what I can do, I will.' And when Sador drew the knife from the sheath he said: 'This is a gift indeed: a blade of elven steel. Long have I missed the feel of it.'*

*Húrin soon marked that Túrin did not wear the knife, and he asked him whether his warning had made him fear it. Then Túrin answered: 'No; but I gave the knife to Sador the woodwright.'*

*'Do you then scorn your father's gift?' said Morwen; and again Túrin answered: 'No; but I love Sador, and I feel pity for him.'*

*Then Húrin said: 'All three gifts were your own to give, Túrin: love, pity, and the knife the least.'*

*'Yet I doubt if Sador deserves them,' said Morwen. 'He is self-maimed by his own want of skill, and he is slow with his tasks, for he spends much time on trifles unbidden.'*

*'Give him pity nonetheless,' said Húrin. 'An honest hand and a true heart may hew amiss; and the harm may be harder to bear than the work of a foe.'*

*'But you must wait now for another blade,' said Morwen. 'Thus the gift shall be a true gift and at your own cost.'*

*Nonetheless Túrin saw that Sador was treated more kindly thereafter, and was set now to the making of a great chair for the lord to sit on in his hall.*

*There came a bright morning in the month of Lothron when Túrin was roused by sudden trumpets; and running to the doors he saw in the court a great press of men on foot and on horse, and all fully armed as for war. There also stood Húrin, and he spoke to the men and gave commands; and Túrin learned that they were setting out that day for Barad Eithel. These were Húrin's guards and household men; but all the men of his land were summoned. Some had gone already with Huor his father's brother; and many others would join the Lord of Dor-lómin on the road, and go behind his banner to the great muster of the King.*



*Then Morwen bade farewell to Húrin without tears; and she said: 'I will guard what you leave in my keeping, both what is and what shall be.'*

*And Húrin answered her: 'Farewell, Lady of Dor-lómin; we ride now with greater hope than ever we have known before. Let us think that at this midwinter the feast shall be merrier than in all our years yet, with a fearless spring to follow after!' Then he lifted Túrin to his shoulder, and cried to his men: 'Let the heir of the House of Hador see the light of your swords!' And the sun glittered on fifty blades as they leaped forth, and the court rang with the battle-cry of the Edain of the North: Lacho calad! Drego morn! Flame Light! Flee Night!*

*Then at last Húrin sprang into his saddle, and his golden banner was unfurled, and the trumpets sang again in the morning; and thus Húrin Thalion rode away to the Nirnaeth Arnoediad.*

*But Morwen and Túrin stood still by the doors, until far away they heard the faint call of a single horn on the wind: Húrin had passed over the shoulder of the hill, beyond which he could see his house no more.*

### *The Words of Húrin and Morgoth*

*Many songs are sung and many tales are told by the Elves of the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, the Battle of Unnumbered Tears, in which Fingon fell and the flower of the Eldar withered. If all were retold a man's life would not suffice for the hearing;<sup>65</sup> but now is to be told only of what befell Húrin son of Galdor, Lord of Dor-lómin, when beside the stream of Rivil he was taken at last alive by the command of Morgoth, and carried off to Angband.*

*Húrin was brought before Morgoth, for Morgoth knew by his arts and his spies that Húrin had the friendship of the King of Gondolin; and he sought to daunt him with his eyes. But Húrin could not yet be daunted, and he defied Morgoth. Therefore Morgoth had him chained and set in slow torment; but after a while he came to him, and offered him his choice to go free whither he would, or to receive power and rank as the greatest of Morgoth's captains, if he would but reveal where Turgon had his stronghold, and aught else that he knew of the King's counsels. But Húrin the Steadfast mocked him, saying: 'Blind you are Morgoth Bauglir, and blind shall ever be, seeing only the dark. You know not what rules the hearts of Men, and if you knew you could not give it. But a fool is he who accepts what Morgoth offers. You will take first the price and then withhold the promise; and I should get only death, if I told you what you ask.'*

*Then Morgoth laughed, and he said: 'Death you may yet crave from me as a boon.' Then he took Húrin to the Haudhen-Nirnaeth, and it was then new-built and the reek of death was upon it; and Morgoth set Húrin upon its top and bade him look west towards Hithlum, and think of his wife and his son and other kin. 'For they dwell now in my realm,' said Morgoth, 'and they are at my mercy.'*

*'You have none,' answered Húrin. 'But you will not come at Turgon through them; for they do not know his secrets.'*

*Then wrath mastered Morgoth, and he said: 'Yet I may come at you, and all your accursed house; and you shall be broken on my will, though you all were made of steel.' And he took up a long sword that lay there and broke it before the eyes of Húrin, and a splinter wounded his face; but Húrin did not blench. Then Morgoth stretching out his long arm towards Dor-lómin cursed Húrin and Morwen and their off-spring, saying: 'Behold! The shadow of my thought shall lie upon them wherever they go, and my hate shall pursue them to the ends of the world.'*

*But Húrin said: 'You speak in vain. For you cannot see them, nor govern them from afar: not while you keep this shape, and desire still to be a King visible upon earth.'*

*Then Morgoth turned upon Húrin, and he said: 'Fool, little among Men, and they are the least of all that speak! Have you seen the Valar, or measured the power of Manwë and Varda? Do you know the reach of their thought? Or do you think, perhaps, that their thought is upon you, and that they may shield you from afar?'*

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<sup>65</sup>, Here in the text of the *Narn* there is a passage giving an account of the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, that I have excluded for the same reason as that given in [note 64](#); see *The Silmarillion* pp. 190-5.

*'I know not,' said Húrin. 'Yet so it might be, if they willed. For the Elder King shall not be dethroned while Arda endures.'*

*'You say it,' said Morgoth. 'I am the Elder King: Melkor, first and mightiest of all the Valar, who was before the world, and made it. The shadow of my purpose lies upon Arda, and all that is in it bends slowly and surely to my will. But upon all whom you love my thought shall weigh as a cloud of Doom, and it shall bring them down into darkness and despair. Wherever they go, evil shall arise. Whenever they speak, their words shall bring ill counsel. Whatsoever they do shall turn against them. They shall die without hope, cursing both life and death.'*

*But Húrin answered: 'Do you forget to whom you speak? Such things you spoke long ago to our fathers; but we escaped from your shadow. And now we have knowledge of you, for we have looked on the faces that have seen the Light, and heard the voices that have spoken with Manwë. Before Arda you were, but others also; and you did not make it. Neither are you the most mighty; for you have spent your strength upon yourself and wasted it in your own emptiness. No more are you now than an escaped thrall of the Valar, and their chain still awaits you.'*

*'You have learned the lessons of your masters by rote,' said Morgoth. 'But such childish lore will not help you, now they are all fled away.'*

*'This last then I will say to you, thrall Morgoth,' said Húrin, 'and it comes not from the lore of the Eldar, but is put into my heart in this hour. You are not the Lord of Men, and shall not be, though all Arda and Menel fall in your dominion. Beyond the Circles of the World you shall not pursue those who refuse you.'*

*'Beyond the Circles of the World I will not pursue them,' said Morgoth. 'For beyond the Circles of the World there is Nothing. But within them they shall not escape me, until they enter into Nothing.'*

*'You lie,' said Húrin.*

*'You shall see and you shall confess that I do not lie,' said Morgoth. And taking Húrin back to Angband he set him in a chair of stone upon a high place of Thangorodrim, from which he could see afar the land of Hithlum in the west and the lands of Beleriand in the south. There he was bound by the power of Morgoth; and Morgoth standing beside him cursed him again and set his power upon him, so that he could not move from that place, nor die, until Morgoth should release him.*

*'Sit now there,' said Morgoth, 'and look out upon the lands where evil and despair shall come upon those whom you have delivered to me. For you have dared to mock me, and have questioned the power of Melkor, Master of the fates of Arda. Therefore with my eyes you shall see, and with my ears you shall hear, and nothing shall be hidden from you.'*

## **The Departure Of Túrin**

*To Brethil three men only found their way back at last through Taur-nu-Fuin, an evil road; and when Glóredhel Hador's daughter learned of the fall of Haldir she grieved and died.*

*To Dor-lómin no tidings came. Rían wife of Huor fled into the wild distraught; but she was aided by the Grey-elves of the hills of Mithrim, and when her child, Tuor, was born they fostered him. But Rían went to the Haudh-en-Nirnaeth, and laid herself down there, and died.*

*Morwen Eledhwen remained in Hithlum, silent in grief. Her son Túrin was only in his ninth year, and she was again with child. Her days were evil. The Easterlings came into the land in great numbers, and they dealt cruelly with the people of Hador, and robbed them of all that they possessed and enslaved them. All the people of Húrin's homelands that could work or serve any purpose they took away, even young girls and boys, and the old they killed or drove out to starve. But they dared not yet lay hands on the Lady of Dor-lómin, or thrust her from her house; for the word ran among them that she was perilous, and a witch who had dealings with the*

white-fiends: for so they named the Elves, hating them, but fearing them more.<sup>66</sup> For this reason they also feared and avoided the mountains, in which many of the Eldar had taken refuge, especially in the south of the land; and after plundering and harrying the Easterlings drew back northwards. For Húrin's house stood in the south-east of Dor-lómin, and the mountains were near; Nen Lalaith indeed came down from a spring under the shadow of Amon Dathir, over whose shoulder there was a steep pass. By this the hardy could cross Ered Wethrin and come down by the wells of Glithui into Beleriand. But this was not known to the Easterlings, nor to Morgoth yet; for all that country, while the House of Fingolfin stood, was secure from him, and none of his servants had ever come there. He trusted that Ered Wethrin was a wall insurmountable, both against escape from the north and against assault from the south; and there was indeed no other pass, for the unwinged, between Serech and far westward where Dor-lómin marched with Nevrast.

Thus it came to pass that after the first inroads Morwen was let be, though there were men that lurked in the woods about, and it was perilous to stir far abroad. There still remained under Morwen's shelter Sador the woodwright and a few old men and women, and Túrin, whom she kept close within the garth. But the homestead of Húrin soon fell into decay, and though Morwen laboured hard she was poor, and would have gone hungry but for the help that was sent to her secretly by Aerin, Húrin's kinswoman; for a certain Brodda, one of the Easterlings, had taken her by force to be his wife. Alms were bitter to Morwen; but she took this aid for the sake of Túrin and her unborn child, and because, as she said, it came of her own. For it was this Brodda who had seized the people, the goods, and the cattle of Húrin's homelands, and carried them off to his own dwellings. He was a bold man, but of small account among his own people before they came to Hithlum; and so, seeking wealth, he was ready to hold lands that others of his sort did not covet. Morwen he had seen once, when he rode to her house on a foray; but a great dread of her had seized him. He thought that he had looked in the fell eyes of a white-fiend, and he was filled with a mortal fear lest some evil should overtake him; and he did not ransack her house, nor discover Túrin, else the life of the heir of the true lord would have been short.

Brodda made thralls of the Strawheads, as he named the people of Hador, and set them to build him a wooden hall in the land to the northward of Húrin's house; and within a stockade his slaves were herded like cattle in a byre, but ill guarded. Among them some could still be found uncowed and ready to help the Lady of Dor-lómin, even at their peril; and from them came secretly tidings of the land to Morwen, though there was little hope in the news they brought. But Brodda took Aerin as a wife and not a slave, for there were few women amongst his own following, and none to compare with the daughters of the Edain; and he hoped to make himself a lordship in that country, and have an heir to hold it after him.

Of what had happened and of what might happen in the days to come Morwen said little to Túrin; and he feared to break her silence with questions. When the Easterlings first came into Dor-lómin he said to his mother: 'When will my father come back, to cast out these ugly thieves? Why does he not come?'

Morwen answered: 'I do not know. It may be that he was slain, or that he is held captive; or again it may be that he was driven far away, and cannot yet return through the foes that surround us.'

'Then I think that he is dead,' said Túrin, and before his mother he restrained his tears; 'for no-one could keep him from coming back to help us, if he were alive.'

'I do not think that either of those things are true, my son,' said Morwen.

As the time lengthened the heart of Morwen grew darker with fear for her son Túrin, heir of Dor-lómin and Ladros; for she could see no hope for him better than to become a slave of the Easterling men, before he was much older. Therefore she remembered her words with Húrin, and her thought turned again to Doriath; and she resolved at last to send Túrin away in secret, if she could, and to beg King Thingol to harbour him. And as

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<sup>66</sup> In another version of the text it is made explicit that Morwen did indeed have dealings with the Eldar who had secret dwellings in the mountains not far from her house. 'But they could tell her no news. None had seen Húrin's fall. "He was not with Fingon," they said; "he was driven south with Turgon, but if any of his folk escaped it was in the wake of the host of Gondolin. But who knows? For the Orcs have piled all the slain together, and search is vain, even if any dared to go to the Haudh-en-Nirnaeth."'

*she sat and pondered how this might be done, she heard clearly in her thought the voice of Húrin saying to her: Go swiftly! Do not wait for me! But the birth of her child was drawing near, and the road would be hard and perilous; the more that went the less hope of escape. And her heart still cheated her with hope unadmitted; her inmost thought foreboded that Húrin was not dead, and she listened for his footfall in the sleepless watches of the night, or would wake thinking that she had heard in the courtyard the neigh of Arroch his horse. Moreover, though she was willing that her son should be fostered in the halls of another, after the manner of that time, she would not yet humble her pride to be an alms-guest, not even of a king. Therefore the voice of Húrin, or the memory of his voice, was denied, and the first strand of the fate of Túrin was woven.*

*Autumn of the Year of Lamentation was drawing on before Morwen came to this resolve, and then she was in haste; for the time for journeying was short, but she dreaded that Túrin would be taken, if she waited over winter. Easterlings were prowling round the garth and spying on the house. Therefore she said suddenly to Túrin: 'Your father does not come. So you must go, and go soon. It is as he would wish.'*

*'Go?' cried Túrin. 'Whither shall we go? Over the Mountains?'*

*'Yes,' said Morwen, 'over the Mountains, away south. South—that way some hope may lie. But I did not say we, my son. You must go, but I must stay.'*

*'I cannot go alone!' said Túrin. 'I will not leave you. Why should we not go together?'*

*'I cannot go,' said Morwen. 'But you will not go alone. I shall send Gethron with you, and Grithnir too, perhaps.'*

*'Will you not send Labadal?' said Túrin.*

*'No, for Sador is lame,' said Morwen, 'and it will be a hard road. And since you are my son and the days are grim, I will not speak softly: you may die on that road. The year is getting late. But if you stay, you will come to a worse end: to be a thrall. If you wish to be a man, when you come to a man's age, you will do as I bid, bravely.'*

*'But I shall leave you only with Sador, and blind Ragnir, and the old women,' said Túrin. 'Did not my father say that I am the heir of Hador? The heir should stay in Hador's house to defend it. Now I wish that I still had my knife!'*

*'The heir should stay, but he cannot,' said Morwen. 'But he may return one day. Now take heart! I will follow you, if things grow worse; if I can.'*

*'But how will you find me, lost in the wild?' said Túrin; and suddenly his heart failed him, and he wept openly.*

*'If you wail, other things will find you first,' said Morwen. 'But I know whither you are going, and if you come there, and if you remain there, there I will find you, if I can. For I am sending you to King Thingol in Doriath. Would you not rather be a king's guest than a thrall?'*

*'I do not know,' said Túrin. 'I do not know what a thrall is.'*

*'I am sending you away so that you need not learn it,' Morwen answered. Then she set Túrin before her and looked into his eyes, as if she were trying to read some riddle there. 'It is hard, Túrin, my son,' she said at length. 'Not hard for you only. It is heavy on me in evil days to judge what is best to do. But I do as I think right; for why else should I part with the thing most dear that is left to me?'*

*They spoke no more of this together, and Túrin was grieved and bewildered. In the morning he went to find Sador, who had been hewing sticks for firing, of which they had little, for they dared not stray out in the woods; and now he leant on his crutch and looked at the great chair of Húrin, which had been thrust unfinished in a corner. 'It must go,' he said, 'for only bare needs can be served in these days.'*

*'Do not break it yet,' said Túrin. 'Maybe he will come home, and then it will please him to see what you have done for him while he was away.'*

*'False hopes are more dangerous than fears,' said Sador, 'and they will not keep us warm this winter.' He fingered the carving on the chair, and sighed. 'I wasted my time,' he said, 'though the hours seemed pleasant.'*

*But all such things are short-lived; and the joy in the making is their only true end, I guess. And now I might as well give you back your gift.'*

*Túrin put out his hand, and quickly withdrew it. 'A man does not take back his gifts,' he said.*

*'But if it is my own, may I not give it as I will?' said Sador.*

*'Yes,' said Túrin, 'to any man but me. But why should you wish to give it?'*

*'I have no hope of using it for worthy tasks,' Sador said. 'There will be no work for Labadal in days to come but thrall-work.'*

*'What is a thrall?' said Túrin.*

*'A man who was a man but is treated as a beast,' Sador answered. 'Fed only to keep alive, kept alive only to toil, toiling only for fear of pain or death. And from these robbers he may get pain or death just for their sport. I hear that they pick some of the fleet-footed and hunt them with hounds. They have learned quicker from the Orcs than we learnt from the Fair Folk.'*

*'Now I understand things better,' said Túrin.*

*'It is a shame that you should have to understand such things so soon,' said Sador; then seeing the strange look on Túrin's face: 'What do you understand now?'*

*'Why my mother is sending me away,' said Túrin, and tears filled his eyes.*

*'Ah!' said Sador, and he muttered to himself: 'But why so long delayed?' Then turning to Túrin he said: 'That does not seem news for tears to me. But you should not speak your mother's counsels aloud to Labadal, or to anyone. All walls and fences have ears these days, ears that do not grow on fair heads.'*

*'But I must speak with someone!' said Túrin. 'I have always told things to you. I do not want to leave you, Labadal. I do not want to leave this house or my mother.'*

*'But if you do not,' said Sador, 'soon there will be an end of the House of Hador for ever, as you must understand now. Labadal does not want you to go; but Sador servant of Húrin will be happier when Húrin's son is out of the reach of the Easterlings. Well, well, it cannot be helped: we must say farewell. Now will you not take my knife as a parting gift?'*

*'No!' said Túrin. 'I am going to the Elves, to the King of Doriath, my mother says. There I may get other things like it. But I shall not be able to send you any gifts, Labadal. I shall be far away and all alone.' Then Túrin wept; but Sador said to him: 'Hey now! Where is Húrin's son? For I heard him say, not long ago: I shall go as a soldier with an Elf-king, as soon as I am able.'*

*Then Túrin stayed his tears, and he said: 'Very well: if those were the words of the son of Húrin, he must keep them, and go. But whenever I say that I will do this or that, it looks very different when the time comes. Now I am unwilling. I must take care not to say such things again.'*

*'It would be best indeed,' said Sador. 'So most men teach, and few men learn. Let the unseen days be. Today is more than enough.'*

*Now Túrin was made ready for the journey, and he bade farewell to his mother, and departed in secret with his two companions. But when they bade Túrin turn and look back upon the house of his father, then the anguish of parting smote him like a sword, and he cried: 'Morwen, Morwen, when shall I see you again?' But Morwen standing on her threshold heard the echo of that cry in the wooded hills, and she clutched the post of the door so that her fingers were torn. This was the first of the sorrows of Túrin.*

*Early in the year after Túrin was gone Morwen gave birth to her child, and she named her Nienor, which is Mourning; but Túrin was already far away when she was born. Long and evil was his road, for the power of Morgoth was ranging far abroad; but he had as guides Gethron and Grithnir, who had been young in the days of Hador, and though they were now aged they were valiant, and they knew well the lands, for they had journeyed often through Beleriand in former times. Thus by fate and courage they passed over the Shadowy Mountains, and coming down into the Vale of Sirion they passed into the Forest of Brethil; and at last, weary*

*and haggard, they reached the confines of Doriath. But there they became bewildered, and were enmeshed in the mazes of the Queen, and wandered lost amid the pathless trees, until all their food was spent. There they came near to death, for winter came cold from the North; but not so light was Túrin's doom. Even as they lay in despair they heard a horn sounded. Beleg the Strongbow was hunting in that region, for he dwelt ever upon the marches of Doriath, and he was the greatest woodsman of those days. He heard their cries and came to them, and when he had given them food and drink he learned their names and whence they came, and he was filled with wonder and pity. And he looked with liking upon Túrin, for he had the beauty of his mother and the eyes of his father, and he was sturdy and strong.*

*'What boon would you have of King Thingol?' said Beleg to the boy.*

*'I would be one of his knights, to ride against Morgoth, and avenge my father,' said Túrin.*

*'That may well be, when the years have increased you,' said Beleg. 'For though you are yet small you have the makings of a valiant man, worthy to be a son of Húrin the Steadfast, if that were possible.' For the name of Húrin was held in honour in all the lands of the Elves. Therefore Beleg gladly became the guide of the wanderers, and he led them to a lodge where he dwelt at that time with other hunters, and there they were housed while a messenger went to Menegroth. And when word came back that Thingol and Melian would receive the son of Húrin and his guardians, Beleg led them by secret ways into the Hidden Kingdom.*

*Thus Túrin came to the great bridge over the Esgalduin, and passed the gates of Thingol's halls; and as a child he gazed upon the marvels of Menegroth, which no mortal Man before had seen, save Beren only. Then Gethron spoke the message of Morwen before Thingol and Melian; and Thingol received them kindly, and set Túrin upon his knee in honour of Húrin, mightiest of Men, and of Beren his kinsman. And those that saw this marvelled, for it was a sign that Thingol took Túrin as his foster-son; and that was not at that time done by kings, nor ever again by Elf-lord to a Man. Then Thingol said to him: 'Here, son of Húrin, shall your home be; and in all your life you shall be held as my son, Man though you be. Wisdom shall be given you beyond the measure of mortal Men, and the weapons of the Elves shall be set in your hands. Perhaps the time may come when you shall regain the lands of your father in Hithlum; but dwell now here in love.'*

*Thus began the sojourn of Túrin in Doriath. With him for a while remained Gethron and Grithnir his guardians, though they yearned to return again to their lady in Dorlómin. Then age and sickness came upon Grithnir, and he stayed beside Túrin until he died; but Gethron departed, and Thingol sent with him an escort to guide him and guard him, and they brought words from Thingol to Morwen. They came at last to Húrin's house, and when Morwen learned that Túrin was received with honour in the halls of Thingol her grief was lightened; and the Elves brought also rich gifts from Melian, and a message bidding her return with Thingol's folk to Doriath. For Melian was wise and foresighted, and she hoped thus to avert the evil that was prepared in the thought of Morgoth. But Morwen would not depart from her house, for her heart was yet unchanged and her pride still high; moreover Nienor was a babe in arms. Therefore she dismissed the Elves of Doriath with her thanks, and gave them in gift the last small things of gold that remained to her, concealing her poverty; and she bade them take back to Thingol the Helm of Hador. But Túrin watched ever for the return of Thingol's messengers; and when they came back alone he fled into the woods and wept, for he knew of Melian's bidding and he had hoped that Morwen would come. This was the second sorrow of Túrin.*

*When the messengers spoke Morwen's answer, Melian was moved with pity, perceiving her mind; and she saw that the fate which she foreboded could not lightly be set aside.*

*The Helm of Hador was given into Thingol's hands. That helm was made of grey steel adorned with gold, and on it were graven runes of victory. A power was in it that guarded any who wore it from wound or death, for the sword that hewed it was broken, and the dart that smote it sprang aside. It was wrought by Telchar, the smith of Nogrod, whose works were renowned. It had a visor (after the manner of those that the Dwarves used in their forges for the shielding of their eyes), and the face of one that wore it struck fear into the hearts of all beholders, but was itself guarded from dart and fire. Upon its crest was set in defiance a gilded image of the head of Glaurung the dragon; for it had been made soon after he first issued from the gates of Morgoth. Often Hador, and Galdor after him, had borne it in war; and the hearts of the host of Hithlum were uplifted when*



they saw it towering high amid the battle, and they cried: 'Of more worth is the Dragon of Dor-lómin than the gold-worm of Angband!'

But in truth this helm had not been made for Men, but for Azaghâl Lord of Belegost, he who was slain by Glaurung in the Year of Lamentation.<sup>67</sup> It was given by Azaghâl to Maedhros, as guerdon for the saving of his life and treasure, when Azaghâl was waylaid by Orcs upon the Dwarf-road in East Beleriand.<sup>68</sup> Maedhros afterwards sent it as a gift to Fingon, with whom he often exchanged tokens of friendship, remembering how Fingon had driven Glaurung back to Angband. But in all Hithlum no head and shoulders were found stout enough to bear the dwarf-helm with ease, save those of Hador and his son Galdor. Fingon therefore gave it to Hador, when he received the lordship of Dor-lómin. By ill-fortune Galdor did not wear it when he defended Eithel Sirion, for the assault was sudden, and he ran barehead to the walls, and an orc-arrow pierced his eye. But Húrin did not wear the Dragon-helm with ease, and in any case he would not use it, for he said: 'I would rather look on my foes with my true face.' Nonetheless he accounted the helm among the greatest heirlooms of his house.

Now Thingol had in Menegroth deep armouries filled with great wealth of weapons: metal wrought like fishes' mail and shining like water in the moon; swords and axes, shields and helms, wrought by Telchar himself or by his master Gamil Zirak the old, or by elven-wrights more skilful still. For some things he had received in gift that came out of Valinor and were wrought by Fëanor in his mastery, than whom no craftsman was greater in all the days of the world. Yet Thingol handled the Helm of Hador as though his hoard were scanty, and he spoke courteous words, saying: 'Proud were the head that bore this helm, which the sires of Húrin bore.'

Then a thought came to him, and he summoned Túrin, and told him that Morwen had sent to her son a mighty thing, the heirloom of his fathers. 'Take now the Dragonhead of the North,' he said, 'and when the time comes wear it well.' But Túrin was yet too young to lift the helm, and he heeded it not because of the sorrow of his heart.

## Túrin In Doriath

*I*n the years of his childhood in the kingdom of Doriath Túrin was watched over by Melian, though he saw her seldom. But there was a maiden named Nellas, who lived in the woods; and at Melian's bidding she would follow Túrin if he strayed in the forest, and often she met him there, as it were by chance. From Nellas Túrin learned much concerning the ways and the wild things of Doriath, and she taught him to speak the Sindarin tongue after the manner of the ancient realm, older, and more courteous, and richer in beautiful words.<sup>69</sup> Thus for a little while his mood was lightened, until he fell again under shadow, and that friendship passed like a morning of spring. For Nellas did not go to Menegroth, and was unwilling ever to walk under roofs of stone; so that as Túrin's boyhood passed and he turned his thoughts to the deeds of men, he saw her less and less often, and at last called for her no more. But she watched over him still, though now she remained hidden.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> With this description of the Helm of Hador compare the 'great masks hideous to look upon' worn by the Dwarves of Belegost in the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, which 'stood them in good stead against the dragons' (*The Silmarillion* p. 193). Túrin afterwards wore a dwarf-mask when he went into battle out of Nargothrond, 'and his enemies fled before his face' (*ibid.*, p. 210). See further the Appendix to the *Narn*, pp. 199, 200 below.

<sup>68</sup> The Orc-raid into East Beleriand in which Maedhros saved Azaghâl is nowhere else referred to.

<sup>69</sup> Elsewhere my father remarked that the speech of Doriath, whether of the King or others, was even in the days of Túrin more antique than that used elsewhere; and also that Mîm observed (though the extant writings concerning Mîm do not mention this) that one thing of which Túrin never rid himself, despite his grievance against Doriath, was the speech he had acquired during his fostering.

<sup>70</sup> A marginal note in one text says here: 'Always he sought in all faces of women the face of Lalaith.'

*Nine years Túrin dwelt in the halls of Menegroth. His heart and thought turned ever to his own kin, and at times he had tidings of them for his comfort. For Thingol sent messengers to Morwen as often as he might, and she sent back words for her son; thus Túrin heard that his sister Nienor grew in beauty, a flower in the grey North, and that Morwen's plight was eased. And Túrin grew in stature until he became tall among Men, and his strength and hardihood were renowned in the realm of Thingol. In those years he learned much lore, hearing eagerly the histories of ancient days; and he became thoughtful, and sparing in speech. Often Beleg Strongbow came to Menegroth to seek him, and led him far afield, teaching him woodcraft and archery and (which he loved best) the handling of swords; but in crafts of making he had less skill, for he was slow to learn his own strength, and often marred what he made with some sudden stroke. In other matters also it seemed that fortune was unfriendly to him, so that often what he designed went awry, and what he desired he did not gain; neither did he win friendship easily, for he was not merry, and laughed seldom, and a shadow lay on his youth. Nonetheless he was held in love and esteem by those who knew him well, and he had honour as the fosterling of the King.*

*Yet there was one that begrudged him this, and ever the more as Túrin drew nearer to manhood: Saeros, son of Ithilbor, was his name. He was of the Nandor, being one of those who took refuge in Doriath after the fall of their lord Denethor upon Amon Ereb, in the first battle of Beleriand. These Elves dwelt for the most part in Arthórion, between Aros and Celon in the east of Doriath, wandering at times over Celon into the wild lands beyond; and they were no friends to the Edain since their passage through Ossiriand and settlement in Estolad. But Saeros dwelt mostly in Menegroth, and won the esteem of the king; and he was proud, dealing haughtily with those whom he deemed of lesser state and worth than himself. He became a friend of Daeron the minstrel,<sup>71</sup> for he also was skilled in song; and he had no love for Men, and least of all for any kinsman of Beren Erchamion. 'Is it not strange,' said he, 'that this land should be opened to yet another of this unhappy race? Did not the other do harm enough in Doriath?' Therefore he looked askance on Túrin and on all that he did, saying what ill he could of it; but his words were cunning and his malice veiled. If he met with Túrin alone, he spoke haughtily to him and showed plain his contempt; and Túrin grew weary of him, though for long he returned ill words with silence, for Saeros was great among the people of Doriath and a counsellor of the King. But the silence of Túrin displeased Saeros as much as his words.*

*In the year that Túrin was seventeen years old, his grief was renewed; for all tidings from his home ceased at that time. The power of Morgoth had grown yearly, and all Hithlum was now under his shadow. Doubtless he knew much of the doings of Húrin's kin, and had not molested them for a while, so that his design might be fulfilled; but now in pursuit of this purpose he set a close watch upon all the passes of the Shadowy Mountains, so that none might come out of Hithlum nor enter it, save at great peril, and the Orcs swarmed about the sources of Narog and Teiglin and the upper waters of Sirion. Thus there came a time when the messengers of Thingol did not return, and he would send no more. He was ever loath to let any stray beyond the guarded borders, and in nothing had he shown greater good will to Húrin and his kin than in sending his people on the dangerous roads to Morwen in Dor-lómin.*

*Now Túrin grew heavy-hearted, not knowing what new evil was afoot, and fearing that an ill fate had befallen Morwen and Nienor; and for many days he sat silent, brooding on the downfall of the House of Hador and the Men of the North. Then he rose up and went to seek Thingol; and he found him sitting with Melian under Hirilorn, the great beech of Menegroth.*

*Thingol looked on Túrin in wonder, seeing suddenly before him in the place of his fosterling a Man and a stranger, tall, dark-haired, looking at him with deep eyes in a white face. Then Túrin asked Thingol for mail, sword, and shield, and he reclaimed now the Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin; and the king granted him what he sought, saying: 'I will appoint you a place among my knights of the sword; for the sword will ever be your weapon. With them you may make trial of war upon the marches, if that is your desire.'*

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<sup>71</sup> In one variant text of this section of the narrative Saeros is said to have been the kinsman of Daeron, and in another Daeron's brother; the text printed is probably the latest.



*But Túrin said: 'Beyond the marches of Doriath my heart urges me; I long rather for assault upon the Enemy, than for defence of the borderlands.'*

*'Then you must go alone,' said Thingol. 'The part of my people in the war with Angband I rule according to my wisdom, Túrin son of Húrin. No force of the arms of Doriath will I send out at this time; nor in any time that I can yet foresee.'*

*'Yet you are free to go as you will, son of Morwen,' said Melian. 'The Girdle of Melian does not hinder the going of those that passed in with our leave.'*

*'Unless wise counsel will restrain you,' said Thingol.*

*'What is your counsel, lord?' said Túrin.*

*'A Man you seem in stature,' Thingol answered, 'but nonetheless you have not come to the fullness of your manhood that shall be. When that time comes, then, maybe, you can remember your kin; but there is little hope that one Man alone can do more against the Dark Lord than to aid the Elf-lords in their defence, as long as that may last.'*

*Then Túrin said: 'Beren my kinsman did more.'*

*'Beren, and Lúthien,' said Melian. 'But you are over-bold to speak so to the father of Lúthien. Not so high is your destiny, I think, Túrin son of Morwen, though your fate is twined with that of the Elven-folk, for good or for ill. Beware of yourself, lest it be ill.' Then after a silence she spoke to him again, saying: 'Go now, fosterson; and heed the counsel of the king. Yet I do not think that you will long abide with us in Doriath after the coming of manhood. If in days to come you remember the words of Melian, it will be for your good: fear both the heat and the cold of your heart.'*

*Then Túrin bowed before them, and took his leave. And soon after he put on the Dragon-helm, and took arms, and went away to the north-marches, and was joined to the elven-warriors who there waged unceasing war upon the Orcs and all servants and creatures of Morgoth. Thus while yet scarcely out of his boyhood his strength and courage were proved; and remembering the wrongs of his kin he was ever forward in deeds of daring, and he received many wounds by spear or arrow or the crooked blades of the Orcs. But his doom delivered him from death; and word ran through the woods, and was heard far beyond Doriath, that the Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin was seen again. Then many wondered, saying: 'Can the spirit of Hador or of Galdor the Tall return from death; or has Húrin of Hithlum escaped indeed from the pits of Angband?'*

*One only was mightier in arms among the march-wardens of Thingol at that time than Túrin, and that was Beleg Cúthalion; and Beleg and Túrin were companions in every peril, and walked far and wide in the wild woods together.*

*Thus three years passed, and in that time Túrin came seldom to Thingol's halls; and he cared no longer for his looks or his attire, but his hair was unkempt, and his mail covered with a grey cloak stained with the weather. But it chanced in the third summer, when Túrin was twenty years old, that desiring rest and needing smith-work for the repair of his arms he came unlooked for to Menegroth in the evening; and he went into the hall. Thingol was not there, for he was abroad in the greenwood with Melian, as was his delight at times in the high summer. Túrin went to a seat without heed, for he was wayworn, and filled with thought; and by ill-luck he set himself at a board among the elders of the realm, and in that very place where Saeros was accustomed to sit. Saeros, entering late, was angered, believing that Túrin had done this in pride, and with intent to affront him; and his anger was not lessened to find that Túrin was not rebuked by those that sat there, but welcomed among them.*

*For a while therefore Saeros feigned to be of like mind, and took another seat, facing Túrin across the board. 'Seldom does the march-warden favour us with his company,' he said; 'and I gladly yield my accustomed seat for the chance of speech with him.' And much else he said to Túrin, questioning him concerning the news from the borders, and his deeds in the wild; but though his words seemed fair, the mockery in his voice could not be mistaken. Then Túrin became weary, and he looked about him, and knew the bitterness of exile; and for all the light and laughter of the Elven-halls his thought turned to Beleg and their life in the woods, and thence far away, to Morwen in Dor-lómin in the house of his father; and he frowned, because of the darkness of his thoughts, and made no answer to Saeros. At this, believing the frown aimed at himself, Saeros restrained his*

anger no longer; and he took out a golden comb, and cast it on the board before Túrin, saying: 'Doubtless, Man of Hithlum, you came in haste to this table, and may be excused your ragged cloak; but you have no need to leave your head untended as a thicket of brambles. And perhaps if your ears were uncovered you would hear better what is said to you.'

Túrin said nothing, but turned his eyes upon Saeros, and there was a glint in their darkness. But Saeros did not heed the warning, and returned the gaze with scorn, saying for all to hear: 'If the Men of Hithlum are so wild and fell, of what sort are the women of that land? Do they run like deer clad only in their hair?'

Then Túrin took up a drinking-vessel and cast it in Saeros' face, and he fell backward with great hurt; and Túrin drew his sword and would have run at him, but Mablung the Hunter, who sat at his side, restrained him. Then Saeros rising spat blood upon the board, and spoke from a broken mouth: 'How long shall we harbour this woodwose<sup>72</sup>? Who rules here tonight? The king's law is heavy upon those who hurt his lieges in the hall; and for those who draw blades there outlawry is the least doom. Outside the hall I could answer you, Woodwose!'

But when Túrin saw the blood upon the table his mood became cold; and releasing himself from Mablung's grasp he left the hall without a word.

Then Mablung said to Saeros: 'What ails you tonight? For this evil I hold you to blame; and it may be that the King's law will judge a broken mouth a just return for your taunting.'

'If the cub has a grievance, let him bring it to the King's judgement,' answered Saeros. 'But the drawing of swords here is not to be excused for any such cause. Outside the hall, if the woodwose draws on me, I shall kill him.'

'That seems to me less certain,' said Mablung; 'but if either be slain it will be an evil deed, more fit for Angband than Doriath, and more evil will come of it. Indeed I think that some shadow of the North has reached out to touch us tonight. Take heed, Saeros son of Ithilbor, lest you do the will of Morgoth in your pride, and remember that you are of the Eldar.'

'I do not forget it,' said Saeros; but he did not abate his wrath, and through the night his malice grew, nursing his injury.

In the morning, when Túrin left Menegroth to return to the north-marches, Saeros waylaid him, running out upon him from behind with drawn sword and shield on arm. But Túrin, trained in the wild to wariness, saw him from the corner of his eye, and leaping aside he drew swiftly and turned upon his foe. 'Morwen!' he cried, 'now your mocker shall pay for his scorn!' And he clove Saeros' shield, and then they fought together with swift blades. But Túrin had been long in a hard school, and had grown as agile as any Elf, but stronger. He soon had the mastery, and wounding Saeros' sword-arm he had him at his mercy. Then he set his foot on the sword that Saeros had let fall. 'Saeros,' he said, 'there is a long race before you, and clothes will be a hindrance; hair must suffice.' And suddenly throwing him to the ground he stripped him, and Saeros felt Túrin's great strength, and was afraid. But Túrin let him up, and then 'Run!' he cried. 'Run! And unless you go as swift as the deer I shall prick you on from behind.' And Saeros fled into the wood, crying wildly for help; but Túrin came after him like a hound, and however he ran, or swerved, still the sword was behind him to egg him on.

The cries of Saeros brought many others to the chase, and they followed after, but only the swiftest could keep up with the runners. Mablung was in the forefront of these, and he was troubled in mind, for though the taunting had seemed evil to him, 'malice that wakes in the morning is the mirth of Morgoth ere night'; and it was held moreover a grievous thing to put any of the Elven-folk to shame, self-willed, without the matter being brought to judgement. None knew at that time that Túrin had been assailed first by Saeros, who would have slain him.

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<sup>72</sup> Woodwose: 'wild man of the woods'; see [note 324](#) to *The Drúedain*, p. 500 below.

*'Hold, hold, Túrin!' he cried. 'This is Orc-work in the woods!' But Túrin called back: 'Orc-work in the woods for Orc-words in the hall!' and sprang again after Saeros; and he, despairing of aid and thinking his death close behind, ran wildly on, until he came suddenly to a brink where a stream that fed Esgalduin flowed in a deep cleft through high rocks, and it was wide for a deer-leap. There Saeros in his great fear attempted the leap; but he failed of his footing on the far side and fell back with a cry, and was broken on a great stone in the water. So he ended his life in Doriath; and long would Mandos hold him.*

*Túrin looked down on his body lying in the stream, and he thought: 'Unhappy fool! From here I would have let him walk back to Menegroth. Now he has laid a guilt upon me undeserved.' And he turned and looked darkly on Mablung and his companions, who now came up and stood near him on the brink. Then after a silence Mablung said: 'Alas! But come back now with us, Túrin, for the King must judge these deeds.'*

*But Túrin said: 'If the King were just, he would judge me guiltless. But was not this one of his counsellors? Why should a just king choose a heart of malice for his friend? I abjure his law and his judgement.'*

*'Your words are unwise,' said Mablung, though in his heart he felt pity for Túrin. 'You shall not turn runagate. I bid you return with me, as a friend. And there are other witnesses. When the King learns the truth you may hope for his pardon.'*

*But Túrin was weary of the Elven-halls, and he feared lest he be held captive; and he said to Mablung: 'I refuse your bidding. I will not seek King Thingol's pardon for nothing; and I will go now where his doom cannot find me. You have but two choices: to let me go free, or to slay me, if that would fit your law. For you are too few to take me alive.'*

*They saw in his eyes that this was true, and they let him pass; and Mablung said: 'One death is enough.'*

*'I did not will it, but I do not mourn it,' said Túrin. 'May Mandos judge him justly; and if ever he return to the lands of the living, may he prove wiser. Farewell!'*

*'Fare free!' said Mablung; 'for that is your wish. But well I do not hope for, if you go in this way. A shadow is on your heart. When we meet again, may it be no darker.'*

*To that Túrin made no answer, but left them, and went swiftly away, none knew whither.*

*It is told that when Túrin did not return to the north-marches of Doriath and no tidings could be heard of him, Beleg Strongbow came himself to Menegroth to seek him; and with heavy heart he gathered news of Túrin's deeds and flight. Soon afterwards Thingol and Melian came back to their halls, for the summer was waning; and when the King heard report of what had passed he sat upon his throne in the great hall of Menegroth, and about him were all the lords and counsellors of Doriath.*

*Then all was searched and told, even to the parting words of Túrin; and at the last Thingol sighed, and he said: 'Alas! How has this shadow stolen into my realm? Saeros I accounted faithful and wise; but if he lived he would feel my anger, for his taunting was evil, and I hold him to blame for all that chanced in the hall. So far Túrin has my pardon. But the shaming of Saeros and the hounding of him to his death were wrongs greater than the offence, and these deeds I cannot pass over. They show a hard heart, and proud.' Then Thingol fell silent, but at last he spoke again in sadness. 'This is an ungrateful fosterson, and a Man too proud for his state. How shall I harbour one who scorns me and my law, or pardon one who will not repent? Therefore I will banish Túrin son of Húrin from the kingdom of Doriath. If he seeks entry he shall be brought to judgement before me; and until he sues for pardon at my feet he is my son no longer. If any here accounts this unjust, let him speak.'*

*Then there was silence in the hall, and Thingol lifted up his hand to pronounce his doom. But at that moment Beleg entered in haste, and cried: 'Lord, may I yet speak?'*

*'You come late,' said Thingol. 'Were you not bidden with the others?'*

*'Truly, lord,' answered Beleg, 'but I was delayed; I sought for one whom I knew. Now I bring at last a witness who should be heard, ere your doom falls.'*

*'All were summoned who had aught to tell,' said the King. 'What can he tell now of more weight than those to whom I have listened?'*

*'You shall judge when you have heard,' said Beleg. 'Grant this to me, if I have ever deserved your grace.'*

*'To you I grant it,' said Thingol. Then Beleg went out, and led in by the hand the maiden Nellas, who dwelt in the woods, and came never into Menegroth; and she was afraid, both for the great pillared hall and the roof of stone, and for the company of many eyes that watched her. And when Thingol bade her speak, she said: 'Lord, I was sitting in a tree'; but then she faltered in awe of the King, and could say no more.*

*At that the King smiled, and said: 'Others have done this also, but have felt no need to tell me of it.'*

*'Others indeed,' said she, taking courage from his smile. 'Even Lúthien! And of her I was thinking that morning, and of Beren the Man.'*

*To that Thingol said nothing, and he smiled no longer, but waited until Nellas should speak again.*

*'For Túrin reminded me of Beren,' she said at last. 'They are akin, I am told, and their kinship can be seen by some: by some that look close.'*

*Then Thingol grew impatient. 'That may be,' he said. 'But Túrin son of Húrin is gone in scorn of me, and you will see him no more to read his kindred. For now I will speak my judgement.'*

*'Lord King!' she cried then. 'Bear with me, and let me speak first. I sat in a tree to look on Túrin as he went away; and I saw Saeros come out from the wood with sword and shield, and spring on Túrin at unawares.'*

*At that there was a murmur in the hall; and the King lifted his hand, saying: 'You bring graver news to my ear than seemed likely. Take heed now to all that you say; for this is a court of doom.'*

*'So Beleg has told me,' she answered, 'and only for that have I dared to come here, so that Túrin shall not be ill judged. He is valiant, but he is merciful. They fought, lord, these two, until Túrin had bereft Saeros of both shield and sword; but he did not slay him. Therefore I do not believe that he willed his death in the end. If Saeros were put to shame, it was shame that he had earned.'*

*'Judgement is mine,' said Thingol. 'But what you have told shall govern it.' Then he questioned Nellas closely; and at last he turned to Mablung, saying: 'It is strange to me that Túrin said nothing of this to you.'*

*'Yet he did not,' said Mablung. 'And had he spoken of it, otherwise would my words have been to him at parting.'*

*'And otherwise shall my doom now be,' said Thingol. 'Hear me! Such fault as can be found in Túrin I now pardon, holding him wronged and provoked. And since it was indeed, as he said, one of my council who so misused him, he shall not seek for this pardon, but I will send it to him, wherever he may be found; and I will recall him in honour to my halls.'*

*But when the doom was pronounced, suddenly Nellas wept. 'Where can he be found?' she said. 'He has left our land, and the world is wide.'*

*'He shall be sought,' said Thingol. Then he rose, and Beleg led Nellas forth from Menegroth; and he said to her: 'Do not weep; for if Túrin lives or walks still abroad, I shall find him, though all others fail.'*

*On the next day Beleg came before Thingol and Melian, and the King said to him: 'Counsel me, Beleg; for I am grieved. I took Húrin's son as my son, and so he shall remain, unless Húrin himself should return out of the shadows to claim his own. I would not have any say that Túrin was driven forth unjustly into the wild, and gladly would I welcome him back; for I loved him well.'*

*And Beleg answered: 'I will seek Túrin until I find him, and I will bring him back to Menegroth, if I can; for I love him also.' Then he departed; and far across Beleriand he sought in vain for tidings of Túrin, through many perils; and that winter passed away, and the spring after.*

## **Túrin Among The Outlaws**

*Now the tale turns again to Túrin. He, believing himself an outlaw whom the king would pursue, did not return to Beleg on the north-marches of Doriath, but went away westward, and passing secretly out of the Guarded Realm came into the woodlands south of Teiglin. There before the Nirnaeth many Men had dwelt in scattered homesteads; they were of Haleth's folk for the most part, but owned no lord, and they lived both by hunting and by husbandry, keeping swine in the mast-lands, and tilling clearings in the forest which were fenced from the wild. But most were now destroyed, or had fled into Brethil, and all that region lay under the fear of Orcs, and of outlaws. For in that time of ruin houseless and desperate Men went astray: remnants of battle and defeat, and lands laid waste; and some were Men driven into the wild for evil deeds. They hunted and gathered such food as they could; but in winter when hunger drove them they were to be feared as wolves, and Gaurwaith, the Wolf-men, they were called by those who still defended their homes. Some fifty of these Men had joined in one band, wandering in the woods beyond the western marches of Doriath; and they were hated scarcely less than Orcs, for there were among them outcasts hard of heart, bearing a grudge against their own kind. The grimmest among them was one named Andróg, hunted from Dor-lómin for the slaying of a woman; and others also came from that land: old Algund, the oldest of the fellowship, who had fled from the Nirnaeth, and Forweg, as he named himself, the captain of the band, a man with fair hair and unsteady glittering eyes, big and bold, but far fallen from the ways of the Edain of the people of Hador. They were become very wary, and they set scouts or a watch about them, whether moving or at rest; and thus they were quickly aware of Túrin when he strayed into their haunts. They trailed him, and they drew a ring about him; and suddenly, as he came out into a glade beside a stream, he found himself within a circle of men with bent bows and drawn swords.*

*Then Túrin halted, but he showed no fear. 'Who are you?' he said. 'I thought that only Orcs waylaid Men; but I see that I am mistaken.'*

*'You may rue the mistake,' said Forweg, 'for these are our haunts, and we do not allow other Men to walk in them. We take their lives as forfeit, unless they can ransom them.'*

*Then Túrin laughed. 'You will get no ransom from me,' he said, 'an outcast and an outlaw. You may search me when I am dead, but it will cost you dearly to prove my words true.'*

*Nonetheless his death seemed near, for many arrows were notched to the string, waiting for the word of the captain; and none of his enemies stood within reach of a leap with drawn sword. But Túrin, seeing some stones at the stream's edge before his feet, stooped suddenly; and in that instant one of the men, angered by his words, let fly a shaft. But it passed over Túrin, and he springing up cast a stone at the bowman with great force and true aim; and he fell to the ground with broken skull.*

*'I might be of more service to you alive, in the place of that luckless man,' said Túrin; and turning to Forweg he said: 'If you are the captain here, you should not allow your men to shoot without command.'*

*'I do not,' said Forweg; 'but he has been rebuked swiftly enough. I will take you in his stead, if you will heed my words better.'*

*Then two of the outlaws cried out against him; and one was a friend of the fallen man. Ulrad was his name. 'A strange way to gain entry to a fellowship,' he said: 'the slaying of one of the best men.'*

*'Not unchallenged,' said Túrin. 'But come then! I will endure you both together, with weapons or with strength alone; and then you shall see if I am fit to replace one of your best men.' Then he strode towards them; but Ulrad gave back and would not fight. The other threw down his bow, and looked Túrin up and down; and this man was Andróg of Dor-lómin.*

*'I am not your match,' he said at length, shaking his head. 'There is none here, I think. You may join us, for my part. But there is a strange look about you; you are a dangerous man. What is your name?'*

*'Neithan, the Wronged, I call myself,' said Túrin, and Neithan he was afterwards called by the outlaws; but though he told them that he had suffered injustice (and to any who claimed the like he ever lent too ready an ear), no more would he reveal concerning his life or his home. Yet they saw that he had fallen from some high state, and that though he had nothing but his arms, those were made by elvensmiths. He soon won their praise,*

*for he was strong and valiant, and had more skill in the woods than they, and they trusted him, for he was not greedy, and took little thought for himself; but they feared him, because of his sudden angers, which they seldom understood. To Doriath Túrin could not, or in pride would not, return; to Nargothrond since the fall of Felagund none were admitted. To the lesser folk of Haleth in Brethil he did not deign to go; and to Dor-lómin he did not dare, for it was closely beset, and one man alone could not hope at that time, as he thought, to come through the passes of the Mountains of Shadow. Therefore Túrin abode with the outlaws, since the company of any men made the hardship of the wild more easy to endure; and because he wished to live and could not be ever at strife with them, he did little to restrain their evil deeds. Yet at times pity and shame would wake in him, and then he was perilous in his anger. In this way he lived to that year's end, and through the need and hunger of winter, until Stirring came and then a fair spring.*

*Now in the woods south of Teiglin, as has been told, there were still some homesteads of Men, hardy and wary, though now few in number. Though they loved them not at all and pitied them little, they would in bitter winter put out such food as they could well spare where the Gaurwaith might find it; and so they hoped to avoid the banded attack of the famished. But they earned less gratitude so from the outlaws than from beasts and birds, and they were saved rather by their dogs and their fences. For each homestead had great hedges about its cleared land, and about the houses was a ditch and a stockade; and there were paths from stead to stead, and men could summon help and need by horn-calls.*

*But when spring was come it was perilous for the Gaurwaith to linger so near to the houses of the Woodmen, who might gather and hunt them down; and Túrin wondered therefore that Forweg did not lead them away. There was more food and game, and less peril, away South where no Men remained. Then one day Túrin missed Forweg, and also Andróg his friend; and he asked where they were, but his companions laughed.*

*'Away on business of their own, I guess,' said Ulrad. 'They will be back before long, and then we shall move. In haste, maybe; for we shall be lucky if they do not bring the hive-bees after them.'*

*The sun shone and the young leaves were green; and Túrin was irked by the squalid camp of the outlaws, and he wandered away alone far into the forest. Against his will he remembered the Hidden Kingdom, and he seemed to hear the names of the flowers of Doriath as echoes of an old tongue almost forgotten. But on a sudden he heard cries, and from a hazel-thicket a young woman ran out; her clothes were rent by thorns, and she was in great fear, and stumbling she fell gasping to the ground. Then Túrin springing towards the thicket with drawn sword hewed down a man that burst from the hazels in pursuit; and he saw only in the very stroke that it was Forweg.*

*But as he stood looking down in amaze at the blood upon the grass, Andróg came out, and halted also astounded. 'Evil work, Neithan!' he cried, and drew his sword; but Túrin's mood ran cold, and he said to Andróg: 'Where are the Orcs, then? Have you outrun them to help her?'*

*'Orcs?' said Andróg. 'Fool! You call yourself an outlaw. Outlaws know no law but their needs. Look to your own, Neithan, and leave us to mind ours.'*

*'I will do so,' said Túrin. 'But today our paths have crossed. You will leave the woman to me, or you will join Forweg.'*

*Andróg laughed. 'If that is the way of it, have your will,' he said. 'I make no claim to match you, alone; but our fellows may take this slaying ill.'*

*Then the woman rose to her feet and laid her hand on Túrin's arm. She looked at the blood and she looked at Túrin, and there was delight in her eyes. 'Kill him, lord!' she said. 'Kill him too! And then come with me. If you bring their heads, Larnach my father will not be displeased. For two "wolf-heads" he has rewarded men well.'*

*But Túrin said to Andróg: 'Is it far to her home?'*

*'A mile or so,' he answered, 'in a fenced homestead yonder. She was straying outside.'*

*'Go then quickly,' said Túrin, turning back to the woman. 'Tell your father to keep you better. But I will not cut off the heads of my fellows to buy his favour, or aught else.'*

*Then he put up his sword. 'Come!' he said to Andróg. 'We will return. But if you wish to bury your captain, you must do so yourself. Make haste, for a hue and cry may be raised. Bring his weapons!'*

*Then Túrin went on his way without more words, and Andróg watched him go, and he frowned as one pondering a riddle.*

*When Túrin came back to the camp of the outlaws he found them restless and ill at ease; for they had stayed too long already in one place, near to homesteads well-guarded, and they murmured against Forweg. 'He runs hazards to our cost,' they said; 'and others may have to pay for his pleasures.'*

*'Then choose a new captain!' said Túrin, standing before them. 'Forweg can lead you no longer; for he is dead.'*

*'How do you know that?' said Utrad. 'Did you seek honey from the same hive? Did the bees sting him?'*

*'No,' said Túrin. 'One sting was enough. I slew him. But I spared Andróg, and he will soon return.' Then he told all that was done, rebuking those that did such deeds; and while he yet spoke Andróg returned bearing Forweg's weapons. 'See, Neithan!' he cried. 'No alarm has been raised. Maybe she hopes to meet you again.'*

*'If you jest with me,' said Túrin, 'I shall regret that I grudged her your head. Now tell your tale, and be brief.'*

*Then Andróg told truly enough all that had befallen. 'What business Neithan had there I now wonder,' he said. 'Not ours, it seems. For when I came up, he had already slain Forweg. The woman liked that well, and offered to go with him, begging our heads as a bride-price. But he did not want her, and sped her off; so what grudge he had against the captain I cannot guess. He left my head on my shoulders, for which I am grateful, though much puzzled.'*

*'Then I deny your claim to come of the People of Hador,' said Túrin. 'To Uldor the Accursed you belong rather, and should seek service with Angband. But hear me now!' he cried to them all. 'These choices I give you. You must take me as your captain in Forweg's place, or else let me go. I will govern this fellowship now, or leave it. But if you wish to kill me, set to! I will fight you all until I am dead—or you.'*

*Then many men seized their weapons, but Andróg cried out: 'Nay! The head that he spared is not witless. If we fight, more than one will die needlessly, before we kill the best man among us.' Then he laughed. 'As it was when he joined us, so it is again. He kills to make room. If it proved well before, so may it again; and he may lead us to better fortune than prowling about other men's middens.'*

*And old Algund said: 'The best man among us. Time was when we would have done the same, if we dared; but we have forgotten much. He may bring us home in the end.'*

*At that the thought came to Túrin that from this small band he might rise to build himself a free lordship of his own. But he looked at Algund and Andróg, and he said: 'Home, do you say? Tall and cold stand the Mountains of Shadow between. Behind them are the people of Uldor, and about them the legions of Angband. If such things do not daunt you, seven times seven men, then I may lead you homewards. But how far, before we die?'*

*All were silent. Then Túrin spoke again. 'Do you take me to be your captain? Then I will lead you first away into the wild, far from the homes of Men. There we may find better fortune, or not; but at the least we shall earn less hatred of our own kind.'*

*Then all those that were of the People of Hador gathered to him, and took him as their captain; and the others with less good will agreed. And at once he led them away out of that country.<sup>73</sup>*

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<sup>73</sup> In a variant text of this part of the story Túrin at this time declared to the outlaws his true name; and he claimed that, being by right the lord and judge of the People of Hador, he had slain Forweg justly, since he was a man of Dorlómin. Then Algund, the old outlaw who had fled down Sirion from the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, said that Túrin's eyes had long reminded him of another whom he could not recall, and that now he knew him for the son of Húrin. "But he was a smaller man, small for his kin, though filled with fire; and his hair gold-red. You are dark, and tall. I see your mother in you, now that I look closer; she was of Bëor's people. What fate



*Many messengers had been sent out by Thingol to seek Túrin within Doriath and in the lands near its borders; but in the year of his flight they searched for him in vain, for none knew or could guess that he was with the outlaws and enemies of Men. When winter came on they returned to the king, save Beleg only. After all others had departed still he went on alone.*

*But in Dimbar and along the north-marches of Doriath things had gone ill. The Dragon-helm was seen there in battle no longer, and the Strongbow also was missed; and the servants of Morgoth were heartened and increased ever in numbers and in daring. Winter came and passed, and with Spring their assault was renewed: Dimbar was overrun, and the Men of Brethil were afraid, for evil roamed now upon all their borders, save in the south.*

*It was now almost a year since Túrin had fled, and still Beleg sought for him, with ever lessening hope. He passed northwards in his wanderings to the Crossings of Teiglin, and there, hearing ill news of a new inroad of Orcs out of Taur-nu-Fuin, he turned back, and came as it chanced to the homes of the Woodmen soon after Túrin had left that region. There he heard a strange tale that went among them. A tall and lordly Man, or an Elf-warrior, some said, had appeared in the woods, and had slain one of the Gaurwaith, and rescued the daughter of Larnach whom they were pursuing. ‘Very proud he was,’ said Larnach’s daughter to Beleg, ‘with bright eyes that scarcely deigned to look at me. Yet he called the Wolf-men his fellows, and would not slay another that stood by, and knew his name. Neithan, he called him.’*

*‘Can you read this riddle?’ asked Larnach of the Elf.*

*‘I can, alas,’ said Beleg. ‘The Man that you tell of is one whom I seek.’ No more of Túrin did he tell the Woodmen; but he warned them of evil gathering northwards. ‘Soon the Orcs will come ravening in this country in strength too great for you to withstand,’ he said. ‘This year at last you must give up your freedom or your lives. Go to Brethil while there is time!’*

*Then Beleg went on his way in haste, and sought for the lairs of the outlaws, and such signs as might show him whither they had gone. These he soon found; but Túrin was now several days ahead, and moved swiftly, fearing the pursuit of the Woodmen, and he used all the arts that he knew to defeat or mislead any that tried to follow them. Seldom did they remain two nights in one camp, and they left little trace of their going or staying. So it was that even Beleg hunted them in vain. Led by signs that he could read, or by the rumour of the passing of Men among the wild things with whom he could speak, he came often near, but always their lair was deserted when he came to it; for they kept a watch about them by day and night, and at any rumour of approach they were swiftly up and away. ‘Alas!’ he cried. ‘Too well did I teach this child of Men craft in wood and field! An Elvish band almost one might think this to be.’ But they for their part became aware that they were trailed by some tireless pursuer, whom they could not see, and yet could not shake off; and they grew uneasy.<sup>74</sup>*

*Not long afterwards, as Beleg had feared, the Orcs came across the Brithiach, and being resisted with all the force that he could muster by Handir of Brethil they passed south over the Crossings of Teiglin in search of*

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was hers, I wonder.” “I do not know,” said Túrin. “No word comes out of the North.”” In this version it was the knowledge that Neithan was Túrin son of Húrin that led those outlaws who came originally from Dor-lómin to accept him as the leader of the band.

<sup>74</sup> The last-written versions of this part of the story agree that when Túrin became captain of the outlaw band he led them away from the homes of the Woodmen in the forest south of Teiglin, and that Beleg came there soon after they had gone; but the geography is unclear and the accounts of the outlaws’ movements conflicting. It seems necessary to suppose, in view of the subsequent course of the narrative, that they remained in the Vale of Sirion, and indeed that they were not far from their previous haunts at the time of the Orc-raid on the homes of the Woodmen. In one tentative version they went away southwards and came to the country ‘above the Aelin-uial and the Fens of Sirion’; but the men becoming discontented in that ‘harbourless land’, Túrin was persuaded to lead them back to the woodlands south of Teiglin where he first encountered them. This would fit the requirements of the narrative.



plunder. Many of the Woodmen had taken Beleg's counsel and sent their women and children to ask for refuge in Brethil. These and their escort escaped, passing over the Crossings in time; but the armed men that came behind were met by the Orcs, and the men were worsted. A few fought their way through and came to Brethil, but many were slain or captured; and the Orcs passed on to the homesteads, and sacked them and burned them. Then at once they turned back westwards, seeking the Road, for they wished now to return North as swiftly as they could with their booty and their captives.

But the scouts of the outlaws were soon aware of them; and though they cared little enough for the captives, the plunder of the Woodmen aroused their greed. To Túrin it seemed perilous to reveal themselves to the Orcs, until their numbers were known; but the outlaws would not heed him, for they had need of many things in the wild, and already some began to regret his leading. Therefore taking one Orleg as his only companion Túrin went forth to spy upon the Orcs; and giving command of the band to Andróg he charged him to lie close and well hid while they were gone.

Now the Orc-host was far greater than the band of the outlaws, but they were in lands to which Orcs had seldom dared to come, and they knew also that beyond the Road lay the Talath Dirnen, the Guarded Plain, upon which the scouts and spies of Nargothrond kept watch; and fearing danger they were wary, and their scouts went creeping through the trees on either side of the marching lines. Thus it was that Túrin and Orleg were discovered, for three scouts stumbled upon them as they lay hid; and though they slew two the third escaped, crying as he ran Golug! Golug! Now that was a name which they had for the Noldor. At once the forest was filled with Orcs, scattering silently and hunting far and wide. Then Túrin, seeing that there was small hope of escape, thought at least to deceive them and to lead them away from the hiding-place of his men; and perceiving from the cry of Golug! that they feared the spies of Nargothrond, he fled with Orleg westward. The pursuit came swiftly after them, until turn and dodge as they would they were driven at last out of the forest; and then they were espied, and as they sought to cross the Road Orleg was shot down by many arrows. But Túrin was saved by his elven-mail, and escaped alone into the wilds beyond; and by speed and craft he eluded his enemies, fleeing far into lands that were strange to him. Then the Orcs, fearing that the Elves of Nargothrond might be aroused, slew their captives and made haste away into the North.

Now when three days had passed, and yet Túrin and Orleg did not return, some of the outlaws wished to depart from the cave where they lay hid; but Andróg spoke against it. And while they were in the midst of this debate, suddenly a grey figure stood before them. Beleg had found them at last. He came forward with no weapon in his hands, and held the palms turned towards them; but they leapt up in fear, and Andróg coming behind cast a noose over him, and drew it so that it pinioned his arms.

'If you do not wish for guests, you should keep better watch,' said Beleg. 'Why do you welcome me thus? I come as a friend, and seek only a friend. Neithan I hear that you call him.'

'He is not here,' said Ulrad. 'But unless you have long spied on us, how know you that name?'

'He has long spied on us,' said Andróg. 'This is the shadow that has dogged us. Now perhaps we shall learn his true purpose.' Then he bade them tie Beleg to a tree beside the cave; and when he was hard bound hand and foot they questioned him. But to all their questions Beleg would give one answer only: 'A friend I have been to this Neithan since I first met him in the woods, and he was then but a child. I seek him only in love, and to bring him good tidings.'

'Let us slay him, and be rid of his spying,' said Andróg in wrath; and he looked on the great bow of Beleg and coveted it, for he was an archer. But some of better heart spoke against him, and Algund said to him: 'The captain may return yet; and then you will rue it, if he learns that he has been robbed at once of a friend and of good tidings.'

'I do not believe the tale of this Elf,' said Andróg. 'He is a spy of the King of Doriath. But if he has indeed any tidings, he shall tell them to us; and we shall judge if they give us reason to let him live.'

'I shall wait for your captain,' said Beleg.

'You shall stand there until you speak,' said Andróg.

*Then at the egging of Andróg they left Beleg tied to the tree without food or water, and they sat near eating and drinking; but he said no more to them. When two days and nights had passed in this way they became angry and fearful, and were eager to be gone; and most were now ready to slay the Elf. As night drew down they were all gathered about him, and Ulrad brought a brand from the little fire that was lit in the cave-mouth. But at that moment Túrin returned. Coming silently, as was his custom, he stood in the shadows beyond the ring of men, and he saw the haggard face of Beleg in the light of the brand.*

*Then he was stricken as with a shaft, and as if at the sudden melting of a frost tears long unshed filled his eyes. He sprang out and ran to the tree. 'Beleg! Beleg!' he cried. 'How have you come hither? And why do you stand so?' At once he cut the bonds from his friend, and Beleg fell forward into his arms.*

*When Túrin heard all that the men would tell, he was angry and grieved; but at first he gave heed only to Beleg. While he tended him with what skill he had, he thought of his life in the woods, and his anger turned upon himself. For often strangers had been slain, when caught near the lairs of the outlaws, or waylaid by them, and he had not hindered it; and often he himself had spoken ill of King Thingol and of the Grey-elves, so that he must share the blame, if they were treated as foes. Then with bitterness he turned to the men. 'You were cruel,' he said, 'and cruel without need. Never until now have we tormented a prisoner; but to such Orc-work such a life as we lead has brought us. Lawless and fruitless all our deeds have been, serving only ourselves, and feeding hate in our hearts.'*

*But Andróg said: 'Whom shall we serve, if not ourselves? Whom shall we love, when all hate us?'*

*'At least my hands shall not again be raised against Elves or Men,' said Túrin. 'Angband has servants enough. If others will not take this vow with me, I will walk alone.'*

*Then Beleg opened his eyes and raised his head. 'Not alone!' he said. 'Now at last I can tell my tidings. You are no outlaw, and Neithan is a name unfit. Such fault as was found in you is pardoned. For a year you have been sought, to recall you to honour and to the service of the king. The Dragon-helm has been missed too long.'*

*But Túrin showed no joy in this news, and sat long in silence; for at Beleg's words a shadow fell upon him again. 'Let this night pass,' he said at length. 'Then I will choose. However it goes, we must leave this lair tomorrow; for not all who seek us wish us well.'*

*'Nay, none,' said Andróg, and he cast an evil look at Beleg.*

*In the morning Beleg, being swiftly healed of his pains, after the manner of the Elven-folk of old, spoke to Túrin apart.*

*'I looked for more joy at my tidings,' he said. 'Surely you will return now to Doriath?' And he begged Túrin to do this in all ways that he could; but the more he urged it, the more Túrin hung back. Nonetheless he questioned Beleg closely concerning the judgement of Thingol. Then Beleg told him all that he knew, and at the last Túrin said: 'Then Mablung proved my friend, as he once seemed?'*

*'The friend of truth, rather,' said Beleg, 'and that was best, in the end. But why, Túrin, did you not speak to him of Saeros' assault upon you? All otherwise might things have gone. And,' he said, looking at the men sprawled near the mouth of the cave, 'you might have held your helm still high, and not fallen to this.'*

*'That may be, if fall you call it,' said Túrin. 'That may be. But so it went; and words stuck in my throat. There was reproof in his eyes, without question asked of me, for a deed I had not done. My Man's heart was proud, as the Elf-king said. And so it still is, Beleg Cúthalion. Not yet will it suffer me to go back to Menegroth and bear looks of pity and pardon, as for a wayward boy amended. I should give pardon, not receive it. And I am a boy no longer, but a man, according to my kind; and a hard man by my fate.'*

*Then Beleg was troubled. 'What will you do, then?' he asked.*

*'Fare free,' said Túrin. 'That wish Mablung gave me at our parting. The grace of Thingol will not stretch to receive these companions of my fall, I think; but I will not part with them now, if they do not wish to part with me. I love them in my way, even the worst a little. They are of my own kind, and there is some good in each that might grow. I think that they will stand by me.'*

*'You see with other eyes than mine,' said Beleg. 'If you try to wean them from evil, they will fail you. I doubt them, and one most of all.'*

*'How shall an Elf judge of Men?' said Túrin. 'As he judges all deeds, by whomsoever done,' answered Beleg, but he said no more, and did not speak of Andróg's malice, to which his evil handling had been chiefly due; for perceiving Túrin's mood he feared to be disbelieved and to hurt their old friendship, driving Túrin back to his evil ways.*

*'Fare free, you say, Túrin, my friend,' he said. 'What is your meaning?'*

*'I would lead my own men, and make war in my own way,' Túrin answered. 'But in this at least my heart is changed: I repent every stroke save those dealt against the Enemy of Men and Elves. And above all else I would have you beside me. Stay with me!'*

*'If I stayed beside you, love would lead me, not wisdom,' said Beleg. 'My heart warns me that we should return to Doriath.'*

*'Nonetheless, I will not go there,' said Túrin.*

*Then Beleg strove once more to persuade him to return to the service of King Thingol, saying that there was great need of his strength and valour on the north-marches of Doriath, and he spoke to him of the new inroads of the Orcs, coming down into Dimbar out of Taur-nu-Fuin by the Pass of Anach. But all his words were of no avail, and at last he said: 'A hard man you have called yourself, Túrin. Hard you are, and stubborn. Now the turn is mine. If you wish indeed to have the Strongbow beside you, look for me in Dimbar; for thither I shall return.'*

*Then Túrin sat in silence, and strove with his pride, which would not let him turn back; and he brooded on the years that lay behind him. But coming suddenly out of his thought he said to Beleg: 'The elf-maiden whom you named: I owe her well for her timely witness; yet I cannot recall her. Why did she watch my ways?'*

*Then Beleg looked strangely at him. 'Why indeed?' he said. 'Túrin, have you lived always with your heart and half your mind far away? You walked with Nellas in the woods of Doriath, when you were a boy.'*

*'That was long ago,' said Túrin. 'Or so my childhood now seems, and a mist is over it—save only the memory of my father's house in Dor-lómin. But why should I have walked with an elf-maiden?'*

*'To learn what she could teach, maybe,' said Beleg. 'Alas, child of Men! There are other griefs in Middle-earth than yours, and wounds made by no weapon. Indeed, I begin to think that Elves and Men should not meet or meddle.'*

*Túrin said nothing, but looked long in Beleg's face, as if he would read in it the riddle of his words. But Nellas of Doriath never saw him again, and his shadow passed from her.<sup>75</sup>*

## **Of Mîm The Dwarf**

*After the departure of Beleg (and that was in the second summer after the flight of Túrin from Doriath)<sup>76</sup> things went ill for the outlaws. There were rains out of season, and Orcs in greater numbers than before came*

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<sup>75</sup> In The Silmarillion the narrative continues (pp. 201-2) with Beleg's farewell to Túrin, Túrin's strange foreknowledge that his fate would lead him to Amon Rúdh, Beleg's coming to Menegroth (where he received the sword Anglachel from Thingol and *lembas* from Melian), and his return to warfare against the Orcs in Dimbar. There is no other text to supplement this, and the passage is omitted here.

<sup>76</sup> Túrin fled from Doriath in the summer; he passed the autumn and winter among the outlaws, and he slew Forweg and became their captain in the spring of the next year. The events described here took place in the summer following.

down from the North and along the old South Road over Teiglin, troubling all the woods on the west borders of Doriath. There was little safety or rest, and the company were more often hunted than hunters.

One night as they lay lurking in the fireless dark, Túrin looked on his life, and it seemed to him that it might well be bettered. 'I must find some secure refuge,' he thought, 'and make provision against winter and hunger'; and the next day he led his men away, further than they had yet come from the Teiglin and the marches of Doriath. After three days' journeying they halted at the western edge of the woods of Sirion's Vale. There the land was drier and more bare, as it began to climb up into the moorlands.

Soon after, it chanced that as the grey light of a day of rain was failing Túrin and his men were sheltering in a holly-thicket; and beyond it was a treeless space, in which there were many great stones, leaning or tumbled together. All was still, save for the drip of rain from the leaves. Suddenly a watchman gave a call, and leaping up they saw three hooded shapes, grey-clad, going stealthily among the stones. They were burdened each with a great sack, but they went swiftly for all that.

Túrin cried out to them to halt, and the men ran out on them like hounds; but they held on their way, and though Andróg shot arrows after them two vanished in the dusk. One lagged behind, being slower or more heavily burdened; and he was soon seized and thrown down, and held by many hard hands, though he struggled and bit like a beast. But Túrin came up, and rebuked his men. 'What have you there?' he said. 'What need to be so fierce? It is old and small. What harm is in it?'

'It bites,' said Andróg, showing his hand that bled. 'It is an Orc, or of Orc-kin. Kill it!'

'It deserved no less, for cheating our hope,' said another, who had taken the sack. 'There is nothing here but roots and small stones.'

'Nay,' said Túrin, 'it is bearded. It is only a dwarf, I guess. Let him up, and speak.'

So it was that Mîm came in to the Tale of the Children of Húrin. For he stumbled up on his knees before Túrin's feet and begged for his life. 'I am old,' he said, 'and poor. Only a dwarf, as you say, and not an Orc. Mîm is my name. Do not let them slay me, lord, for no cause, as would the Orcs.'

Then Túrin pitied him in his heart, but he said: 'Poor you seem, Mîm, though that is strange in a dwarf; but we are poorer, I think: houseless and friendless Men. If I said that we do not spare for pity's sake only, being in great need, what would you offer for ransom?'

'I do not know what you desire, lord,' said Mîm warily.

'At this time, little enough!' said Túrin, looking about him bitterly with rain in his eyes. 'A safe place to sleep in out of the damp woods. Doubtless you have such for yourself.'

'I have,' said Mîm; 'but I cannot give it in ransom. I am too old to live under the sky.'

'You need grow no older,' said Andróg, stepping up with a knife in his unharmed hand. 'I can spare you that.'

'Lord!' cried Mîm then in great fear. 'If I lose my life, you will lose the dwelling; for you will not find it without Mîm. I cannot give it, but I will share it. There is more room in it than once there was: so many have gone for ever,' and he began to weep.

'Your life is spared, Mîm,' said Túrin.

'Till we come to his lair, at least,' said Andróg.

But Túrin turned upon him, and said: 'If Mîm brings us to his home without trickery, and it is good, then his life is ransomed; and he shall not be slain by any man who follows me. So I swear.'

Then Mîm clasped Túrin about his knees, saying: 'Mîm will be your friend, lord. At first I thought you were an Elf, by your speech and your voice; but if you are a Man, that is better. Mîm does not love Elves.'

'Where is this house of yours?' said Andróg. 'It must be good indeed if Andróg is to share it with a Dwarf. For Andróg does not like Dwarves. His people brought few good tales of that race out of the East.'

*'Judge my home when you see it,' said Mîm. 'But you will need light on the way, you stumbling Men. I will return in good time and lead you.'*

*'No, no!' said Andróg. 'You will not allow this, surely, captain? You would never see the old rascal again.'*

*'It is growing dark,' said Túrin. 'Let him leave us some pledge. Shall we keep your sack and its load, Mîm?'*

*But at this the Dwarf fell on his knees again in great trouble. 'If Mîm did not mean to return, he would not return for an old sack of roots,' he said. 'I will come back. Let me go!'*

*'I will not,' said Túrin. 'If you will not part with your sack, you must stay with it. A night under the leaves will make you pity us in your turn, maybe.' But he marked, and others also, that Mîm set more value on his load than it seemed worth to the eye.*

*They led the old Dwarf away to their dismal camp, and as he went he muttered in a strange tongue that seemed harsh with ancient hatred; but when they put bonds on his legs he went suddenly quiet. And those who were on the watch saw him sitting on through the night silent and still as stone, save for his sleepless eyes that glinted as they roved in the dark.*

*Before morning the rain ceased, and a wind stirred in the trees. Dawn came more brightly than for many days, and light airs from the South opened the sky, pale and clear about the rising of the sun. Mîm sat on without moving, and he seemed as if dead; for now the heavy lids of his eyes were closed, and the morning-light showed him withered and shrunken with age. Túrin stood and looked down on him. 'There is light enough now,' he said.*

*Then Mîm opened his eyes and pointed to his bonds; and when he was released he spoke fiercely. 'Learn this, fools!' he said. 'Do not put bonds on a Dwarf! He will not forgive it. I do not wish to die, but for what you have done my heart is hot. I repent my promise.'*

*'But I do not,' said Túrin. 'You will lead me to your home. Till then we will not speak of death. That is my will.' He looked steadfastly in the eyes of the Dwarf, and Mîm could not endure it; few indeed could challenge the eyes of Túrin in set will or in wrath. Soon he turned away his head, and rose. 'Follow me, lord!' he said.*

*'Good!' said Túrin. 'But now I will add this: I understand your pride. You may die, but you shall not be set in bonds again.'*

*Then Mîm led them back to the place where he had been captured, and he pointed westward. 'There is my home!' he said. 'You have often seen it, I guess, for it is tall. Sharbhund we called it, before the Elves changed all the names.' Then they saw that he was pointing to Amon Rûdh, the Bald Hill, whose bare head watched over many leagues of the wild.*

*'We have seen it, but never nearer,' said Andróg. 'For what safe lair can be there, or water, or any other thing that we need? I guessed that there was some trick. Do men hide on a hill-top?'*

*'Long sight may be safer than lurking,' said Túrin. 'Amon Rûdh gazes far and wide. Well, Mîm, I will come and see what you have to show. How long will it take us, stumbling Men, to come thither?'*

*'All this day until dusk,' Mîm answered.*

*The company set out westward, and Túrin went at the head with Mîm at his side. They walked warily when they left the woods, but all the land was empty and quiet. They passed over the tumbled stones, and began to climb; for Amon Rûdh stood upon the eastern edge of the high moorlands that rose between the vales of Sirion and Narog, and even above the stony heath at its base its crown was reared up a thousand feet and more. Upon the eastern side a broken land climbed slowly up to the high ridges among knots of birch and rowan, and ancient*

thorn-trees rooted in rock. About the lower slopes of Amon Rûdh there grew thickets of aeglos; but its steep grey head was bare, save for the red seregon that mantled the stone.<sup>77</sup>

As the afternoon was waning the outlaws drew near to the roots of the hill. They came now from the north, for so Mîm had led them, and the light of the westering sun fell upon the crown of Amon Rûdh, and the seregon was all in flower.

‘See! There is blood on the hill-top,’ said Andróg.

‘Not yet,’ said Túrin.

The sun was sinking and light was failing in the hollows. The hill now loomed up before them and above them, and they wondered what need there could be of a guide to so plain a mark. But as Mîm led them on, and they began to climb the last steep slopes, they perceived that he was following some path by secret signs or old custom. Now his course wound to and fro, and if they looked aside they saw that at either hand dark dells and chines opened, or the land ran down into wastes of great stones, with falls and holes masked by bramble and thorn. There without a guide they might have laboured and clambered for days to find a way.

At length they came to steeper but smoother ground. They passed under the shadows of ancient rowan-trees into aisles of long-legged aeglos: a gloom filled with a sweet scent.<sup>78</sup> Then suddenly there was a rock-wall before them, flat-faced and sheer, towering high above them in the dusk.

‘Is this the door of your house?’ said Túrin. ‘Dwarves love stone, it is said.’ He drew close to Mîm, lest he should play them some trick at the last.

‘Not the door of the house, but the gate of the garth,’ said Mîm. Then he turned to the right along the cliff-foot, and after twenty paces halted suddenly; and Túrin saw that by the work of hands or of weather there was a cleft so shaped that two faces of the wall overlapped, and an opening ran back to the left between them. Its entrance was shrouded by long-trailing plants rooted in crevices above, but within there was a steep stony path going upwards in the dark. Water trickled down it, and it was dank. One by one they filed up. At the top the path turned right and south again, and brought them through a thicket of thorns out upon a green flat, through which it ran on into the shadows. They had come to Mîm’s house, Bar-en-Nibin-noeg,<sup>79</sup> which only ancient tales in Doriath and Nargothrond remembered, and no Men had seen. But night was falling, and the east was starlit, and they could not yet see how this strange place was shaped.

Amon Rûdh had a crown: a great mass like a steep cap of stone with a bare flattened top. Upon its north side there stood out from it a shelf, level and almost square, which could not be seen from below; for behind it stood the hill-crown like a wall, and west and east from its brink sheer cliffs fell. Only from the north, as they had come, could it be reached with ease by those who knew the way.<sup>80</sup> From the cleft a path led, and passed soon

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<sup>77</sup> Aeglos, ‘snowthorn’, is said to have been like furze (gorse), but larger, and with white flowers. Aeglos was also the name of the spear of Gil-galad. Seregon, ‘blood of stone’, was a plant of the kind called in English ‘stonecrop’; it had flowers of a deep red.

<sup>78</sup> So also the yellow-flowered gorse bushes encountered by Frodo, Sam and Gollum in Ithilien were ‘gaunt and leggy below but thick above’, so that they could walk upright under them, ‘passing through long dry aisles’, and they bore flowers that ‘glimmered in the gloom and gave a faint sweet scent’ (*The Two Towers* IV 7).

<sup>79</sup> Elsewhere the Sindarin name of the Petty-Dwarves is given as Noegyth Nibin (so in *The Silmarillion* p. 204) and Nibin-Nogrim. The ‘high moorlands that rose between the Vales of Sirion and Narog’, north-east of Nargothrond (p. 128 above) are more than once referred to as the Moors of the Nibin-noeg (or variants of this name).

<sup>80</sup> The tall cliff through which Mîm led them by the cleft that he called ‘the gate of the garth’ was (it appears) the north edge of the shelf; the cliffs on the eastern and western sides were much more precipitous.



into a little grove of dwarfed birches growing about a clear pool in a rock-hewn basin. This pool was fed by a spring at the foot of the wall behind, and through a runnel it spilled like a white thread over the western brink of the shelf. Behind the screen of the trees near the spring, between two tall buttresses of rock, there was a cave. No more than a shallow grot it looked, with a low broken arch; but further in it had been deepened and bored far under the hill by the slow hands of the Petty-dwarves, in the long years that they had dwelt there, untroubled by the Grey-elves of the woods.

Through the deep dusk Mîm led them past the pool, where now the faint stars were mirrored among the shadows of the birch-boughs. At the mouth of the cave he turned and bowed to Túrin. 'Enter,' he said, 'Bar-en-Danwedh, the House of Ransom; for so it shall be called.'

'That may be,' said Túrin. 'I will look first.' Then he went in with Mîm, and the others, seeing him unafraid, followed behind, even Andróg, who most misdoubted the Dwarf. They were soon in a black dark; but Mîm clapped his hands, and a little light appeared, coming round a corner: from a passage at the back of the outer grot there stepped another Dwarf bearing a small torch.

'Ha! I missed him, as I feared!' said Andróg. But Mîm spoke quickly with the other in their own harsh tongue, and seeming troubled or angered by what he heard, he darted into the passage and disappeared. Then Andróg was all for going forward. 'Attack first!' he said. 'There may be a hive of them; but they are small.'

'Three only, I guess,' said Túrin; and he led the way, while behind him the outlaws groped along the passage by the feel of the rough walls. Many times it bent this way and that at sharp angles; but at last a faint light gleamed ahead, and they came into a small but lofty hall, dim-lit by lamps hanging down out of the roof-shadow upon fine chains. Mîm was not there, but his voice could be heard, and led by it Túrin came to the door of a chamber opening at the back of the hall. Looking in, he saw Mîm kneeling on the floor. Beside him stood silent the Dwarf with the torch; but on a stone couch by the further wall there lay another. 'Khîm, Khîm, Khîm!' the old Dwarf wailed, tearing at his beard.

'Not all your shafts went wild,' said Túrin to Andróg. 'But this may prove an ill hit. You loose shaft too lightly; but you may not live long enough to learn wisdom.' Then entering softly Túrin stood behind Mîm, and spoke to him. 'What is the trouble, Mîm?' he said. 'I have some healing arts. Can I give you aid?'

Mîm turned his head, and there was a red light in his eyes. 'Not unless you can turn back time, and then cut off the cruel hands of your men,' he answered. 'This is my son, pierced by an arrow. Now he is beyond speech. He died at sunset. Your bonds held me from healing him.'

Again pity long hardened welled in Túrin's heart as water from rock. 'Alas!' he said. 'I would recall that shaft, if I could. Now Bar-en-Danwedh, House of Ransom, shall this be called in truth. For whether we dwell here or no, I will hold myself in your debt; and if ever I come to any wealth, I will pay you a ransom of heavy gold for your son, in token of sorrow, though it gladden your heart no more.'

Then Mîm rose, and looked long at Túrin. 'I hear you,' he said. 'You speak like a dwarf-lord of old; and at that I marvel. Now my heart is cooled, though it is not glad. My own ransom I will pay, therefore: you may dwell here, if you will. But this I will add: he that loosed the shaft shall break his bow and his arrows and lay them at my son's feet; and he shall never take arrow nor bear bow again. If he does, he shall die by it. That curse I lay on him.'

Andróg was afraid when he heard of this curse; and though he did so with great grudge, he broke his bow and his arrows and laid them at the dead Dwarf's feet. But as he came out from the chamber, he glanced evilly at Mîm, and muttered: 'The curse of a Dwarf never dies, they say; but a Man's too may come home. May he die with a dart in his throat!'<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Andróg's curse is also recorded in the form: 'May he lack a bow at need ere his end.' In the event Mîm met his death from Húrin's sword before the Doors of Nargothrond (*The Silmarillion* p. 230).

*That night they lay in the hall and slept uneasily for the wailing of Mîm and of Ibun, his other son. When that ceased they could not tell; but when they woke at last the Dwarves were gone, and the chamber was closed by a stone. The day was fair again, and in the morning sun the outlaws washed in the pool and prepared such food as they had; and as they ate Mîm stood before them.*

*He bowed to Túrin. 'He is gone, and all is done,' he said. 'He lies with his fathers. Now we turn to such life as is left, though the days before us may be short. Does Mîm's home please you? Is the ransom paid and accepted?'*

*'It is,' said Túrin.*

*'Then all is yours, to order your dwelling here as you will, save this: the chamber that is closed, none shall open it but me.'*

*'We hear you,' said Túrin. 'But as for our life here, we are secure, or so it seems; but still we must have food, and other things. How shall we go out; or still more, how shall we return?'*

*To their disquiet Mîm laughed in his throat. 'Do you fear that you have followed a spider to the heart of his web?' he said. 'Mîm does not eat Men! And a spider could ill deal with thirty wasps at a time. See, you are armed, and I stand here bare. No, we must share, you and I: house, food, and fire, and maybe other winnings. The house, I think, you will guard and keep secret for your own good, even when you know the ways in and out. You will learn them in time. But in the meanwhile Mîm must guide you, or Ibun his son.'*

*To this Túrin agreed, and he thanked Mîm, and most of his men were glad; for under the sun of morning, while summer was yet high, it seemed a fair place to dwell in. Andróg alone was ill-content. 'The sooner we are masters of our goings and comings the better,' he said. 'Never before have we taken a prisoner with a grievance to and fro on our ventures.'*

*That day they rested, and cleaned their arms and mended their gear; for they had food to last for a day or two yet, and Mîm added to what they had. Three great cooking-pots he lent to them, and firing also; and he brought out a sack. 'Rubbish,' he said. 'Not worth the stealing. Only wild roots.'*

*But when they were cooked these roots proved good to eat, somewhat like bread; and the outlaws were glad of them, for they had long lacked bread save when they could steal it. 'Wild Elves know them not; Grey-elves have not found them; the proud ones from over the Sea are too proud to delve,' said Mîm.*

*'What is their name?' said Túrin.*

*Mîm looked at him sidelong. 'They have no name, save in the dwarf-tongue, which we do not teach,' he said. 'And we do not teach Men to find them, for Men are greedy and thriftless, and would not spare till all the plants had perished; whereas now they pass them by as they go blundering in the wild. No more will you learn of me; but you may have enough of my bounty, as long as you speak fair and do not spy or steal.' Then again he laughed in his throat. 'They are of great worth,' he said. 'More than gold in the hungry winter, for they may be hoarded like the nuts of a squirrel, and already we were building our store from the first that are ripe. But you are fools, if you think that I would not be parted from one small load even for the saving of my life.'*

*'I hear you,' said Ulrad, who had looked in the sack when Mîm was taken. 'Yet you would not be parted, and your words only make me wonder the more.'*

*Mîm turned and looked at him darkly. 'You are one of the fools that spring would not mourn if you perished in winter,' he said. 'I had spoken my word, and so must have returned, willing or not, with sack or without, let a lawless and faithless man think what he will! But I like not to be parted from my own by force of the wicked, be it no more than a shoe-thong. Do I not remember that your hands were among those that put bonds on me, and so held me that I did not speak again with my son? Ever when I deal out the earth-bread from my store you shall be counted out, and if you eat it, you shall eat by the bounty of your fellows, not of me.'*



*Then Mîm went away; but Ulrad, who had quailed under his anger, spoke to his back: 'High words! Nonetheless the old rogue had other things in his sack, of like shape but harder and heavier. Maybe there are other things beside earth-bread in the wild which Elves have not found and Men must not know!'*<sup>82</sup>

*'That may be,' said Túrin. 'Nonetheless the Dwarf spoke the truth in one point at least, calling you a fool. Why must you speak your thoughts? Silence, if fair words stick in your throat, would serve all our ends better.'*

*The day passed in peace, and none of the outlaws desired to go abroad. Túrin paced much upon the green sward of the shelf, from brink to brink; and he looked out east, and west, and north, and wondered to find how far were the views in the clear air. Northward he looked, and descried the Forest of Brethil climbing green about Amon Obel in its midst, and thither his eyes were drawn ever and again, he knew not why; for his heart was set rather to the north-west, where league upon league away on the skirts of the sky it seemed to him that he could glimpse the Mountains of Shadow, the walls of his home. But at evening Túrin looked west into the sunset, as the sun rode down red into the hazes above the distant coasts, and the Vale of Narog lay deep in the shadows between.*

*So began the abiding of Túrin son of Húrin in the halls of Mîm, in Bar-en-Danwedh, the House of Ransom.*

For the story of Túrin from his coming to Bar-en-Danwedh to the fall of Nargothrond see *The Silmarillion*, pp. 204-15, and the Appendix to the *Narn i Hîn Húrin*, p. 193 below.

## **The Return Of Túrin To Dor-lómin**

*At last worn by haste and the long road (for forty leagues and more had he journeyed without rest) Túrin came with the first ice of winter to the pools of Ivrin, where before he had been healed. But they were now only a frozen mire, and he could drink there no more.*

*Thence he came to the passes into Dor-lómin,<sup>83</sup> and snow came bitterly from the North, and the ways were perilous and cold. Though three and twenty years were gone since he had trodden that path it was graven in his heart, so great was the sorrow of each step at the parting from Morwen. Thus at last he came back to the land of his childhood. It was bleak and bare; and the people there were few and churlish, and they spoke the harsh tongue of the Easterlings, and the old tongue was become the language of serfs, or of foes.*

*Therefore Túrin walked warily, hooded and silent, and he came at last to the house that he sought. It stood empty and dark, and no living thing dwelt near it; for Morwen was gone, and Brodda the Incomer (he that took by force Aerin, Húrin's kinswoman, to wife) had plundered her house, and taken all that was left to her of goods or of servants. Brodda's house stood nearest to the old house of Húrin, and thither Túrin came, spent with wandering and grief, begging for shelter; and it was granted to him, for some of the kindlier manners of old were still kept there by Aerin. He was given a seat by a fire among the servants, and a few vagabonds well-nigh as grim and wayworn as he; and he asked news of the land.*

*At that the company fell silent, and some drew away, looking askance at the stranger. But one old vagabond man, with a crutch, said: 'If you must speak the old tongue, master, speak it softer, and ask for no tidings. Would you be beaten for a rogue, or hung for a spy? For both you may well be by the looks of you. Which is but to say,' he said, coming near and speaking low in Túrin's ear, 'one of the kindly folk of old that came with Hador in the days of gold, before heads wore wolf-hair. Some here are of that sort, though now made beggars*

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<sup>82</sup> The mystery of the other things in Mîm's sack is not explained. The only other statement on the subject is in a hastily scribbled note, which suggests that there were ingots of gold disguised as roots, and refers to Mîm seeking 'for old treasures of a dwarf-house near the "flat stones"'. These were no doubt those referred to in the text (p. 125) as 'great stones, leaning or tumbled together', at the place where Mîm was captured. But there is nowhere any indication of what part this treasure was to play in the story of Bar-en-Danwedh.

<sup>83</sup> It is said on p. 90 that the pass over the shoulder of Amon Dorthir was the only pass 'between Serech and far westward where Dor-lómin marched with Nevrast'.

*and slaves, and but for the Lady Aerin would get neither this fire nor this broth. Whence are you, and what news would you have?’*

*‘There was a lady called Morwen,’ answered Túrin, ‘and long ago I lived in her house. Thither after far wandering I came to seek welcome, but neither fire nor folk are there now.’*

*‘Nor have been this long year and more,’ answered the old man. ‘But scant were both fire and folk in that house since the deadly war; for she was of the old people—as doubtless you know, the widow of our lord, Húrin Galdor’s son. They dared not touch her, though, for they feared her; proud and fair as a queen, before sorrow marred her. Witchwife they called her, and shunned her. Witchwife: it is but “elf-friend” in the new language. Yet they robbed her. Often would she and her daughter have gone hungry, but for the Lady Aerin. She aided them in secret, it is said, and was often beaten for it by the churl Brodda, her husband by need.’*

*‘And this long year and more?’ said Túrin. ‘Are they dead or made thralls? Or have the Orcs assailed her?’*

*‘It is not known for sure,’ said the old man. ‘But she is gone with her daughter; and this Brodda has plundered her and stripped what remained. Not a dog is left, and her few folk made his slaves; save some that have gone begging, as have I. I served her many a year, and the great Master before, Sador Onefoot: a cursed axe in the woods long ago, or I would be lying in the Great Mound now. Well I remember the day Húrin’s boy was sent away, and how he wept; and she, when he was gone. To the Hidden Kingdom he went, it was said.’*

*With that the old man stayed his tongue, and eyed Túrin doubtfully. ‘I am old and I babble,’ he said. ‘Mind me not! But though it is pleasant to speak the old tongue with one that speaks it fair as in time past, the days are ill, and one must be wary. Not all that speak the fair tongue are fair at heart.’*

*‘Truly,’ said Túrin. ‘My heart is grim. But if you fear that I am a spy of the North or the East, then you have little more wisdom than you had long ago, Sador Labadal.’*

*The old man eyed him agape; then trembling he spoke. ‘Come outside! It is colder, but safer. You speak too loud, and I too much, for an Easterling’s hall.’*

*When they were come into the court he clutched at Túrin’s cloak. ‘Long ago you dwelt in that house, you say. Lord Túrin, son of Húrin, why have you come back? My eyes are opened, and my ears at last; you have the voice of your father. But young Túrin alone ever gave me that name, Labadal. He meant no ill: we were merry friends in those days. What does he seek here now? Few are we left; and we are old and weaponless. Happier are those in the Great Mound.’*

*‘I did not come with thought of battle,’ said Túrin, ‘though your words have waked the thought in me now, Labadal. But it must wait. I came seeking the Lady Morwen and Nienor. What can you tell me, and swiftly?’*

*‘Little, lord,’ said Sador. ‘They went away secretly. It was whispered among us that they were summoned by the Lord Túrin; for we did not doubt that he had grown great in the years, a king or a lord in some south country. But it seems that is not so.’*

*‘It is not,’ answered Túrin. ‘A lord I was in a south country, though now I am a vagabond. But I did not summon them.’*

*‘Then I know not what to tell you,’ said Sador. ‘But the Lady Aerin will know, I doubt not. She knew all the counsel of your mother.’*

*‘How can I come to her?’*

*‘That I know not. It would cost her much pain were she caught whispering at a door with a wandering wretch of the downtrod people, even could any message call her forth. And such a beggar as you are will not walk far up the hall towards the high board, before the Easterlings seize him and beat him, or worse.’*

*Then in anger Túrin cried: ‘May I not walk up Brodda’s hall, and will they beat me? Come, and see!’*

*Thereupon he went into the hall, and cast back his hood, and thrusting aside all in his path he strode towards the board where sat the master of the house and his wife, and other Easterling lords. Then some ran to seize*

him, but he flung them to the ground, and cried: 'Does no-one rule this house, or is it an Orc-hold? Where is the master?'

Then Brodda rose in wrath. 'I rule this house,' said he.

But before he could say more, Túrin said: 'Then you have not learned the courtesy that was in this land before you. Is it now the manner of men to let lackeys mishandle the kinsmen of their wives? Such am I, and I have an errand to the Lady Aerin. Shall I come freely, or shall I come as I will?'

'Come!' said Brodda, and he scowled; but Aerin turned pale.

Then Túrin strode to the high board, and stood before it, and bowed. 'Your pardon, Lady Aerin,' he said, 'that I break in upon you thus; but my errand is urgent and has brought me far. I seek Morwen, Lady of Dor-lómin, and Nienor her daughter. But her house is empty and plundered. What can you tell me?'

'Nothing,' said Aerin in great fear, for Brodda watched her narrowly. 'Nothing, save that she is gone.'

'That I do not believe,' said Túrin.

Then Brodda sprang forth, and he was red with drunken rage. 'No more!' he cried. 'Shall my wife be gainsaid before me, by a beggar that speaks the serf-tongue? There is no Lady of Dor-lómin. But as for Morwen, she was of the thrall-folk, and has fled as thralls will. Do you likewise, and swiftly, or I will have you hung on a tree!'

Then Túrin leapt at him, and drew his black sword, and seized Brodda by the hair and laid back his head. 'Let no-one stir,' said he, 'or this head will leave its shoulders! Lady Aerin, I would beg your pardon once more, if I thought that this churl had ever done you anything but wrong. But speak now, and do not deny me! Am I not Túrin, Lord of Dorlómin? Shall I command you?'

'Command me,' she answered.

'Who plundered the house of Morwen?'

'Brodda,' she answered.

'When did she flee, and whither?'

'A year and three months gone,' said Aerin. 'Master Brodda and others of the Incomers of the East hereabout oppressed her sorely. Long ago she was bidden to the Hidden Kingdom; and she went forth at last. For the lands between were then free of evil for a while, because of the prowess of the Blacksword of the south country, it is said; but that now is ended. She looked to find her son there awaiting her. But if you are he, then I fear that all has gone awry.'

Then Túrin laughed bitterly. 'Awry, awry?' he cried. 'Yes, ever awry: as crooked as Morgoth!' And suddenly a black wrath shook him; for his eyes were opened, and the spell of Glaurung loosed its last threads, and he knew the lies with which he had been cheated. 'Have I been cozened, that I might come and die here dishonoured, who might at least have ended valiantly before the Doors of Nargothrond?' And out of the night about the hall it seemed to him that he heard the cries of Finduilas.

'Not first will I die here!' he cried. And he seized Brodda, and with the strength of his great anguish and wrath he lifted him on high and shook him, as if he were a dog. 'Morwen of the thrall-folk, did you say? You son of dastards, thief, slave of slaves!' Thereupon he flung Brodda head foremost across his own table, full in the face of an Easterling that rose to assail Túrin.

In that fall Brodda's neck was broken; and Túrin leapt after his cast and slew three more that cowered there, for they were caught weaponless. There was tumult in the hall. The Easterlings that sat there would have come against Túrin, but many others were gathered there of the elder people of Dor-lómin: long had they been tame servants, but now they rose with shouts in rebellion. Soon there was great fighting in the hall, and though the thralls had but meat-knives and such things as they could snatch up against daggers and swords, many were quickly slain on either hand, before Túrin leapt down among them and slew the last of the Easterlings that remained in the hall.

*Then he rested, leaning against a pillar, and the fire of his rage was as ashes. But old Sador crept up to him and clutched him about the knees, for he was wounded to the death. 'Thrice seven years and more, it was long to wait for this hour,' he said. 'But now go, go, lord! Go, and do not come back, unless with greater strength. They will raise the land against you. Many have run from the hall. Go, or you will end here. Farewell!' Then he slipped down and died.*

*'He speaks with the truth of death,' said Aerin. 'You have learned what you would. Now go swiftly! But go first to Morwen and comfort her, or I will hold all the wrack you have wrought here hard to forgive. For ill though my life was, you have brought death to me with your violence. The Incomers will avenge this night on all that were here. Rash are your deeds, son of Húrin, as if you were still but the child that I knew.'*

*'And faint heart is yours, Aerin Indor's daughter, as it was when I called you aunt, and a rough dog frightened you,' said Túrin. 'You were made for a kinder world. But come away! I will bring you to Morwen.'*

*'The snow lies on the land, but deeper upon my head,' she answered. 'I should die as soon in the wild with you, as with the brute Easterlings. You cannot mend what you have done. Go! To stay will make all the worse, and rob Morwen to no purpose. Go, I beg you!'*

*Then Túrin bowed low to her, and turned, and left the hall of Brodda; but all the rebels that had the strength followed him. They fled towards the mountains, for some among them knew well the ways of the wild, and they blessed the snow that fell behind them and covered their trail. Thus though soon the hunt was up, with many men and dogs and braying of horses, they escaped south into the hills. Then looking back they saw a red light far off in the land they had left.*

*'They have fired the hall,' said Túrin. 'To what purpose is that?'*

*'They? No, lord: she, I guess,' said one, Asgon by name. 'Many a man of arms misreads patience and quiet. She did much good among us at much cost. Her heart was not faint, and patience will break at the last.'*

*Now some of the hardest that could endure the winter stayed with Túrin and led him by strange paths to a refuge in the mountains, a cave known to outlaws and runagates; and some store of food was hidden there. There they waited until the snow ceased, and then they gave him food and took him to a pass little used that led south to Sirion's Vale, where the snow had not come. On the downward path they parted.*

*'Farewell now, Lord of Dor-lómin,' said Asgon. 'But do not forget us. We shall be hunted men now; and the Wolf-folk will be crueller because of your coming. Therefore go, and do not return, unless you come with strength to deliver us. Farewell!'*

## **The Coming Of Túrin Into Brethil**

*Now Túrin went down towards Sirion, and he was torn in mind. For it seemed to him that whereas before he had two bitter choices, now there were three, and his oppressed people called him, upon whom he had brought only increase of woe. This comfort only he had: that beyond doubt Morwen and Nienor had come long since to Doriath, and only by the prowess of the Blacksword of Nargothrond had their road been made safe. And he said in his thought: 'Where else better might I have bestowed them, had I come indeed sooner? If the Girdle of Melian be broken, then is all ended. Nay, it is better as things be; for by my wrath and rash deeds I cast a shadow wherever I dwell. Let Melian keep them! And I will leave them in peace unshadowed for a while.'*

*But too late Túrin now sought for Finduilas, roaming the woods under the eaves of Ered Wethrin, wild and wary as a beast; and he waylaid all the roads that went north to the Pass of Sirion. Too late. For all trails had been washed away by the rains and the snows. But thus it was that Túrin passing down Teiglin came upon some of the People of Haleth from the Forest of Brethil. They were dwindled now by war to a small people, and dwelt for the most part secretly within a stockade upon Amon Obel deep in the forest. Ephel Brandir that place was named; for Brandir son of Handir was now their lord, since his father was slain. And Brandir was no man of war, being lamed by a leg broken in a misadventure in childhood; and he was moreover gentle in mood, loving wood rather than metal, and the knowledge of things that grow in the earth rather than other lore.*

*But some of the woodmen still hunted the Orcs on their borders; and thus it was that as Túrin came thither he heard the sound of an affray. He hastened towards it, and coming warily through the trees he saw a small band of men surrounded by Orcs. They defended themselves desperately, with their backs to a knot of trees that grew apart in a glade; but the Orcs were in great number, and they had little hope of escape, unless help came. Therefore, out of sight in the underwood, Túrin made a great noise of stamping and crashing, and then he cried in a loud voice, as if leading many men: 'Ha! Here we find them! Follow me all! Out now, and slay!'*

*At that many of the Orcs looked back in dismay, and then out came Túrin leaping, waving as if to men behind, and the edges of Gurthang flickered like flame in his hand. Too well was that blade known to the Orcs, and even before he sprang among them many scattered and fled. Then the woodmen ran to join him, and together they hunted their foes into the river: few came across.*

*At last they halted on the bank, and Dorlas, leader of the woodmen, said: 'You are swift in the hunt, lord; but your men are slow to follow.'*

*'Nay,' said Túrin, 'we all run together as one man, and will not be parted.'*

*Then the Men of Brethil laughed, and said: 'Well, one such is worth many. And we owe you great thanks. But who are you, and what do you here?'*

*'I do but follow my trade, which is Orc-slaying,' said Túrin. 'And I dwell where my trade is. I am Wildman of the Woods.'*

*'Then come and dwell with us,' said they. 'For we dwell in the woods, and we have need of such craftsmen. You would be welcome!'*

*Then Túrin looked at them strangely, and said: 'Are there then any left who will suffer me to darken their doors? But, friends, I have still a grievous errand: to find Finduilas, daughter of Orodreth of Nargothrond, or at least to learn news of her. Alas! Many weeks is it since she was taken from Nargothrond, but still I must go seeking.'*

*Then they looked on him with pity, and Dorlas said: 'Seek no more. For an Orc-host came up from Nargothrond towards the Crossings of Teiglin, and we had long warning of it: it marched very slow, because of the number of captives that were led. Then we thought to deal our small stroke in the war, and we ambushed the Orcs with all the bowmen we could muster, and hoped to save some of the prisoners. But alas! as soon as they were assailed the foul Orcs slew first the women among their captives; and the daughter of Orodreth they fastened to a tree with a spear.'*

*Túrin stood as one mortally stricken. 'How do you know this?' he said.*

*'Because she spoke to me, before she died,' said Dorlas. 'She looked upon us as though seeking one whom she had expected, and she said: "Mormegil. Tell the Mormegil that Finduilas is here." She said no more. But because of her latest words we laid her where she died. She lies in a mound beside Teiglin. It is a month now ago.'*

*'Bring me there,' said Túrin; and they led him to a hillock by the Crossings of Teiglin. There he laid himself down, and a darkness fell on him, so that they thought he was dead. But Dorlas looked down at him as he lay, and then he turned to his men and said: 'Too late! This is a piteous chance. But see: here lies the Mormegil himself, the great captain of Nargothrond. By his sword we should have known him, as did the Orcs.' For the fame of the Blacksword of the South had gone far and wide, even into the deeps of the wood.*

*Now therefore they lifted him with reverence and bore him to Ephel Brandir; and Brandir coming out to meet them wondered at the bier that they bore. Then drawing back the coverlet he looked on the face of Túrin son of Húrin; and a dark shadow fell on his heart.*

*'O cruel Men of Haleth!' he cried. 'Why did you hold back death from this man? With great labour you have brought hither the last bane of our people.'*

*But the woodmen said: 'Nay, it is the Mormegil of Nargothrond,<sup>84</sup> a mighty Orc-slayer, and he shall be a great help to us, if he lives. And were it not so, should we leave a man woe-stricken to lie as carrion by the way?'*

*'You should not indeed,' said Brandir. 'Doom willed it not so.' And he took Túrin into his house and tended him with care.*

*But when at last Túrin shook off the darkness, spring was returning; and he awoke and saw sun on the green buds. Then the courage of the House of Hador awoke in him also, and he arose, and said in his heart: 'All my deeds and past days were dark and full of evil. But a new day is come. Here I will stay at peace, and renounce name and kin; and so I will put my shadow behind me, or at the least not lay it upon those that I love.'*

*Therefore he took a new name, calling himself Turambar, which in the High-elven speech signified Master of Doom; and he dwelt among the woodmen, and was loved by them, and he charged them to forget his name of old, and to count him as born in Brethil. Yet with the change of a name he could not change wholly his temper, nor wholly forget his old griefs against the servants of Morgoth; and he would go hunting the Orcs with a few of the same mind, though this was displeasing to Brandir. For he hoped rather to preserve his people by silence and secrecy.*

*'The Mormegil is no more,' said he, 'yet have a care lest the valour of Turambar bring a like vengeance on Brethil!'*

*Therefore Turambar laid his black sword by, and took it no more to battle, and wielded rather the bow and the spear. But he would not suffer the Orcs to use the Crossings of Teiglin or draw near the mound where Finduilas was laid. Haudh-en-Elleth it was named, the Mound of the Elfmaid, and soon the Orcs learned to dread that place, and shunned it. And Dorlas said to Turambar: 'You have renounced the name, but the Blacksword you are still; and does not rumour say truly that he was the son of Húrin of Dor-lómin, lord of the House of Hador?'*

*And Turambar answered: 'So I have heard. But publish it not, I beg you, as you are my friend.'*

## **The Journey Of Morwen And Nienor To Nargothrond**

*When the Fell Winter withdrew new tidings of Nargothrond came to Doriath. For some that escaped from the sack, and had survived the winter in the wild, came at last seeking refuge with Thingol, and the march-wards brought them to the King. And some said that all the enemy had withdrawn northwards, and others that Glaurung abode still in the halls of Felagund; and some said that the Mormegil was slain, and others that he was cast under a spell by the Dragon and dwelt there yet, as one changed to stone. But all declared that it was known in Nargothrond ere the end that the Blacksword was none other than Túrin son of Húrin of Dor-lómin.*

*Then great was the fear and sorrow of Morwen and of Nienor; and Morwen said: 'Such doubt is the very work of Morgoth! May we not learn the truth, and know surely the worst that we must endure?'*

*Now Thingol himself desired greatly to know more of the fate of Nargothrond, and had in mind already the sending out of some that might go warily thither, but he believed that Túrin was indeed slain or beyond rescue, and he was loath to see the hour when Morwen should know this clearly. Therefore he said to her: 'This is a perilous matter, Lady of Dor-lómin, and must be pondered. Such doubt may in truth be the work of Morgoth, to draw us on to some rashness.'*

*But Morwen being distraught cried: 'Rashness, lord! If my son lurks in the woods hungry, if he lingers in bonds, if his body lies unburied, then I would be rash. I would lose no hour to go to seek him.'*

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<sup>84</sup> In the story as told in *The Silmarillion* (p. 216) Brandir's foreboding of evil came upon him after he had heard 'the tidings that Dorlas brought', and therefore (as it appears) after he knew that the man on the bier was the Black Sword of Nargothrond, rumoured to be the son of Húrin of Dorlómin.



*'Lady of Dor-lómin,' said Thingol, 'that surely the son of Húrin would not desire. Here would he think you better bestowed than in any other land that remains: in the keeping of Melian. For Húrin's sake and Túrin's I will not have you wander abroad in the black peril of these days.'*

*'You did not hold Túrin from peril, but me you will hold from him,' cried Morwen. 'In the keeping of Melian! Yes, a prisoner of the Girdle. Long did I hold back before I entered it, and now I rue it.'*

*'Nay, if you speak so, Lady of Dor-lómin,' said Thingol, 'know this: the Girdle is open. Free you came hither; free you shall stay—or go.'*

*Then Melian, who had remained silent, spoke: 'Go not hence, Morwen. A true word you said: this doubt is of Morgoth. If you go, you go at his will.'*

*'Fear of Morgoth will not withhold me from the call of my kin,' Morwen answered. 'But if you fear for me, lord, then lend me some of your people.'*

*'I command you not,' said Thingol. 'But my people are my own to command. I will send them at my own advice.'*

*Then Morwen said no more, but wept; and she left the presence of the King. Thingol was heavy-hearted, for it seemed to him that the mood of Morwen was fey; and he asked Melian whether she would not restrain her by her power.*

*'Against the coming in of evil I may do much,' she answered. 'But against the going out of those who will go, nothing. That is your part. If she is to be held here, you must hold her with strength. Yet maybe thus you will overthrow her mind.'*

*Now Morwen went to Nienor, and said: 'Farewell, daughter of Húrin. I go to seek my son, or true tidings of him, since none here will do aught, but will tarry until too late. Await me here until haply I return.'*

*Then Nienor in dread and distress would restrain her, but Morwen answered nothing, and went to her chamber; and when morning came she had taken horse and gone.*

*Now Thingol had commanded that none should stay her, or seem to waylay her. But as soon as she went forth, he gathered a company of the hardest and most skilled of his march-wards, and he set Mablung in charge.*

*'Follow now speedily,' he said, 'yet let her not be aware of you. But when she is come into the wild, if danger threatens, then show yourselves; and if she will not return, then guard her as you may. But some of you I would have go forward as far as you can, and learn all that you may.'*

*Thus it was that Thingol sent out a larger company than he had at first intended, and there were ten riders among them with spare horses. They followed after Morwen, and she went south through Region, and so came to the shores of Sirion above the Twilit Meres; there she halted, for Sirion was wide and swift, and she did not know the way. Therefore now the guards must needs reveal themselves; and Morwen said: 'Will Thingol stay me? Or late does he send me the help that he denied?'*

*'Both,' answered Mablung. 'Will you not return?'*

*'No!' she said.*

*'Then I must help you,' said Mablung, 'though it is against my own will. Wide and deep here is Sirion, and perilous to swim for beast or man.'*

*'Then bring me over by whatever way the Elven-folk are used to cross,' said Morwen; 'or else I will try the swimming.'*

*Therefore Mablung led her to the Twilit Meres. There amid the creeks and reeds ferries were kept hidden and guarded on the east shore; for by that way messengers would pass to and fro between Thingol and his kin in Nargothrond.<sup>85</sup> Now they waited until the starlit night was late, and they passed over in the white mists before*

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<sup>85</sup> See p. 197, where there is a reference to Orodreth's exchanging messages with Thingol 'by secret ways'.

*the dawn. And even as the sun rose red beyond the Blue Mountains, and a strong morning-wind blew and scattered the mists, the guards went up on to the west shore, and left the Girdle of Melian. Tall Elves of Doriath they were, grey-clad, and cloaked over their mail. Morwen from the ferry watched them as they passed silently, and then suddenly she gave a cry, and pointed to the last of the company that went by.*

*'Whence came he?' she said. 'Thrice ten you came to me. Thrice ten and one you go ashore!'*

*Then the others turned, and saw that the sun shone upon a head of gold: for it was Nienor, and her hood was blown back by the wind. Thus it was revealed that she had followed the company, and joined them in the dark before they crossed the river. They were dismayed, and none more than Morwen. 'Go back, go back! I command you!' she cried.*

*'If the wife of Húrin can go forth against all counsel at the call of kindred,' said Nienor, 'then so also can Húrin's daughter. Mourning you named me, but I will not mourn alone, for father, brother, and mother. But of these you only have I known, and above all do I love. And nothing that you fear not do I fear.'*

*In truth little fear was seen in her face or her bearing. Tall and strong she seemed; for of great stature were those of Hador's House, and thus clad in Elvish raiment she matched well with the guards, being smaller only than the greatest among them.*

*'What would you do?' said Morwen.*

*'Go where you go,' said Nienor. 'This choice indeed I bring. To lead me back and bestow me safely in the keeping of Melian; for it is not wise to refuse her counsel. Or to know that I shall go into peril, if you go.' For in truth Nienor had come most in the hope that for fear and love of her her mother would turn back; and Morwen was indeed torn in mind.*

*'It is one thing to refuse counsel,' said she. 'It is another to refuse the command of your mother. Go now back!'*

*'No,' said Nienor. 'It is long since I was a child. I have a will and wisdom of my own, though until now it has not crossed yours. I go with you. Rather to Doriath, for reverence of those that rule it; but if not, then westward. Indeed, if either of us should go on, it is I rather, in the fullness of strength.'*

*Then Morwen saw in the grey eyes of Nienor the steadfastness of Húrin; and she wavered, but she could not overcome her pride, and would not seem thus (save the fair words) to be led back by her daughter, as one old and doting.*

*'I go on, as I have purposed,' she said. 'Come you also, but against my will.'*

*'Let it be so,' said Nienor.*

*Then Mablung said to his company: 'Truly, it is by lack of counsel not of courage that Húrin's folk bring woe to others! Even so with Túrin; yet not so with his fathers. But now they are all fey, and I like it not. More do I dread this errand of the King than the hunting of the Wolf. What is to be done?'*

*But Morwen, who had come ashore and now drew near, heard the last of his words. 'Do as you are bidden by the King,' said she. 'Seek for tidings of Nargothrond, and of Túrin. For this end are we all come together.'*

*'It is yet a long way and dangerous,' said Mablung. 'If you go further, you shall both be horsed and go among the riders, and stray no foot from them.'*

*Thus it was that with the full day they set forth, and passed slowly and warily out of the country of reeds and low willows, and came to the grey woods that covered much of the southern plain before Nargothrond. All day they went due west, and saw nothing but desolation, and heard nothing; for the lands were silent, and it seemed to Mablung that a present fear lay upon them. That same way had Beren trodden years before, and then the woods were filled with the hidden eyes of the hunters; but now all the people of Narog were gone, and the Orcs, as it seemed, were not yet roaming so far southward. That night they encamped in the grey wood without fire or light.*

*The next two days they went on, and by evening of the third day from Sirion they were come across the plain and were drawing near to the east shores of Narog. Then so great an unease came upon Mablung that he*



*begged Morwen to go no further. But she laughed, and said: 'You will be glad soon to be rid of us, as is likely enough. But you must endure us a little longer. We are come too near now to turn back in fear.'*

*Then Mablung cried: 'Fey are you both, and foolhardy. You help not but hinder any gathering of news. Now hear me! I was bidden not to stay you with strength; but I was bidden also to guard you, as I might. In this pass, one only can I do. And I will guard you. Tomorrow I will lead you to Amon Ethir, the Spyhill, which is near; and there you shall sit under guard, and go no further while I command here.'*

*Now Amon Ethir was a mound as great as a hill that long ago Felagund had caused to be raised with great labour in the plain before his Doors, a league east of Narog. It was tree-grown, save on the summit, where a wide view might be had all ways, of the roads that led to the great bridge of Nargothrond, and of the lands round about. To this hill they came late in the morning and climbed up from the east. Then looking out towards the High Faroth, brown and bare beyond the river,<sup>86</sup> Mablung saw with elven-sight the terraces of Nargothrond on the steep west bank, and as a small black hole in the hill-wall the gaping Doors of Felagund. But he could hear no sound, and he could see no sign of any foe, nor any token of the Dragon, save the burning about the Doors that he had wrought in the day of the sack. All lay quiet under a pale sun.*

*Now therefore Mablung, as he had said, commanded his ten riders to keep Morwen and Nienor on the hill-top, and not to stir thence until he returned, unless some great peril arose: and if that befell, the riders should set Morwen and Nienor in their midst and flee as swiftly as they might, east-away towards Doriath, sending one ahead to bring news and seek aid.*

*Then Mablung took the other score of his company, and they crept down from the hill; and then passing into the fields westward, where trees were few, they scattered and made each his way, daring but stealthy, to the banks of Narog. Mablung himself took the middle way, going towards the bridge, and so came to its hither end and found it all broken down; and the deep-cloven river, running wild after rains far away northward, was foaming and roaring among the fallen stones.*

*But Glaurung lay there, just within the shadow of the great passage that led inward from the ruined Doors, and he had long been aware of the spies, though few other eyes in Middle-earth would have discerned them. But the glance of his fell eyes was keener than that of eagles, and outreached the far sight of the Elves; and indeed he knew also that some remained behind and sat upon the bare top of Amon Ethir.*

*Thus, even as Mablung crept among the rocks seeking whether he could ford the wild river upon the fallen stones of the bridge, suddenly Glaurung came forth with a great blast of fire, and crawled down into the stream. Then straightway there was a vast hissing and huge vapours arose, and Mablung and his followers that lurked near were engulfed in a blinding steam and foul stench; and the most fled as best they could guess towards the Spyhill. But as Glaurung was passing over Narog, Mablung drew aside and lay under a rock, and remained; for it seemed to him that he had an errand yet to do. He knew now indeed that Glaurung abode in Nargothrond, but he was bidden also to learn the truth concerning Húrin's son, if he might; and in the stoutness of his heart, therefore, he purposed to cross the river, as soon as Glaurung was gone, and search the halls of Felagund. For he thought that all had been done that could be for the keeping of Morwen and Nienor: the coming of Glaurung would be marked, and even now the riders should be speeding towards Doriath.*

*Glaurung therefore passed Mablung by, a vast shape in the mist; and he went swiftly, for he was a mighty Worm, and yet lithe. Then Mablung behind him forded Narog in great peril; but the watchers upon Amon Ethir beheld the issuing of the Dragon, and were dismayed. At once they bade Morwen and Nienor mount, without debate, and prepared to flee eastward as they were bidden. But even as they came down from the hill into the plain, an ill wind blew the great vapours upon them, bringing a stench that no horses would endure. Then, blinded by the fog and in mad terror of the dragon-reek, the horses soon became ungovernable, and went wildly this way and that; and the guards were dispersed, and were dashed against trees to great hurt, or sought vainly*

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<sup>86</sup> In *The Silmarillion* (p. 122) the High Faroth, or Taur-en-Faroth, are 'great wooded highlands'. The description of them here as 'brown and bare' perhaps refers to the leaflessness of the trees in the beginning of spring.

one for another. The neighing of the horses and the cries of the riders came to the ears of Glaurung; and he was well pleased.

One of the Elf-riders, striving with his horse in the fog, saw the Lady Morwen passing near, a grey wraith upon a mad steed; but she vanished into the mist, crying Nienor, and they saw her no more.

But when the blind terror came upon the riders, Nienor's horse, running wild, stumbled, and she was thrown. Falling softly into grass she was unhurt; but when she got to her feet she was alone: lost in the mist without horse or companion. Her heart did not fail her, and she took thought; and it seemed to her vain to go towards this cry or that, for cries were all about her, but growing ever fainter. Better it seemed to her in such case to seek again for the hill: thither doubtless Mablung would come before he went away, if only to be sure that none of his company had remained there.

Therefore walking at guess she found the hill, which was indeed close at hand, by the rising of the ground before her feet; and slowly she climbed the path that led up from the east. And as she climbed so the fog grew thinner, until she came at last out into the sunlight on the bare summit. Then she stepped forward and looked westward. And there right before her was the great head of Glaurung, who had even then crept up from the other side; and before she was aware her eyes looked in his eyes, and they were terrible, being filled with the fell spirit of Morgoth, his master.

Then Nienor strove against Glaurung, for she was strong in will; but he put forth his power against her. 'What seek you here?' he said.

And constrained to answer she said: 'I do but seek one Túrin that dwelt here a while. But he is dead, maybe.'

'I know not,' said Glaurung. 'He was left here to defend the women and weaklings; but when I came he deserted them, and fled. A boaster but a craven, it seems. Why seek you such a one?'

'You lie,' said Nienor. 'The children of Húrin at least are not craven. We fear you not.'

Then Glaurung laughed, for so was Húrin's daughter revealed to his malice. 'Then you are fools, both you and your brother,' said he. 'And your boast shall be made vain. For I am Glaurung!'

Then he drew her eyes unto his, and her will swooned. And it seemed to her that the sun sickened and all became dim about her; and slowly a great darkness drew down on her and in that darkness there was emptiness; she knew nothing, and heard nothing, and remembered nothing.

Long Mablung explored the halls of Nargothrond, as well he might for the darkness and the stench; but he found no living thing there: nothing stirred amid the bones, and none answered his cries. At last, being oppressed by the horror of the place, and fearing the return of Glaurung, he came back to the Doors. The sun was sinking west, and the shadows of the Faroth behind lay dark on the terraces and the wild river below; but away beneath Amon Ethir he descried, as it seemed, the evil shape of the Dragon. Harder and more perilous was the return over Narog in such haste and fear; and scarcely had he reached the east shore and crept aside under the bank when Glaurung drew nigh. But he was slow now and stealthy; for all the fires in him were burned low: great power had gone out of him, and he would rest and sleep in the dark. Thus he writhed through the water and slunk up to the Doors like a huge snake, ashen-grey, sliming the ground with his belly.

But he turned before he went in and looked back eastward, and there came from him the laughter of Morgoth, dim but horrible, as an echo of malice out of the black depths far away. And this voice, cold and low, came after: 'There you lie like a vole under the bank, Mablung the mighty! Ill do you run the errands of Thingol. Haste you now to the hill and see what is become of your charge!'

Then Glaurung passed into his lair, and the sun went down and grey evening came chill over the land. But Mablung hastened back to Amon Ethir; and as he climbed to the top the stars came out in the East. Against them he saw there standing, dark and still, a figure as it were an image of stone. Thus Nienor stood, and heard nothing that he said, and made him no answer. But when at last he took her hand, she stirred, and suffered him to lead her away; and while he held her she followed, but if he loosed her, she stood still.

Then great was Mablung's grief and bewilderment; but no other choice had he but to lead Nienor so upon the long eastward way, without help or company. Thus they passed away, walking like dreamers, out into the night-

shadowed plain. And when morning returned Nienor stumbled and fell, and lay still; and Mablung sat beside her in despair.

*'Not for nothing did I dread this errand,' he said. 'For it will be my last, it seems. With this unlucky child of Men I shall perish in the wilderness, and my name shall be held in scorn in Doriath: if any tidings indeed are ever heard of our fate. All else doubtless are slain, and she alone spared, but not in mercy.'*

*Thus they were found by three of the company that had fled from Narog at the coming of Glaurung, and after much wandering when the mist had passed went back to the hill; and finding it empty they had begun to seek their way home. Hope then returned to Mablung; and they went on now together steering northward and eastward, for there was no road back into Doriath in the south, and since the fall of Nargothrond the ferrywards were forbidden to set any across save those that came from within.*

*Slow was their journey, as for those that lead a weary child. But ever as they passed further from Nargothrond and drew nearer to Doriath, so little by little strength returned to Nienor, and she would walk hour by hour obediently, led by the hand. Yet her wide eyes saw nothing, and her ears heard no words, and her lips spoke no words.*

*And now at length after many days they came nigh to the west border of Doriath, somewhat south of Teiglin; for they intended to pass the fences of the little land of Thingol beyond Sirion and so come to the guarded bridge near the inflowing of Esgalduin. There a while they halted; and they laid Nienor on a couch of grass, and she closed her eyes as she had not yet done, and it seemed that she slept. Then the Elves rested also, and for very weariness were unheeding. Thus they were assailed at unawares by a band of Orc-hunters, such as now roamed much in that region, as nigh to the fences of Doriath as they dared to go. In the midst of the affray suddenly Nienor leapt up from her couch, as one waking out of sleep to an alarm by night, and with a cry she sped away into the forest. Then the Orcs turned and gave chase, and the Elves after them. But a strange change came upon Nienor and now she outran them all, flying like a deer among the trees with her hair streaming in the wind of her speed. The Orcs indeed Mablung and his companions swiftly overtook and they slew them one and all, and hastened on. But by then Nienor had passed away like a wraith; and neither sight nor slot of her could they find, though they hunted for many days.*

*Then at last Mablung returned to Doriath bowed with grief and with shame. 'Choose you a new master of your hunters, lord,' he said to the King. 'For I am dishonoured.'*

*But Melian said: 'It is not so, Mablung. You did all that you could, and none other among the King's servants would have done so much. But by ill chance you were matched against a power too great for you: too great indeed for all that now dwell in Middle-earth.'*

*'I sent you to win tidings, and that you have done,' said Thingol. 'It is no fault of yours that those whom the tidings touch nearest are now beyond hearing. Grievous indeed is this end of all Húrin's kin, but it lies not at your door.'*

*For not only was Nienor now run witless into the wild, but Morwen also was lost. Neither then nor after did any certain news of her fate come to Doriath or to Dor-lómin. Nonetheless Mablung would not rest, and with a small company he went out into the wild and for three years wandered far, from Ered Wethrin even to the Mouths of Sirion, seeking for sign or tidings of the lost.*

## **Nienor In Brethil**

*But as for Nienor, she ran on into the wood, hearing the shouts of pursuit come behind; and her clothing she tore off, casting away her garments as she fled, until she went naked; and all that day still she ran, as a beast that is hunted to heart-bursting, and dare not stay or draw breath. But at evening suddenly her madness passed. She stood still a moment as in wonder, and then, in a swoon of utter weariness, she fell as one stricken down into a deep brake of fern. And there amid the old bracken and the swift fronds of spring she lay and slept, heedless of all.*

*In the morning she woke, and rejoiced in the light as one first called to life; and all things that she saw seemed to her new and strange, and she had no names for them. For behind her lay only an empty darkness, through which came no memory of anything she had ever known, nor any echo of any word. A shadow of fear only she remembered, and so she was wary, and sought ever for hidings: she would climb into trees or slip into thickets, swift as squirrel or fox, if any sound or shadow frightened her; and thence she would peer long through the leaves before she went on again.*

*Thus going forward in the way she first ran, she came to the river Teiglin, and stayed her thirst; but no food she found, nor knew how to seek it, and she was famished and cold. And since the trees across the water seemed closer and darker (as indeed they were, being the eaves of Brethil forest) she crossed over at last, and came to a green mound and there cast herself down: for she was spent, and it seemed to her that the darkness that lay behind her was overtaking her again, and the sun going dark.*

*But indeed it was a black storm that came up out of the South, laden with lightning and great rain; and she lay there cowering in terror of the thunder, and the dark rain smote her nakedness.*

*Now it chanced that some of the woodmen of Brethil came by in that hour from a foray against Orcs, hastening over the Crossings of Teiglin to a shelter that was near; and there came a great flash of lightning, so that the Haudh-en-Elleth was lit as with a white flame. Then Turambar who led the men started back and covered his eyes, and trembled; for it seemed that he saw the wraith of a slain maiden that lay upon the grave of Finduilas.*

*But one of the men ran to the mound, and called to him: 'Hither, lord! Here is a young woman lying, and she lives!' and Turambar coming lifted her, and the water dripped from her drenched hair, but she closed her eyes and quivered and strove no more. Then marvelling that she lay thus naked Turambar cast his cloak about her and bore her away to the hunters' lodge in the woods. There they lit a fire and wrapped coverlets about her, and she opened her eyes and looked upon them; and when her glance fell on Turambar a light came in her face and she put out a hand towards him, for it seemed to her that she had found at last something that she had sought in the darkness, and she was comforted. But Turambar took her hand, and smiled, and said: 'Now, lady, will you not tell us your name and your kin, and what evil has befallen you?'*

*Then she shook her head, and said nothing, but began to weep; and they troubled her no more, until she had eaten hungrily of what food they could give her. And when she had eaten she sighed, and laid her hand again in Turambar's; and he said: 'With us you are safe. Here you may rest this night, and in the morning we will lead you to our homes up in the high forest. But we would know your name and your kin, so that we may find them, maybe, and bring them news of you. Will you not tell us?'*

*But again she made no answer, and wept.*

*'Do not be troubled!' said Turambar. 'Maybe the tale is too sad yet to tell. But I will give you a name, and call you Niníel, Maid of Tears.' And at that name she looked up, and she shook her head, but said: Niníel. And that was the first word that she spoke after her darkness, and it was her name among the woodmen ever after.*

*In the morning they bore Niníel towards Ephel Brandir, and the road went steeply upward towards Amon Obel until it came to a place where it must cross the tumbling stream of Celebros. There a bridge of wood had been built, and below it the stream went over a lip of worn stone, and fell down by many foaming steps into a rocky bowl far below; and all the air was filled with spray like rain. There was a wide greensward at the head of the falls, and birches grew about it, but over the bridge there was a wide view towards the ravines of Teiglin some two miles to the west. There the air was cool and there wayfarers in summer would rest and drink of the cold water. Dimrost, the Rainy Stair, those falls were called, but after that day Nen Girith, the Shuddering Water; for Turambar and his men halted there, but as soon as Niníel came to that place she grew cold and shivered, and they could not warm her or comfort her.<sup>87</sup> Therefore they hastened on their way; but before they came to Ephel Brandir Niníel was already wandering in a fever.*

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<sup>87</sup> One might suppose that it was only when all was over, and Túrin and Nienor dead, that her shuddering fit was recalled and its meaning seen, and Dimrost renamed Nen Girith; but in the legend Nen Girith is used as the name throughout.

*Long she lay in her sickness, and Brandir used all his skill in her healing, and the wives of the woodmen watched over her by night and by day. But only when Turambar stayed near her would she lie at peace, or sleep without moaning; and this thing all marked that watched her: throughout all her fever, though often she was much troubled, she murmured never a word in any tongue of Elves or of Men. And when health slowly returned to her, and she walked and began to eat again, then as with a child the women of Brethil must teach her to speak, word by word. But in this learning she was quick and took great delight, as one that finds again treasures great and small that were mislaid; and when at length she had learned enough to speak with her friends she would say: 'What is the name of this thing? For in my darkness I lost it.' And when she was able to go about again, she would seek the house of Brandir; for she was most eager to learn the names of all living things, and he knew much of such matters; and they would walk together in the gardens and the glades.*

*Then Brandir grew to love her; and when she grew strong she would lend him an arm for his lameness, and she called him her brother. But to Turambar her heart was given, and only at his coming would she smile, and only when he spoke gaily would she laugh.*

*One evening of the golden autumn they sat together, and the sun set the hillside and the houses of Ephel Brandir aglow, and there was a deep quiet. Then Niniel said to him: 'Of all things I have now asked the name, save you. What are you called?'*

*'Turambar,' he answered.*

*Then she paused as if listening for some echo; but she said: 'And what does that say, or is it just the name for you alone?'*

*'It means,' said he, 'Master of the Dark Shadow. For I also, Niniel, had my darkness, in which dear things were lost; but now I have overcome it, I deem.'*

*'And did you also flee from it, running, until you came to these fair woods?' she said. 'And when did you escape, Turambar?'*

*'Yes,' he answered, 'I fled for many years. And I escaped when you did so. For it was dark when you came, Niniel, but ever since it has been light. And it seems to me that what I long sought in vain has come to me.' And as he went back to his house in the twilight, he said to himself: 'Haudh-en-Elleth! From the green mound she came. Is that a sign, and how shall I read it?'*

*Now that golden year waned and passed to a gentle winter, and there came another bright year. There was peace in Brethil, and the woodmen held themselves quiet and went not abroad, and they heard no tidings of the lands that lay about them. For the Orcs that at that time came southward to the dark reign of Glaurung, or were sent to spy on the borders of Doriath, shunned the Crossings of Teiglin, and passed westward far beyond the river.*

*And now Niniel was fully healed, and was grown fair and strong; and Turambar restrained himself no longer, but asked her in marriage. Then Niniel was glad; but when Brandir learned of it his heart was sick within him, and he said to her: 'Be not in haste! Think me not unkindly, if I counsel you to wait.'*

*'Nothing that you do is done unkindly,' she said. 'But why then do you give me such counsel, wise brother?'*

*'Wise brother?' he answered. 'Lame brother, rather, unloved and unlovely. And I scarce know why. Yet there lies a shadow on this man, and I am afraid.'*

*'There was a shadow,' said Niniel, 'for so he told me. But he has escaped from it, even as I. And is he not worthy of love? Though he now holds himself at peace, was he not once the greatest captain, from whom all our enemies would flee, if they saw him?'*

*'Who told you this?' said Brandir.*

*'It was Dorlas,' she said. 'Does he not speak truth?'*

*'Truth indeed,' said Brandir, but he was ill pleased, for Dorlas was chief of that party that wished for war on the Orcs. And yet he sought still for reasons to delay Niniel; and he said therefore: 'The truth, but not the whole truth; for he was the Captain of Nargothrond, and came before out of the North, and was (it is said) son of*

*Húrin of Dor-lómin of the warlike House of Hador.’ And Brandir, seeing the shadow that passed over her face at that name, misread her, and said more: ‘Indeed, Níniel, well may you think that such a one is likely ere long to go back to war, far from this land, maybe. And if so, how will you endure it? Have a care, for I forebode that if Turambar goes again to battle, then not he but the Shadow shall have the mastery.’*

*‘Ill would I endure it,’ she answered; ‘but unwedded no better than wedded. And a wife, maybe, would better restrain him, and hold off the shadow.’ Nonetheless she was troubled by the words of Brandir, and she bade Turambar wait yet a while. And he wondered and was downcast; but when he learned from Níniel that Brandir had counselled her to wait, he was ill pleased.*

*But when the next spring came he said to Níniel: ‘Time passes. We have waited, and now I will wait no longer. Do as your heart bids you, Níniel most dear, but see: this is the choice before me. I will go back now to war in the wild; or I will wed you, and go never to war again—save only to defend you, if some evil assails our home.’*

*Then she was glad indeed, and she plighted her troth, and at the mid-summer they were wedded; and the woodmen made a great feast, and they gave them a fair house which they had built for them upon Amon Obel. There they dwelt in happiness, but Brandir was troubled, and the shadow on his heart grew deeper.*

## **The Coming Of Glaurung**

*Now the power and malice of Glaurung grew apace, and he waxed fat, and he gathered Orcs to him, and ruled as a dragon-King, and all the realm of Nargothrond that had been was laid under him. And before this year ended, the third of Turambar’s dwelling among the woodmen, he began to assail their land, which for a while had had peace; for indeed it was well known to Glaurung and to his Master that in Brethil there abode still a remnant of free men, the last of the Three Houses to defy the power of the North. And this they would not brook; for it was the purpose of Morgoth to subdue all Beleriand and to search out its every corner, so that none in any hole or hiding might live that were not thrall to him. Thus, whether Glaurung guessed where Túrin was hidden, or whether (as some hold) he had indeed for that time escaped from the eye of Evil that pursued him, is of little matter. For in the end the counsels of Brandir must prove vain, and at the last two choices only could there be for Turambar: to sit deedless until he was found, driven forth like a rat; or to go forth soon to battle, and be revealed.*

*But when tidings of the coming of the Orcs were first brought to Ephel Brandir, he did not go forth and yielded to the prayers of Níniel. For she said: ‘Our homes are not yet assailed, as your word was. It is said that the Orcs are not many. And Dorlas has told me that before you came such affrays were not seldom, and the woodmen held them off.’*

*But the woodmen were worsted, for these Orcs were of a fell breed, fierce and cunning; and they came indeed with a purpose to invade the Forest of Brethil, not as before passing through its eaves on other errands, or hunting in small bands. Therefore Dorlas and his men were driven back with loss, and the Orcs came over Teiglin and roamed far into the woods. And Dorlas came to Turambar and showed his wounds, and he said: ‘See, lord, now is the time of our need come upon us, after a false peace, even as I foreboded. Did you not ask to be counted one of our people, and no stranger? Is this peril not yours also? For our homes will not remain hidden, if the Orcs come further into our land.’*

*Therefore Turambar arose, and took up again his sword Gurthang, and he went to battle; and when the woodmen learned this they were greatly heartened, and they gathered to him, till he had a force of many hundreds. Then they hunted through the forest and slew all the Orcs that crept there, and hung them on the trees near the Crossings of Teiglin. And when a new host came against them, they trapped it, and being surprised both by the numbers of the woodmen and by the terror of the Black Sword that had returned, the Orcs were routed and slain in great number. Then the woodmen made great pyres and burned the bodies of the soldiers of Morgoth in heaps, and the smoke of their vengeance rose black into heaven, and the wind bore it away westward. But few living went back to Nargothrond with these tidings.*

*Then Glaurung was wrathful indeed; but for a while he lay still and pondered what he had heard. Thus the winter passed in peace, and men said: ‘Great is the Black Sword of Brethil, for all our enemies are overcome.’*



*And Niniel was comforted, and she rejoiced in the renown of Turambar; but he sat in thought, and he said in his heart: 'The die is cast. Now comes the test, in which my boast shall be made good, or fail utterly. I will flee no more. Turambar indeed I will be, and by my own will and prowess I will surmount my doom—or fall. But falling or riding, Glaurung at least I will slay.'*

*Nonetheless he was unquiet, and he sent out men of daring as scouts far afield. For indeed though no word was said he now ordered things as he would, as if he were lord of Brethil, and no man heeded Brandir.*

*Spring came hopefully, and men sang at their work. But in that spring Niniel conceived, and she became pale and wan, and all her happiness was dimmed. And soon there came strange tidings, from the men that had gone abroad beyond Teiglin, that there was a great burning far out in the woods of the plain towards Nargothrond, and men wondered what it might be.*

*Before long there came more reports: that the fires drew ever northward, and that indeed Glaurung himself made them. For he had left Nargothrond, and was abroad again on some errand. Then the more foolish or more hopeful said: 'His army is destroyed, and now at last he sees wisdom and is going back whence he came.' And others said: 'Let us hope that he will pass us by.' But Turambar had no such hope, and knew that Glaurung was coming to seek him. Therefore though he masked his mind because of Niniel, he pondered ever by day and by night what counsel he should take; and spring turned towards summer.*

*A day came when two men returned to Ephel Brandir in terror, for they had seen the Great Worm himself. 'In truth, lord,' they said to Turambar, 'he draws now near to Teiglin, and turns not aside. He lay in the midst of a great burning, and the trees smoked about him. The stench of him is scarce to be endured. And all the long leagues back to Nargothrond his foul swath lies, we deem, in a line that swerves not, but points straight to us. What is to be done?'*

*'Little,' said Turambar, 'but to that little I have already given thought. The tidings you bring give me hope rather than dread; for if indeed he goes straight, as you say, and will not swerve, then I have some counsel for hardy hearts.'* The men wondered, for he said no more at that time; but they took heart from his steadfast bearing.<sup>88</sup>

*Now the river Teiglin ran in this manner. It flowed down from Ered Wethrin swift as Narog, but at first between low shores, until after the Crossings, gathering power from other streams, it clove a way through the feet of the highlands upon which stood the Forest of Brethil. Thereafter it ran in deep ravines, whose great sides were like walls of rock, but pent at the bottom the waters flowed with great force and noise. And right in the path of Glaurung there lay now one of these gorges, by no means the deepest, but the narrowest, just north of the inflow of Celebros. Therefore Turambar sent out three hardy men to keep watch from the brink on the movements of the Dragon; but he himself would ride to the high fall of Nen Girith, where news could find him swiftly, and whence he himself could look far across the lands.*

*But first he gathered the woodmen together in Ephel Brandir and spoke to them, saying:*

*'Men of Brethil, a deadly peril has come upon us which only great hardihood shall turn aside. But in this matter numbers will avail little; we must use cunning, and hope for good fortune. If we went up against the Dragon with all our strength, as against an army of Orcs, we should but offer ourselves all to death, and so leave our wives and kin defenceless. Therefore I say that you should stay here, and prepare for flight. For if*

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<sup>88</sup> If Glaurung's intention had indeed been to return to Angband it might be thought that he would have taken the old road to the Crossings of Teiglin, a course not greatly different from that which brought him to Cabed-en-Aras. Perhaps the assumption was that he would return to Angband by the way that he came south to Nargothrond, going up Narog to Ivrin. Cf. also Mablung's words (p. 184): 'I watched the coming forth of Glaurung, and I thought that he . . . was returning to his Master. But he turned towards Brethil . . .'

When Turambar spoke of his hope that Glaurung would go straight and not swerve, he meant that if the Dragon went up along Teiglin to the Crossings he would be able to enter Brethil without having to pass over the gorge, where he would be vulnerable: see his words to the men at Nen Girith, p. 167.

*Glaurung comes, then you must abandon this place, and scatter far and wide; and so may some escape and live. For certainly, if he can, he will come to our stronghold and dwelling, and he will destroy it, and all that he espies; but afterwards he will not abide here. In Nargothrond lies all his treasure, and there are the deep halls in which he can lie safe, and grow.'*

*Then the men were dismayed, and were utterly downcast, for they trusted in Turambar, and had looked for more hopeful words. But he said: 'Nay, that is the worst. And it shall not come to pass, if my counsel and fortune is good. For I do not believe that this Dragon is unconquerable, though he grows greater in strength and malice with the years. I know somewhat of him. His power is rather in the evil spirit that dwells within him than in the might of his body, great though that be. For hear now this tale that I was told by some that fought in the year of the Nirnaeth, when I and most that hear me were children. In that field the Dwarves withstood him and Azaghâl of Belegost pricked him so deep that he fled back to Angband. But here is a thorn sharper and longer than the knife of Azaghâl.'*

*And Turambar swept Gurthang from its sheath and stabbed with it up above his head, and it seemed to those that looked on that a flame leapt from Turambar's hand many feet into the air. Then they gave a great cry: 'The Black Thorn of Brethil!'*

*'The Black Thorn of Brethil,' said Turambar: 'well may he fear it. For know this: it is the doom of this Dragon (and all his brood, it is said) that how great so ever be his armour of horn, harder than iron, below he must go with the belly of a snake. Therefore, Men of Brethil, I go now to seek the belly of Glaurung, by what means I may. Who will come with me? I need but a few with strong arms and stronger hearts.'*

*Then Dorlas stood forth and said: 'I will go with you, lord; for I would ever go forward rather than wait for a foe.'*

*But no others were so swift to the call, for the dread of Glaurung lay on them, and the tale of the scouts that had seen him had gone about and grown in the telling. Then Dorlas cried out: 'Hearken, Men of Brethil, it is now well seen that for the evil of our times the counsels of Brandir were vain. There is no escape by hiding. Will none of you take the place of the son of Handir, that the House of Haleth be not put to shame?' Thus Brandir, who sat indeed in the high-seat of the lord of the assembly, but unheeded, was scorned, and he was bitter in his heart; for Turambar did not rebuke Dorlas. But one Hunthor, Brandir's kinsman, arose and said: 'You do evilly, Dorlas, to speak thus to the shame of your lord, whose limbs by ill hazard cannot do as his heart would. Beware lest the contrary be seen in you at some turn! And how can it be said that his counsels were vain, when they were never taken? You, his liege, have ever set them at naught. I say to you that Glaurung comes now to us, as to Nargothrond before, because our deeds have betrayed us, as he feared. But since this woe is now come, with your leave, son of Handir, I will go on behalf of Haleth's house.'*

*Then Turambar said: 'Three is enough! You twain will I take. But, lord, I do not scorn you. See! We must go in great haste, and our task will need strong limbs. I deem that your place is with your people. For you are wise, and are a healer; and it may be that there will be great need of wisdom and healing ere long.' But these words, though fair spoken, did but embitter Brandir the more, and he said to Hunthor: 'Go then, but not with my leave. For a shadow lies on this man, and it will lead you to evil.'*

*Now Turambar was in haste to go; but when he came to Niniel, to bid her farewell, she clung to him, weeping grievously. 'Go not forth, Turambar, I beg!' she said. 'Challenge not the shadow that you have fled from! Nay, nay, flee still, and take me with you, far away!'*

*'Niniel most dear,' he answered, 'we cannot flee further, you and I. We are hemmed in this land. And even should I go, deserting the people that befriended us, I could but take you forth into the houseless wild, to your death and the death of our child. A hundred leagues lie between us and any land that is yet beyond the reach of the Shadow. But take heart, Niniel. For I say to you: neither you nor I shall be slain by this Dragon, nor by any foe of the North.' Then Niniel ceased to weep and fell silent, but her kiss was cold as they parted.*

*Then Turambar with Dorlas and Hunthor went away hot-foot to Nen Girith, and when they came there the sun was westering and shadows were long; and the last two of the scouts were there awaiting them.*



*'You come not too soon, lord,' said they. 'For the Dragon has come on, and already when we left he had reached the brink of Teiglin, and glared across the water. He moves ever by night, and we may look then for some stroke before tomorrow's dawn.'*

*Turambar looked out over the falls of Celebros and saw the sun going down to its setting, and black spires of smoke rising by the borders of the river. 'There is no time to lose,' he said; 'yet these tidings are good. For my fear was that he would seek about; and if he passed northward and came to the Crossings and so to the old road in the lowland, then hope would be dead. But now some fury of pride and malice drives him headlong.' But even as he spoke, he wondered, and mused in his mind: 'Or can it be that one so evil and fell shuns the Crossings, even as the Orcs? Haudh-en-Elleth! Does Finduilas lie still between me and my doom?'*

*Then he turned to his companions and said: 'This task now lies before us. We must wait yet a little; for too soon in this case were as ill as too late. When dusk falls, we must creep down, with all stealth, to Teiglin. But beware! For the ears of Glaurung are as keen as his eyes—and they are deadly. If we reach the river unmarked, we must climb then down into the ravine, and cross the water, and so come in the path that he will take when he stirs.'*

*'But how can he come forward so?' said Dorlas. 'Lithe he may be, but he is a great Dragon, and how shall he climb down the one cliff and up the other, when part must again be climbing before the hinder is yet descended? And if he can so, what will it avail us to be in the wild water below?'*

*'Maybe he can so,' answered Turambar, 'and indeed if he does, it will go ill with us. But it is my hope from what we learn of him, and from the place where he now lies, that his purpose is otherwise. He is come to the brink of Cabed-en-Aras, over which, as you tell, a deer once leaped from the huntsmen of Haleth. So great is he now that I think he will seek to cast himself across there. That is all our hope, and we must trust to it.'*

*Dorlas' heart sank at these words; for he knew better than any all the land of Brethil, and Cabed-en-Aras was a grim place indeed. On the east side was a sheer cliff of some forty feet, bare but tree-grown at the crown; on the other side was a bank somewhat less sheer and less high, shrouded with hanging trees and bushes, but between them the water ran fiercely among rocks, and though a man bold and sure-footed might ford it by day, it was perilous to dare it at night. But this was the counsel of Turambar, and it was useless to gain-say him.*

*They set out therefore at dusk, and they did not go straight towards the Dragon, but took first the path to the Crossings; then, before they came so far, they turned southward by a narrow track and passed into the twilight of the woods above Teiglin.<sup>89</sup> And as they drew near to Cabed-en-Aras, step by step, halting often to listen, the reek of burning came to them, and a stench that sickened them. But all was deadly still, and there was no stir of air. The first stars glimmered in the East behind them, and faint spires of smoke rose straight and unwavering against the last light in the West.*

*Now when Turambar was gone Níniel stood silent as stone; but Brandir came to her and said: 'Níniel, fear not the worst until you must. But did I not counsel you to wait?'*

*'You did so,' she answered. 'Yet how would that profit me now? For love may abide and suffer unwedded.'*

*'That I know,' said Brandir. 'Yet wedding is not for nothing.'*

*'I am two months gone with his child,' said Níniel. 'But it does not seem to me that my fear of loss is the more heavy to bear. I understand you not.'*

*'Nor I myself,' said he. 'And yet I am afraid.'*

*'What a comforter are you!' she cried. 'But Brandir, friend: wedded or unwedded, mother or maid, my dread is beyond enduring. The Master of Doom is gone to challenge his doom far hence, and how shall I stay here and*

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<sup>89</sup> I have found no map to illustrate my father's conception of the lie of the land in detail, but this [sketch](#) seems at least to fit the references in the narrative.

*wait for the slow coming of tidings, good or ill? This night, it may be, he will meet with the Dragon, and how shall I stand, or sit, or pass the dreadful hours?’*

*‘I know not,’ said he, ‘but somehow the hours must pass, for you and for the wives of those that went with him.’*

*‘Let them do as their hearts bid!’ she cried. ‘But for me, I shall go. The miles shall not lie between me and my lord’s peril. I will go to meet the tidings!’*

*Then Brandir’s dread grew black at her words, and he cried: ‘That you shall not do, if I may hinder it. For thus will you endanger all counsel. The miles that lie between may give time for escape, if ill befall.’*

*‘If ill befall, I shall not wish to escape,’ she said. ‘And now your wisdom is vain, and you shall not hinder me.’ And she stood forth before the people that were still gathered in the open place of the Ephel, and she cried: ‘Men of Brethil! I will not wait here. If my lord fails, then all hope is false. Your land and woods shall be burned utterly, and all your houses laid in ashes, and none, none, shall escape. Therefore why tarry here? Now I go to meet the tidings and whatever doom may send. Let all those of like mind come with me!’*

*Then many were willing to go with her: the wives of Dorlas and Hunthor because those whom they loved were gone with Turambar; others for pity of Niniel and desire to befriend her; and many more that were lured by the very rumour of the Dragon, in their hardihood or their folly (knowing little of evil) thinking to see strange and glorious deeds. For indeed so great in their minds had the Black Sword become that few could believe that even Glaurung could conquer him. Therefore they set forth soon in haste, a great company, towards a peril that they did not understand; and going with little rest they came wearily at last, just at nightfall, to Nen Girith but a little while after Turambar had departed. But night is a cold counsellor, and many were now amazed at their own rashness; and when they heard from the scouts that remained there how near Glaurung was come, and the desperate purpose of Turambar, their hearts were chilled, and they dared go no further. Some looked out towards Cabed-en-Aras with anxious eyes, but nothing could they see, and nothing hear save the cold voice of the falls. And Niniel sat apart, and a great shuddering seized her.*

*When Niniel and her company had gone, Brandir said to those that remained: ‘Behold how I am scorned, and all my counsel disdained! Let Turambar be your lord in name, since already he has taken all my authority. For here I renounce both lordship and people. Let none seek of me ever again either counsel or healing!’ And he broke his staff. To himself he thought: ‘Now nothing is left to me, save only my love of Niniel: therefore where she goes, in wisdom or folly, I must go. In this dark hour nothing can be foreseen; but it may well chance that even I could ward off some evil from her, if I were near.’*

*He girt himself therefore with a short sword, as seldom before, and took his crutch, and went with what speed he might out of the gate of the Ephel, limping after the others down the long path to the west march of Brethil.*

## **The Death Of Glaurung**

*At last, even as full night closed over the land, Turambar and his companions came to Cabed-en-Aras, and they were glad of the great noise of the water; for though it promised peril below, it covered all other sounds. Then Dorlas led them a little aside, southwards, and they climbed down by a cleft to the cliff-foot; but there his heart quailed, for many rocks and great stones lay in the river, and the water ran wild about them, grinding its teeth. ‘This is a sure way to death,’ said Dorlas.*

*‘It is the only way, to death or to life,’ said Turambar, ‘and delay will not make it seem more hopeful. Therefore follow me!’ And he went on before them, and by skill and hardihood, or by fate, he came across, and in the deep dark he turned to see who came after. A dark form stood beside him. ‘Dorlas?’ he said.*

*‘No, it is I,’ said Hunthor. ‘Dorlas failed at the crossing. For a man may love war, and yet dread many things. He sits shivering on the shore, I guess; and may shame take him for his words to my kinsman.’*

*Now Turambar and Hunthor rested a little, but soon the night chilled them, for they were both drenched with water, and they began to seek a way along the stream northwards towards the lodgement of Glaurung. There the chasm grew darker and narrower, and as they felt their way forward they could see a flicker above them as of smouldering fire, and they heard the snarling of the Great Worm in his watchful sleep. Then they groped for*

*a way up, to come nigh under the brink; for in that lay all their hope to come at their enemy beneath his guard. But so foul now was the reek that their heads were dizzy, and they slipped as they clambered, and clung to the tree-stems, and retched, forgetting in their misery all fear save the dread of falling into the teeth of Teiglin.*

*Then Turambar said to Hunthor: 'We spend our waning strength to no avail. For till we be sure where the Dragon will pass, it is vain to climb.'*

*'But when we know,' said Hunthor, 'then there will be no time to seek a way up out of the chasm.'*

*'Truly,' said Turambar. 'But where all lies on chance, to chance we must trust.' They halted therefore and waited, and out of the dark ravine they watched a white star far above creep across the faint strip of sky; and then slowly Turambar sank into a dream, in which all his will was given to clinging, though a black tide sucked and gnawed at his limbs.*

*Suddenly there was a great noise and the walls of the chasm quivered and echoed. Turambar roused himself, and said to Hunthor: 'He stirs. The hour is upon us. Strike deep, for two must strike now for three!'*

*And with that Glaurung began his assault upon Brethil; and all passed much as Turambar had hoped. For now the Dragon crawled with slow weight to the edge of the cliff, and he did not turn aside, but made ready to spring over the chasm with his great forelegs and then draw his bulk after. Terror came with him; for he did not begin his passage right above, but a little to the northward, and the watchers from beneath could see the huge shadow of his head against the stars; and his jaws gaped, and he had seven tongues of fire. Then he sent forth a blast, so that all the ravine was filled with a red light, and black shadows flying among the rocks; but the trees before him withered and went up in smoke, and stones crashed down into the river. And thereupon he hurled himself forward, and grappled the further cliff with his mighty claws, and began to heave himself across.*

*Now there was need to be bold and swift, for though Turambar and Hunthor had escaped the blast, since they were not standing right in Glaurung's path, they yet had to come at him, before he passed over, or all their hope failed. Heedless of peril Turambar clambered along the water-edge to come beneath him; but there so deadly was the heat and the stench that he tottered and would have fallen if Hunthor, following stoutly behind, had not seized his arm and steadied him.*

*'Great heart!' said Turambar. 'Happy was the choice that took you for a helper!' But even as he spoke, a great stone hurtled from above and smote Hunthor on the head, and he fell into the water, and so ended: not the least valiant of the House of Haleth. Then Turambar cried: 'Alas! It is ill to walk in my shadow! Why did I seek aid? For now you are alone, O Master of Doom, as you should have known it must be. Now conquer alone!'*

*Then he summoned to him all his will, and all his hatred of the Dragon and his Master, and it seemed that suddenly he found a strength of heart and of body that he had not known before; and he climbed the cliff, from stone to stone, and root to root, until he seized at last a slender tree that grew a little beneath the lip of the chasm, and though its top was blasted, it held still fast by its roots. And even as he steadied himself in a fork of its boughs, the midmost parts of the Dragon came above him, and swayed down with their weight almost upon his head, ere Glaurung could heave them up. Pale and wrinkled was their underside, and all dank with a grey slime, to which clung all manner of dropping filth; and it stank of death. Then Turambar drew the Black Sword of Beleg and stabbed upwards with all the might of his arm, and of his hate, and the deadly blade, long and greedy, went into the belly even to its hilts.*

*Then Glaurung, feeling his death-pang, gave forth a scream, whereat all the woods were shaken, and the watchers at Nen Girith were aghast. Turambar reeled as from a blow, and slipped down, and his sword was torn from his grasp, and clave to the belly of the Dragon. For Glaurung in a great spasm bent up all his shuddering bulk and hurled it over the ravine, and there upon the further shore he writhed, screaming, lashing and coiling himself in his agony, until he had broken a great space all about him, and lay there at last in a smoke and a ruin, and was still.*

*Now Turambar clung to the roots of the tree, stunned and well-nigh overcome. But he strove against himself and drove himself on, and half sliding and half climbing he came down to the river, and dared again the perilous crossing, crawling now on hands and feet, clinging, blinded with spray, until he came over at last, and*

*climbed wearily up by the cleft by which they had descended. Thus he came at length to the place of the dying Dragon, and he looked on his stricken enemy without pity, and was glad.*

*There now Glaurung lay, with jaws agape; but all his fires were burned out, and his evil eyes were closed. He was stretched out in his length, and had rolled upon one side, and the hilts of Gurthang stood in his belly. Then the heart of Turambar rose high within him, and though the Dragon still breathed he would recover his sword, which if he prized it before was now worth to him all the treasure of Nargothrond. True proved the words spoken at its forging that nothing, great or small, should live that once it had bitten.*

*Therefore going up to his foe he set foot upon his belly, and seizing the hilts of Gurthang he put forth his strength to withdraw it. And he cried in mockery of Glaurung's words at Nargothrond: 'Hail, Worm of Morgoth! Well met again! Die now and the darkness have thee! Thus is Túrin son of Húrin avenged.' Then he wrenched out the sword, and even as he did so a spout of black blood followed it, and fell upon his hand, and his flesh was burned by the venom, so that he cried aloud at the pain. Thereat Glaurung stirred and opened his baleful eyes and looked upon Turambar with such malice that it seemed to him that he was smitten by an arrow; and for that and for the anguish of his hand he fell in a swoon, and lay as one dead beside the Dragon, and his sword was beneath him.*

*Now the screams of Glaurung came to the people at Nen Girith, and they were filled with terror; and when the watchers beheld from afar the great breaking and burning that the Dragon made in his throes, they believed that he was trampling and destroying those that had assailed him. Then indeed they wished the miles longer that lay between them; but they dared not leave the high place where they were gathered, for they remembered the words of Turambar that, if Glaurung conquered, he would go first to Ephel Brandir. Therefore they watched in fear for any sign of his movement, but none were so hardy as to go down and seek for tidings in the place of the battle. And Níniel sat, and did not move, save that she shuddered and could not still her limbs; for when she heard the voice of Glaurung her heart died within her, and she felt her darkness creeping upon her again.*

*Thus Brandir found her. For he came at last to the bridge over Celebros, slow and weary; all the long way alone he had limped on his crutch, and it was five leagues at the least from his home. Fear for Níniel had driven him on, and now the tidings that he learned were no worse than he had dreaded. 'The Dragon has crossed the river,' men told him, 'and the Black Sword is surely dead, and those that went with him.' Then Brandir stood by Níniel, and guessed her misery, and he yearned to her; but he thought nonetheless: 'The Black Sword is dead, and Níniel lives.' And he shuddered, for suddenly it seemed cold by the waters of Nen Girith; and he cast his cloak about Níniel. But he found no words to say; and she did not speak.*

*Time passed, and still Brandir stood silent beside her, peering into the night and listening; but he could see nothing, and could hear no sound but the falling of the waters of Nen Girith, and he thought: 'Now surely Glaurung is gone and has passed into Brethil.' But he pitied his people no more, fools that had flouted his counsel, and had scorned him. 'Let the Dragon go to Amon Obel, and there will be time then to escape, to lead Níniel away.' Whither, he scarce knew, for he had never journeyed beyond Brethil.*

*At last he bent down and touched Níniel on the arm, and said to her: 'Time passes, Níniel! Come! It is time to go. If you will let me, I will lead you.'*

*Then silently she arose, and took his hand, and they passed over the bridge and went down the path that led to the Crossings of Teiglin. But those that saw them moving as shadows in the dark knew not who they were, and cared not. And when they had gone some little way through the silent trees, the moon rose beyond Amon Obel, and the glades of the forest were filled with a grey light. Then Níniel halted and said to Brandir: 'Is this the way?'*

*And he answered: 'What is the way? For all our hope in Brethil is ended. We have no way, save to escape the Dragon, and flee far from him while there is yet time.'*

*Níniel looked at him in wonder and said: 'Did you not offer to lead me to him? Or would you deceive me? The Black Sword was my beloved and my husband, and only to find him do I go. What else could you think? Now do as you will, but I must hasten.'*

*And even as Brandir stood a moment amazed, she sped from him; and he called after her, crying: 'Wait, Níniel! Go not alone! You know not what you will find. I will come with you!' But she paid no heed to him, and went now as though her blood burned her, which before had been cold; and though he followed as he could she passed soon out of his sight. Then he cursed his fate and his weakness; but he would not turn back.*

*Now the moon rose white in the sky, and was near the full, and as Níniel came down from the upland towards the land near the river, it seemed to her that she remembered it, and feared it. For she was come to the Crossings of Teiglin, and Haudh-en-Elleth stood there before her, pale in the moonlight, with a black shadow cast athwart it; and out of the mound came a great dread.*

*Then she turned with a cry and fled south along the river, and cast her cloak as she ran, as though casting off a darkness that clung to her; and beneath she was all clad in white, and she shone in the moon as she flitted among the trees. Thus Brandir above on the hill-side saw her, and turned to cross her course, if he could; and finding by fortune the narrow path that Turambar had used, for it left the more beaten road and went steeply down southward to the river, he came at last close behind her again. But though he called, she did not heed, or did not hear, and soon once more she passed on ahead; and so they drew near to the woods beside Cabed-en-Aras and the place of the agony of Glaurung.*

*The moon then was riding in the South unclouded, and the light was cold and clear. Coming to the edge of the ruin that Glaurung had wrought, Níniel saw his body lying there, and his belly grey in the moon-sheen; but beside him lay a man. Then forgetting her fear she ran on amid the smouldering wrack and so came to Turambar. He was fallen on his side, and his sword lay beneath him, but his face was wan as death in the white light. Then she threw herself down by him weeping, and kissed him; and it seemed to her that he breathed faintly, but she thought it but a trickery of false hope, for he was cold, and did not move, nor did he answer her. And as she caressed him she found that his hand was blackened as if it had been scorched, and she washed it with her tears, and tearing a strip from her raiment she bound it about. But still he did not move at her touch, and she kissed him again, and cried aloud: 'Turambar, Turambar, come back! Hear me! Awake! For it is Níniel. The Dragon is dead, dead, and I alone am here by you.' But he answered nothing.*

*Her cry Brandir heard, for he had come to the edge of the ruin; but even as he stepped forward towards Níniel, he was halted, and stood still. For at the cry of Níniel Glaurung stirred for the last time, and a quiver ran through all his body; and he opened his baleful eyes a slit, and the moon gleamed in them, as gasping he spoke:*

*'Hail, Nienor, daughter of Húrin. We meet again ere the end. I give thee joy that thou hast found thy brother at last. And now thou shalt know him: a stabber in the dark, treacherous to foes, faithless to friends, and a curse unto his kin, Túrin son of Húrin! But the worst of all his deeds thou shalt feel in thyself.'*

*Then Nienor sat as one stunned, but Glaurung died; and with his death the veil of his malice fell from her, and all her memory grew clear before her, from day unto day, neither did she forget any of those things that had befallen her since she lay on Haudh-en-Elleth. And her whole body shook with horror and anguish. But Brandir, who had heard all, was stricken, and leaned against a tree.*

*Then suddenly Nienor started to her feet, and stood pale as a wraith in the moon, and looked down on Túrin, and cried: 'Farewell, O twice beloved! A Túrin Turambar turún' ambartanen: master of doom by doom mastered! O happy to be dead!' Then distraught with woe and the horror that had overtaken her she fled wildly from that place; and Brandir stumbled after her, crying: 'Wait! Wait, Níniel!'*

*One moment she paused, looking back with staring eyes. 'Wait?' she cried. 'Wait? That was ever your counsel. Would that I had heeded! But now it is too late. And now I will wait no more upon Middle-earth.' And she sped on before him.<sup>90</sup>*

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<sup>90</sup> The phrases 'fled wildly from that place' and 'sped on before him' suggest that there was some distance between the place where Túrin lay beside Glaurung's corpse and the edge of the ravine. It may be that the Dragon's death-leap carried him some way beyond the further brink.



*Swiftly she came to the brink of Cabed-en-Aras, and there stood and looked on the loud water crying: 'Water, water! Take now Níniel Nienor daughter of Húrin; Mourning, Mourning daughter of Morwen! Take me and bear me down to the Sea!' With that she cast herself over the brink: a flash of white swallowed in the dark chasm, a cry lost in the roaring of the river.*

*The waters of Teiglin flowed on, but Cabed-en-Aras was no more: Cabed Naeramarth thereafter it was named by men; for no deer would ever leap there again, and all living things shunned it, and no man would walk upon its shore. Last of men to look down into its darkness was Brandir son of Handir; and he turned away in horror, for his heart quailed, and though he hated now his life, he could not there take the death that he desired.<sup>91</sup> Then his thought turned to Túrin Turambar, and he cried: 'Do I hate you, or do I pity you? But you are dead. I owe you no thanks, taker of all that I had or would have. But my people owe you a debt. It is fitting that from me they should learn it.'*

*And so he began to limp back to Nen Girith, avoiding the place of the Dragon with a shudder; and as he climbed the steep path again he came on a man that peered through the trees, and seeing him drew back. But he had marked his face in a gleam of the sinking moon.*

*'Ha, Dorlas!' he cried. 'What news can you tell? How came you off alive? And what of my kinsman?'*

*'I know not,' answered Dorlas sullenly.*

*'Then that is strange,' said Brandir.*

*'If you will know,' said Dorlas, 'the Black Sword would have us ford the races of Teiglin in the dark. Is it strange that I could not? I am a better man with an axe than some, but I am not goat-footed.'*

*'So they went on without you to come at the Dragon?' said Brandir. 'But how when he passed over? At the least you would stay near, and would see what befell.'*

*But Dorlas made no answer, and stared only at Brandir with hatred in his eyes. Then Brandir understood, perceiving suddenly that this man had deserted his companions, and unmanned by shame had then hidden in the woods. 'Shame on you, Dorlas!' he said. 'You are the begetter of our woes: egging on the Black Sword, bringing the Dragon upon us, putting me to scorn, drawing Hunthor to his death, and then you flee to skulk in the woods!' And as he spoke another thought entered his mind, and he said in great anger: 'Why did you not bring tidings? It was the least penance that you could do. Had you done so, the Lady Níniel would have had no need to seek them herself. She need never have seen the Dragon. She might have lived. Dorlas, I hate you!'*

*'Keep your hate!' said Dorlas. 'It is as feeble as all your counsels. But for me the Orcs would have come and hung you as a scarecrow in your own garden. Take the name skulker to yourself!' And with that, being for his shame the readier to wrath, he aimed a blow at Brandir with his great fist, and so ended his life, before the look of amazement left his eyes: for Brandir drew his sword and hewed him his death-blow. Then for a moment he stood trembling, sickened by the blood; and casting down his sword he turned, and went on his way, bowed upon his crutch.*

*As Brandir came to Nen Girith the pallid moon was gone down, and the night was fading; morning was opening in the East. The people that cowered there still by the bridge saw him come like a grey shadow in the*

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<sup>91</sup> Later in the narrative (p. 186) Túrin himself, before his death, called the place Cabed Naeramarth, and it may be supposed that it was from the tradition of his last words that the later name was derived.

The apparent discrepancy that, although Brandir is said (both here and in *The Silmarillion*) to have been the last man to look on Cabed-en-Aras, Túrin came there soon afterwards, and indeed the Elves also and all those who raised the mound over him, may perhaps be explained by taking the words of the *Narn* concerning Brandir in a narrow sense: he was the last man actually to 'look down into its darkness'. It was indeed my father's intention to alter the narrative so that Túrin slew himself not at Cabed-en-Aras but on the mound of Finduilas by the Crossings of Teiglin; but this never received written form.

dawn, and some called to him in wonder: 'Where have you been? Have you seen her? For the Lady Níniel is gone.'

'Yes, she is gone,' he said. 'Gone, gone, never to return! But I am come to bring you tidings. Hear now, people of Brethil, and say if there was ever such a tale as the tale that I bear! The Dragon is dead, but dead also is Turambar at his side. And those are good tidings: yes, both are good indeed.'

Then the people murmured, wondering at his speech, and some said that he was mad; but Brandir cried: 'Hear me to the end! Níniel too is dead, Níniel the fair whom you loved, whom I loved dearest of all. She leaped from the brink of the Deer's Leap,<sup>92</sup> and the teeth of Teiglin have taken her. She is gone, hating the light of day. For this she learned before she fled: Húrin's children were they both, sister and brother. The Mormegil he was called, Turambar he named himself, hiding his past: Túrin son of Húrin. Níniel we named her, not knowing her past: Nienor she was, daughter of Húrin. To Brethil they brought their dark doom's shadow. Here their doom has fallen, and of grief this land shall never again be free. Call it not Brethil, not the land of the Halethrim, but Sarchnia Hîn Húrin, Grave of the Children of Húrin!'

Then though they did not understand yet how this evil had come to pass, the people wept as they stood, and some said: 'A grave there is in Teiglin for Níniel the beloved, a grave there shall be for Turambar, most valiant of men. Our deliverer shall not be left to lie under the sky. Let us go to him.'

## The Death Of Túrin

Now even as Níniel fled away, Túrin stirred, and it seemed to him that out of his deep darkness he heard her call to him far away; but as Glaurung died, the black swoon left him, and he breathed deep again, and sighed, and passed into a slumber of great weariness. But ere dawn it grew bitter cold, and he turned in his sleep, and the hilts of Gurthang drove into his side, and suddenly he awoke. Night was going, and there was a breath of morning in the air; and he sprang to his feet, remembering his victory, and the burning venom on his hand. He raised it up, and looked at it, and marvelled. For it was bound about with a strip of white cloth, yet moist, and it was at ease; and he said to himself: 'Why should one tend me so, and yet leave me here to lie cold amid the wrack and the dragon-stench? What strange things have chanced?'

Then he called aloud, but there was no answer. All was black and drear about him, and there was a reek of death. He stooped and lifted his sword, and it was whole, and the light of its edges was undimmed. 'Foul was the venom of Glaurung,' he said, 'but you are stronger than I, Gurthang! All blood will you drink. Yours is the victory. But come! I must go seek for aid. My body is weary, and there is a chill in my bones.'

Then he turned his back upon Glaurung and left him to rot; but as he passed from that place each step seemed more heavy, and he thought: 'At Nen Girith, maybe, I will find one of the scouts awaiting me. But would I were soon in my own house, and might feel the gentle hands of Níniel, and the good skill of Brandir!' And so at last, walking wearily, leaning on Gurthang, through the grey light of early day he came to Nen Girith, and even as men were setting forth to seek his dead body, he stood before the people.

Then they gave back in terror, believing that it was his unquiet spirit, and the women wailed and covered their eyes. But he said: 'Nay, do not weep, but be glad! See! Do I not live? And have I not slain the Dragon that you feared?'

Then they turned upon Brandir, and cried: 'Fool, with your false tales, saying that he lay dead. Did we not say that you were mad?' But Brandir was aghast, and stared at Túrin with fear in his eyes, and he could say nothing.

But Túrin said to him: 'It was you then that were there, and tended my hand? I thank you. But your skill is failing, if you cannot tell swoon from death.' Then he turned to the people: 'Speak not so to him, fools all of

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<sup>92</sup> It seems from this that 'The Deer's Leap' was the original name of the place, and indeed the meaning of Cabed-en-Aras.

you. Which of you would have done better? At least he had the heart to come down to the place of battle, while you sit wailing!

'But now, son of Handir, come! There is more that I would learn. Why are you here, and all this people, whom I left at the Ephel? If I may go into the peril of death for your sakes, may I not be obeyed when I am gone? And where is Níniel? At the least I may hope that you did not bring her hither, but left her where I bestowed her, in my house, with true men to guard it?'

And when no-one answered him, 'Come, say where is Níniel?' he cried. 'For her first I would see; and to her first will I tell the tale of the deeds in the night.'

But they turned their faces from him, and Brandir said at last: 'Níniel is not here.'

'That is well then,' he said. 'Then I will go to my home. Is there a horse to bear me? Or a bier would be better. I faint with my labours.'

'Nay, nay!' said Brandir in anguish. 'Your house is empty. Níniel is not there. She is dead.'

But one of the women—the wife of Dorlas, who loved Brandir little—cried shrilly: 'Pay no heed to him, lord! For he is crazed. He came crying that you were dead, and called it good tidings. But you live. Why then should his tale of Níniel be true: that she is dead, and yet worse?'

Then Túrin strode towards Brandir: 'So my death was good tidings?' he cried. 'Yes, ever you did begrudge her to me, that I knew. Now she is dead, you say. And yet worse? What lie have you begotten in your malice, Club-foot? Would you slay us then with foul words, since you can wield no other weapon?'

Then anger drove pity from Brandir's heart, and he cried: 'Crazed? Nay, crazed are you, Black Sword of black doom! And all this dotard people. I do not lie! Níniel is dead, dead, dead! Seek her in Teiglin!'

Then Túrin stood still and cold. 'How do you know?' he said softly. 'How did you contrive it?'

'I know because I saw her leap,' answered Brandir. 'But the contriving was yours. She fled from you, Túrin son of Húrin, and in Cabed-en-Aras she cast herself, that she might never see you again. Níniel! Níniel? Nay, Nienor daughter of Húrin.'

Then Túrin seized him and shook him; for in those words he heard the feet of his doom overtaking him, but in horror and fury his heart would not receive them, as a beast hurt to death that will wound ere it dies all that are near it.

'Yes, I am Túrin son of Húrin,' he cried. 'So long ago you guessed. But nothing do you know of Nienor my sister. Nothing! She dwells in the Hidden Kingdom, and is safe. It is a lie of your own vile mind, to drive my wife witless, and now me. You limping evil—would you dog us both to death?'

But Brandir shook him off. 'Touch me not!' he said. 'Stay your raving. She that you name wife came to you and tended you, and you did not answer her call. But one answered for you. Glaurung the Dragon, who I deem bewitched you both to your doom. So he spoke, before he ended: "Nienor daughter of Húrin, here is thy brother: treacherous to foes, faithless to friends, a curse unto his kin, Túrin son of Húrin"' Then suddenly a fey laughter seized on Brandir. 'On their deathbed men will speak true, they say,' he cackled. 'And even a Dragon too, it seems! Túrin son of Húrin, a curse unto thy kin and unto all that harbour thee!'

Then Túrin grasped Gurthang and a fell light was in his eyes. 'And what shall be said of you, Club-foot?' he said slowly. 'Who told her secretly behind my back my right name? Who brought her to the malice of the Dragon? Who stood by and let her die? Who came hither to publish this horror at the swiftest? Who would now gloat upon me? Do men speak true before death? Then speak it now quickly.'

Then Brandir, seeing his death in Túrin's face, stood still and did not quail, though he had no weapon but his crutch; and he said: 'All that has chanced is a long tale to tell, and I am weary of you. But you slander me, son of Húrin. Did Glaurung slander you? If you slay me, then all shall see that he did not. Yet I do not fear to die, for then I will go to seek Níniel whom I loved, and perhaps I may find her again beyond the Sea.'



*'Seek Niniel!' cried Túrin. 'Nay, Glaurung you shall find, and breed lies together. You shall sleep with the Worm, your soul's mate, and rot in one darkness!' Then he lifted up Gurthang and hewed Brandir, and smote him to death. But the people hid their eyes from that deed, and as he turned and went from Nen Girith they fled from him in terror.*

*Then Túrin went as one witless through the wild woods, now cursing Middle-earth and all the life of Men, now calling upon Niniel. But when at last the madness of his grief left him he sat awhile and pondered all his deeds, and he heard himself crying: 'She dwells in the Hidden Kingdom, and is safe!' And he thought that now, though all his life was in ruin, he must go thither; for all the lies of Glaurung had ever led him astray. Therefore he arose and went to the Crossings of Teiglin, and as he passed by Haudh-en-Elleth he cried: 'Bitterly have I paid, O Finduilas! that ever I gave heed to the Dragon. Send me now counsel!'*

*But even as he cried out he saw twelve huntsmen well-armed that came over the Crossings, and they were Elves; and as they drew near he knew one, for it was Mablung, chief huntsman of Thingol. And Mablung hailed him, crying: 'Túrin! Well met at last. I seek you, and glad I am to see you living, though the years have been heavy on you.'*

*'Heavy!' said Túrin. 'Yes, as the feet of Morgoth. But if you are glad to see me living, you are the last in Middle-earth. Why so?'*

*'Because you were held in honour among us,' answered Mablung; 'and though you have escaped many perils, I feared for you at the last. I watched the coming forth of Glaurung, and I thought that he had fulfilled his wicked purpose and was returning to his Master. But he turned towards Brethil, and at the same time I learned from wanderers in the land that the Black Sword of Nargothrond had appeared there again, and the Orcs shunned its borders as death. Then I was filled with dread, and I said: "Alas! Glaurung goes where his Orcs dare not, to seek out Túrin." Therefore I came hither as swift as might be, to warn you and aid you.'*

*'Swift, but not swift enough,' said Túrin. 'Glaurung is dead.'*

*Then the Elves looked at him in wonder, and said: 'You have slain the Great Worm! Praised for ever shall your name be among Elves and Men!'*

*'I care not,' said Túrin. 'For my heart also is slain. But since you come from Doriath, give me news of my kin. For I was told in Dor-lómin that they had fled to the Hidden Kingdom.'*

*The Elves made no answer, but at length Mablung spoke: 'They did so indeed, in the year before the coming of the Dragon. But they are not there now, alas!' Then Túrin's heart stood still, hearing the feet of doom that would pursue him to the end. 'Say on!' he cried. 'And be swift!'*

*'They went out into the wild seeking you,' said Mablung. 'It was against all counsel; but they would go to Nargothrond, when it was known that you were the Black Sword; and Glaurung came forth, and all their guard were scattered. Morwen none have seen since that day; but Nienor had a spell of dumbness upon her, and fled north into the woods like a wild deer, and was lost.' Then to the wonder of the Elves Túrin laughed loud and shrill. 'Is not that a jest?' he cried. 'O the fair Nienor! So she ran from Doriath to the Dragon, and from the Dragon unto me. What a sweet grace of fortune! Brown as a berry she was, dark was her hair; small and slim as an Elf-child, none could mistake her!'*

*Then Mablung was amazed, and he said: 'But some mistake is here. Not such was your sister. She was tall, and her eyes were blue, her hair fine gold, the very likeness in woman's form of Húrin her father. You cannot have seen her!'*

*'Can I not, can I not, Mablung?' cried Túrin. 'But why no! For see, I am blind! Did you not know? Blind, blind, groping since childhood in a dark mist of Morgoth! Therefore leave me! Go, go! Go back to Doriath, and may winter shrivel it! A curse upon Menegroth! And a curse on your errand! This only was wanting. Now comes the night!'*

*Then he fled from them, like the wind, and they were filled with wonder and fear. But Mablung said: 'Some strange and dreadful thing has chanced that we know not. Let us follow him and aid him if we may: for now he is fey and witless.'*

*But Túrin sped far before them, and came to Cabed-en-Aras, and stood still; and he heard the roaring of the water, and saw that all the trees near and far were withered, and their sere leaves fell mournfully, as though winter had come in the first days of summer.*

*‘Cabed-en-Aras, Cabed Naeramarth!’ he cried. ‘I will not defile your waters where Níníel was washed. For all my deeds have been ill, and the latest the worst.’*

*Then he drew forth his sword, and said: ‘Hail Gurthang, iron of death, thou alone now remainest! But what lord or loyalty dost thou know, save the hand that wieldeth thee? From no blood wilt thou shrink! Wilt thou take Túrin Turambar? Wilt thou slay me swiftly?’*

*And from the blade rang a cold voice in answer: ‘Yea, I will drink thy blood, that I may forget the blood of Beleg my master, and the blood of Brandir slain unjustly. I will slay thee swiftly.’*

*Then Túrin set the hilts upon the ground, and cast himself upon the point of Gurthang, and the black blade took his life.*

*But Mablung came and looked on the hideous shape of Glaurung lying dead, and he looked upon Túrin and was grieved, thinking of Húrin as he had seen him in the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, and the dreadful doom of his kin. As the Elves stood there, men came down from Nen Girith to look upon the Dragon, and when they saw to what end the life of Túrin Turambar had come they wept; and the Elves learning at last the reason of Túrin’s words to them were aghast. Then Mablung said bitterly: ‘I also have been meshed in the doom of the Children of Húrin, and thus with words have slain one that I loved.’*

*Then they lifted up Túrin, and saw that his sword was broken asunder. So passed all that he possessed.*

*With toil of many hands they gathered wood and piled it high and made a great burning, and destroyed the body of the Dragon, until he was but black ash and his bones beaten to dust, and the place of that burning was ever bare and barren thereafter. But Túrin they laid in a high mound where he had fallen, and the shards of Gurthang were set beside him. And when all was done, and the minstrels of Elves and Men had made lament, telling of the valour of Turambar and the beauty of Níníel, a great grey stone was brought and set upon the mound; and thereon the Elves carved in the Runes of Doriath:*

*TÚRIN TURAMBAR DAGNIR GLAURUNGA*

*and beneath they wrote also:*

*NIENOR NÍNÍEL*

*But she was not there, nor was it ever known whither the cold waters of Teiglin had taken her.*

Thus ends the Tale of the Children of Húrin, longest of all the lays of Beleriand.

In an introductory note, existing in different forms, it is said that though made in Elvish speech and using much Elvish lore, especially of Doriath, the *Narn I Hîn Húrin* was the work of a Mannish poet, Dírhavel, who lived at the Havens of Sirion in the days of Eärendil, and there gathered all the tidings he could of the House of Hador, whether among Men or Elves, remnants and fugitives of Dor-lómin, of Nargothrond, of Gondolin, or of Doriath. In one version of this note, Dírhavel is said to have come himself of the House of Hador. This Lay, longest of all the Lays of Beleriand, was all that he ever made, but it was prized by the Eldar, for Dírhavel used the Grey-elven tongue, in which he had great skill. He used that mode of Elvish verse which was called *Minlamed thent/estent*, and was of old proper to the *narn* (a tale that is told in verse, but to be spoken and not sung). Dírhavel perished in the raid of the Sons of Fëanor upon the Havens of Sirion.

## Appendix

From the point in the story where Túrin and his men established themselves in the ancient dwelling of the Petty-dwarves on Amon Rûdh there is no completed narrative on the same detailed plan, until the *Narn* takes up again with Túrin’s journey northwards after the fall of Nargothrond. From many tentative or exploratory outlines and notes, however, some further glimpses can be gained beyond the more summary account in *The Silmarillion*, and even some short stretches of connected narrative on the scale of the *Narn*.

An isolated fragment describes the life of the outlaws on Amon Rûdh in the time that followed their settlement there, and gives some further description of Bar-en-Danwedh.

*For a long while the life of the outlaws went well to their liking. Food was not scarce, and they had good shelter, warm and dry, with room enough and to spare; for they found that the caves could have housed a hundred or more at need. There was another smaller hall further in. It had a hearth at one side, above which a smoke-shaft ran up through the rock to a vent cunningly hidden in a crevice on the hillside. There were also many other chambers, opening out of the halls or the passage between them, some for dwelling, some for works or for stores. In storage Mîm had more arts than they, and he had many vessels and chests of stone and wood that looked to be of great age. But most of the chambers were now empty: in the armouries hung axes and other gear rusted and dusty, shelves and aumbries were bare; and the smithies were idle. Save one: a small room that led out of the inner hall and had a hearth which shared the smoke-vent of the hearth in the hall. There Mîm would work at times, but would not allow others to be with him.*

*During the rest of that year they went on no more raids, and if they stirred abroad for hunting or gathering of food they went for the most part in small parties. But for a long while they found it hard to retrace their road, and beside Túrin not more than six of his men became ever sure of the way. Nonetheless, seeing that those skilled in such things could come to their lair without Mîm's help, they set a watch by day and night near to the cleft in the north-wall. From the south they expected no enemies, nor was there fear of any climbing Amon Rûdh from that quarter; but by day there was at most times a watchman set on the top of the crown, who could look far all about. Steep as were the sides of the crown, the summit could be reached, for to the east of the cave-mouth rough steps had been hewn leading up to slopes where men could clamber unaided.*

*So the year wore on without hurt or alarm. But as the days drew in, and the pool became grey and cold and the birches bare, and great rains returned, they had to pass more time in shelter. Then they soon grew weary of the dark under hill, or the dim half-light of the halls; and to most it seemed that life would be better if it were not shared with Mîm. Too often he would appear out of some shadowy corner or doorway when they thought him elsewhere; and when Mîm was near unease fell on their talk. They took to speaking one to another ever in whispers.*

*Yet, and strange it seemed to them, with Túrin it went otherwise; and he became ever more friendly with the old Dwarf, and listened more and more to his counsels. In the winter that followed he would sit for long hours with Mîm, listening to his lore and the tales of his life; nor did Túrin rebuke him if he spoke ill of the Eldar. Mîm seemed well pleased, and showed much favour to Túrin in return; him only would he admit to his smithy at times, and there they would talk softly together. Less pleased were the Men; and Andróg looked on with a jealous eye.*

The text followed in *The Silmarillion* gives no indication of how Beleg found his way into Bar-en-Danwedh: he 'appeared suddenly among them' 'in the dim dusk of a winter's day'. In other brief outlines the story is that through the improvidence of the outlaws food became short in Bar-en-Danwedh during the winter, and Mîm begrudged them the edible roots from his store; therefore in the beginning of the year they went out on a hunting foray from the stronghold. Beleg, approaching Amon Rûdh, came upon their tracks, and either trailed them to a camp which they were forced to make in a sudden snowstorm, or followed them back to Bar-en-Danwedh and slipped in after them.

At this time Andróg, seeking for Mîm's secret store of food, became lost in the caves, and found a hidden stair that led out on to the flat summit of Amon Rûdh (it was by this stair that some of the outlaws fled from Bar-en-Danwedh when it was attacked by the Orcs: *The Silmarillion* p. 206). And either during the foray just mentioned, or on a later occasion, Andróg, having taken up again bow and arrows in defiance of Mîm's curse, was wounded by a poisoned shaft—in one only of several references to the event said to have been an Orc-arrow.

Andróg was cured of this wound by Beleg, but it seems that his dislike and distrust of the Elf was not thereby mitigated; and Mîm's hatred of Beleg became all the fiercer, for he had thus 'undone' his curse upon Andróg. 'It will bite again,' he said. It came into Mîm's mind that if he also ate the *lembas* of Melian he would renew his youth and grow strong again; and since he could not come at it by stealth he feigned sickness and begged it

of his enemy. When Beleg refused it to him the seal was set upon Mîm's hatred, and all the more because of Túrin's love for the Elf.

It may be mentioned here that when Beleg brought out the *lembas* from his pack (see *The Silmarillion* pp. 202, 204) Túrin refused it:

*The silver leaves were red in the firelight; and when Túrin saw the seal his eyes darkened. 'What have you there?' he said.*

*'The greatest gift that one who loves you still has to give,' answered Beleg. 'Here is lembas, the waybread of the Eldar, that no Man yet has tasted.'*

*'The Helm of my fathers I take,' said Túrin, 'with good will for your keeping; but I will not receive gifts out of Doriath.'*

*'Then send back your sword and your arms,' said Beleg. 'Send back also the teaching and fostering of your youth. And let your men die in the desert to please your mood. Nonetheless, this waybread was a gift not to you but to me, and I may do with it as I will. Eat it not, if it sticks in your throat; but others here may be more hungry and less proud.'*

Then Túrin was abashed, and in that matter overcame his pride.

Some slight further indications are found concerning Dor-Cúarthol, the Land of Bow and Helm, where Beleg and Túrin for a time became from their stronghold on Amon Rûdh the leaders of a strong force in the lands south of Teiglin (*The Silmarillion* p. 205).

*Túrin received gladly all who came to him, but by the counsel of Beleg he admitted no newcomer to his refuge upon Amon Rûdh (and that was now named Echad i Sedryn, Camp of the Faithful); the way thither only those of the Old Company knew and no others were admitted. But other guarded camps and forts were established round about: in the forest eastward, or in the highlands, or in the southward fens, from Methed-en-glad ('the End of the Wood') to Bar-erib some leagues south of Amon Rûdh; and from all these places men could see the summit of Amon Rûdh, and by signals receive tidings and commands.*

*In this way, before the summer had passed, the following of Túrin was swelled to a great force; and the power of Angband was thrown back. Word of this came even to Nargothrond, and many there grew restless, saying that if an Outlaw could do such hurt to the Enemy, what might not the Lord of Narog do. But Orodreth would not change his counsels. In all things he followed Thingol, with whom he exchanged messengers by secret ways; and he was a wise lord, according to the wisdom of those who considered first their own people, and how long they might preserve their life and wealth against the lust of the North. Therefore he allowed none of his people to go to Túrin, and he sent messengers to say to him that in all that he might do or devise in his war he should not set foot in the land of Nargothrond, nor drive Orcs thither. But help other than in arms he offered to the Two Captains, should they have need (and in this, it is thought, he was moved by Thingol and Melian).*

It is several times emphasized that Beleg remained throughout opposed to Túrin's grand design, although he supported him; that it seemed to him that the Dragon-helm had worked otherwise with Túrin than he had hoped; and that he foresaw with a troubled mind what the days to come would bring. Scraps of his words with Túrin on these matters are preserved. In one of these, they sat in the stronghold of Echad i Sedryn together, and Túrin said to Beleg:

*'Why are you sad, and thoughtful? Does not all go well, since you returned to me? Has not my purpose proved good?'*

*'All is well now,' said Beleg. 'Our enemies are still surprised, and afraid. And still good days lie before us; for a while.'*

*'And what then?'*

*'Winter. And after that another year, for those who live to see it.'*

*'And what then?'*

*'The wrath of Angband. We have burned the finger tips of the Black Hand—no more. It will not withdraw.'*

*'But is not the wrath of Angband our purpose and delight?' said Túrin. 'What else would you have me do?'*

*'You know full well,' said Beleg. 'But of that road you have forbidden me to speak. But hear me now. The lord of a great host has many needs. He must have a secure refuge; and he must have wealth, and many whose work is not in war. With numbers comes the need of food, more than the wild will furnish; and there comes the passing of secrecy. Amon Rûdh is a good place for a few—it has eyes and ears. But it stands alone, and is seen far off; and no great force is needed to surround it.'*

*'Nonetheless, I will be the captain of my own host,' said Túrin; and if I fall, then I fall. Here I stand in the path of Morgoth, and while I so stand he cannot use the southward road. For that in Nargothrond there should be some thanks; and even help with needful things.'*

In another brief passage of speech between them Túrin replied to Beleg's warnings of the frailty of his power in these words:

*'I wish to rule a land; but not this land. Here I desire only to gather strength. To my father's land in Dor-lómin my heart turns, and thither I shall go when I may.'*

It is also asserted that Morgoth for a time withheld his hand and made mere feints of attack, 'so that by easy victory the confidence of these rebels might become overweening; as it proved indeed'.

Andróg appears again in an outline of the course of the assault on Amon Rûdh. It was only then that he revealed to Túrin the existence of the inner stair; and he was one of those who came by that way to the summit. There he is said to have fought more valiantly than any, but he fell at last mortally wounded by an arrow; and thus the curse of Mîm was fulfilled.

To the tale in *The Silmarillion* of Beleg's journey in pursuit of Túrin, his meeting with Gwindor in Taur-nu-Fuin, the rescue of Túrin, and Beleg's death at Túrin's hands, there is nothing of any moment to add. For Gwindor's possession of one of the blue-shining 'Fëanorian lamps' and the part that this lamp played in a version of the story see [note 34](#).

It may be noted that it was my father's intention to extend the history of the Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin into the period of Túrin's sojourn in Nargothrond and even beyond; but this was never incorporated into the narratives. In the existing versions the Helm disappears with the end of Dor-Cúarthol, in the destruction of the outlaws' stronghold on Amon Rûdh; but in some way it was to reappear in Túrin's possession at Nargothrond. It could only have come there if it had been taken by the Orcs that carried Túrin off to Angband; but its recovery from them at the time of Túrin's rescue by Beleg and Gwindor would have required some development of the narrative at that point.

An isolated scrap of writing tells that in Nargothrond Túrin would not wear the Helm again 'lest it reveal him', but that he wore it when he went to the Battle of Tumhalad (*The Silmarillion* p. 212, where he is said to have worn the dwarf-mask that he found in the armouries of Nargothrond). This note continues:

*For fear of that helm all foes avoided him, and thus it was that he came off unhurt from that deadly field. It was thus that he came back to Nargothrond wearing the Dragon-helm, and Glaurung, desiring to rid Túrin of its aid and protection (since he himself feared it), taunted him, saying that surely Túrin claimed to be his vassal and retainer, since he bore his master's likeness on the crest of his helm.*

*But Túrin answered: 'Thou liest, and knowest it. For this image was made in scorn of thee; and while there is one to bear it doubt shall ever assail thee, lest the bearer deal thee thy doom.'*

*'Then it must await a master of another name,' said Glaurung; 'for Túrin son of Húrin I do not fear. Otherwise is it. For he has not the hardihood to look me in the face, openly.'*

*And indeed so great was the terror of the Dragon that Túrin dared not look straight upon his eye, but had kept the visor of his helmet down, shielding his face, and in his parley had looked no higher than Glaurung's feet. But being thus taunted, in pride and rashness he thrust up the visor and looked Glaurung in the eye.*



In another place there is a note that it was when Morwen heard in Doriath of the appearance of the Dragon-helm at the Battle of Tumhalad that she knew that the tale was true that the Mormegil was indeed Túrin her son.

Finally, there is a suggestion that Túrin was to wear the Helm when he slew Glaurung, and would taunt the Dragon at his death with his words at Nargothrond about 'a master of another name'; but there is no indication of how the narrative was to be managed to bring this about.

There is an account of the nature and substance of Gwindor's opposition to Túrin's policies in Nargothrond, which in *The Silmarillion* is only very briefly referred to (p. 211). This account is not fully formed into narrative, but may be represented thus:

*Gwindor spoke ever against Túrin in the council of the King, saying that he had been in Angband, and knew somewhat of the might of Morgoth, and of his designs. 'Petty victories will prove profitless at the last,' he said; 'for thus Morgoth learns where the boldest of his enemies are to be found, and gathers strength great enough to destroy them. All the might of the Elves and the Edain united sufficed only to contain him, and to gain the peace of a siege; long indeed, but only so long as Morgoth bided his time before he broke the leaguer; and never again can such a union be made. In secrecy only lies now any hope; until the Valar come.'*

*'The Valar!'* said Túrin. *'They have forsaken you, and they hold Men in scorn. What use to look westward across the endless Sea? There is but one Vala with whom we have to do, and that is Morgoth; and if in the end we cannot overcome him, at the least we can hurt him and hinder him. For victory is victory, however small, nor is its worth only in what follows from it. But it is expedient also; for if you do nothing to halt him, all Beleriand will fall beneath his shadow before many years are passed, and then one by one he will smoke you out of your earths. And what then? A pitiable remnant will fly south and west, to cower on the shores of the Sea, caught between Morgoth and Ossë. Better then to win a time of glory, though it be shortlived; for the end will be no worse. You speak of secrecy, and say that therein lies the only hope; but could you ambush and waylay every scout and spy of Morgoth to the last and least, so that none came ever back with tidings to Angband, yet from that he would learn that you lived and guess where. And this also I say: though mortal Men have little life beside the span of the Elves, they would rather spend it in battle than fly or submit. The defiance of Húrin Thalion is a great deed; and though Morgoth slay the doer he cannot make the deed not to have been. Even the Lords of the West will honour it; and is it not written into the history of Arda, which neither Morgoth nor Manwë can unwrite?'*

*'You speak of high things,' Gwindor answered, 'and plain it is that you have lived among the Eldar. But a darkness is on you if you set Morgoth and Manwë together, or speak of the Valar as the foes of Elves or Men; for the Valar scorn nothing, and least of all the Children of Ilúvatar. Nor do you know all the hopes of the Eldar. It is a prophecy among us that one day a messenger from Middle-earth will come through the shadows to Valinor, and Manwë will hear, and Mandos relent. For that time shall we not attempt to preserve the seed of the Noldor, and of the Edain also? And Círdan dwells now in the South, and there is building of ships; but what know you of ships, or of the Sea? You think of yourself and of your own glory, and bid us each do likewise; but we must think of others beside ourselves, for not all can fight and fall, and those we must keep from war and ruin, while we can.'*

*'Then send them to your ships, while there is yet time,' said Túrin.*

*'They will not be parted from us,' said Gwindor, 'even could Círdan sustain them. We must abide together as long as we may, and not court death.'*

*'All this I have answered,' said Túrin. 'Valiant defence of the borders and hard blows ere the enemy gathers: in that course lies the best hope of your long abiding together. And do those that you speak of love such skulkers in the woods, hunting always like a wolf, better than one who puts on his helm and figured shield, and drives away the foe, be they far greater than all his host? At least the women of the Edain do not. They did not hold back the men from the Nirnaeth Arnoediad.'*

*'But they suffered greater woe than if that field had not been fought,' said Gwindor.*

The love of Finduilas for Túrin was also to be more fully treated:

*Finduilas the daughter of Orodreth was golden-haired after the manner of the house of Finarfin, and Túrin began to take pleasure in the sight of her and in her company; for she reminded him of his kindred and the women of Dor-lómin in his father's house. At first he met her only when Gwindor was by; but after a while she sought him out, and they met at times alone, though it seemed to be chance. Then she would question him about the Edain, of whom she had seen few and seldom, and about his country and his kin.*

*Then Túrin spoke freely to her concerning these things, though he did not name the land of his birth nor any of his kindred; and on a time he said to her: 'I had a sister, Lalaith, or so I named her; and of her you put me in mind. But Lalaith was a child, a yellow flower in the green grass of spring; and had she lived she would now, maybe, have become dimmed with grief. But you are queenly, and as a golden tree; I would I had a sister so fair.'*

*'But you are kingly,' said she, 'even as the lords of the people of Fingolfin; I would I had a brother so valiant. And I do not think that Agarwaen is your true name, nor is it fit for you, Adanedhel. I call you Thurin, the Secret.'*

*At this Túrin started, but he said: 'That is not my name; and I am not a king, for our kings are of the Eldar, as I am not.'*

*Now Túrin marked that Gwindor's friendship grew cooler towards him; and he wondered also that whereas at first the woe and horror of Angband had begun to be lifted from him, now he seemed to slip back into care and sorrow. And he thought, it may be that he is grieved that I oppose his counsels, and have overcome him; I would it were not so. For he loved Gwindor as his guide and healer, and was filled with pity for him. But in those days the radiance of Finduilas also became dimmed, her footsteps slow and her face grave; and Túrin perceiving this surmised that the words of Gwindor had set fear in her heart of what might come to pass.*

*In truth Finduilas was torn in mind. For she honoured Gwindor and pitied him, and wished not to add one tear to his suffering; but against her will her love for Túrin grew day by day, and she thought of Beren and Lúthien. But Túrin was not like Beren! He did not scorn her, and was glad in her company; yet she knew that he had no love of the kind she wished. His mind and heart were elsewhere, by rivers in springs long past.*

*Then Túrin spoke to Finduilas, and said: 'Do not let the words of Gwindor affright you. He has suffered in the darkness of Angband; and it is hard for one so valiant to be thus crippled and backward perforce. He needs all solace, and a longer time for healing.'*

*'I know it well,' she said.*

*'But we will win that time for him!' said Túrin. 'Nargothrond shall stand! Never again will Morgoth the Craven come forth from Angband, and all his reliance must be on his servants; thus says Melian of Doriath. They are the fingers of his hands; and we will smite them, and cut them off, till he draws back his claws. Nargothrond shall stand!'*

*'Perhaps,' said Finduilas. 'It shall stand, if you can achieve it. But have a care, Adanedhel; my heart is heavy when you go out to battle, lest Nargothrond be bereaved.'*

*And afterwards Túrin sought out Gwindor, and said to him: 'Gwindor, dear friend, you are falling back into sadness; do not so! For your healing will come in the houses of your kin, and in the light of Finduilas.'*

*Then Gwindor stared at Túrin, but he said nothing, and his face was clouded.*

*'Why do you look upon me so?' said Túrin. 'Often your eyes have gazed strangely at me of late. How have I grieved you? I have opposed your counsels; but a man must speak as he sees, nor hide the truth that he believes, for any private cause. I would that we were one in mind; for to you I owe a great debt, and I shall not forget it.'*

*'Will you not?' said Gwindor. 'Nonetheless your deeds and your counsels have changed my home and my kin. Your shadow lies upon them. Why should I be glad, who have lost all to you?'*

*But Túrin did not understand these words, and did but guess that Gwindor begrudged him his place in the heart and counsels of the King.*

A passage follows in which Gwindor warned Finduilas against her love for Túrin, telling her who Túrin was, and this is closely based on the text given in *The Silmarillion* (pp. 210-11). But at the end of Gwindor's speech Finduilas answers him at greater length than in the other version:

*'Your eyes are dimmed, Gwindor,' she said. 'You do not see or understand what is here come to pass. Must I now be put to double shame to reveal the truth to you? For I love you, Gwindor, and I am ashamed that I love you not more, but have taken a love even greater, from which I cannot escape. I did not seek it, and long I put it aside. But if I have pity for your hurts, have pity on mine. Túrin loves me not; nor will.'*

*'You say this,' said Gwindor, 'to take the blame from him whom you love. Why does he seek you out, and sit long with you, and come ever more glad away?'*

*'Because he also needs solace,' said Finduilas, 'and is bereaved of his kin. You both have your needs. But what of Finduilas? Now is it not enough that I must confess myself to you unloved, but that you should say that I speak so to deceive?'*

*'Nay, a woman is not easily deceived in such a case,' said Gwindor. 'Nor will you find many who will deny that they are loved, if that is true.'*

*'If any of us three be faithless, it is I: but not in will. But what of your doom and rumours of Angband? What of death and destruction? The Adanedhel is mighty in the tale of the World, and his stature shall reach yet to Morgoth in some far day to come.'*

*'He is proud,' said Gwindor.*

*'But also he is merciful,' said Finduilas. 'He is not yet awake, but still pity can ever pierce his heart, and he will never deny it. Pity maybe shall be ever the only entry. But he does not pity me. He holds me in awe, as were I both his mother and a queen!'*

*Maybe Finduilas spoke truly, seeing with the keen eyes of the Eldar. And now Túrin, not knowing what had passed between Gwindor and Finduilas, was ever gentler towards her as she seemed more sad. But on a time Finduilas said to him: 'Thurin Adanedhel, why did you hide your name from me? Had I known who you were I should not have honoured you less, but I should better have understood your grief.'*

*'What do you mean?' he said. 'Whom do you make me?'*

*'Túrin son of Húrin Thalion, captain of the North.'*

Then Túrin rebuked Gwindor for revealing his true name, as is told in *The Silmarillion* (p. 211).

One other passage in this part of the narrative exists in a fuller form than in *The Silmarillion* (of the battle of Tumhalad and the sack of Nargothrond there is no other account; while the speeches of Túrin and the Dragon are so fully recorded in *The Silmarillion* that it seems unlikely that they would have been further expanded). This passage is a much fuller account of the coming of the Elves Gelmir and Arminas to Nargothrond in the year of its fall (*The Silmarillion* pp. 211-12); for their earlier encounter with Tuor in Dor-lómin, which is referred to here, see pp. 8, 9 above.

*In the spring there came two Elves, and they named themselves Gelmir and Arminas of the people of Finarfin, and said that they had an errand to the Lord of Nargothrond. They were brought before Túrin; but Gelmir said: 'It is to Orodreth, Finarfin's son, that we would speak.'*

*And when Orodreth came, Gelmir said to him: 'Lord, we were of Angrod's people, and we have wandered far since the Dagor Bragollach; but of late we have dwelt among Círdan's following by the Mouths of Sirion. And on a day he called us, and bade us go to you; for Ulmo himself, the Lord of Waters, had appeared to him and warned him of great peril that draws near to Nargothrond.'*

*But Orodreth was wary, and he answered: 'Why then do you come hither out of the North? Or perhaps you had other errands also?'*

*Then Arminas said: 'Lord, ever since the Nirnaeth I have sought for the hidden kingdom of Turgon, and I have found it not; and in this search I fear now that I have delayed our errand hither over long. For Círdan sent us*



*along the coast by ship, for secrecy and speed, and we were put ashore in Drengist. But among the sea-folk were some that came south in past years as messengers from Turgon, and it seemed to me from their guarded speech that maybe Turgon dwells still in the North, and not in the South, as most believe. But we have found neither sign nor rumour of what we sought.'*

*'Why do you seek Turgon?' said Orodreth.*

*'Because it is said that his kingdom shall stand longest against Morgoth,' answered Arminas. And those words seemed to Orodreth ill-omened, and he was displeased.*

*'Then tarry not in Nargothrond,' he said; 'for here you will hear no news of Turgon. And I need none to teach me that Nargothrond stands in peril.'*

*'Be not angered, lord,' said Gelmir, 'if we answer your questions with truth. And our wandering from the straight path hither has not been fruitless, for we have passed beyond the reach of your furthest scouts; we have traversed Dor-lómin and all the lands under the eaves of Ered Wethrin, and we have explored the Pass of Sirion, spying out the ways of the Enemy. There is a great gathering of Orcs and evil creatures in those regions, and a host is mustering about Sauron's Isle.'*

*'I know it,' said Túrin. 'Your news is stale. If the message of Círdan was to any purpose, it should have come sooner.'*

*'At least, lord, you shall hear the message now,' said Gelmir to Orodreth. 'Hear then the words of the Lord of Waters! Thus he spoke to Círdan the Shipwright: "The Evil of the North has defiled the springs of Sirion, and my power withdraws from the fingers of the flowing waters. But a worse thing is yet to come forth. Say therefore to the Lord of Nargothrond: Shut the doors of the fortress and go not abroad. Cast the stones of your pride into the loud river, that the creeping evil may not find the gate."''*

*These words seemed dark to Orodreth, and he turned as he ever did to Túrin for counsel. But Túrin mistrusted the messengers, and he said in scorn: 'What does Círdan know of our wars, who dwell nigh to the Enemy? Let the mariner look to his ships! But if in truth the Lord of Waters would send us counsel, let him speak more plainly. For otherwise it will seem better in our case to muster our strength, and go boldly to meet our foes, ere they come too nigh.'*

*Then Gelmir bowed before Orodreth, and said: 'I have spoken as I was bidden, lord'; and he turned away. But Arminas said to Túrin: 'Are you indeed of the House of Hador, as I have heard said?'*

*'Here I am named Agarwaen, the Black Sword of Nargothrond,' said Túrin. 'You deal much, it seems, in guarded speech, friend Arminas; and it is well that Turgon's secret is hid from you, or soon it would be heard in Angband. A man's name is his own, and should the son of Húrin learn that you have betrayed him when he would be hid, then may Morgoth take you and burn out your tongue!'*

*Then Arminas was dismayed by the black wrath of Túrin; but Gelmir said: 'He shall not be betrayed by us, Agarwaen. Are we not in council behind closed doors, where speech may be plainer? And Arminas asked this thing, I deem, because it is known to all that dwell by the Sea that Ulmo has great love for the House of Hador, and some say that Húrin and Huor his brother came once into the Hidden Realm.'*

*'If that were so, then he would speak of it to none, neither the great nor the less, and least of all to his son in childhood,' answered Túrin. 'Therefore I do not believe that Arminas asked this of me in hope to learn aught of Turgon. I mistrust such messengers of mischief.'*

*'Save your mistrust!' said Arminas in anger. 'Gelmir mistakes me. I asked because I doubted what here seems believed; for little indeed do you resemble the kin of Hador, whatever your name.'*

*'And what do you know of them?' said Túrin.*

*'Húrin I have seen,' answered Arminas, 'and his fathers before him. And in the wastes of Dor-lómin I met with Tuor, son of Huor, Húrin's brother; and he is like his fathers, as you are not.'*

*'That may be,' said Túrin, 'though of Tuor I have heard no word ere now. But if my head be dark and not golden, of that I am not ashamed. For I am not the first of sons in the likeness of his mother; and I come through Morwen Eledhwen of the House of Bëor and the kindred of Beren Camlost.'*

*'I spoke not of the difference between the black and the gold,' said Arminas. 'But others of the House of Hador bear themselves otherwise, and Tuor among them. For they use courtesy, and they listen to good counsel, holding the Lords of the West in awe. But you, it seems, will take counsel with your own wisdom, or with your sword only; and you speak haughtily. And I say to you, Agarwaen Mormegil, that if you do so, other shall be your doom than one of the Houses of Hador and Bëor might look for.'*

*'Other it has ever been,' answered Túrin. 'And if, as it seems, I must bear the hate of Morgoth because of the valour of my father, shall I also endure the taunts and ill-boding of a runagate, though he claim the kinship of kings? I counsel you: get you back to the safe shores of the Sea.'*

*Then Gelmir and Arminas departed, and went back to the South: but despite Túrin's taunts they would gladly have awaited battle beside their kin, and they went only because Círdan had bidden them under the command of Ulmo to bring back word to him of Nargothrond and of the speeding of their errand there. And Orodreth was much troubled by the words of the messengers; but all the more fell became the mood of Túrin, and he would by no means listen to their counsels, and least of all would he suffer the great bridge to be cast down. For so much at least of the words of Ulmo were read aright.*

It is nowhere explained why Gelmir and Arminas on an urgent errand to Nargothrond were sent by Círdan all the length of the coast to the Firth of Drengist. Arminas said that it was done for speed and secrecy; but greater secrecy could surely have been achieved by journeying up Narog from the South. It might be supposed that Círdan did this in obedience to Ulmo's command (so that they should meet Tuor in Dor-lómin and guide him through the Gate of the Noldor), but this is nowhere suggested.

[illegible]

## PART TWO



## THE SECOND AGE

[illegible]





## A Description Of The Island Of Númenor

The account of the Island of Númenor that here follows is derived from descriptions and simple maps that were long preserved in the archives of the Kings of Gondor. These represent indeed but a small part of all that was once written, for many natural histories and geographies were composed by learned men in Númenor; but these, like nearly all else of the arts and sciences of Númenor at its high tide, disappeared in the Downfall.

Even such documents as were preserved in Gondor, or in Imladris (where in the care of Elrond were deposited the surviving treasures of the Northern Númenórean kings) suffered from loss and destruction by neglect. For though the survivors in Middle-earth ‘yearned’, as they said, for Akallabêth, the Downfallen, and never even after long ages ceased to regard themselves as in a measure exiles, when it became clear that the Land of Gift was taken away and that Númenor had disappeared for ever, all but a few regarded study of what was left of its history as vain, breeding only useless regret. The story of Ar-Pharazôn and his impious armada was all that remained generally known in later ages.

The land of Númenor resembled in outline a five-pointed star, or pentangle, with a central portion some two hundred and fifty miles across, north and south, and east and west, from which extended five large peninsular promontories. These promontories were regarded as separate regions, and they were named Forostar (Northlands), Andustar (West-lands), Hyarnustar (Southwestlands), Hyarrostar (Southeastlands), and Orrostar (Eastlands). The central portion was called Mittalmar (Inlands), and it had no coast, except the land about Rómenna and the head of its firth. A small part of the Mittalmar was, however, separated from the rest, and called Arandor, the Kingsland. In Arandor were the haven of Rómenna, the Meneltarma, and Armenelos, the City of the Kings; and it was at all times the most populous region of Númenor.

The Mittalmar was raised above the promontories (not reckoning the height of their mountains and hills); it was a region of grasslands and low downs, and few trees grew there. Near to the centre of the Mittalmar stood the tall mountain called Meneltarma, Pillar of the Heavens, sacred to the worship of Eru Ilúvatar. Though the lower slopes of the mountain were gentle and grass-covered, it grew ever steeper, and towards the summit it could not be scaled; but a winding spiral road was made upon it, beginning at its foot upon the south, and ending below the lip of the summit upon the north. For the summit was somewhat flattened and depressed, and could contain a great multitude; but it remained untouched by hands throughout the history of Númenor. No building, no raised altar, not even a pile of undressed stones, ever stood there; and no other likeness of a temple did the Númenóreans possess in all the days of their grace, until the coming of Sauron. There no tool or weapon had ever been borne; and there none might speak any word, save the King only. Thrice only in each year the King spoke, offering prayer for the coming year at the *Erukýermë* in the first days of spring, praise of Eru Ilúvatar at the *Erulaitalë* in midsummer, and thanksgiving to him at the *Eruhantalë* at the end of autumn. At these times the King ascended the mountain on foot followed by a great concourse of the people, clad in white and garlanded, but silent. At other times the people were free to climb to the summit alone or in company; but it is said that the silence was so great that even a stranger ignorant of Númenor and all its history, if he were transported thither, would not have dared to speak aloud. No bird ever came there, save only eagles. If anyone approached the summit, at once three eagles would appear and alight upon three rocks near to the western edge; but at the times of the Three Prayers they did not descend, remaining in the sky and hovering above the people. They were called the Witnesses of Manwë, and they were believed to be sent by him from Aman to keep watch upon the Holy Mountain and upon all the land.

The base of the Meneltarma sloped gently into the surrounding plain, but it extended, after the fashion of roots, five long low ridges outwards in the direction of the five promontories of the land; and these were called Tarmasundar, the Roots of the Pillar. Along the crest of the southwestern ridge the climbing road approached

the mountain; and between this ridge and that on the south-east the land went down into a shallow valley. That was named Noirinan, the Valley of the Tombs; for at its head chambers were cut in the rock at the base of the mountain, in which were the tombs of the Kings and Queens of Númenor.

But for the most part the Mittalmar was a region of pastures. In the south-west there were rolling downs of grass; and there, in the Emerië, was the chief region of the Shepherds.

The Forostar was the least fertile part; stony, with few trees, save that on the westward slopes of the high heather-covered moors there were woods of fir and larch. Towards the North Cape the land rose to rocky heights, and there great Sorontil rose sheer from the sea in tremendous cliffs. Here was the abode of many eagles; and in this region Tar-Meneldur Elentirmo built a tall tower, from which he could observe the motions of the stars.

The Andustar was also rocky in its northern parts, with high fir-woods looking out upon the sea. Three small bays it had, facing west, cut back into the highlands; but here the cliffs were in many places not at the sea's edge, and there was a shelving land at their feet. The northmost of these was called the Bay of Andúnië, for there was the great haven of Andúnië (Sunset), with its town beside the shore and many other dwellings climbing up the steep slopes behind. But much of the southerly part of the Andustar was fertile, and there also were great woods, of birch and beech upon the upper ground, and in the lower vales of oaks and elms. Between the promontories of the Andustar and the Hyarnustar was the great Bay that was called Eldanna, because it faced towards Eressëa; and the lands about it, being sheltered from the north and open to the western seas, were warm, and the most rain fell there. At the centre of the Bay of Eldanna was the most beautiful of all the havens of Númenor, Eldalondë the Green; and hither in the earlier days the swift white ships of the Eldar of Eressëa came most often.

All about that place, up the seaward slopes and far into the land, grew the evergreen and fragrant trees that they brought out of the West, and so throve there that the Eldar said that almost it was fair as a haven in Eressëa. They were the greatest delight of Númenor, and they were remembered in many songs long after they had perished for ever, for few ever flowered east of the Land of Gift: *oiolairë* and *lairelossë*, *nessamelda*, *vardarianna*, *taniquelassë*, and *yavannamirë* with its globed and scarlet fruits. Flower, leaf, and rind of those trees exuded sweet scents, and all that country was full of blended fragrance; therefore it was called Nísimaldar, the Fragrant Trees. Many of them were planted and grew, though far less abundantly, in other regions of Númenor; but only here grew the mighty golden tree *malinornë*, reaching after five centuries a height scarce less than it achieved in Eressëa itself. Its bark was silver and smooth, and its boughs somewhat upswept after the manner of the beech; but it never grew save with a single trunk. Its leaves, like those of the beech but greater, were pale green above and beneath were silver, glistening in the sun; in the autumn they did not fall, but turned to pale gold. In the spring it bore golden blossom in clusters like a cherry, which bloomed on during the summer; and as soon as the flowers opened the leaves fell, so that through spring and summer a grove of *malinorni* was carpeted and roofed with gold, but its pillars were of grey silver.<sup>93</sup> Its fruit was a nut with a silver shale; and some were given as a gift by Tar-Aldarion, the sixth King of Númenor, to King Gil-galad of Lindon. They did not take root in that land; but Gil-galad gave some to his kinswoman Galadriel, and under her power they grew and flourished in the guarded land of Lothlórien beside the River Anduin, until the High Elves at last left Middle-earth; but they did not reach the height or girth of the great groves of Númenor.

The river Nunduinë flowed into the sea at Eldalondë, and on its way made the little lake of Nísinen, that was so named from the abundance of sweet-smelling shrubs and flowers that grew upon its banks.

The Hyarnustar was in its western part a mountainous region, with great cliffs on the western and southern coasts; but eastwards were great vineyards in a warm and fertile land. The promontories of the Hyarnustar and the Hyarrostar were splayed wide apart, and on those long shores sea and land came gently together, as nowhere else in Númenor. Here flowed down Siril, the chief river of the land (for all others, save for the

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<sup>93</sup> This description of the mallorn is much like that given by Legolas to his companions as they approached Lothlórien (*The Fellowship of the Ring* II 6).

Nunduinë in the west, were short and swift torrents hurrying to the sea), that rose in springs under the Meneltarma in the valley of Noirinan, and running through the Mittalmar southwards became in its lower course a slow and winding stream. It issued at last into the sea amid wide marshes and reedy flats, and its many small mouths found their changing paths through great sands; for many miles on either side were wide white beaches and grey shingles, and here the fisherfolk mostly dwelt, in villages upon the hards among the marshes and meres, of which the chief was Nindamos.

In the Hyarrostar grew an abundance of trees of many kinds, and among them the *laurinquë* in which the people delighted for its flowers, for it had no other use. This name they gave it because of its long-hanging clusters of yellow flowers; and some who had heard from the Eldar of Laurelin, the Golden Tree of Valinor, believed that it came from that great Tree, being brought in seed thither by the Eldar; but it was not so. From the days of Tar-Aldarion there were great plantations in the Hyarrostar to furnish timber for shipbuilding.

The Orrostar was a cooler land, but it was protected from the cold north-east winds by highlands that rose towards the end of the promontory; and in the inner regions of the Orrostar much grain was grown, especially in those parts near to the borders of Arandor.

The whole land of Númenor was so posed as if it had been thrust upward out of the sea, but tilted southward and a little eastward; and save upon the south the land in nearly all places fell towards the sea in steep cliffs. In Númenor birds that dwell near the sea, and swim or dive in it, abode in multitudes beyond reckoning. The mariners said that were they blind they still would know that their ship was drawing near to Númenor because of the great clamour of the birds of the shore; and when any ship approached the land seabirds in great flocks would arise and fly above it in welcome and gladness, for they were never killed or molested by intent. Some would accompany ships on their voyages, even those that went to Middle-earth. Likewise within the lands the birds of Númenor were beyond count, from the *kirinki* that were no bigger than wrens, but all scarlet, with piping voices on the edge of human hearing, to the great eagles that were held sacred to Manwë, and never afflicted, until the days of evil and the hatred of the Valar began. For two thousand years, from the days of Elros Tar-Minyatur until the time of Tar-Ancalimon son of Tar-Atanamir, there was an eyrie in the summit of the tower of the King's palace in Armenelos; and there one pair ever dwelt and lived on the bounty of the King.

In Númenor all journeyed from place to place on horseback; for in riding the Númenóreans, both men and women, took delight, and all the people of the land loved horses, treating them honourably and housing them nobly. They were trained to hear and answer calls from a great distance, and it is said in old tales that where there was great love between men and women and their favourite steeds they could be summoned at need by thought alone. Therefore the roads of Númenor were for the most part unpaved, made and tended for riding, since coaches and carriages were little used in the earlier centuries, and heavy cargoes were borne by sea. The chief and most ancient road, suitable for wheels, ran from the greatest port, Rómenna in the east, to the royal city of Armenelos, and thence on to the Valley of the Tombs and the Meneltarma; and this road was early extended to Ondosto within the borders of the Forostar, and thence to Andúnië in the west. Along it passed wains bearing stone from the Northlands that was most esteemed for building, and timber in which the Westlands were rich.

The Edain brought with them to Númenor the knowledge of many crafts, and many craftsmen who had learned from the Eldar, besides preserving lore and traditions of their own. But they could bring with them few materials, save for the tools of their crafts; and for long all metals in Númenor were precious metals. They brought with them many treasures of gold and silver, and gems also; but they did not find these things in Númenor. They loved them for their beauty, and it was this love that first aroused in them cupidity, in later days when they fell under the Shadow and became proud and unjust in their dealings with lesser folk of Middle-earth. Of the Elves of Eressëa in the days of their friendship they had at times gifts of gold and silver and jewels; but such things were rare and prized in all the earlier centuries, until the power of the Kings was spread to the coasts of the East.

Some metals they found in Númenor, and as their cunning in mining and in smelting and smithying swiftly grew things of iron and copper became common. Among the wrights of the Edain were weaponsmiths, and they had with the teaching of the Noldor acquired great skill in the forging of swords, of axe-blades, and of spearheads and knives. Swords the Guild of Weaponsmiths still made, for the preservation of the craft, though

most of their labour was spent on the fashioning of tools for the uses of peace. The King and most of the great chieftains possessed swords as heirlooms of their fathers;<sup>94</sup> and at times they would still give a sword as a gift to their heirs. A new sword was made for the King's Heir to be given to him on the day on which this title was conferred. But no man wore a sword in Númenor, and for long years few indeed were the weapons of warlike intent that were made in the land. Axes and spears and bows they had, and shooting with bows on foot and on horseback was a chief sport and pastime of the Númenóreans. In later days, in the wars upon Middle-earth, it was the bows of the Númenóreans that were most greatly feared. 'The Men of the Sea', it was said, 'send before them a great cloud, as a rain turned to serpents, or a black hail tipped with steel'; and in those days the great cohorts of the King's Archers used bows made of hollow steel, with black-feathered arrows a full ell long from point to notch.

But for long the crews of the great Númenórean ships came unarmed among the men of Middle-earth; and though they had axes and bows aboard for the felling of timber and the hunting for food upon wild shores owned by no man, they did not bear these when they sought out the men of the lands. It was indeed their grievance, when the Shadow crept along the coasts and men whom they had befriended became afraid or hostile, that iron was used against them by those to whom they had revealed it.

Beyond all other pursuits the strong men of Númenor took delight in the Sea, in swimming, in diving, or in small craft for contests of speed in rowing or sailing. The hardiest of the people were the fisherfolk; fish were abundant all about the coasts, and were at all times a chief source of food in Númenor; and all the towns where many people congregated were set by the shores. From the fisherfolk were mostly drawn the Mariners, who as the years passed grew greatly in importance and esteem. It is said that when the Edain first set sail upon the Great Sea, following the Star to Númenor, the Elvish ships that bore them were each steered and captained by one of the Eldar deputed by Círdan; and after the Elvish steersmen departed and took with them the most part of their ships it was long before the Númenóreans themselves ventured far to sea. But there were shipwrights among them who had been instructed by the Eldar; and by their own study and devices they improved their art until they dared to sail ever further into the deep waters. When six hundred years had passed from the beginning of the Second Age Vëantur, Captain of the King's Ships under Tar-Elendil, first achieved the voyage to Middle-earth. He brought his ship *Entulessë* (which signifies 'Return') into Mithlond on the spring winds blowing from the west; and he returned in the autumn of the following year. Thereafter seafaring became the chief enterprise for daring and hardihood among the men of Númenor; and Aldarion son of Meneldur, whose wife was Vëantur's daughter, formed the Guild of Venturers, in which were joined all the tried mariners of Númenor; as is told in the tale that follows here.

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<sup>94</sup> The King's sword was indeed Aranyúth, the sword of Elu Thingol of Doriath in Beleriand, that had descended to Elros from Elwing his mother. Other heirlooms there were beside: the Ring of Barahir; the great Axe of Tuor, father of Eärendil; and the Bow of Bregor of the House of Bëor. Only the Ring of Barahir father of Beren One-hand survived the Downfall; for it was given by Tar-Elendil to his daughter Silmarien and was preserved in the House of the Lords of Andúnië, of whom the last was Elendil the Faithful who fled from the wrack of Númenor to Middle-earth. [Author's note.]

The story of the Ring of Barahir is told in *The Silmarillion*, [Chapter 19](#), and its later history in *The Lord of the Rings* Appendix A (I, [iii](#) and [v](#)). Of 'the great Axe of Tuor' there is no mention in *The Silmarillion*, but it is named and described in the original 'Fall of Gondolin' (1916-17, see [p. 6](#)), where it is said that in Gondolin Tuor carried an axe rather than a sword, and that he named it in the speech of the people of Gondolin *Dramborleg*. In a list of names accompanying the tale *Dramborleg* is translated 'Thunder-Sharp': 'the axe of Tuor that smote both a heavy dint as of a club and cleft as a sword'.





## Aldarion And Erendis

### The Mariner's Wife

*Meneldur was the son of Tar-Elendil, the fourth King of Númenor. He was the King's third child, for he had two sisters, named Silmarien and Isilmë. The elder of these was wedded to Elatan of Andúnië, and their son was Valandil, Lord of Andúnië, from whom came long after the lines of the Kings of Gondor and Arnor in Middle-earth.*

*Meneldur was a man of gentle mood, without pride, whose exercise was rather in thought than in deeds of the body. He loved dearly the land of Númenor and all things in it, but he gave no heed to the Sea that lay all about it; for his mind looked further than Middle-earth: he was enamoured of the stars and the heavens. All that he could gather of the lore of the Eldar and Edain concerning Ea and the deeps that lay about the Kingdom of Arda he studied, and his chief delight was in the watching of the stars. He built a tower in the Forostar (the northernmost region of the island) where the airs were clearest, from which by night he would survey the heavens and observe all the movements of the lights of the firmament.<sup>95</sup>*

*When Meneldur received the Sceptre he removed, as he must, from the Forostar, and dwelt in the great house of the Kings in Armenelos. He proved a good and wise king, though he never ceased to yearn for days in which he might enrich his knowledge of the heavens. His wife was a woman of great beauty, named Almarian. She was the daughter of Vëantur, Captain of the King's Ships under Tar-Elendil; and though she herself loved ships and the sea no more than most women of the land her son followed after Vëantur her father, rather than after Meneldur.*

*The son of Meneldur and Almarian was Anardil, afterwards renowned among the Kings of Númenor as Tar-Aldarion. He had two sisters, younger than he: Ailinel and Almiel, of whom the elder married Orchaldor, a descendant of the House of Hador, son of Hatholdir, who was close in friendship with Meneldur; and the son of Orchaldor and Ailinel was Soronto, who comes later into the tale.<sup>96</sup>*

*Aldarion, for so he is called in all tales, grew swiftly to a man of great stature, strong and vigorous in mind and body, golden-haired as his mother, ready to mirth and generous, but prouder than his father and ever more bent on his own will. From the first he loved the Sea, and his mind was turned to the craft of ship-building. He had little liking for the north country, and spent all the time that his father would grant by the shores of the sea, especially near Rómenna, where was the chief haven of Númenor, the greatest shipyards, and the most skilled shipwrights. His father did little to hinder him for many years, being well-pleased that Aldarion should have exercise for his hardihood and work for thought and hand.*

*Aldarion was much loved by Vëantur his mother's father, and he dwelt often in Vëantur's house on the southern side of the firth of Rómenna. That house had its own quay, to which many small boats were always moored, for Vëantur would never journey by land if he could by water; and there as a child Aldarion learned to row, and later to manage sail. Before he was full grown he could captain a ship of many men, sailing from haven to haven.*

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<sup>95</sup> In the 'Description of Númenor' (p. 215) he is called Tar-Meneldur Elentirmo (Star-watcher). See also his entry in 'The Line of Elros' (p. 282).

<sup>96</sup> Soronto's part in the story can now only be glimpsed; see pp. 271, 272.

*It happened on a time that Vëantur said to his grandson: ‘Anardilya, the spring is drawing nigh, and also the day of your full age’ (for in that April Aldarion would be twenty-five years old). ‘I have in mind a way to mark it fittingly. My own years are far greater, and I do not think that I shall often again have the heart to leave my fair house and the blest shores of Númenor; but once more at least I would ride the Great Sea and face the North wind and the East. This year you shall come with me, and we will go to Mithlond and see the tall blue mountains of Middle-earth and the green land of the Eldar at their feet. Good welcome you will find from Círdan the Shipwright and from King Gil-galad. Speak of this to your father.’<sup>97</sup>*

*When Aldarion spoke of this venture, and asked leave to go as soon as the spring winds should be favourable, Meneldur was loath to grant it. A chill came upon him, as though his heart guessed that more hung upon this than his mind could foresee. But when he looked upon the eager face of his son he let no sign of this be seen. ‘Do as your heart calls, onya,’ he said. ‘I shall miss you sorely; but with Vëantur as captain, under the grace of the Valar, I shall live in good hope of your return. But do not become enamoured of the Great Lands, you who one day must be King and Father of this Isle!’*

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<sup>97</sup> As is told in the ‘Description of Númenor’ (p. 221) it was Vëantur who first achieved the voyage to Middle-earth in the year 600 of the Second Age (he was born in 451). In the Tale of Years in Appendix B to *The Lord of the Rings* the annal entry for the year 600 states: ‘The first ships of the Númenoreans appear off the coasts.’

There is a description in a late philological essay of the first meeting of the Númenóreans with Men of Eriador at that time: ‘It was six hundred years after the departure of the survivors of the Atani [Edain] over the sea to Númenor that a ship first came again out of the West to Middle-earth and passed up the Gulf of Lhûn. Its captain and mariners were welcomed by Gil-galad; and thus was begun the friendship and alliance of Númenor with the Eldar of Lindon. The news spread swiftly and Men in Eriador were filled with wonder. Although in the First Age they had dwelt in the East, rumours of the terrible war “beyond the Western Mountains” [*i.e.* Ered Luin] had reached them; but their traditions preserved no clear account of it, and they believed that all the Men who dwelt in the lands beyond had been destroyed or drowned in great tumults of fire and inrushing seas. But since it was still said among them that those Men had in years beyond memory been kinsmen of their own, they sent messages to Gil-galad asking leave to meet the shipmen “who had returned from death in the deeps of the Sea”. Thus it came about that there was a meeting between them on the Tower Hills; and to that meeting with the Númenóreans came twelve Men only out of Eriador, Men of high heart and courage, for most of their people feared that the newcomers were perilous spirits of the Dead. But when they looked on the shipmen fear left them, though for a while they stood silent in awe; for mighty as they were themselves accounted among their kin, the shipmen resembled rather Elvish lords than mortal Men in bearing and apparel. Nonetheless they felt no doubt of their ancient kinship; and likewise the shipmen looked with glad surprise upon the Men of Middle-earth, for it had been believed in Númenor that the Men left behind were descended from the evil Men who in the last days of the war against Morgoth had been summoned by him out of the East. But now they looked upon faces free from the Shadow and Men who could have walked in Númenor and not been thought aliens save in their clothes and their arms. Then suddenly, after the silence, both the Númenóreans and the Men of Eriador spoke words of welcome and greeting in their own tongues, as if addressing friends and kinsmen after a long parting. At first they were disappointed, for neither side could understand the other; but when they mingled in friendship they found that they shared very many words still clearly recognisable, and others that could be understood with attention, and they were able to converse haltingly about simple matters.’ Elsewhere in this essay it is explained that these Men dwelt about Lake Evendim, in the North Downs and the Weather Hills, and in the lands between as far as the Brandywine, west of which they often wandered though they did not dwell there. They were friendly with the Elves, though they held them in awe; and they feared the Sea and would not look upon it. It appears that they were in origin Men of the same stock as the Peoples of Bëor and Hador who had not crossed the Blue Mountains into Beleriand during the First Age.

*Thus it came to pass that on a morning of fair sun and white wind, in the bright spring of the seven hundred and twenty-fifth year of the Second Age, the son of the King's Heir of Númenor<sup>98</sup> sailed from the land; and ere day was over he saw it sink shimmering into the sea, and last of all the peak of the Meneltarma as a dark finger against the sunset.*

*It is said that Aldarion himself wrote records of all his journeys to Middle-earth, and they were long preserved in Rómenna, though all were afterwards lost. Of his first journey little is known, save that he made the friendship of Círdan and Gil-galad, and journeyed far in Lindon and the west of Eriador, and marvelled at all that he saw. He did not return for more than two years, and Meneldur was in great disquiet. It is said that his delay was due to the eagerness he had to learn all that he could of Círdan, both in the making and management of ships, and in the building of walls to withstand the hunger of the sea.*

*There was joy in Rómenna and Armenelos when men saw the great ship Númerrámar (which signifies 'West-wings') coming up from the sea, her golden sails reddened in the sunset. The summer was nearly over and the Eruhantalë was nigh.<sup>99</sup> It seemed to Meneldur when he welcomed his son in the house of Vëantur that he had grown in stature, and his eyes were brighter; but they looked far away.*

*'What did you see, onya, in your far journeys that now lives most in memory?'*

*But Aldarion, looking east towards the night, was silent. At last he answered, but softly, as one that speaks to himself: 'The fair people of the Elves? The green shores? The mountains wreathed in cloud? The regions of mist and shadow beyond guess? I do not know.' He ceased, and Meneldur knew that he had not spoken his full mind. For Aldarion had become enamoured of the Great Sea, and of a ship riding there alone without sight of land, borne by the winds with foam at its throat to coasts and havens unguessed; and that love and desire never left him until his life's end.*

*Vëantur did not again voyage from Númenor; but the Númerrámar he gave in gift to Aldarion. Within three years Aldarion begged leave to go again, and he set sail for Lindon. He was three years abroad; and not long after another voyage he made, that lasted for four years, for it is said that he was no longer content to sail to Mithlond, but began to explore the coasts southwards, past the mouths of Baranduin and Gwathló and Angren, and he rounded the dark cape of Ras Morthil and beheld the great Bay of Belfalas, and the mountains of the country of Amroth where the Nandor Elves still dwell.<sup>100</sup>*

*In the thirty-ninth year of his age Aldarion returned to Númenor, bringing gifts from Gil-galad to his father; for in the following year, as he had long proclaimed, Tar-Elendil relinquished the Sceptre to his son, and Tar-Meneldur became the King. Then Aldarion restrained his desire, and remained at home for a while for the comfort of his father; and in those days he put to use the knowledge he had gained of Círdan concerning the making of ships, devising much anew of his own thought, and he began also to set men to the improvement of the havens and the quays, for he was ever eager to build greater vessels. But the sea-longing came upon him anew, and he departed again and yet again from Númenor; and his mind turned now to ventures that might not be compassed with one vessel's company. Therefore he formed the Guild of Venturers, that afterwards was renowned; to that brotherhood were joined all the hardiest and most eager mariners, and young men sought*

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<sup>98</sup> The son of the King's Heir: Aldarion son of Meneldur. Tar-Elendil did not resign the sceptre to Meneldur until a further fifteen years had passed.

<sup>99</sup> *Eruhantalë*: 'Thanksgiving to Eru', the autumn feast in Númenor; see the 'Description of Númenor' p. 214.

<sup>100</sup> (Sîr) Angren was the Elvish name of the river Isen. Ras Morthil, a name not otherwise found, must be the great headland at the end of the northern arm of the Bay of Belfalas, which was also called Andrast (Long Cape).

The reference to 'the country of Amroth where the Nandor Elves still dwell' can be taken to imply that the tale of Aldarion and Erendis was written down in Gondor before the departure of the last ship from the haven of the Silvan Elves near Dol Amroth in the year 1981 of the Third Age; see pp. 310ff.

admission to it even from the inland regions of Númenor, and Aldarion they called the Great Captain. At that time he, having no mind to live upon land in Armenelos, had a ship built that should serve as his dwelling-place; he named it therefore Eämbär, and at times he would sail in it from haven to haven of Númenor, but for the most part it lay at anchor off Tol Uinen: and that was a little isle in the bay of Rómenna that was set there by Uinen the Lady of the Seas.<sup>101</sup> Upon Eämbär was the guildhouse of the Venturers, and there were kept the records of their great voyages;<sup>102</sup> for Tar-Meneldur looked coldly on the enterprises of his son, and cared not to hear the tale of his journeys, believing that he sowed the seeds of restlessness and the desire of other lands to hold.

In that time Aldarion became estranged from his father, and ceased to speak openly of his designs and his desires; but Almarian the Queen supported her son in all that he did, and Meneldur perforce let matters go as they must. For the Venturers grew in numbers and in the esteem of men, and they called them Uinendili, the lovers of Uinen; and their Captain became the less easy to rebuke or restrain. The ships of the Númenóreans became ever larger and of greater draught in those days, until they could make far voyages, carrying many men and great cargoes; and Aldarion was often long gone from Númenor. Tar-Meneldur ever opposed his son, and he set a curb on the felling of trees in Númenor for the building of vessels; and it came therefore into Aldarion's mind that he would find timber in Middle-earth, and seek there for a haven for the repair of his ships. In his voyages down the coasts he looked with wonder on the great forests; and at the mouth of the river that the Númenóreans called Gwathir, River of Shadow, he established Vinyalondë, the New Haven.<sup>103</sup>

But when nigh on eight hundred years had passed since the beginning of the Second Age, Tar-Meneldur commanded his son to remain now in Númenor and to cease for a time his eastward voyaging; for he desired to proclaim Aldarion the King's Heir, as had been done at that age of the Heir by the Kings before him. Then Meneldur and his son were reconciled, for that time, and there was peace between them; and amid joy and feasting Aldarion was proclaimed Heir in the hundredth year of his age, and received from his father the title and power of Lord of the Ships and Havens of Númenor. To the feasting in Armenelos came one Beregar from his dwelling in the west of the Isle, and with him came Erendis his daughter. There Almarian the Queen observed her beauty, of a kind seldom seen in Númenor; for Beregar came of the House of Bëor by ancient descent, though not of the royal line of Elros, and Erendis was dark-haired and of slender grace, with the clear grey eyes of her kin.<sup>104</sup> But Erendis looked upon Aldarion as he rode by, and for his beauty and splendour of bearing she had eyes for little else. Thereafter Erendis entered the household of the Queen, and found favour also with the King; but little did she see of Aldarion, who busied himself in the tending of the forests, being concerned that in days to come timber should not lack in Númenor. Ere long the mariners of the Guild of Venturers became restless, for they were ill content to voyage more briefly and more rarely under lesser commanders; and when six years had passed since the proclamation of the King's Heir Aldarion determined to sail again to Middle-earth. Of the King he got but grudging leave, for he refused his father's urging that he abide in Númenor and seek a wife; and he set sail in the spring of the year. But coming to bid farewell to his mother he saw Erendis amid the Queen's company; and looking on her beauty he divined the strength that lay concealed in her.

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<sup>101</sup> For Uinen the spouse of Ossë (Maiar of the Sea) see *The Silmarillion* p. 30. There it is said that 'the Númenóreans lived long in her protection, and held her in reverence equal to the Valar'.

<sup>102</sup> It is stated that the Guildhouse of the Venturers 'was confiscated by the Kings, and removed to the western haven of Andúnië; all its records perished' (i.e. in the Downfall), including all the accurate charts of Númenor. But it is not said when this confiscation of Eämbär took place.

<sup>103</sup> The river was afterwards called Gwathló or Greyflood, and the haven Lond Daer; see pp. 338ff.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. *The Silmarillion* p. 148: 'The Men of that House [i.e. of Bëor] were dark or brown of hair, with grey eyes.' According to a genealogical table of the House of Bëor Erendis was descended from Bereth, who was the sister of Baragund and Belegund, and thus the aunt of Morwen mother of Túrin Turambar and of Rían the mother of Tuor.



Then Almarian said to him: 'Must you depart again, Aldarion, my son? Is there nothing that will hold you in the fairest of all mortal lands?'

'Not yet,' he answered; 'but there are fairer things in Armenelos than a man could find elsewhere, even in the lands of the Eldar. But mariners are men of two minds, at war with themselves; and the desire of the Sea still holds me.'

Erendis believed that these words were spoken also for her ears; and from that time forth her heart was turned wholly to Aldarion, though not in hope. In those days there was no need, by law or custom, that those of the royal house, not even the King's Heir, should wed only with descendants of Elros Tar-Minyatur; but Erendis deemed that Aldarion was too high. Yet she looked on no man with favour thereafter, and every suitor she dismissed.

Seven years passed before Aldarion came back, bringing with him ore of silver and gold; and he spoke with his father of his voyage and his deeds. But Meneldur said: 'Rather would I have had you beside me, than any news or gifts from the Dark Lands. This is the part of merchants and explorers, not of the King's Heir. What need have we of more silver and gold, unless to use in pride where other things would serve as well? The need of the King's house is for a man who knows and loves this land and people, which he will rule.'

'Do I not study men all my days?' said Aldarion. 'I can lead and govern them as I will.'

'Say rather, some men, of like mind with yourself,' answered the King. 'There are also women in Númenor, scarce fewer than men; and save your mother, whom indeed you can lead as you will, what do you know of them? Yet one day you must take a wife.'

'One day!' said Aldarion. 'But not before I must; and later, if any try to thrust me towards marriage. Other things I have to do more urgent to me, for my mind is bent on them. "Cold is the life of a mariner's wife"; and the mariner who is single of purpose and not tied to the shore goes further, and learns better how to deal with the sea.'

'Further, but not with more profit,' said Meneldur. 'And you do not "deal with the sea", Aldarion, my son. Do you forget that the Edain dwell here under the grace of the Lords of the West, that Uinen is kind to us, and Ossë is restrained? Our ships are guarded, and other hands guide them than ours. So be not overproud, or the grace may wane; and do not presume that it will extend to those who risk themselves without need upon the rocks of strange shores or in the lands of men of darkness.'

'To what purpose then is the gracing of our ships,' said Aldarion, 'if they are to sail to no shores, and may seek nothing not seen before?'

He spoke no more to his father of such matters, but passed his days upon the ship Eämbär in the company of the Venturers, and in the building of a vessel greater than any made before: that ship he named Palarran, the Far-Wanderer. Yet now he met Erendis often (and that was by contrivance of the Queen); and the King learning of their meetings felt disquiet, yet he was not displeased. 'It would be more kind to cure Aldarion of his restlessness,' said he, 'before he win the heart of any woman.' 'How else will you cure him, if not by love?' said the Queen. 'Erendis is yet young,' said Meneldur. But Almarian answered: 'The kin of Erendis have not the length of life that is granted to the descendants of Elros; and her heart is already won.'<sup>105</sup>

Now when the great ship Palarran was built Aldarion would depart once more. At this Meneldur became wrathful, though by the persuasions of the Queen he would not use the King's power to stay him. Here must be told of the custom that when a ship departed from Númenor over the Great Sea to Middle-earth a woman, most often of the captain's kin, should set upon the vessel's prow the Green Bough of Return; and that was cut from the tree *oiolairë*, that signifies 'Ever-summer', which the Eldar gave to the Númenóreans,<sup>106</sup> saying that they set

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<sup>105</sup> On different life-spans among the Númenóreans see [note 123](#), 'The Line of Elros'.

<sup>106</sup> On the tree *oiolairë* see the 'Description of Númenór', [p. 216](#).

*it upon their own ships in token of friendship with Ossë and Uinen. The leaves of that tree were ever-green, glossy and fragrant; and it throve upon sea-air. But Meneldur forbade the Queen and the sisters of Aldarion to bear the bough of oiolairë to Rómenna where lay the Palarran, saying that he refused his blessing to his son, who was venturing forth against his will; and Aldarion hearing this said: 'If I must go without blessing or bough, then so I will go.'*

*Then the Queen was grieved; but Erendis said to her: 'Tarinya, if you will cut the bough from the Elven-tree, I will bear it to the haven, by your leave; for the King has not forbidden it to me.'*

*The mariners thought it an ill thing that the Captain should depart thus; but when all was made ready and men prepared to weigh anchor Erendis came there, little though she loved the noise and bustle of the great harbour and the crying of the gulls. Aldarion greeted her with amazement and joy; and she said: 'I have brought you the Bough of Return, lord: from the Queen.' 'From the Queen?' said Aldarion, in a changed manner. 'Yes, lord,' said she; 'but I asked for her leave to do so. Others beside your own kin will rejoice at your return, as soon as may be.'*

*At that time Aldarion first looked on Erendis with love; and he stood long in the stern looking back as the Palarran passed out to sea. It is said that he hastened his return, and was gone less time than he had designed; and coming back he brought gifts for the Queen and the ladies of her house, but the richest gift he brought for Erendis, and that was a diamond. Cold now were the greetings between the King and his son; and Meneldur rebuked him, saying that such a gift was unbecoming in the King's Heir unless it were a betrothal gift, and he demanded that Aldarion declare his mind.*

*'In gratitude I brought it,' said he, 'for a warm heart amid the coldness of others.'*

*'Cold hearts may not kindle others to give them warmth at their goings and comings,' said Meneldur; and again he urged Aldarion to take thought of marriage, though he did not speak of Erendis. But Aldarion would have none of it, for he was ever and in every course the more opposed as those about him urged it; and treating Erendis now with greater coolness he determined to leave Númenor and further his designs in Vinyalondë. Life on land was irksome to him, for aboard his ship he was subject to no other will, and the Venturers who accompanied him knew only love and admiration for the Great Captain. But now Meneldur forbade his going; and Aldarion, before the winter was fully gone, set sail with a fleet of seven ships and the greater part of the Venturers in defiance of the King. The Queen did not dare incur Meneldur's wrath; but at night a cloaked woman came to the haven bearing a bough, and she gave it into the hands of Aldarion, saying: 'This comes from the Lady of the West-lands' (for so they called Erendis), and went away in the dark.*

*At the open rebellion of Aldarion the King rescinded his authority as Lord of the Ships and Havens of Númenor; and he caused the Guildhouse of the Venturers on Eämbär to be shut, and the shipyards of Rómenna to be closed, and forbade the felling of all trees for shipbuilding. Five years passed; and Aldarion returned with nine ships, for two had been built in Vinyalondë, and they were laden with fine timber from the forests of the coasts of Middle-earth. The anger of Aldarion was great when he found what had been done; and to his father he said: 'If I am to have no welcome in Númenor, and no work for my hands to do, and if my ships may not be repaired in its havens, then I will go again and soon; for the winds have been rough,<sup>107</sup> and I need refitment. Has not a King's son aught to do but study women's faces to find a wife? The work of forestry I took up, and I have been prudent in it; there will be more timber in Númenor ere my day ends than there is under your sceptre.' And true to his word Aldarion left again in the same year with three ships and the hardiest of the Venturers, going without blessing or bough; for Meneldur set a ban on all the women of his house and of the Venturers, and put a guard about Rómenna.*

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<sup>107</sup> This is to be understood as a portent.

*On that voyage Aldarion was away so long that the people feared for him; and Meneldur himself was disquieted, despite the grace of the Valar that had ever protected the ships of Númenor.<sup>108</sup> When ten years were gone since his sailing Erendis at last despaired, and believing that Aldarion had met with disaster, or else that he had determined to dwell in Middle-earth, and also in order to escape the importuning of suitors, she asked the Queen's leave, and departing from Armenelos she returned to her own kindred in the Westlands. But after four years more Aldarion at last returned, and his ships were battered and broken by the seas. He had sailed first to the haven of Vinyalondë, and thence he had made a great coastwise journey southwards, far beyond any place yet reached by the ships of the Númenóreans; but returning northwards he had met contrary winds and great storms, and scarce escaping shipwreck in the Harad found Vinyalondë overthrown by great seas and plundered by hostile men. Three times he was driven back from the crossing of the Great Sea by high winds out of the West, and his own ship was struck by lightning and dismasted; and only with labour and hardship in the deep waters did he come at last to haven in Númenor. Greatly was Meneldur comforted at Aldarion's return; but he rebuked him for his rebellion against king and father, thus forsaking the guardianship of the Valar, and risking the wrath of Ossë not only for himself but for men whom he had bound to himself in devotion. Then Aldarion was chastened in mood, and he received the pardon of Meneldur, who restored to him the Lordship of the Ships and Havens, and added thereto the title of Master of the Forests.*

*Aldarion was grieved to find Erendis gone from Armenelos, but he was too proud to seek her; and indeed he could not well do so save to ask for her in marriage, and he was still unwilling to be bound. He set himself to the repairing of the neglects of his long absence, for he had been nigh on twenty years away; and at that time great harbour works were put in hand, especially at Rómenna. He found that there had been much felling of trees for building and the making of many things, but all was done without foresight, and little had been planted to replace what was taken; and he journeyed far and wide in Númenor to view the standing woods.*

*Riding one day in the forests of the Westlands he saw a woman, whose dark hair flowed in the wind, and about her was a green cloak clasped at the throat with a bright jewel; and he took her for one of the Eldar, who came at times to those parts of the Island. But she approached, and he knew her for Erendis, and saw that the jewel was the one that he had given her; then suddenly he knew in himself the love that he bore her, and he felt the emptiness of his days. Erendis seeing him turned pale and would ride off, but he was too quick, and he said: 'Too well have I deserved that you should flee from me, who have fled so often and so far! But forgive me, and stay now.' They rode then together to the house of Beregar her father, and there Aldarion made plain his desire for betrothal to Erendis; but now Erendis was reluctant, though according to custom and the life of her people it was now full time for her marriage. Her love for him was not lessened, nor did she retreat out of guile; but she feared now in her heart that in the war between herself and the Sea for the keeping of Aldarion she would not conquer. Never would Erendis take less, that she might not lose all; and fearing the Sea, and begrudging to all ships the felling of trees which she loved, she determined that she must utterly defeat the Sea and the ships, or else be herself defeated utterly.*

*But Aldarion wooed Erendis in earnest, and wherever she went he would go; he neglected the havens and the shipyards and all the concerns of the Guild of Venturers, felling no trees but setting himself to their planting only, and he found more contentment in those days than in any others of his life, though he did not know it until he looked back long after when old age was upon him. At length he sought to persuade Erendis to sail with him on a voyage about the Island in the ship Eämbär; for one hundred years had now passed since Aldarion founded the Guild of Venturers, and feasts were to be held in all the havens of Númenor. To this Erendis consented, concealing her distaste and fear; and they departed from Rómenna and came to Andúnië in the west*

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<sup>108</sup> Cf. the *Akallabêth* (*The Silmarillion* p. 277), where it is told that in the days of Ar-Pharazôn 'ever and anon a great ship of the Númenóreans would founder and not return to haven, though such a grief had not till then befallen them since the rising of the Star'.

of the Isle. There Valandil, Lord of Andúnië and close kin of Aldarion,<sup>109</sup> held a great feast; and at that feast he drank to Erendis, naming her Uinéniel, Daughter of Uinen, the new Lady of the Sea. But Erendis, who sat beside the wife of Valandil, said aloud: 'Call me by no such name! I am no daughter of Uinen: rather is she my foe.'

Thereafter for a while doubt again assailed Erendis, for Aldarion turned his thoughts again to the works at Rómenna, and busied himself with the building of great sea-walls, and the raising of a tall tower upon Tol Uinen: Calmindon, the Light-tower, was its name. But when these things were done Aldarion returned to Erendis and besought her to be betrothed; yet still she delayed, saying: 'I have journeyed with you by ship, lord. Before I give you my answer, will you not journey with me ashore, to the places that I love? You know too little of this land, for one who shall be its King.' Therefore they departed together, and came to Emerië, where were rolling downs of grass, and it was the chief place of sheep pasturage in Númenor; and they saw the white houses of the farmers and shepherds, and heard the bleating of the flocks.

There Erendis spoke to Aldarion and said: 'Here could I be at ease!'

'You shall dwell where you will, as wife of the King's Heir,' said Aldarion. 'And as Queen in many fair houses, such as you desire.'

'When you are King, I shall be old,' said Erendis. 'Where will the King's Heir dwell meanwhile?'

'With his wife,' said Aldarion, 'when his labours allow, if she cannot share in them.'

'I will not share my husband with the Lady Uinen,' said Erendis.

'That is a twisted saying,' said Aldarion. 'As well might I say that I would not share my wife with the Lord Oromë of Forests, because she loves trees that grow wild.'

'Indeed you would not,' said Erendis; 'for you would fell any wood as a gift to Uinen, if you had a mind.'

'Name any tree that you love and it shall stand till it dies,' said Aldarion.

'I love all that grow in this Isle,' said Erendis.

Then they rode a great while in silence; and after that day they parted, and Erendis returned to her father's house. To him she said nothing, but to her mother Núneth she told the words that had passed between herself and Aldarion.

'All or nothing, Erendis,' said Núneth. 'So you were as a child. But you love this man, and he is a great man, not to speak of his rank; and you will not cast out your love from your heart so easily, nor without great hurt to yourself. A woman must share her husband's love with his work and the fire of his spirit, or make him a thing not loveable. But I doubt that you will ever understand such counsel. Yet I am grieved, for it is full time that you were wed; and having borne a fair child I had hoped to see fair grandchildren; nor if they were cradled in the King's house would that displease me.'

This counsel did not indeed move the mind of Erendis; nevertheless she found that her heart was not under her will, and her days were empty: more empty than in the years when Aldarion had been gone. For he still abode in Númenor, and yet the days passed, and he did not come again into the west.

Now Almarian the Queen, being acquainted by Núneth with what had passed, and fearing lest Aldarion should seek solace in voyaging again (for he had been long ashore), sent word to Erendis asking that she return to Armenelos; and Erendis being urged by Núneth and by her own heart did as she was bid. There she was reconciled to Aldarion; and in the spring of the year, when the time of the Erukyermë was come, they ascended in the retinue of the King to the summit of the Meneltarma, which was the Hallowed Mountain of the

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<sup>109</sup> Valandil was Aldarion's cousin, for he was the son of Silmarien, daughter of Tar-Elendil and sister of Tar-Meneldur. Valandil, first of the Lords of Andúnië, was the ancestor of Elendil the Tall, father of Isildur and Anárion.



Númenóreans.<sup>110</sup> When all had gone down again Aldarion and Erendis remained behind; and they looked out, seeing all the Isle of Westernesse laid green beneath them in the spring, and they saw the glimmer of light in the West where far away was Avallónë,<sup>111</sup> and the shadows in the East upon the Great Sea; and the Menel was blue above them. They did not speak, for no-one, save only the King, spoke upon the height of Meneltarma; but as they came down Erendis stood a moment, looking towards Emerië, and beyond, towards the woods of her home.

*‘Do you not love the Yôzâyan?’ she said.*

*‘I love it indeed,’ he answered, ‘though I think that you doubt it. For I think also of what it may be in time to come, and the hope and splendour of its people; and I believe that a gift should not lie idle in hoard.’*

*But Erendis denied his words, saying: ‘Such gifts as come from the Valar, and through them from the One, are to be loved for themselves now, and in all nows. They are not given for barter, for more or for better. The Edain remain mortal Men, Aldarion, great though they be: and we cannot dwell in the time that is to come, lest we lose our now for a phantom of our own design.’ Then taking suddenly the jewel from her throat she asked him: ‘Would you have me trade this to buy me other goods that I desire?’*

*‘No!’ said he. ‘But you do not lock it in hoard. Yet I think you set it too high; for it is dimmed by the light of your eyes.’ Then he kissed her on the eyes, and in that moment she put aside fear, and accepted him; and their troth was plighted upon the steep path of the Meneltarma.*

*They went back then to Armenelos, and Aldarion presented Erendis to Tar-Meneldur as the betrothed of the King’s Heir; and the King was rejoiced, and there was merrymaking in the city and in all the Isle. As betrothal gift Meneldur gave to Erendis a fair portion of land in Emerië, and there he had built for her a white house. But Aldarion said to her: ‘Other jewels I have in hoard, gifts of kings in far lands to whom the ships of Númenor have brought aid. I have gems as green as the light of the sun in the leaves of trees which you love.’*

*‘No!’ said Erendis. ‘I have had my betrothal gift, though it came beforehand. It is the only jewel that I have or would have; and I will set it yet higher.’ Then he saw that she had caused the white gem to be set as a star in a silver fillet; and at her asking he bound it on her forehead. She wore it so for many years, until sorrow befell; and thus she was known far and wide as Tar-Elestirně, the Lady of the Star-brow.<sup>112</sup> Thus there was for a time peace and joy in Armenelos in the house of the King, and in all the Isle, and it is recorded in ancient books that there was great fruitfulness in the golden summer of that year, which was the eight hundred and fifty-eighth of the Second Age.*

*But alone among the people the mariners of the Guild of Venturers were not well content. For fifteen years Aldarion had remained in Númenor, and led no expedition abroad; and though there were gallant captains who had been trained by him, without the wealth and authority of the King’s son their voyages were fewer and more brief, and went but seldom further than the land of Gil-galad. Moreover timber was become scarce in the shipyards, for Aldarion neglected the forests; and the Venturers besought him to turn again to this work. At their prayer Aldarion did so, and at first Erendis would go about with him in the woods; but she was saddened*

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<sup>110</sup> *Erukyermë*: ‘Prayer to Eru’, the feast of the Spring in Númenor; see the ‘Description of Númenór’ p. 214.

<sup>111</sup> It is said in the *Akallabêth* (*The Silmarillion* pp. 262-3) that ‘at times, when all the air was clear and the sun was in the east, they would look out and descry far off in the west a city white-shining on a distant shore, and a great harbour and a tower. For in those days the Númenóreans were far-sighted; yet even so it was only the keenest eyes among them that could see this vision, from the Meneltarma maybe, or from some tall ship that lay off their western coast . . . But the wise among them knew that this distant land was not indeed the Blessed Realm of Valinor, but was Avallónë, the haven of the Eldar upon Eressëa, easternmost of the Undying Lands.’

<sup>112</sup> Thus came, it is said, the manner of the Kings and Queens afterward to wear as a star a white jewel upon the brow, and they had no crown. [Author’s note.]

by the sight of trees felled in their prime, and afterwards hewn and sawn. Soon therefore Aldarion went alone, and they were less in company.

Now the year came in, in which all looked for the marriage of the King's Heir; for it was not the custom that betrothal should last much longer than three years. One morning in that spring Aldarion rode up from the haven of Andúnië, to take the road to the house of Beregar; for there he was to be guest, and thither Erendis had preceded him, going from Armenelos by the roads of the land. As he came to the top of the great bluff that stood out from the land and sheltered the haven from the north, he turned and looked back over the sea. A west wind was blowing, as often at that season, beloved by those who had a mind to sail to Middle-earth, and white-crested waves marched towards the shore. Then suddenly the sea-longing took him as though a great hand had been laid on his throat, and his heart hammered, and his breath was stopped. He strove for the mastery, and at length turned his back and continued on his journey; and by design he took his way through the wood where he had seen Erendis riding as one of the Eldar, now fifteen years gone. Almost he looked to see her so once more; but she was not there, and desire to see her face again hastened him, so that he came to Beregar's house before evening.

There she welcomed him gladly, and he was merry; but he said nothing touching their wedding, though all had thought that this was a part of his errand to the Westlands. As the days passed Erendis marked that he now often fell silent in company when others were gay; and if she looked towards him suddenly she saw his eyes upon her. Then her heart was shaken; for the blue eyes of Aldarion seemed to her now grey and cold, yet she perceived as it were a hunger in his gaze. That look she had seen too often before, and feared what it boded; but she said nothing. At that Núneth, who marked all that passed, was glad; for 'words may open wounds', as she said. Ere long Aldarion and Erendis rode away, returning to Armenelos, and as they drew further from the sea he grew merrier again. Still he said nothing to her of his trouble: for indeed he was at war within himself, and irresolute.

So the year drew on, and Aldarion spoke neither of the sea nor of wedding; but he was often in Rómenna, and in the company of the Venturers. At length, when the next year came in, the King called him to his chamber; and they were at ease together, and the love they bore one another was no longer clouded.

'My son,' said Tar-Meneldur, 'when will you give me the daughter that I have so long desired? More than three years have now passed, and that is long enough. I marvel that you could endure so long a delay.'

Then Aldarion was silent, but at length he said: 'It has come upon me again, Atarinya. Eighteen years is a long fast. I can scarce lie still in a bed, or hold myself upon a horse, and the hard ground of stone wounds my feet.'

Then Meneldur was grieved, and pitied his son; but he did not understand his trouble, for he himself had never loved ships, and he said: 'Alas! But you are betrothed. And by the laws of Númenor and the right ways of the Eldar and Edain a man shall not have two wives. You cannot wed the Sea, for you are affianced to Erendis.'

Then Aldarion's heart was hardened, for these words recalled his speech with Erendis as they passed through Emerië; and he thought (but untruly) that she had consulted with his father. It was ever his mood, if he thought that others combined to urge him on some path of their choosing, to turn away from it. 'Smiths may smithy, and horsemen ride, and miners delve, when they are betrothed,' said he. 'Therefore why may not mariners sail?'

'If smiths remained five years at the anvil few would be smiths' wives,' said the King. 'And mariners' wives are few, and they endure what they must, for such is their livelihood and their necessity. The King's Heir is not a mariner by trade, nor is he under necessity.'

'There are other needs than livelihood that drive a man,' said Aldarion. 'And there are yet many years to spare.'

'Nay, nay,' said Meneldur, 'you take your grace for granted: Erendis has shorter hope than you, and her years wane swifter. She is not of the line of Elros; and she has loved you now many years.'

'She held back well nigh twelve years, when I was eager,' said Aldarion. 'I do not ask for a third of such a time.'

*'She was not then betrothed,' said Meneldur. 'But neither of you are now free. And if she held back, I doubt not that it was in fear of what now seems likely to befall, if you cannot master yourself. In some way you must have stilled that fear; and though you may have spoken no plain word, yet you are beholden, as I judge.'*

*Then Aldarion said in anger: 'It were better to speak with my betrothed myself, and not hold parley by proxy.' And he left his father. Not long after he spoke to Erendis of his desire to voyage again upon the great waters, saying that he was robbed of all sleep and rest. But she sat pale and silent. At length she said: 'I thought that you were come to speak of our wedding.'*

*'I will,' said Aldarion. 'It shall be as soon as I return, if you will wait.' But seeing the grief in her face he was moved, and a thought came to him. 'It shall be now,' he said. 'It shall be before this year is done. And then I will fit out such a ship as the Venturers made never yet, a Queen's house on the water. And you shall sail with me, Erendis, under the grace of the Valar, of Yavanna and of Oromë whom you love; you shall sail to lands where I shall show you such woods as you have never seen, where even now the Eldar sing; or forests wider than Númenor, free and wild since the beginning of days, where still you may hear the great horn of Oromë the Lord.'*

*But Erendis wept. 'Nay, Aldarion,' she said. 'I rejoice that the world yet holds such things as you tell of; but I shall never see them. For I do not desire it: to the woods of Númenor my heart is given. And, alas! if for love of you I took ship, I should not return. It is beyond my strength to endure; and out of sight of land I should die. The Sea hates me; and now it is revenged that I kept you from it and yet fled from you. Go, my lord! But have pity, and take not so many years as I lost before.'*

*Then Aldarion was abashed; for as he had spoken in heedless anger to his father, so now she spoke with love. He did not sail that year; but he had little peace or joy. 'Out of sight of land she will die!' he said. 'Soon I shall die, if I see it longer. Then if we are to spend any years together I must go alone, and go soon.' He made ready therefore at last for sailing in the spring; and the Venturers were glad, if none else in the Isle who knew of what was done. Three ships were manned, and in the month of Vîressë they departed. Erendis herself set the green bough of oiolairë on the prow of the Palarran, and hid her tears, until it passed out beyond the great new harbour-walls.*

*Six years and more passed away before Aldarion returned to Númenor. He found even Almarian the Queen colder in welcome, and the Venturers were fallen out of esteem; for men thought that he had treated Erendis ill. But indeed he was longer gone than he had purposed; for he had found the haven of Vinyalondë now wholly ruined, and great seas had brought to nothing all his labours to restore it. Men near the coasts were growing afraid of the Númenóreans, or were become openly hostile; and Aldarion heard rumours of some lord in Middle-earth who hated the men of the ships. Then when he would turn for home a great wind came out of the south, and he was borne far to the northward. He tarried a while at Mithlond, but when his ships stood out to sea once more they were again swept away north, and driven into wastes perilous with ice, and they suffered cold. At last the sea and wind relented, but even as Aldarion looked out in longing from the prow of the Palarran and saw far off the Meneltarma, his glance fell upon the green bough, and he saw that it was withered. Then Aldarion was dismayed, for such a thing had never befallen the bough of oiolairë, so long as it was washed with the spray. 'It is frosted, Captain,' said a mariner who stood beside him. 'It has been too cold. Glad am I to see the Pillar.'*

*When Aldarion sought out Erendis she looked at him keenly but did not come forward to meet him; and he stood for a while at a loss for words, as was not his wont. 'Sit, my lord,' said Erendis, 'and first tell me of all your deeds. Much must you have seen and done in these long years!'*

*Then Aldarion began haltingly, and she sat silent, listening, while he told all the tale of his trials and delays; and when he ended she said: 'I thank the Valar by whose grace you have returned at last. But I thank them also that I did not come with you; for I should have withered sooner than any green bough.'*

*'Your green bough did not go into the bitter cold by will,' he answered. 'But dismiss me now, if you will, and I think that men will not blame you. Yet dare I not to hope that your love will prove stronger to endure even than fair oiolairë?'*

*'So it does prove indeed,' said Erendis. 'It is not yet chilled to the death, Aldarion. Alas! How can I dismiss you, when I look on you again, returning as fair as the sun after winter!'*

*'Then let spring and summer now begin!' he said.*

*'And let not winter return,' said Erendis.*

*Then to the joy of Meneldur and Almarian the wedding of the King's Heir was proclaimed for the next spring; and so it came to pass. In the eight hundred and seventieth year of the Second Age Aldarion and Erendis were wedded in Armenelos, and in every house there was music, and in all the streets men and women sang. And afterwards the King's Heir and his bride rode at their leisure through all the Isle, until at midsummer they came to Andúnië, where the last feast was prepared by Valandil its lord; and all the people of the Westlands were gathered there, for love of Erendis and pride that a Queen of Númenor should come from among them.*

*In the morning before the feast Aldarion gazed out from the window of the bedchamber, which looked west-over-sea. 'See, Erendis!' he cried. 'There is a ship speeding to haven; and it is no ship of Númenor, but one such as neither you nor I shall ever set foot upon, even if we would.' Then Erendis looked forth, and she saw a tall white ship, with white birds turning in the sunlight all about it; and its sails glimmered with silver as with foam at the stem it rode towards the harbour. Thus the Eldar graced the wedding of Erendis, for love of the people of the Westlands, who were closest in their friendship.<sup>113</sup> Their ship was laden with flowers for the adornment of the feast, so that all that sat there, when evening was come, were crowned with elanor<sup>114</sup> and*

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<sup>113</sup> In the Westlands and in Andúnië the Elven-tongue [Sindarin] was spoken by high and low. In that tongue Erendis was nurtured; but Aldarion spoke the Númenórean speech, although as all high men of Númenór he knew also the tongue of Beleriand. [Author's note.]

Elsewhere, in a note on the languages of Númenor, it is said that the general use of Sindarin in the north-west of the Isle was due to the fact that those parts were largely settled by people of 'Bëorian' descent; and the People of Bëor had in Beleriand early abandoned their own speech and adopted Sindarin. (Of this there is no mention in *The Silmarillion*, though it is said there (p. 148) that in Dor-lómin in the days of Fingolfin the people of Hador did not forget their own speech, 'and from it came the common tongue of Númenor'.) In other regions of Númenor Adûnaic was the native language of the people, though Sindarin was known in some degree to nearly all; and in the royal house, and in most of the houses of the noble or learned, Sindarin was usually the native tongue, until after the days of Tar-Atanamir. (It is said later in the present narrative (p. 249) that Aldarion actually preferred the Númenórean speech; it may be that in this he was exceptional.) This note further states that although Sindarin as used for a long period by mortal Men tended to become divergent and dialectal, this process was largely checked in Númenor, at least among the nobles and the learned, by their contact with the Eldar of Eressëa and Lindon. Quenya was not a spoken tongue in Númenor. It was known only to the learned and to the families of high descent, to whom it was taught in their early youth. It was used in official documents intended for preservation, such as the Laws, and the Scroll and Annals of the Kings (cf. the *Akallabêth* p. 267: 'in the Scroll of Kings the name Herunúmen was inscribed in the High-elven speech'), and often in more recondite works of lore. It was also largely used in nomenclature: the official names of all places, regions, and geographical features in the land were of Quenya form (though they usually had also local names, generally of the same meaning, in either Sindarin or Adûnaic). The personal names, and especially the official and public names, of all members of the royal house, and of the Line of Elros in general, were given in Quenya form.

In a reference to these matters in *The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix F, I (section 'Of Men'), a somewhat different impression is given of the place of Sindarin among the languages of Númenor: 'The *Dúnedain* alone of all races of Men knew and spoke an Elvish tongue; for their forefathers had learned the Sindarin tongue, and this they handed on to their children as a matter of lore, changing little with the passing of the years.'

<sup>114</sup> *Elanor* was a small golden star-shaped flower; it grew also upon the mound of Cerin Amroth in Lothlórien (*The Fellowship of the Ring* II 6). Sam Gamgee gave its name to his daughter, on Frodo's suggestion (*The Return of the King* VI 9).

sweet lissuin whose fragrance brings heart's ease. Minstrels they brought also, singers who remembered songs of Elves and Men in the days of Nargothrond and Gondolin long ago; and many of the Eldar high and fair were seated among Men at the tables. But the people of Andúnië, looking upon the blissful company, said that none were more fair than Erendis; and they said that her eyes were as bright as were the eyes of Morwen Eledhwen of old,<sup>115</sup> or even as those of Avallónë.

Many gifts the Eldar brought also. To Aldarion they gave a sapling tree, whose bark was snow-white, and its stem straight, strong and pliant as it were of steel; but it was not yet in leaf. 'I thank you,' said Aldarion to the Elves. 'The wood of such a tree must be precious indeed.'

'Maybe; we know not,' said they. 'None has ever been hewn. It bears cool leaves in summer, and flowers in winter. It is for this that we prize it.'

To Erendis they gave a pair of birds, grey, with golden beaks and feet. They sang sweetly one to another with many cadences never repeated through a long thrill of song; but if one were separated from the other, at once they flew together, and they would not sing apart.

'How shall I keep them?' said Erendis.

'Let them fly and be free,' answered the Eldar. 'For we have spoken to them and named you; and they will stay wherever you dwell. They mate for their life, and that is long. Maybe there will be many such birds to sing in the gardens of your children.'

That night Erendis awoke, and a sweet fragrance came through the lattice; but the night was light, for the full moon was westering. Then leaving their bed Erendis looked out and saw all the land sleeping in silver; but the two birds sat side by side upon her sill.

When the feasting was ended Aldarion and Erendis went for a while to her home; and the birds again perched upon the sill of her window. At length they bade Beregar and Núneth farewell, and they rode back at last to Armenelos; for there by the King's wish his Heir would dwell, and a house was prepared for them amidst a garden of trees. There the Elven-tree was planted, and the Elven-birds sang in its boughs.

Two years later Erendis conceived, and in the spring of the year after she bore to Aldarion a daughter. Even from birth the child was fair, and grew ever in beauty: the woman most beautiful, as old tales tell, that ever was born in the line of Elros, save Ar-Zimraphel, the last. When her first naming was due they called her Ancalimë. In heart Erendis was glad, for she thought: 'Surely now Aldarion will desire a son, to be his heir; and he will abide with me long yet.' For in secret she still feared the Sea and its power upon his heart; and though she strove to hide it, and would talk with him of his old ventures and of his hopes and designs, she watched jealously if he went to his house-ship or was much with the Venturers. To Eämbar Aldarion once asked her to come, but seeing swiftly in her eyes that she was not full-willing he never pressed her again. Not without cause was Erendis' fear. When Aldarion had been five years ashore he began to be busy again with his Mastership of Forests, and was often many days away from his house. There was now indeed sufficient timber in Númenor (and that was chiefly owing to his prudence); yet since the people were now more numerous there was ever need of wood for building and for the making of many things beside. For in those ancient days, though many had great skill with stone and with metals (since the Edain of old had learned much of the Noldor), the Númenóreans loved things fashioned of wood, whether for daily use, or for beauty of carving. At that time Aldarion again gave most heed to the future, planting always where there was felling, and he had new woods set to grow where there was room, a free land that was suited to trees of different kinds. It was then that he became most widely known as Aldarion, by which name he is remembered among those who held the sceptre in Númenor. Yet to many beside Erendis it seemed that he had little love for trees in themselves, caring for them rather as timber that would serve his designs.

Not far otherwise was it with the Sea. For as Núneth had said to Erendis long before: 'Ships he may love, my daughter, for those are made by men's minds and hands; but I think that it is not the winds or the great waters

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<sup>115</sup> See [note 104](#) for Erendis' descent from Bereth, the sister of Morwen's father Baragund.



that so burn his heart, nor yet the sight of strange lands, but some heat in his mind, or some dream that pursues him.' And it may be that she struck near the truth; for Aldarion was a man long-sighted, and he looked forward to days when the people would need more room and greater wealth; and whether he himself knew this clearly or no, he dreamed of the glory of Númenor and the power of its kings, and he sought for footholds whence they could step to wider dominion. So it was that ere long he turned again from forestry to the building of ships, and a vision came to him of a mighty vessel like a castle with tall masts and great sails like clouds, bearing men and stores enough for a town. Then in the yards of Rómenna the saws and hammers were busy, while among many lesser craft a great ribbed hull took shape; at which men wondered. Turuphanto, the Wooden Whale, they called it, but that was not its name.

Erendis learned of these things, though Aldarion had not spoken to her of them, and she was unquiet. Therefore one day she said to him: 'What is all this busyness with ships, Lord of the Havens? Have we not enough? How many fair trees have been cut short of their lives in this year?' She spoke lightly, and smiled as she spoke.

'A man must have work to do upon land,' he answered, 'even though he have a fair wife. Trees spring and trees fall. I plant more than are felled.' He spoke also in a light tone, but he did not look her in the face; and they did not speak again of these matters.

But when Ancalimë was close on four years old Aldarion at last declared openly to Erendis his desire to sail again from Númenor. She sat silent, for he said nothing that she did not already know; and words were in vain. He tarried until the birthday of Ancalimë, and made much of her that day. She laughed and was merry, though others in that house were not so; and as she went to her bed she said to her father: 'Where will you take me this summer, tatanya? I should like to see the white house in the sheep-land that mamil tells of.' Aldarion did not answer; and the next day he left the house, and was gone for some days. When all was ready he returned, and bade Erendis farewell. Then against her will tears were in her eyes. They grieved him, and yet irked him, for his mind was resolved, and he hardened his heart. 'Come, Erendis!' he said. 'Eight years I have stayed. You cannot bind for ever in soft bonds the son of the King, of the blood of Tuor and Eärendil! And I am not going to my death. I shall soon return.'

'Soon?' she said. 'But the years are unrelenting, and you will not bring them back with you. And mine are briefer than yours. My youth runs away; and where are my children, and where is your heir? Too long and often of late is my bed cold.'<sup>116</sup>

'Often of late I have thought that you preferred it so,' said Aldarion. 'But let us not be wroth, even if we are not of like mind. Look in your mirror, Erendis. You are beautiful, and no shadow of age is there yet. You have time to spare to my deep need. Two years! Two years is all that I ask!'

But Erendis answered: 'Say rather: "Two years I will take, whether you will or no." Take two years, then! But no more. A King's son of the blood of Eärendil should also be a man of his word.'

Next morning Aldarion hastened away. He lifted up Ancalimë and kissed her; but though she clung to him he set her down quickly and rode off. Soon after the great ship set sail from Rómenna. Hirilondë he named it, Haven-finder; but it went from Númenor without the blessing of Tar-Meneldur; and Erendis was not at the harbour to set the green Bough of Return, nor did she send. Aldarion's face was dark and troubled as he stood at the prow of Hirilondë, where the wife of his captain had set a great branch of oiolairë; but he did not look back until the Meneltarma was far off in the twilight.

All that day Erendis sat in her chamber alone, grieving; but deeper in her heart she felt a new pain of cold anger, and her love of Aldarion was wounded to the quick. She hated the Sea; and now even trees, that once she had loved, she desired to look upon no more, for they recalled to her the masts of great ships. Therefore ere

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<sup>116</sup> It is stated that the Númenóreans, like the Eldar, avoided the begetting of children if they foresaw any separation likely between husband and wife between the conception of the child and at least its very early years. Aldarion stayed in his house for a very brief time after the birth of his daughter, according to the Númenóreans' idea of the fitness of things.

long she left Armenelos, and went to Emerië in the midst of the Isle, where ever, far and near, the bleating of sheep was borne upon the wind. 'Sweeter it is to my ears than the mewing of gulls,' she said, as she stood at the doors of her white house, the gift of the King; and that was upon a downside, facing west, with great lawns all about that merged without wall or hedge into the pastures. Thither she took Ancalimë, and they were all the company that either had. For Erendis would have only servants in her household, and they were all women; and she sought ever to mould her daughter to her own mind, and to feed her upon her own bitterness against men. Ancalimë seldom indeed saw any man, for Erendis kept no state, and her few farm-servants and shepherds had a homestead at a distance. Other men did not come there, save rarely some messenger from the King; and he would ride away soon, for to men there seemed a chill in the house that put them to flight, and while there they felt constrained to speak half in whisper.

One morning soon after Erendis came to Emerië she awoke to the song of birds, and there on the sill of her window were the Elven-birds that long had dwelt in her garden in Armenelos, but which she had left behind forgotten. 'Sweet fools, fly away!' she said. 'This is no place for such joy as yours.'

Then their song ceased, and they flew up over the trees; thrice they wheeled above the roofs, and then they went away westwards. That evening they settled upon the sill of the chamber in the house of her father, where she had lain with Aldarion on their way from the feast in Andúnië; and there Núneth and Beregar found them on the morning of the next day. But when Núneth held out her hands to them they flew steeply up and fled away, and she watched them until they were specks in the sunlight, speeding to the sea, back to the land whence they came.

'He has gone again, then, and left her,' said Núneth.

'Then why has she not sent news?' said Beregar. 'Or why has she not come home?'

'She has sent news enough,' said Núneth. 'For she has dismissed the Elven-birds, and that was ill done. It bodes no good. Why, why, my daughter? Surely you knew what you must face? But let her alone, Beregar, wherever she may be. This is her home no longer, and she will not be healed here. He will come back. And then may the Valar send her wisdom—or guile, at the least!'

When the second year after Aldarion's sailing came in, by the King's wish Erendis ordered the house in Armenelos to be arrayed and made ready; but she herself made no preparation for return. To the King she sent answer saying: 'I will come if you command me, atar aranya. But have I a duty now to hasten? Will it not be time enough when his sail is seen in the East?' And to herself she said: 'Will the King have me wait upon the quays like a sailor's lass? Would that I were, but I am so no longer. I have played that part to the full.'

But that year passed, and no sail was seen; and the next year came, and waned to autumn. Then Erendis grew hard and silent. She ordered that the house in Armenelos be shut, and she went never more than a few hours' journey from her house in Emerië. Such love as she had was all given to her daughter, and she clung to her, and would not have Ancalimë leave her side, not even to visit Núneth and her kin in the Westlands. All Ancalimë's teaching was from her mother; and she learned well to write and to read, and to speak the Elven-tongue with Erendis, after the manner in which high men of Númenor used it. For in the Westlands it was a daily speech in such houses as Beregar's, and Erendis seldom used the Númenórean tongue, which Aldarion loved the better. Much Ancalimë also learned of Númenor and the ancient days in such books and scrolls as were in the house which she could understand; and lore of other kinds, of the people and the land, she heard at times from the women of the household, though of this Erendis knew nothing. But the women were chary of their speech to the child, fearing their mistress; and there was little enough of laughter for Ancalimë in the white house in Emerië. It was hushed and without music, as if one had died there not long since; for in Númenor in those days it was the part of men to play upon instruments, and the music that Ancalimë heard in childhood was the singing of women at work, out of doors, and away from the hearing of the White Lady of Emerië. But now Ancalimë was seven years old, and as often as she could get leave she would go out of the house and on to the wide downs where she could run free; and at times she would go with a shepherdess, tending the sheep, and eating under the sky.

One day in the summer of that year a young boy, but older than herself, came to the house on an errand from one of the distant farms; and Ancalimë came upon him munching bread and drinking milk in the farm-

courtyard at the rear of the house. He looked at her without deference, and went on drinking. Then he set down his mug.

'Stare, if you must, great eyes!' he said. 'You're a pretty girl, but too thin. Will you eat?' He took a loaf out of his bag.

'Be off, Íbal!' cried an old woman, coming from the dairy-door. 'And use your long legs, or you'll forget the message I gave you for your mother before you get home!'

'No need for a watch-dog where you are, mother Zamîn!' cried the boy, and with a bark and a shout he leapt over the gate and went off at a run down the hill. Zamîn was an old country-woman, free-tongued, and not easily daunted, even by the White Lady.

'What noisy thing was that?' said Ancalimë.

'A boy,' said Zamîn, 'if you know what that is. But how should you? They're breakers and eaters, mostly. That one is ever eating—but not to no purpose. A fine lad his father will find when he comes back; but if that is not soon, he'll scarce know him. I might say that of others.'

'Has the boy then a father too?' asked Ancalimë.

'To be sure,' said Zamîn. 'Ulbar, one of the shepherds of the great lord away south: the Sheep-lord we call him, a kinsman of the King.'

'Then why is the boy's father not at home?'

'Why, hérinkë,' said Zamîn, 'because he heard of those Venturers, and took up with them, and went away with your father, the Lord Aldarion: but the Valar know whither, or why.'

That evening Ancalimë said suddenly to her mother: 'Is my father also called the Lord Aldarion?'

'He was,' said Erendis. 'But why do you ask?' Her voice was quiet and cool, but she wondered and was troubled; for no word concerning Aldarion had passed between them before.

Ancalimë did not answer the question. 'When will he come back?' she said.

'Do not ask me!' said Erendis. 'I do not know. Never, perhaps. But do not trouble yourself; for you have a mother, and she will not run away, while you love her.'

Ancalimë did not speak of her father again.

The days passed bringing in another year, and then another; in that spring Ancalimë was nine years old. Lambs were born and grew; shearing came and passed; a hot summer burned the grass. Autumn turned to rain. Then out of the East upon a cloudy wind Hirilondë came back over the grey seas, bearing Aldarion to Rómenna; and word was sent to Emerië, but Erendis did not speak of it. There were none to greet Aldarion upon the quays. He rode through the rain to Armenelos; and he found his house shut. He was dismayed, but he would ask news of no man; first he would seek the King, for he thought he had much to say to him.

He found his welcome no warmer than he looked for; and Meneldur spoke to him as King to a captain whose conduct is in question. 'You have been long away,' he said coldly. 'It is more than three years now since the date that you set for your return.'

'Alas!' said Aldarion. 'Even I have become weary of the sea, and for long my heart has yearned westward. But I have been detained against my heart: there is much to do. And all things go backward in my absence.'

'I do not doubt it,' said Meneldur. 'You will find it true here also in your right land, I fear.'

'That I hope to redress,' said Aldarion. 'But the world is changing again. Outside nigh on a thousand years have passed since the Lords of the West sent their power against Angband; and those days are forgotten, or wrapped in dim legend among Men of Middle-earth. They are troubled again, and fear haunts them. I desire greatly to consult with you, to give account of my deeds, and my thought concerning what should be done.'

'You shall do so,' said Meneldur. 'Indeed I expect no less. But there are other matters which I judge more urgent. "Let a King first rule well his own house ere he correct others", it is said. It is true of all men. I will



now give you counsel, son of Meneldur. You have also a life of your own. Half of yourself you have ever neglected. To you I say now: Go home!’

Aldarion stood suddenly still, and his face was stern. ‘If you know, tell me,’ he said. ‘Where is my home?’

‘Where your wife is,’ said Meneldur. ‘You have broken your word to her, whether by necessity or no. She dwells now in Emerië, in her own house, far from the sea. Thither you must go at once.’

‘Had any word been left for me, whither to go, I would have gone directly from the haven,’ said Aldarion. ‘But at least I need not now ask tidings of strangers.’ He turned then to go, but paused, saying: ‘Captain Aldarion has forgotten somewhat that belongs to his other half, which in his waywardness he also thinks urgent. He has a letter that he was charged to deliver to the King in Armenelos.’ Presenting it to Meneldur he bowed and left the chamber; and within an hour he took horse and rode away, though night was falling. With him he had but two companions, men from his ship: Henderch of the Westlands, and Ulbar who came from Emerië.

Riding hard they came to Emerië at nightfall of the next day, and men and horses were weary. Cold and white looked the house on the hill in a last gleam of sunset under cloud. He blew a horn-call as soon as he saw it from afar.

As he leapt from his horse in the forecourt he saw Erendis: clad in white she stood upon the steps that went up to the pillars before the door. She held herself high, but as he drew near he saw that she was pale and her eyes over-bright.

‘You come late, my lord,’ she said. ‘I had long ceased to expect you. I fear that there is no such welcome prepared for you as I had made when you were due.’

‘Mariners are not hard to please,’ he said.

‘That is well,’ she said; and she turned back into the house and left him. Then two women came forward, and an old crone who went down the steps. As Aldarion went in she said to the men in a loud voice so that he could hear her: ‘There is no lodging for you here. Go down to the homestead at the hill’s foot!’

‘No, Zamîn,’ said Ulbar. ‘I’ll not stay. I am for home, by the Lord Aldarion’s leave. Is all well there?’

‘Well enough,’ said she. ‘Your son has eaten himself out of your memory. But go, and find your own answers! You’ll be warmer there than your Captain.’

Erendis did not come to the table at his late evening-meal, and Aldarion was served by women in a room apart. But before he was done she entered, and said before the women: ‘You will be weary, my lord, after such haste. A guest-room is made ready for you, when you will. My women will wait on you. If you are cold, call for fire.’

Aldarion made no answer. He went early to the bed-chamber, and being now weary indeed he cast himself on the bed and forgot soon the shadows of Middle-earth and of Númenor in a heavy sleep. But at cockcrow he awoke to a great disquiet and anger. He rose at once, and thought to go without noise from the house: he would find his man Henderch and the horses, and ride to his kinsman Hallatan, the sheep-lord of Hyarastorni. Later he would summon Erendis to bring his daughter to Armenelos, and not have dealings with her upon her own ground. But as he went out towards the doors Erendis came forward. She had not lain in bed that night, and she stood before him on the threshold.

‘You leave more promptly than you came, my lord,’ she said. ‘I hope that (being a mariner) you have not found this house of women irksome already, to go thus before your business is done. Indeed, what business brought you hither? May I learn it before you leave?’

‘I was told in Armenelos that my wife was here, and had removed my daughter hither,’ he answered. ‘As to the wife I am mistaken, it seems, but have I not a daughter?’

‘You had one some years ago,’ she said. ‘But my daughter has not yet risen.’

‘Then let her rise, while I go for my horse,’ said Aldarion.

Erendis would have withheld Ancalimë from meeting him at that time; but she feared to go so far as to lose the King's favour, and the Council<sup>117</sup> had long shown their displeasure at the upbringing of the child in the country. Therefore when Aldarion rode back, with Henderch beside him, Ancalimë stood beside her mother on the threshold. She stood erect and stiff as her mother, and made him no courtesy as he dismounted and came up the steps towards her. 'Who are you?' she said. 'And why do you bid me to rise so early, before the house is stirring?'

Aldarion looked at her keenly, and though his face was stern he smiled within: for he saw there a child of his own, rather than of Erendis, for all her schooling.

'You knew me once, Lady Ancalimë,' he said, 'but no matter. Today I am but a messenger from Armenelos, to remind you that you are the daughter of the King's Heir; and (so far as I can now see) you shall be his Heir in your turn. You will not always dwell here. But go back to your bed now, my lady, until your maidservant wakes, if you will. I am in haste to see the King. Farewell!' He kissed the hand of Ancalimë and went down the steps; then he mounted and rode away with a wave of his hand.

Erendis alone at a window watched him riding down the hill, and she marked that he rode towards Hyarastorni and not towards Armenelos. Then she wept, from grief, but still more from anger. She had looked for some penitence, that she might extend after rebuke pardon if prayed for; but he had dealt with her as if she were the offender, and ignored her before her daughter. Too late she remembered the words of Núneth long before, and she saw Aldarion now as something large and not to be tamed, driven by a fierce will, more perilous when chill. She rose, and turned from the window, thinking of her wrongs. 'Perilous!' she said. 'I am steel hard to break. So he would find even were he the King of Númenor.'

Aldarion rode on to Hyarastorni, the house of Hallatan his cousin; for he had a mind to rest there a while and take thought. When he came near, he heard the sound of music, and he found the shepherds making merry for the homecoming of Ulbar, with many marvellous tales and many gifts; and the wife of Ulbar garlanded was dancing with him to the playing of pipes. At first none observed him, and he sat on his horse watching with a smile; but then suddenly Ulbar cried out 'The Great Captain!' and Íbal his son ran forward to Aldarion's stirrup. 'Lord Captain!' he said eagerly.

'What is it? I am in haste,' said Aldarion; for now his mood was changed, and he felt wrathful and bitter.

'I would but ask,' said the boy, 'how old must a man be, before he may go over sea in a ship, like my father?'

'As old as the hills, and with no other hope in life,' said Aldarion. 'Or whenever he has a mind! But your mother, Ulbar's son: will she not greet me?'

When Ulbar's wife came forward Aldarion took her hand. 'Will you receive this of me?' he said. 'It is but little return for six years of a good man's aid that you gave me.' Then from a wallet under his tunic he took a jewel red like fire, upon a band of gold, and he pressed it into her hand. 'From the King of the Elves it came,' he said. 'But he will think it well-bestowed, when I tell him.' Then Aldarion bade farewell to the people there, and rode away, having no mind now to stay in that house. When Hallatan heard of his strange coming and going he marvelled, until more news ran through the countryside.

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<sup>117</sup> In a note on the 'Council of the Sceptre' at this time in the history of Númenor it is said that this Council had no powers to govern the King save by advice; and no such powers had yet been desired or dreamed of as needful. The Council was composed of members from each of the divisions of Númenor; but the King's Heir when proclaimed was also a member, so that he might learn of the government of the land, and others also the King might summon, or ask to be chosen, if they had special knowledge of matters at any time in debate. At this time there were only two members of the Council (other than Aldarion) who were of the Line of Elros: Valandil of Andúnië for the Andustar, and Hallatan of Hyarastorni for the Mittalmar; but they owed their place not to their descent or their wealth, but to the esteem and love in which they were held in their countries. (In the *Akallabêth* (p. 268) it is said that 'the Lord of Andúnië was ever among the chief councillors of the Sceptre'.)

*Aldarion rode only a short way from Hyarastorni and then he stayed his horse, and spoke to Henderch his companion. 'Whatever welcome awaits you, friend, out West, I will not keep you from it. Ride now home with my thanks. I have a mind to go alone.'*

*'It is not fitting, Lord Captain,' said Henderch.*

*'It is not,' said Aldarion. 'But that is the way of it. Farewell!'*

*Then he rode on alone to Armenelos, and never again set foot in Emerië.*

*When Aldarion left the chamber, Meneldur looked at the letter that his son had given him, wondering; for he saw that it came from King Gil-galad in Lindon. It was sealed and bore his device of white stars upon a blue rondure.<sup>118</sup> Upon the outer fold was written:*

Given at Mithlond to the hand of the Lord Aldarion King's Heir of Númenórë, to be delivered to the High King at Armenelos in person.

*Then Meneldur broke the seal and read:*

Ereinion Gil-galad son of Fingon to Tar-Meneldur of the line of Eärendil, greeting: the Valar keep you and may no shadow fall upon the Isle of Kings.

Long I have owed you thanks, for you have so many times sent to me your son Anardil Aldarion: the greatest Elf-friend that now is among Men, as I deem. At this time I ask your pardon, if I have detained him overlong in my service; for I had great need of the knowledge of Men and their tongues which he alone possesses. He has dared many perils to bring me counsel. Of my need he will speak to you; yet he does not guess how great it is, being young and full of hope. Therefore I write this for the eyes of the King of Númenórë only.

A new shadow arises in the East. It is no tyranny of evil Men, as your son believes; but a servant of Morgoth is stirring, and evil things wake again. Each year it gains in strength, for most Men are ripe to its purpose. Not far off is the day, I judge, when it will become too great for the Eldar unaided to withstand. Therefore, whenever I behold a tall ship of the Kings of Men, my heart is eased. And now I make bold to seek your help. If you have any strength of Men to spare, lend it to me, I beg.

Your son will report to you, if you will, all our reasons. But in fine it is his counsel (and that is ever wise) that when assault comes, as it surely will, we should seek to hold the Westlands, where still the Eldar dwell, and Men of your race, whose hearts are not yet darkened. At the least we must defend Eriador about the long rivers west of the mountains that we name Hithaeglir: our chief defence. But in that mountain-wall there is a great gap southward in the land of Calenardhon; and by that way inroad from the East must come. Already enmity creeps along the coast towards it. It could be defended and assault hindered, did we hold some seat of power upon the nearer shore.

So the Lord Aldarion long has seen. At Vinyalondë by the mouth of Gwathló he has long laboured to establish such a haven, secure against sea and land; but his mighty works have been in vain. He has great knowledge in such matters, for he has learned much of Círdan, and he understands better than any the needs of your great ships. But he has never had men enough; whereas Círdan has no wrights or masons to spare.

The King will know his own needs; but if he will listen with favour to the Lord Aldarion, and support him as he may, then hope will be greater in the world. The memories of the First Age are dim, and all things in Middle-earth grow colder. Let not the ancient friendship of Eldar and Dúnedain wane also.

Behold! The darkness that is to come is filled with hatred for us, but it hates you no less. The Great Sea will not be too wide for its wings, if it is suffered to come to full growth.

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<sup>118</sup> It is recorded that Ereinion was given the name Gil-galad 'Star of Radiance' 'because his helm and mail, and his shield overlaid with silver and set with a device of white stars, shone from afar like a star in sunlight or moonlight, and could be seen by Elvish eyes at a great distance if he stood upon a height'.

Manwë keep you under the One, and send fair wind to your sails.

*Meneldur let the parchment fall into his lap. Great clouds borne upon a wind out of the East brought darkness early, and the tall candles at his side seemed to dwindle in the gloom that filled his chamber.*

*'May Eru call me before such a time comes!' he cried aloud. Then to himself he said: 'Alas! that his pride and my coolness have kept our minds apart so long. But sooner now than I had resolved it will be the course of wisdom to resign the Sceptre to him. For these things are beyond my reach.*

*'When the Valar gave to us the Land of Gift they did not make us their vice-gerents: we were given the Kingdom of Númenor, not of the world. They are the Lords. Here we were to put away hatred and war; for war was ended, and Morgoth thrust forth from Arda. So I deemed, and so was taught.*

*'Yet if the world grows again dark, the Lords must know; and they have sent me no sign. Unless this be the sign. What then? Our fathers were rewarded for the aid they gave in the defeat of the Great Shadow. Shall their sons stand aloof, if evil finds a new head?*

*'I am in too great doubt to rule. To prepare or to let be? To prepare for war, which is yet only guessed: train craftsmen and tillers in the midst of peace for bloodspilling and battle: put iron in the hands of greedy captains who will love only conquest, and count the slain as their glory? Will they say to Eru: At least your enemies were amongst them? Or to fold hands, while friends die unjustly: let men live in blind peace, until the ravisher is at the gate? What then will they do: match naked hands against iron and die in vain, or flee leaving the cries of women behind them? Will they say to Eru: At least I spilled no blood?*

*'When either way may lead to evil, of what worth is choice? Let the Valar rule under Eru! I will resign the Sceptre to Aldarion. Yet that also is a choice, for I know well which road he will take. Unless Erendis. . . .'*

*Then Meneldur's thought turned in disquiet to Erendis in Emerië. 'But there is little hope there (if it should be called hope). He will not bend in such grave matters. I know her choice—even were she to listen long enough to understand. For her heart has no wings beyond Númenor, and she has no guess of the cost. If her choice should lead to death in her own time, she would die bravely. But what will she do with life, and other wills? The Valar themselves, even as I, must wait to discover.'*

*Aldarion came back to Rómenna on the fourth day after Hirilondë had returned to haven. He was way-stained and weary, and he went at once to Eämbär, upon which he now intended to dwell. By that time, as he found to his embitterment, many tongues were already wagging in the City. On the next day he gathered men in Rómenna and brought them to Armenelos. There he bade some fell all the trees, save one, in his garden, and take them to the shipyards; others he commanded to raze his house to the ground. The white Elven-tree alone he spared; and when the woodcutters were gone he looked at it, standing amid the desolation, and he saw for the first time that it was in itself beautiful. In its slow Elven growth it was yet but twelve feet high, straight, slender, youthful, now budded with its winter flowers upon upheld branches pointing to the sky. It recalled to him his daughter, and he said: 'I will call you also Ancalimë. May you and she stand so in long life, unbent by wind or will, and unclipped!'*

*On the third day after his return from Emerië Aldarion sought the King. Tar-Meneldur sat still in his chair and waited. Looking at his son he was afraid; for Aldarion was changed: his face was become grey, cold, and hostile, as the sea when the sun is suddenly veiled in dull cloud. Standing before his father he spoke slowly with tone of contempt rather than of wrath.*

*'What part you have played in this you yourself know best,' he said. 'But a King should consider how much a man will endure, though he be a subject, even his son. If you would shackle me to this Island, then you choose your chain ill. I have now neither wife, nor love of this land, left. I will go from this misenchanted isle of daydreams where women in their insolence would have men cringe. I will use my days to some purpose, elsewhere, where I am not scorned, more welcome in honour. Another Heir you may find more fit for a house-servant. Of my inheritance I demand only this: the ship Hirilondë and as many men as it will hold. My daughter I would take also, were she older; but I will commend her to my mother. Unless you dote upon sheep, you will not hinder this, and will not suffer the child to be stunted, reared among mute women in cold insolence and*

*contempt of her kin. She is of the Line of Elros, and no other descendant will you have through your son. I have done. I will go now about business more profitable.'*

*Thus far Meneldur had sat in patience with downcast eyes and made no sign. But now he sighed, and looked up. 'Aldarion, my son,' he said sadly, 'the King would say that you also show cold insolence and contempt of your kin, and yourself condemn others unheard; but your father who loves you and grieves for you will remit that. The fault is not mine only that I have not ere now understood your purposes. But as for what you have suffered (of which, alas! too many now speak): I am guiltless. Erendis I have loved, and since our hearts lean the same way I have thought that she had much to endure that was hard. Your purposes are now become clear to me, though if you are in mood to hear aught but praise I would say that at first your own pleasure also led you. And it may be that things would have been otherwise if you had spoken more openly long ago.'*

*'The King may have some grievance in this,' cried Aldarion, now more hotly, 'but not the one you speak of! To her at least I spoke long and often: to cold ears uncomprehending. As well might a truant boy talk of tree-climbing to a nurse anxious only about the tearing of clothes and the due time of meals! I love her, or I should care less. The past I will keep in my heart; the future is dead. She does not love me, or aught else. She loves herself with Númenor as a setting, and myself as a tame hound, to drowse by the hearth until she has a mind to walk in her own fields. But since hounds now seem too gross, she will have Ancalimë to pipe in a cage. But enough of this. Have I the King's leave to depart? Or has he some command?'*

*'The King,' answered Tar-Meneldur, 'has thought much about these matters, in what seem the long days since last you were in Armenelos. He has read the letter of Gil-galad, which is earnest and grave in tone. Alas! To his prayer and your wishes the King of Númenor must say nay. He cannot do otherwise, according to his understanding of the perils of either course: to prepare for war, or not to prepare.'*

*Aldarion shrugged his shoulders, and took a step as if to go. But Meneldur held up his hand commanding attention, and continued: 'Nevertheless, the King, though he has now ruled the land of Númenor for one hundred and forty-two years, has no certainty that his understanding of the matter is sufficient for a just decision in matters of such high import and peril.' He paused, and taking up a parchment written in his own hand he read from it in a clear voice:*

*Therefore: first for the honour of his well-beloved son; and second for the better direction of the realm in courses which his son more clearly understands, the King has resolved: that he will forthwith resign the Sceptre to his son, who shall now become Tar-Aldarion, the King.*

*'This,' said Meneldur, 'when it is proclaimed, will make known to all my thought concerning this present pass. It will raise you above scorn; and it will set free your powers so that other losses may seem more easy to endure. The letter of Gil-galad, when you are King, you shall answer as seems fit to the holder of the Sceptre.'*

*Aldarion stood still for a moment in amaze. He had braced himself to face the King's anger, which wilfully he had endeavoured to kindle. Now he stood confounded. Then, as one swept from his feet by a sudden wind from a quarter unexpected, he fell to his knees before his father; but after a moment he raised his bowed head and laughed—so he always did, when he heard of any deed of great generosity, for it gladdened his heart.*

*'Father,' he said, 'ask the King to forget my insolence to him. For he is a great King, and his humility sets him far above my pride. I am conquered: I submit myself wholly. That such a King should resign the Sceptre while in vigour and wisdom is not to be thought.'*

*'Yet so it is resolved,' said Meneldur. 'The Council shall be summoned forthwith.'*

*When the Council came together, after seven days had passed, Tar-Meneldur acquainted them with his resolve, and laid the scroll before them. Then all were amazed, not yet knowing what were the courses of which the King spoke; and all demurred, begging him to delay his decision, save only Hallatan of Hyarastorni. For he had long held his kinsman Aldarion in esteem, though his own life and likings were far otherwise; and he judged the King's deed to be noble, and timed with shrewdness, if it must be.*

*But to those others who urged this or that against his resolve Meneldur answered: 'Not without thought did I come to this resolution, and in my thought I have considered all the reasons that you wisely argue. Now and not later is the time most fit for my will to be published, for reasons which though none here has uttered all must*

guess. Forthwith then let this decree be proclaimed. But if you will, it shall not take effect until the time of the Erukyermë in the Spring. Till then, I will hold the Sceptre.'

When news came to Emerië of the proclamation of the decree Erendis was dismayed; for she read therein a rebuke by the King in whose favour she had trusted. In this she saw truly, but that anything else of greater import lay behind she did not conceive. Soon afterwards there came a message from Tar-Meneldur, a command indeed, though graciously worded. She was bidden to come to Armenelos and to bring with her the lady Ancalimë, there to abide at least until the Erukyermë and the proclamation of the new King.

'He is swift to strike,' she thought. 'So I should have foreseen. He will strip me of all. But myself he shall not command, though it be by the mouth of his father.'

Therefore she returned answer to Tar-Meneldur: 'King and father, my daughter Ancalimë must come indeed, if you command it. I beg that you will consider her years, and see to it that she is lodged in quiet. For myself, I pray you to excuse me. I learn that my house in Armenelos has been destroyed; and I would not at this time willingly be a guest, least of all upon a house-ship among mariners. Here then permit me to remain in my solitude, unless it be the King's will also to take back this house.'

This letter Tar-Meneldur read with concern, but it missed its mark in his heart. He showed it to Aldarion, to whom it seemed chiefly aimed. Then Aldarion read the letter; and the King, regarding the face of his son, said: 'Doubtless you are grieved. But for what else did you hope?'

'Not for this, at least,' said Aldarion. 'It is far below my hope of her. She has dwindled; and if I have wrought this, then black is my blame. But do the large shrink in adversity? This was not the way, not even in hate or revenge! She should have demanded that a great house be prepared for her, called for a Queen's escort, and come back to Armenelos with her beauty adorned, royally, with the star on her brow; then well nigh all the Isle of Númenor she might have bewitched to her part, and made me seem madman and churl. The Valar be my witness, I would rather have had it so: rather a beautiful Queen to thwart me and flout me, than freedom to rule while the Lady Elestirnë falls down dim into her own twilight.'

Then with a bitter laugh he gave back the letter to the King. 'Well: so it is,' he said. 'But if one has a distaste to dwell on a ship among mariners, another may be excused dislike of a sheep-farm among serving-women. But I will not have my daughter so schooled. At least she shall choose by knowledge.' He rose, and begged leave to go.

## The Further Course Of The Narrative

From the point where Aldarion read the letter from Erendis, refusing to return to Armenelos, the story can only be traced in glimpses and snatches, from notes and jottings: and even those do not constitute the fragments of a wholly consistent story, being composed at different times and often at odds with themselves.

It seems that when Aldarion became King of Númenor in the year 883 he determined to revisit Middle-earth at once, and departed for Mithlond either in the same year or the next. It is recorded that on the prow of *Hirilondë* he set no bough of *oiolairë*, but the image of an eagle with golden beak and jewelled eyes, which was the gift of Círdan.

It perched there, by the craft of its maker, as if poised for flight unerring to some far mark that it espied. 'This sign shall lead us to our aim,' he said. 'For our return let the Valar care—if our deeds do not displease them.'

It is also stated that 'no records are now left of the later voyages that Aldarion made', but that 'it is known that he went much on land as well as sea, and went up the River Gwathló as far as Tharbad, and there met Galadriel'. There is no mention elsewhere of this meeting; but at that time Galadriel and Celeborn were dwelling in Eregion, at no great distance from Tharbad (see [p. 303](#)).



*But all Aldarion's labours were swept away. The works that he began again at Vinyalondë were never completed, and the sea gnawed them.*<sup>119</sup> *Nevertheless he laid the foundation for the achievement of Tar-Minastir long years after, in the first war with Sauron, and but for his works the fleets of Númenor could not have brought their power in time to the right place—as he foresaw. Already the hostility was growing and dark men out of the mountains were thrusting into Enedwaith. But in Aldarion's day the Númenóreans did not yet desire more room, and his Venturers remained a small people, admired but little emulated.*

There is no mention of any further development of the alliance with Gil-galad, or of the sending of the aid that he requested in his letter to Tar-Meneldur; it is said indeed that

*Aldarion was too late, or too early. Too late: for the power that hated Númenor had already waked. Too early: for the time was not yet ripe for Númenor to show its power or to come back into the battle for the world.*

There was a stir in Númenor when Tar-Aldarion determined to return to Middle-earth in 883 or 884, for no King had ever before left the Isle, and the Council had no precedent. It seems that Meneldur was offered but refused the regency, and that Hallatan of Hyarastorni became regent, either appointed by the Council or by Tar-Aldarion himself.

Of the history of Ancalimë during those years when she was growing up there is no certain form. There is less doubt concerning her somewhat ambiguous character, and the influence that her mother exerted on her. She was less prim than Erendis, and natively liked display, jewels, music, admiration, and deference; but she liked them at will and not unceasingly, and she made her mother and the white house in Emerië an excuse for escape. She approved, as it were, both Erendis' treatment of Aldarion on his late return, but also Aldarion's anger, impenitence, and subsequent relentless dismissal of Erendis from his heart and concern. She had a profound dislike of obligatory marriage, and in marriage of any constraint on her will. Her mother had spoken unceasingly against men, and indeed a remarkable example of Erendis' teaching in this respect is preserved:

*Men in Númenor are half-Elves (said Erendis), especially the high men; they are neither the one nor the other. The long life that they were granted deceives them, and they dally in the world, children in mind, until age finds them—and then many only forsake play out of doors for play in their houses. They turn their play into great matters and great matters into play. They would be craftsmen and loremasters and heroes all at once; and women to them are but fires on the hearth—for others to tend, until they are tired of play in the evening. All things were made for their service: hills are for quarries, rivers to furnish water or to turn wheels, trees for boards, women for their body's need, or if fair to adorn their table and hearth; and children to be teased when nothing else is to do—but they would as soon play with their hounds' whelps. To all they are gracious and kind, merry as larks in the morning (if the sun shines); for they are never wrathful if they can avoid it. Men should be gay, they hold, generous as the rich, giving away what they do not need. Anger they show only when they become aware, suddenly, that there are other wills in the world beside their own. Then they will be as ruthless as the seawind if anything dare to withstand them.*

*Thus it is, Ancalimë, and we cannot alter it. For men fashioned Númenor: men, those heroes of old that they sing of—of their women we hear less, save that they wept when their men were slain. Númenor was to be a rest after war. But if they weary of rest and the plays of peace, soon they will go back to their great play, manslaying and war. Thus it is; and we are set here among them. But we need not assent. If we love Númenor also, let us enjoy it before they ruin it. We also are daughters of the great, and we have wills and courage of our own. Therefore do not bend, Ancalimë. Once bend a little, and they will bend you further until you are bowed down. Sink your roots into the rock, and face the wind, though it blow away all your leaves.*

Moreover, and more potently, Erendis had made Ancalimë accustomed to the society of women: the cool, quiet, gentle life of Emerië without interruptions or alarms. Boys, like Îbal, shouted. Men rode up blowing horns at strange hours, and were fed with great noise. They begot children and left them in the care of women when they were troublesome. And though childbirth had less of ills and peril, Númenor was not an 'earthly paradise', and the weariness of labour or of all making was not taken away.

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<sup>119</sup> See p. 345.

Ancalimë, like her father, was resolute in pursuing her policies; and like him she was obstinate, taking the opposite course to any that was counselled. She had something of her mother's coldness and sense of personal injury; and deep in her heart, almost but not quite forgotten, was the firmness with which Aldarion had unclasped her hand and set her down when he was in haste to be gone. She loved dearly the downlands of her home, and never (as she said) in her life could she sleep at peace far from the sound of sheep. But she did not refuse the Heirship, and determined that when her day came she would be a powerful Ruling Queen; and when so, to live where and how she pleased.

It seems that for some eighteen years after Aldarion became King he was often gone from Númenor; and during that time Ancalimë passed her days both in Emerië and in Armenelos, for Queen Almarian took a great liking to her, and indulged her as she had indulged Aldarion in his youth. In Armenelos she was treated with deference by all, and not least by Aldarion; and though at first she was ill at ease, missing the wide airs of her home, in time she ceased to be abashed, and became aware that men looked with wonder upon her beauty, now come to its full. As she grew older she became ever more wilful, and she found irksome the company of Erendis, who behaved like a widow and would not be Queen; but she continued to return to Emerië, both as a retreat from Armenelos and because she desired thus to vex Aldarion. She was clever, and malicious, and saw promise of sport as the prize for which her mother and her father did battle.

Now in the year 892, when Ancalimë was nineteen years old, she was proclaimed the King's Heir (at a far earlier age than had previously been the case, see [p. 228](#)); and at that time Tar-Aldarion caused the law of succession in Númenor to be changed. It is said specifically that Tar-Aldarion did this 'for reasons of private concern, rather than policy', and out of 'his long resolve to defeat Erendis'. The change of the law is referred to in *The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A ([I, i](#)):

*The sixth King [Tar-Aldarion] left only one child, a daughter. She became the first Queen [i.e. Ruling Queen]; for it was then made a law of the royal house that the eldest child of the King, whether man or woman, should receive the sceptre.*

But elsewhere the new law is formulated differently from this. The fullest and clearest account states in the first place that the 'old law', as it was afterwards called, was not in fact a Númenórean 'law', but an inherited custom which circumstances had not yet called in question; and according to that custom the Ruler's eldest son inherited the Sceptre. It was understood that if there were no son the nearest male kinsman *of male descent* from Elros Tar-Minyatur would be the Heir. Thus if Tar-Meneldur had had no son the Heir would not have been Valandil his nephew (son of his sister Silmarien), but Malantur his cousin (grandson of Tar-Elendil's younger brother Eärendur). But by the 'new law' the (eldest) daughter of the Ruler inherited the Sceptre, if he had no son (this being, of course, in contradiction to what is said in *The Lord of the Rings*). By the advice of the Council it was added that she was free to refuse.<sup>120</sup> In such a case, according to the 'new law', the heir of the Ruler was the nearest male kinsman whether by male or female descent. Thus if Ancalimë had refused the Sceptre Tar-Aldarion's heir would have been Soronto, the son of his sister Ailinel; and if Ancalimë had resigned the Sceptre or died childless Soronto would likewise have been her heir.

It was also ordained at the instance of the Council that a female heir must resign, if she remained unwed beyond a certain time; and to these provisions Tar-Aldarion added that the King's Heir should not wed save in the Line of Elros, and that any who did so should cease to be eligible for the Heirship. It is said that this ordinance arose directly from Aldarion's disastrous marriage to Erendis and his reflections upon it; for she was not of the Line of Elros, and had a lesser life-span, and he believed that therein lay the root of all their troubles.

Beyond question these provisions of the 'new law' were recorded in such detail because they were to bear closely on the later history of these reigns; but unhappily very little can now be said of it.

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<sup>120</sup> A legitimate male heir, on the other hand, could not refuse; but since a King could always resign the Sceptre, a male heir could in fact immediately resign to *his* natural heir. He was then himself deemed also to have reigned for at least one year; and this was the case (the only case) with Vardamir, the son of Elros, who did not ascend the throne but gave the Sceptre to his son Amandil.



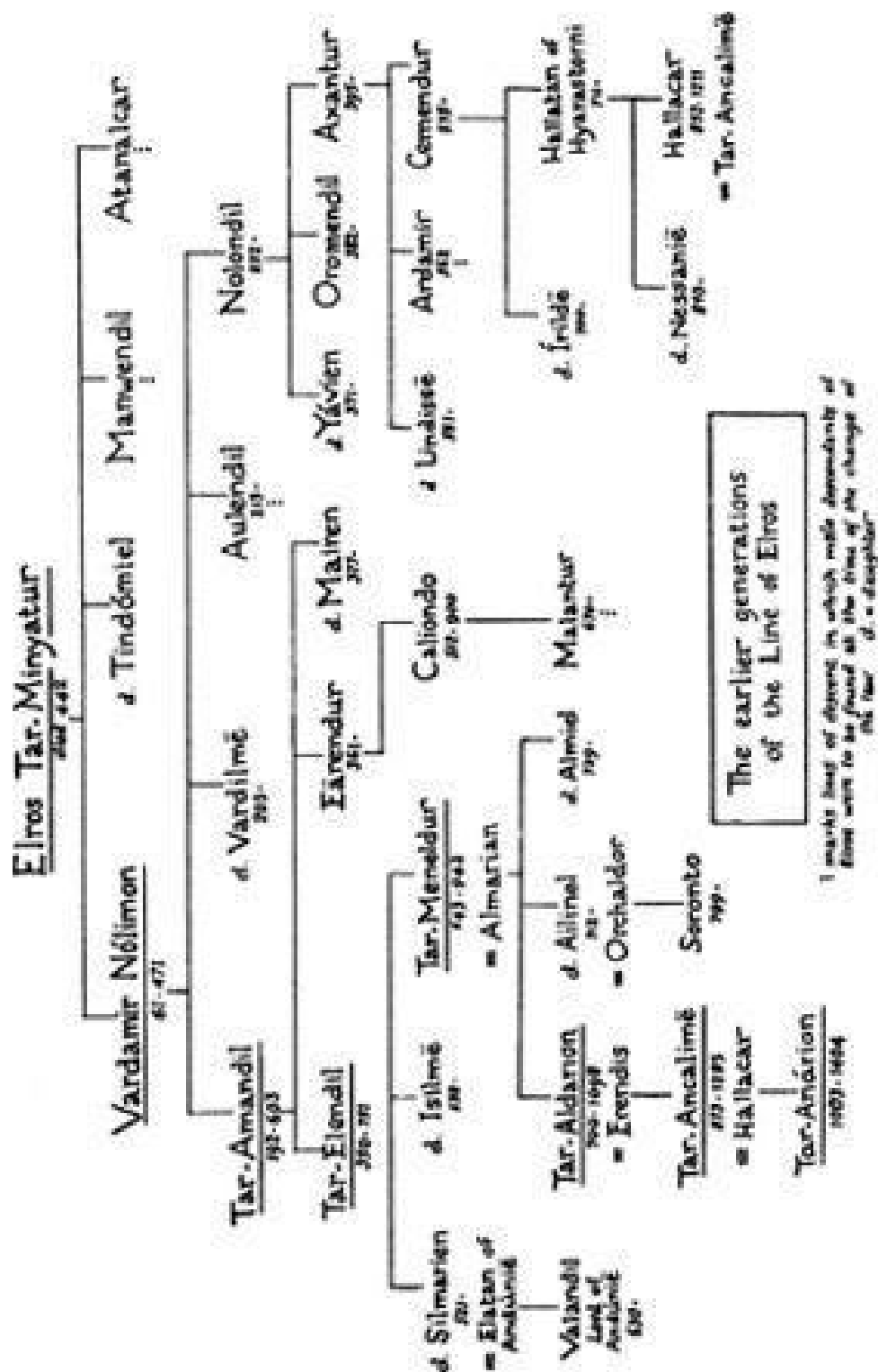
At some later date Tar-Aldarion rescinded the law that a Ruling Queen must marry, or resign (and this was certainly due to Ancalimë's reluctance to countenance either alternative); but the marriage of the Heir to another member of the Line of Elros remained the custom ever after.<sup>121</sup>

At all events, suitors for Ancalimë's hand soon began to appear in Emerië, and not only because of the change in her position, for the fame of her beauty, of her aloofness and disdain, and of the strangeness of her upbringing had run through the land. In that time the people began to speak of her as Emerwen Aranel, the Princess Shepherdess. To escape from importunity Ancalimë, aided by the old woman Zamîn, went into hiding at a farm on the borders of the lands of Hallatan of Hyarastorni, where she lived for a time the life of a shepherdess. The accounts (which are indeed no more than hasty jottings) vary as to how her parents responded to this state of affairs. According to one, Erendis herself knew where Ancalimë was, and approved the reason for her flight, while Aldarion prevented the Council from searching for her, since it was to his mind that his daughter should act thus independently. According to another, however, Erendis was disturbed at Ancalimë's flight and the King was wrathful; and at this time Erendis attempted some reconciliation with him, at least in respect of Ancalimë. But Aldarion was unmoved, declaring that the King had no wife, but that he had a daughter and an heir; and that he did not believe that Erendis was ignorant of her hiding-place.

What is certain is that Ancalimë fell in with a shepherd who was minding flocks in the same region; and to her this man named himself Mámandil. Ancalimë was all unused to such company as his, and she took delight in his singing, in which he was skilled; and he sang to her songs that came out of far-off days, when the Edain pastured their flocks in Eriador long ago, before ever they met the Eldar. They met thus in the pastures often and often, and he altered the songs of the lovers of old and brought into them the names of Emerwen and Mámandil; and Ancalimë feigned not to understand the drift of the words. But at length he declared his love for her openly, and she drew back, and refused him, saying that her fate lay between them, for she was the Heir of the King. But Mámandil was not abashed, and he laughed, and told her that his right name was Hallacar, son of Hallatan of Hyarastorni, of the line of Elros Tar-Minyatur. 'And how else could any wooer find you?' he said.

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<sup>121</sup> It is said elsewhere that this rule of 'royal marriage' was never a matter of law, but it became a custom of pride: 'a symptom of the growth of the Shadow, since it only became rigid when the distinction between the Line of Elros and other families, in life-span, vigour, or ability, had diminished or altogether disappeared.'



Then Ancalimë was angry, because he had deceived her, knowing from the first who she was; but he answered: 'That is true in part. I contrived indeed to meet the Lady whose ways were so strange that I was curious to see more of her. But then I loved Emerwen, and I care not now who she may be. Do not think that I pursue your high place; for far rather would I have it that you were Emerwen only. I rejoice but in this, that I also am of the Line of Elros, because otherwise I deem that we could not wed.'

'We could,' said Ancalimë, 'if I had any mind to such a state. I could lay down my royalty, and be free. But if I were to do so, I should be free to wed whom I will; and that would be Úner (which is "Noman"), whom I prefer above all others.'

It was however to Hallacar that Ancalimë was wedded in the end. From one version it appears that the persistence of Hallacar in his suit despite her rejection of him, and the urging of the Council that she choose a

husband for the quiet of the realm, led to their marriage not many years after their first meeting among the flocks in Emerië. But elsewhere it is said that she remained unmarried so long that her cousin Soronto, relying on the provision of the new law, called upon her to surrender the Heirship, and that she then married Hallacar in order to spite Soronto. In yet another brief notice it is implied that she wedded Hallacar after Aldarion had rescinded the provision, in order to put an end to Soronto's hopes of becoming King if Ancalimë died childless.

However this may be, the story is clear that Ancalimë did not desire love, nor did she wish for a son; and she said: 'Must I become like Queen Almarian, and dote upon him?' Her life with Hallacar was unhappy, and she begrudged him her son Anárion, and there was strife between them thereafter. She sought to subject him, claiming to be the owner of his land, and forbidding him to dwell upon it, for she would not, as she said, have her husband a farm-steward. From this time comes the last tale that is recorded of those unhappy things. For Ancalimë would let none of her women wed, and although for fear of her most were restrained, they came from the country about and had lovers whom they wished to marry. But Hallacar in secret arranged for them to be wedded; and he declared that he would give a last feast at his own house, before he left it. To this feast he invited Ancalimë, saying that it was the house of his kindred, and should be given a farewell of courtesy.

Ancalimë came, attended by all her women, for she did not care to be waited on by men. She found the house all lit and arrayed as for a great feast, and men of the household attired in garlands as for their weddings, and each with another garland in his hands for a bride. 'Come!' said Hallacar. 'The weddings are prepared, and the bride-chambers ready. But since it cannot be thought that we should ask the Lady Ancalimë, King's Heir, to lie with a farm-steward, then, alas! she must sleep alone tonight.' And Ancalimë perforce remained there, for it was too far to ride back, nor would she go unattended. Neither men nor women hid their smiles; and Ancalimë would not come to the feast, but lay abed listening to the laughter far off and thinking it aimed at herself. Next day she rode off in a cold rage, and Hallacar sent three men to escort her. Thus he was revenged, for she came never back to Emerië, where the very sheep seemed to make scorn of her. But she pursued Hallacar with hatred afterwards.

Of the later years of Tar-Aldarion nothing can now be said, save that he seems to have continued his voyages to Middle-earth, and more than once left Ancalimë as his regent. His last voyage took place about the end of the first millennium of the Second Age; and in the year 1075 Ancalimë became the first Ruling Queen of Númenor. It is told that after the death of Tar-Aldarion in 1098 Tar-Ancalimë neglected all her father's policies and gave no further aid to Gil-galad in Lindon. Her son Anárion, who was afterwards the eighth Ruler of Númenor, first had two daughters. They disliked and feared the Queen, and refused the Heirship, remaining unwed, since the Queen would not in revenge allow them to marry.<sup>122</sup> Anárion's son Súrion was born the last, and was the ninth Ruler of Númenor.

Of Erendis it is said that when old age came upon her, neglected by Ancalimë and in bitter loneliness, she longed once more for Aldarion; and learning that he was gone from Númenor on what proved to be his last voyage but that he was soon expected to return, she left Emerië at last and journeyed unrecognised and unknown to the haven of Rómenna. There, it seems, she met her fate; but only the words 'Erendis perished in water in the year 985' remain to suggest how it came to pass.

## Note On Chronology

**A**nardil (Aldarion) was born in the year 700 of the Second Age, and his first voyage to Middle-earth took place in 725-7. Meneldur his father became King of Númenor in 740. The Guild of Venturers was founded in 750, and Aldarion was proclaimed King's Heir in 800. Erendis was born in 771. Aldarion's seven year voyage (p. 229) covered the years 806-13, the first voyage of the *Palarran* (p. 230) 816-20, the voyage of seven ships in defiance of Tar-Meneldur (p. 232) 824-9, and the voyage of fourteen years that followed immediately on the last (pp. 232, 233) 829-43.

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<sup>122</sup> This is strange, because Anárion was the Heir in Ancalimë's life-time. In 'The Line of Elros' (p. 284) it is said only that Anárion's daughters 'refused the sceptre'.

Aldarion and Erendis were betrothed in 858; the years of the voyage undertaken by Aldarion after his betrothal (p. 242) were 863-9, and the wedding was in 870. Ancalimë was born in the Spring of 873. The *Hirilondë* sailed in the Spring of 877 and Aldarion's return, followed by the breach with Erendis, took place in 882; he received the Sceptre of Númenor in 883.



## The Line Of Elros: Kings Of Númenor

### From The Founding Of The City Of Armenelos To The Downfall

*The Realm of Númenor is held to have begun in the thirty-second year of the Second Age, when Elros son of Eärendil ascended the throne in the City of Armenelos, being then ninety years of age. Thereafter he was known in the Scroll of the Kings by the name of Tar-Minyatur; for it was the custom of the Kings to take their titles in the forms of the Quenya or High-elven tongue, that being the noblest tongue of the world, and this custom endured until the days of Ar-Adûnakhôr (Tar-Herunûmen). Elros Tar-Minyatur ruled the Númenóreans for four hundred years and ten. For to the Númenóreans long life had been granted, and they remained unwearied for thrice the span of mortal Men in Middle-earth; but to Eärendil's son the longest life of any Man was given, and to his descendants a lesser span, and yet one greater than to others even of the Númenóreans; and so it was until the coming of the Shadow, when the years of the Númenóreans began to wane.*<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> There are several references to the greater life-span of the descendants of Elros than that of any others among the Númenóreans, in addition to those in the tale of Aldarion and Erendis. Thus in the *Akallabêth* (*The Silmarillion* p. 261) it is said that all the line of Elros 'had long life even according to the measure of the Númenóreans'; and in an isolated note the difference in longevity is given a precise range: the 'end of vigour' for the descendants of Elros came (before the waning of their life-span set in) about the four hundredth year, or somewhat earlier, whereas for those not of that line it came towards the two hundredth year, or somewhat later. It may be noted that almost all the Kings from Vardamir to Tar-Ancalimon lived to or a little beyond their four hundredth year, and the three who did not died within one or two years of it.

But in the latest writing on this subject (which derives, however, from about the same time as the latest work on the tale of Aldarion and Erendis) the distinction in longevity is greatly diminished. To the Númenórean people as a whole is ascribed a life-span some five times the length of that of other Men (although this is in contradiction to the statement in *The Lord of the Rings* Appendix A (I, i) that the Númenóreans were granted a span 'in the beginning thrice that of lesser Men', a statement made again in the preface to the present text); and the difference of the Line of Elros from others in this respect is less a distinct mark and attribute than a mere tendency to live to a greater age. Though the case of Erendis, and the somewhat shorter lives of the 'Bëorian' of the West, are mentioned, there is no suggestion here, as there is in the tale of Aldarion and Erendis, that the difference in their expectation of life was both very great and also something inherent in their destinies, and recognised to be so.

In this account, only Elros was granted a peculiar longevity, and it is said here that he and his brother Elrond were not differently endowed in the physical potential of life, but that since Elros elected to remain among the kindred of Men he retained the chief characteristic of Men as opposed to the Quendi: the 'seeking elsewhere', as the Eldar called it, the 'weariness' or desire to depart from the world. It is further expounded that the increase in the Númenórean span was brought about by assimilation of their mode of life to that of the Eldar: though they were expressly warned that they had not become Eldar, but remained mortal Men, and had been granted only an extension of the period of their vigour of mind and body. Thus (as the Eldar) they grew at much the same rate as other Men, but when they had achieved 'full-growth' they then aged, or 'wore out', very much more slowly. The first approach of 'world-weariness' was indeed for them a sign that their period of vigour was nearing its end. When it came to an end, if they persisted in living, then decay would proceed, as growth had done, no more slowly than among other Men. Thus a Númenórean would pass quickly, in ten years maybe, from health and vigour of mind to decrepitude and senility. In the earlier generations they did not 'cling to life',

## I. Elros Tar-Minyatur

*He was born fifty-eight years before the Second Age began: he remained unwearied until he was five hundred years old and then laid down his life, in the year 442, having ruled for 410 years.*

## II. Vardamir Nólimon

*He was born in the year 61 of the Second Age and died in 471. He was called Nólimon for his chief love was for ancient lore, which he gathered from Elves and Men. Upon the departure of Elros, being then 381 years of age, he did not ascend the throne, but gave the sceptre to his son. He is nonetheless accounted the second of the Kings, and is deemed to have reigned one year.<sup>124</sup> It remained the custom thereafter until the days of Tar-Atanamir that the King should yield the sceptre to his successor before he died; and the Kings died of free will while yet in vigour of mind.*

## III. Tar-Amandil

*He was the son of Vardamir Nólimon, and he was born in the year 192. He ruled for 148 years,<sup>125</sup> and surrendered the sceptre in 590; he died in 603.*

## IV. Tar-Elendil

*He was the son of Tar-Amandil, and he was born in the year 350. He ruled for 150 years, and surrendered the sceptre in 740; he died in 751. He was also called Parmaitë, for with his own hand he made many books and legends of the lore gathered by his grandfather. He married late in his life, and his eldest child was a daughter, Silmarien, born in the year 521,<sup>126</sup> whose son was Valandil. Of Valandil came the Lords of Andúnië, of whom the last was Amandil father of Elendil the Tall, who came to Middle-earth after the Downfall. In Tar-Elendil's reign the ships of the Númenóreans first came back to Middle-earth.*

## V. Tar-Meneldur

*He was the only son and third child of Tar-Elendil, and he was born in the year 543. He ruled for 143 years, and surrendered the sceptre in 883; he died in 942. His 'right name' was Írimon; he took his title Meneldur from his love of star-lore. He married Almarian daughter of Vëantur, Captain of Ships under Tar-Elendil. He was wise, but gentle and patient. He resigned to his son, suddenly and long before due time, as a stroke of policy, in troubles that arose, owing to the disquiet of Gil-galad in Lindon, when he first became aware that an evil spirit, hostile to Eldar and Dúnedain, was stirring in Middle-earth.*

## VI. Tar-Aldarion

*He was the eldest child and only son of Tar-Meneldur, and he was born in the year 700. He ruled for 192 years, and surrendered the sceptre to his daughter in 1075; he died in 1098. His 'right name' was Anardil; but he was early known by the name of Aldarion, because he was much concerned with trees, and planted great woods to*

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but resigned it voluntarily. 'Clinging to life', and so in the end dying perforce and involuntarily, was one of the changes brought about by the Shadow and the rebellion of the Númenóreans; it was also accompanied by a shrinking of their natural life-span.

<sup>124</sup> See [note 120](#).

<sup>125</sup> The figure of 148 (rather than 147) must represent the years of Tar-Amandil's actual rule, and not take the notional year of Vardamir's reign into account.

<sup>126</sup> There is no question but that Silmarien was the eldest child of Tar-Elendil; and her birth-date is several times given as Second Age 521, while that of her brother Tar-Meneldur is fixed at 543. In the Tale of Years ([Appendix B](#) to *The Lord of the Rings*), however, Silmarien's birth is given in the annal entry 548; a date that goes back to the first drafts of that text. I think it very likely that this should have been revised but escaped notice.

furnish timber for the shipyards. He was a great mariner and ship-builder; and himself sailed often to Middle-earth, where he became the friend and counsellor of Gil-galad. Owing to his long absences abroad his wife Erendis became angered, and they separated in the year 882. His only child was a daughter, very beautiful, Ancalimë. In her favour Aldarion altered the law of succession, so that the (eldest) daughter of a King should succeed, if he had no sons. This change displeased the descendants of Elros, and especially the heir under the old law, Soronto, Aldarion's nephew, son of his elder sister Ailinel.<sup>127</sup>

#### VII. Tar-Ancalimë

She was the only child of Tar-Aldarion, and the first Ruling Queen of Númenor. She was born in the year 873, and she reigned for 205 years, longer than any ruler after Elros; she surrendered the sceptre in 1280, and died in 1285. She long remained unwed; but when pressed by Soronto to resign, in his despite she married in the year 1000 Hallacar son of Hallatan, a descendant of Vardamir.<sup>128</sup> After the birth of her son Anárion there was strife between Ancalimë and Hallacar. She was proud and wilful. After Aldarion's death she neglected all his policies, and gave no further aid to Gilgalad.

#### VIII. Tar-Anárion

He was the son of Tar-Ancalimë, and he was born in the year 1003. He ruled for 114 years, and surrendered the sceptre in 1394; he died in 1404.

#### IX. Tar-Súrion

He was the third child of Tar-Anárion; his sisters refused the sceptre.<sup>129</sup> He was born in the year 1174, and ruled for 162 years; he surrendered the sceptre in 1556, and died in 1574.

#### X. Tar-Telperien

She was the second Ruling Queen of Númenor. She was long-lived (for the women of the Númenóreans had the longer life, or laid down their lives less easily), and she would wed with no man. Therefore after her day the sceptre passed to Minastir; he was the son of Isilmo, the second child of Tar-Súrion.<sup>130</sup> Tar-Telperien was born in the year 1320; she ruled for 175 years, until 1731, and died in that same year.<sup>131</sup>

#### XI. Tar-Minastir

This name he had because he built a high tower upon the hill of Oromet, nigh to Andúnië and the west shores, and thence would spend great part of his days gazing westward. For the yearning was grown strong in the

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<sup>127</sup> This is not in agreement with the account of the earlier and later laws of succession given on pp. 268, 269, according to which Soronto only became Ancalimë's heir (if she died childless) by virtue of the new law, for he was a descendant in the female line.

'His elder sister' undoubtedly means 'the elder of his two sisters'.

<sup>128</sup> See p. 271.

<sup>129</sup> See p. 273 and note 122.

<sup>130</sup> It is curious that the sceptre passed to Tar-Telperien when Tar-Súrion had a son, Isilmo. It may well be that the succession here depends on the formulation of the new law given in *The Lord of the Rings*, i.e. simple primogeniture irrespective of sex (see p. 268), rather than inheritance by a daughter only if the Ruler had no son.

<sup>131</sup> The date 1731 here given for the end of the rule of Tar-Telperien and the accession of Tar-Minastir is strangely at variance with the dating, fixed by many references, of the first war against Sauron; for the great Númenórean fleet sent by Tar-Minastir reached Middle-earth in the year 1700. I cannot in any way account for the discrepancy.



hearts of the Númenóreans. He loved the Eldar but envied them. He it was who sent a great fleet to the aid of Gil-galad in the first war against Sauron. He was born in the year 1474, and ruled for 138 years; he surrendered the sceptre in 1869, and died in 1873.

## XII. Tar-Ciryatan

He was born in the year 1634, and ruled for 160 years; he surrendered the sceptre in 2029, and died in 2035. He was a mighty King, but greedy of wealth; he built a great fleet of royal ships, and his servants brought back great store of metals and gems, and oppressed the men of Middle-earth. He scorned the yearnings of his father, and eased the restlessness of his heart by voyaging, east, and north, and south, until he took the sceptre. It is said that he constrained his father to yield to him ere of his free will he would. In this way (it is held) might the first coming of the Shadow upon the bliss of Númenor be seen.

## XIII. Tar-Atanamir the Great

He was born in the year 1800, and ruled for 192 years, until 2221, which was the year of his death. Much is said of this King in the Annals, such as now survive the Downfall. For he was like his father proud and greedy of wealth, and the Númenóreans in his service exacted heavy tribute from the men of the coasts of Middle-earth. In his time the Shadow fell upon Númenor; and the King, and those that followed his lore, spoke openly against the ban of the Valar, and their hearts were turned against the Valar and the Eldar; but wisdom they still kept, and they feared the Lords of the West, and did not defy them. Atanamir is called also the Unwilling, for he was the first of the Kings to refuse to lay down his life, or to renounce the sceptre; and he lived until death took him perforce in dotage.<sup>132</sup>

## XIV. Tar-Ancalimon

He was born in the year 1986, and ruled for 165 years, until his death in 2386. In his time the rift became wider between the King's Men (the larger part) and those who maintained their ancient friendship with the Eldar. Many of the King's Men began to forsake the use of the Elven-tongues, and to teach them no longer to their children. But the royal titles were still given in Quenya, out of ancient custom rather than love, for fear lest the breaking of the old usage should bring ill-fortune.

## XV. Tar-Telemmaitë

He was born in the year 2136, and ruled for 140 years, until his death in 2526. Hereafter the Kings ruled in name from the death of their father to their own death, though the actual power passed often to their sons or counsellors; and the days of the descendants of Elros waned under the Shadow. This King was so called because of his love of silver, and he bade his servants to seek ever for mithril.

## XVI. Tar-Vanimeldë

She was the third Ruling Queen; she was born in the year 2277, and ruled for 111 years until her death in 2637. She gave little heed to ruling, loving rather music and dance; and the power was wielded by her husband Herucalmo, younger than she, but a descendant of the same degree from Tar-Atanamir. Herucalmo took the

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<sup>132</sup> In the Tale of Years (Appendix B to *The Lord of the Rings*) occurs the entry: '2251 Tar-Atanamir takes the sceptre. Rebellion and division of the Númenóreans begins.' This is altogether discrepant with the present text, according to which Tar-Atanamir died in 2221. This date 2221 is, however, itself an emendation from 2251; and his death is given elsewhere as 2251. Thus the same year appears in different texts as both the date of his accession and the date of his death; and the whole structure of the chronology shows clearly that the former must be wrong. Moreover, in the *Akallabêth* (*The Silmarillion* p. 266) it is said that it was in the time of Atanamir's son Ancalimon that the people of Númenor became divided. I have little doubt therefore that the entry in the Tale of Years is in error for a correct reading: '2251 Death of Tar-Atanamir. Tar-Ancalimon takes the sceptre. Rebellion and division of the Númenóreans begins.' But if so, it remains strange that the date of Atanamir's death should have been altered in 'The Line of Elros' if it were fixed by an entry in the Tale of Years.



sceptre upon his wife's death, calling himself Tar-Anducal, and withholding the rule from his son Alcarin; yet some do not reckon him in the Line of Kings as seventeenth, and pass to Alcarin. Tar-Anducal was born in the year 2286, and he died in 2657.

#### XVII. Tar-Alcarin

He was born in the year 2406, and he ruled for 80 years until his death in 2737, being rightful King for one hundred years.

#### XVIII. Tar-Calmacil

He was born in the year 2516, and he ruled for 88 years until his death in 2825. This name he took, for in his youth he was a great captain, and won wide lands along the coasts of Middle-earth. Thus he kindled the hate of Sauron, who nonetheless withdrew, and built his power in the East, far from the shores, biding his time. In the days of Tar-Calmacil the name of the King was first spoken in Adûnaic; and by the King's Men he was called Ar-Belzagar.

#### XIX. Tar-Ardamin

He was born in the year 2618, and he ruled for 74 years until his death in 2899. His name in Adûnaic was Ar-Abattârik.<sup>133</sup>

#### XX. Ar-Adûnakhôr (Tar-Herunúmen)

He was born in the year 2709, and he ruled for 63 years until his death in 2962. He was the first King to take the sceptre with a title in the Adûnaic tongue; though out of fear (as aforesaid) a name in Quenya was inscribed in the Scrolls. But these titles were held by the Faithful to be blasphemous, for they signified 'Lord of the West', by which title they had been wont to name one of the great Valar only, Manwë in especial. In this reign the Elven-tongues were no longer used, nor permitted to be taught, but were maintained in secret by the Faithful; and the ships from Eressëa came seldom and secretly to the west shores of Númenor thereafter.

#### XXI. Ar-Zimrathôn (Tar-Hostamir)

He was born in the year 2798, and he ruled for 71 years until his death in 3033.

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<sup>133</sup> In the list of the Kings and Queens of Númenor in Appendix A (I, i) to *The Lord of the Rings* the ruler following Tar-Calmacil (the eighteenth) was Ar-Adûnakhôr (the nineteenth). In the Tale of Years in Appendix B Ar-Adûnakhôr is said to have taken the sceptre in the year 2899; and on this basis Mr Robert Foster in *The Complete Guide to Middle-earth* gives the death-date of Tar-Calmacil as 2899. On the other hand, at a later point in the account of the rulers of Númenor in Appendix A, Ar-Adûnakhôr is called the twentieth king; and in 1964 my father replied to a correspondent who had enquired about this: 'As the genealogy stands he should be called the sixteenth king and nineteenth ruler. Nineteen should possibly be read for twenty; but it is also possible that a name has been left out.' He explained that he could not be certain because at the time of writing this letter his papers on the subject were not available to him.

When editing the *Akallabêth* I changed the actual reading 'And the twentieth king took the sceptre of his fathers, and he ascended the throne in the name of Adûnakhôr' to 'And the nineteenth king . . .' (*The Silmarillion* p. 267), and similarly 'four and twenty' to 'three and twenty' (*ibid.*, p. 270). At that time I had not observed that in 'The Line of Elros' the ruler following Tar-Calmacil was not Ar-Adûnakhôr but Tar-Ardamin; but it now seems perfectly clear, from the fact alone that Tar-Ardamin's death-date is here given as 2899, that he was omitted in error from the list in *The Lord of the Rings*.

On the other hand, it is a certainty of the tradition (stated in Appendix A, in the *Akallabêth*, and in 'The Line of Elros') that Ar-Adûnakhôr was the first King to take the sceptre in a name of the Adûnaic tongue. On the assumption that Tar-Ardamin dropped out of the list in Appendix A by a mere oversight, it is surprising that the change in the style of the royal names should there be attributed to the first ruler after Tar-Calmacil. It may be that a more complex textual situation underlies the passage than a mere error of omission.

## XXII. Ar-Sakalthôr (Tar-Falassion)

*He was born in the year 2876, and he ruled for 69 years until his death in 3102.*

## XXIII. Ar-Gimilzôr (Tar-Telemnar)

*He was born in the year 2960, and he ruled for 75 years until his death in 3177. He was the greatest enemy of the Faithful that had yet arisen; and he forbade utterly the use of the Eldarin tongues, and would not permit any of the Eldar to come to the land, and punished those that welcomed them. He revered nothing, and went never to the Hallow of Eru. He was wedded to Inzilbêth, a lady descended from Tar-Calmacil;<sup>134</sup> but she was secretly of the Faithful, for her mother was Lindórië of the House of the Lords of Andúnië, and there was small love between them, and strife between their sons. For Inzilahûn<sup>135</sup> the elder was beloved of his mother and of like mind with her; but Gimilkhâd the younger was his father's son, and him Ar-Gimilzôr would fain have appointed his Heir, had the laws allowed. Gimilkhâd was born in the year 3044, and he died in 3243.<sup>136</sup>*

## XXIV. Tar-Palantir (Ar-Inzilahûn)

*He was born in the year 3035, and he ruled for 78 years until his death in 3255. Tar-Palantir repented of the ways of the Kings before him, and would fain have returned to the friendship of the Eldar and the Lords of the West. This name Inzilahûn took, because he was far-sighted both in eye and in mind, and even those who hated him feared his words as those of a true-seer. He also would spend much of his days in Andúnië, since Lindorie his mother's mother was of the kin of the Lords, being sister indeed of Eärendur, the fifteenth Lord and grandfather of Númendil, who was Lord of Andúnië in the days of Tar-Palantir his cousin; and Tar-Palantir would ascend often to the ancient tower of King Minastir, and gaze westward in yearning, hoping to see, maybe, some sail coming from Eressëa. But no ship came ever again out of the West, because of the insolence of the Kings, and because the hearts of the most part of the Númenóreans were still hardened. For Gimilkhâd followed the ways of Ar-Gimilzôr, and became leader of the King's Party, and resisted the will of Tar-Palantir as openly as he dared, and yet more in secret. But for a while the Faithful had peace; and the King went ever at due times to the Hallow upon the Meneltarma, and the White Tree was again given tendance and honour. For Tar-Palantir prophesied, saying that when the Tree died then the line of the Kings also would perish.*

*Tar-Palantir married late and had no son, and his daughter he named Míriel in the Elven-tongue. But when the King died, she was taken to wife by Pharazôn son of Gimilkhâd (who also was dead) against her will, and against the law of Númenor, since she was the child of his father's brother. And he then seized the sceptre into his own hand, taking the title of Ar-Pharazôn (Tar-Calion); and Míriel was named Ar-Zimraphel.<sup>137</sup>*

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<sup>134</sup> In two genealogical tables her father is shown as Gimilzagar, the second son (born in 2630) of Tar-Calmacil, but this is clearly impossible: Inzilbêth must have been descended from Tar-Calmacil at more removes.

<sup>135</sup> There is a highly formalised floral design of my father's, similar in style to that shown in *Pictures by J. R. R. Tolkien*, 1979, no. 45, bottom right, which bears the title *Inzilahûn*, and beneath it is written both in Fëanorian script and transliterated *Númellótë* ['Flower of the West'].

<sup>136</sup> According to the *Akallabêth* (*The Silmarillion* p. 269) Gimilkhâd 'died two years before his two hundredth year, which was accounted an early death for one of Elros' line even in its waning'.

<sup>137</sup> As noted in [Appendix A](#) to *The Lord of the Rings* Míriel should have been the fourth Ruling Queen.

A final discrepancy between 'The Line of Elros' and the Tale of Years arises in the dates of Tar-Palantir. It is said in the *Akallabêth* (p. 269) that 'when Inzilahûn acceded to the sceptre, he took again a title in the Elven-tongue as of old, calling himself Tar-Palantir'; and in the Tale of Years occurs the entry: '3175 Repentance of Tar-Palantir. Civil war in Númenor.' It would seem almost certain from these statements that 3175 was the year of his accession; and this is borne out by the fact that in 'The Line of Elros' the death-date of his father Ar-Gimilzôr was originally given as 3175, and only later emended to 3177. As with the death-date of Tar-Atanamir (note 133 above) it is hard to understand why this small change was made, in contradiction to the Tale of Years.

XXV. Ar-Pharazôn (Tar-Calion)

*The mightiest and last King of Númenor. He was born in the year 3118, and ruled for 64 years, and died in the Downfall in the year 3319, usurping the sceptre of*

Tar-Míriel (Ar-Zimraphel)

*She was born in the year 3117, and died in the Downfall.*

*Of the deeds of Ar-Pharazôn, of his glory and his folly, more is told in the tale of the Downfall of Númenor, which Elendil wrote, and which was preserved in Gondor.*<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> The statement that Elendil was the author of the *Akallabêth* is made only here. It is also said, elsewhere, that the story of Aldarion and Erendis, ‘one of the few detailed histories preserved from Númenor’, owed its preservation to its being of interest to Elendil.



## The History Of Galadriel And Celeborn And Of Amroth King Of Lórien

There is no part of the history of Middle-earth more full of problems than the story of Galadriel and Celeborn, and it must be admitted that there are severe inconsistencies ‘embedded in the traditions’; or, to look at the matter from another point of view, that the role and importance of Galadriel only emerged slowly, and that her story underwent continual refashionings.

Thus, at the outset, it is certain that the earlier conception was that Galadriel went east over the mountains from Beleriand alone, before the end of the First Age, and met Celeborn in his own land of Lórien; this is explicitly stated in unpublished writing, and the same idea underlies Galadriel’s words to Frodo in *The Fellowship of the Ring* II 7, where she says of Celeborn that ‘He has dwelt in the West since the days of dawn, and I have dwelt with him years uncounted; for ere the fall of Nargothrond or Gondolin I passed over the mountains, and together through ages of the world we have fought the long defeat.’ In all probability Celeborn was in this conception a Nandorin Elf (that is, one of the Teleri who refused to cross the Misty Mountains on the Great Journey from Cuiviénen).

On the other hand, in [Appendix B](#) to *The Lord of the Rings* appears a later version of the story; for it is stated there that at the beginning of the Second Age ‘In Lindon south of the Lune dwelt for a time Celeborn, kinsman of Thingol; his wife was Galadriel, greatest of Elven women.’ And in the notes to *The Road Goes Ever On* (1968, p. 60) it is said that Galadriel ‘passed over the Mountains of Eredluin with her husband Celeborn (one of the Sindar) and went to Eregion’.

In *The Silmarillion* there is mention of the meeting of Galadriel and Celeborn in Doriath, and of his kinship with Thingol ([p. 115](#)); and of their being among the Eldar who remained in Middle-earth after the end of the First Age ([p. 254](#)).

The reasons and motives given for Galadriel’s remaining in Middle-earth are various. The passage just cited from *The Road Goes Ever On* says explicitly: ‘After the overthrow of Morgoth at the end of the First Age a ban was set upon her return, and she had replied proudly that she had no wish to do so.’ There is no such explicit statement in *The Lord of the Rings*; but in a letter written in 1967 my father declared:

*The Exiles were allowed to return—save for a few chief actors in the rebellion, of whom at the time of The Lord of the Rings only Galadriel remained. At the time of her Lament in Lórien she believed this to be perennial, as long as the Earth endured. Hence she concludes her lament with a wish or prayer that Frodo may as a special grace be granted a purgatorial (but not penal) sojourn in Eressëa, the solitary isle in sight of Aman, though for her the way is closed. Her prayer was granted—but also her personal ban was lifted, in reward for her services against Sauron, and above all for her rejection of the temptation to take the Ring when offered to her. So at the end we see her taking ship.*

This statement, very positive in itself, does not however demonstrate that the conception of a ban on Galadriel’s return into the West was present when the chapter ‘Farewell to Lórien’ was composed, many years before; and I am inclined to think that it was not (see [p. 302](#)).

In a very late and primarily philological essay, certainly written after the publication of *The Road Goes Ever On*, the story is distinctively different:

*Galadriel and her brother Finrod were the children of Finarfin, the second son of Indis. Finarfin was of his mother’s kind in mind and body, having the golden hair of the Vanyar, their noble and gentle temper, and their love of the Valar. As well as he could he kept aloof from the strife of his brothers and their estrangement from*

the Valar, and he often sought peace among the Teleri, whose language he learned. He wedded Eärwen, the daughter of King Olwë of Alqualondë, and his children were thus the kin of King Elu Thingol of Doriath in Beleriand, for he was the brother of Olwë; and this kinship influenced their decision to join in the Exile, and proved of great importance later in Beleriand. Finrod was like his father in his fair face and golden hair, and also in noble and generous heart, though he had the high courage of the Noldor and in his youth their eagerness and unrest; and he had also from his Telerin mother a love of the sea and dreams of far lands that he had never seen. Galadriel was the greatest of the Noldor, except Fëanor maybe, though she was wiser than he, and her wisdom increased with the long years.

Her mother-name was Nerwen ('man-maiden'),<sup>139</sup> and she grew to be tall beyond the measure even of the women of the Noldor; she was strong of body, mind, and will, a match for both the loremasters and the athletes of the Eldar in the days of their youth. Even among the Eldar she was accounted beautiful, and her hair was held a marvel unmatched. It was golden like the hair of her father and of her foremother Indis, but richer and more radiant, for its gold was touched by some memory of the starlike silver of her mother; and the Eldar said that the light of the Two Trees, Laurelin and Telperion, had been snared in her tresses. Many thought that this saying first gave to Fëanor the thought of imprisoning and blending the light of the Trees that later took shape in his hands as the Silmarils. For Fëanor beheld the hair of Galadriel with wonder and delight. He begged three times for a tress, but Galadriel would not give him even one hair. These two kinsfolk, the greatest of the Eldar of Valinor, were unfriends for ever.

Galadriel was born in the bliss of Valinor, but it was not long, in the reckoning of the Blessed Realm, before that was dimmed; and thereafter she had no peace within. For in that testing time amid the strife of the Noldor she was drawn this way and that. She was proud, strong, and selfwilled, as were all the descendants of Finwë save Finarfin; and like her brother Finrod, of all her kin the nearest to her heart, she had dreams of far lands and dominions that might be her own to order as she would without tutelage. Yet deeper still there dwelt in her the noble and generous spirit of the Vanyar, and a reverence for the Valar that she could not forget. From her earliest years she had a marvellous gift of insight into the minds of others, but judged them with mercy and understanding, and she withheld her goodwill from none save only Fëanor. In him she perceived a darkness that she hated and feared, though she did not perceive that the shadow of the same evil had fallen upon the minds of all the Noldor, and upon her own.

So it came to pass that when the light of Valinor failed, for ever as the Noldor thought, she joined the rebellion against the Valar who commanded them to stay; and once she had set foot upon that road of exile she would not relent, but rejected the last message of the Valar, and came under the Doom of Mandos. Even after the merciless assault upon the Teleri and the rape of their ships, though she fought fiercely against Fëanor in defence of her mother's kin, she did not turn back. Her pride was unwilling to return, a defeated suppliant for pardon; but now she burned with desire to follow Fëanor with her anger to whatever lands he might come, and to thwart him in all ways that she could. Pride still moved her when, at the end of the Elder Days after the final overthrow of Morgoth, she refused the pardon of the Valar for all who had fought against him, and remained in Middle-earth. It was not until two long ages more had passed, when at last all that she had desired in her youth came to her hand, the Ring of Power and the dominion of Middle-earth of which she had dreamed, that her wisdom was full grown and she rejected it, and passing the last test departed from Middle-earth for ever.

This last sentence relates closely to the scene in Lothlórien when Frodo offered the One Ring to Galadriel (*The Fellowship of the Ring* II 7): 'And now at last it comes. You will give me the Ring freely! In place of the Dark Lord you will set up a Queen.'

In *The Silmarillion* it is told (p. 84) that at the time of the rebellion of the Noldor in Valinor Galadriel

was eager to be gone. No oaths she swore, but the words of Fëanor concerning Middle-earth had kindled in her heart, for she yearned to see the wide unguarded lands and to rule there a realm at her own will.

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<sup>139</sup> See Appendix E, p. 346.



There are however in the present account several features of which there is no trace in *The Silmarillion*: the kinship of Finarfin's children with Thingol as a factor influencing their decision to join in Fëanor's rebellion; Galadriel's peculiar dislike and distrust of Fëanor from the beginning, and the effect she had on him; and the fighting at Alqualondë among the Noldor themselves—Angrod asserted to Thingol in Menegroth no more than that the kin of Finarfin were guiltless of the slaying of the Teleri (*The Silmarillion* p. 129). Most notable however in the passage just cited is the explicit statement that Galadriel *refused the pardon of the Valar* at the end of the First Age.

Later in this essay it is said that though called Nerwen by her mother and Artanis ('noble woman') by her father, the name she chose to be her Sindarin name was Galadriel, 'for it was the most beautiful of her names, and had been given to her by her lover, Teleporno of the Teleri, whom she wedded later in Beleriand'. Teleporno is Celeborn, here given a different history, as discussed further below (pp. 300-1); on the name itself see Appendix E, p. 346.

A wholly different story, adumbrated but never told, of Galadriel's conduct at the time of the rebellion of the Noldor appears in a very late and partly illegible note: the last writing of my father's on the subject of Galadriel and Celeborn, and probably the last on Middle-earth and Valinor, set down in the last month of his life. In this he emphasized the commanding stature of Galadriel already in Valinor, the equal if unlike in endowments of Fëanor; and it is said here that so far from joining in Fëanor's revolt she was in every way opposed to him. She did indeed wish to depart from Valinor and to go into the wide world of Middle-earth for the exercise of her talents; for 'being brilliant in mind and swift in action she had early absorbed all of what she was capable of the teaching which the Valar thought fit to give the Eldar', and she felt confined in the tutelage of Aman. This desire of Galadriel's was, it seems, known to Manwë, and he had not forbidden her; but nor had she been given formal leave to depart. Pondering what she might do Galadriel's thoughts turned to the ships of the Teleri, and she went for a while to dwell with her mother's kindred in Alqualondë. There she met Celeborn, who is here again a Telerin prince, the grandson of Olwë of Alqualondë and thus her close kinsman. Together they planned to build a ship and sail in it to Middle-earth; and they were about to seek leave from the Valar for their venture when Melkor fled from Valmar and returning with Ungoliant destroyed the light of the Trees. In Fëanor's revolt that followed the Darkening of Valinor Galadriel had no part: indeed she with Celeborn fought heroically in defence of Alqualondë against the assault of the Noldor, and Celeborn's ship was saved from them. Galadriel, despairing now of Valinor and horrified by the violence and cruelty of Fëanor, set sail into the darkness without waiting for Manwë's leave, which would undoubtedly have been withheld in that hour, however legitimate her desire in itself. It was thus that she came under the ban set upon all departure, and Valinor was shut against her return. But together with Celeborn she reached Middle-earth somewhat sooner than Fëanor, and sailed into the haven where Círdan was lord. There they were welcomed with joy, as being of the kin of Elwë (Thingol). In the years after they did not join in the war against Angband, which they judged to be hopeless under the ban of the Valar and without their aid; and their counsel was to withdraw from Beleriand and to build up a power to the eastward (whence they feared that Morgoth would draw reinforcement), befriending and teaching the Dark Elves and Men of those regions. But such a policy having no hope of acceptance among the Elves of Beleriand, Galadriel and Celeborn departed over Ered Lindon before the end of the First Age; and when they received the permission of the Valar to return into the West they rejected it.

This story, withdrawing Galadriel from all association with the rebellion of Fëanor, even to the extent of giving her a separate departure (with Celeborn) from Aman, is profoundly at variance with all that is said elsewhere. It arose from 'philosophical' (rather than 'historical') considerations, concerning the precise nature of Galadriel's disobedience in Valinor on the one hand, and her status and power in Middle-earth on the other. That it would have entailed a good deal of alteration in the narrative of *The Silmarillion* is evident; but that my father doubtless intended to do. It may be noted here that Galadriel did not appear in the original story of the rebellion and flight of the Noldor, which existed long before she did; and also, of course, that after her entry into the stories of the First Age her actions could still be transformed radically, since *The Silmarillion* had not been published. The book as published was however formed from completed narratives, and I could not take into account merely projected revisions.

On the other hand, the making of Celeborn into a Telerin Elf of Aman contradicts not only statements in *The Silmarillion*, but also those cited already (p. 294) from *The Road Goes Ever On* and Appendix B to *The Lord of the Rings*.

*the Rings*, where Celeborn is a Sindarin Elf of Beleriand. As to why this fundamental alteration in his history was to be made, it might be answered that it arose from the new narrative element of Galadriel's departure from Aman *separately* from the hosts of the rebel Noldor; but Celeborn is already transformed into a Telerin Elf in the text cited on [p. 298](#), where Galadriel did take part in Fëanor's revolt and march from Valinor, and where there is no indication of how Celeborn came to Middle-earth.

The earlier story (apart from the question of the ban and the pardon), to which the statements in [The Silmarillion](#), *The Road Goes Ever On*, and [Appendix B](#) to *The Lord of the Rings* refer, is fairly clear: Galadriel, coming to Middle-earth as one of the leaders of the second host of the Noldor, met Celeborn in Doriath, and was later wedded to him; he was the grandson of Thingol's brother Elmo—a shadowy figure about whom nothing is told save that he was the younger brother of Elwë (Thingol) and Olwë, and was 'beloved of Elwë with whom he remained'. (Elmo's son was named Galadhon, and his sons were Celeborn and Galathil; Galathil was the father of Nimloth, who wedded Dior Thingol's Heir and was the mother of Elwing. By this genealogy Celeborn was a kinsman of Galadriel, the granddaughter of Olwë of Alqualondë, but not so close as by that in which he became Olwë's grandson.) It is a natural assumption that Celeborn and Galadriel were present at the ruin of Doriath (it is said in one place that Celeborn 'escaped the sack of Doriath'), and perhaps aided the escape of Elwing to the Havens of Sirion with the Silmaril—but this is nowhere stated. Celeborn is mentioned in [Appendix B](#) to *The Lord of the Rings* as dwelling for a time in Lindon south of the Lune;<sup>140</sup> but early in the Second Age they passed over the Mountains into Eriador. Their subsequent history, in the same phase (so to call it) of my father's writing, is told in the short narrative that follows here.

## Concerning Galadriel And Celeborn

The text bearing this title is a short and hasty outline, very roughly composed, which is nonetheless almost the sole narrative source for the events in the West of Middle-earth up to the defeat and expulsion of Sauron from Eriador in the year 1701 of the Second Age. Other than this there is little beyond the brief and infrequent entries in the [Tale of Years](#), and the much more generalised and selective account in [Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age](#) (published in *The Silmarillion*). It is certain that this present text was composed after the publication of *The Lord of the Rings*, both from there being a reference to the book and from the fact that Galadriel is called the daughter of Finarfin and the sister of Finrod Felagund (for these are the later names of those princes, introduced in the revised edition: see [note 158](#)). The text is much emended, and it is not always possible to see what belongs to the time of composition of the manuscript and what is indefinitely later. This is the case with those references to Amroth that make him the son of Galadriel and Celeborn; but whenever these references were inserted, I think it is virtually certain that this was a new construction, later than the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*. Had he been supposed to be their son when it was written, the fact would surely have been mentioned.

It is very notable that not only is there no mention in this text of a ban on Galadriel's return into the West, but it even seems from a passage at the beginning of the account that no such idea was present; while later in the narrative Galadriel's remaining in Middle-earth after the defeat of Sauron in Eriador is ascribed to her sense that it was her duty not to depart while he was still finally unconquered. This is a chief support of the (hesitant) view expressed above ([p. 295](#)) that the story of the ban was later than the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*; cf. also a passage in the story of the Elessar, given on [p. 323](#).

What follows here is retold from this text, with some interspersed comments, indicated by square brackets.

Galadriel was the daughter of Finarfin, and sister of Finrod Felagund. She was welcome in Doriath, because her mother Eärwen, daughter of Olwë, was Telerin and the niece of Thingol, and because the people of Finarfin had

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<sup>140</sup> In a note in unpublished material the Elves of Harlindon, or Lindon south of the Lune, are said to have been largely of Sindarin origin, and the region to have been a fief under the rule of Celeborn. It is natural to associate this with the statement in [Appendix B](#); but the reference may possibly be to a later period, for the movements and dwelling-places of Celeborn and Galadriel after the fall of Eregion in 1697 are extremely obscure.

had no part in the Kinslaying of Alqualondë; and she became a friend of Melian. In Doriath she met Celeborn, grandson of Elmo the brother of Thingol. For love of Celeborn, who would not leave Middle-earth (and probably with some pride of her own, for she had been one of those eager to adventure there), she did not go West at the Downfall of Melkor, but crossed Ered Lindon with Celeborn and came into Eriador. When they entered that region there were many Noldor in their following, together with Grey-elves and Green-elves; and for a while they dwelt in the country about Lake Nenuial (Evendim, north of the Shire). Celeborn and Galadriel came to be regarded as Lord and Lady of the Eldar in Eriador, including the wandering companies of Nandorin origin who had never passed west over Ered Lindon and come down into Ossiriand [see *The Silmarillion* p. 94]. During their sojourn near Nenuial was born, at some time between the years 350 and 400, their son Amroth. [The time and place of Celebrian's birth, whether here or later in Eregion, or even later in Lórien, is not made definite.]

But eventually Galadriel became aware that Sauron again, as in the ancient days of the captivity of Melkor [see *The Silmarillion* p. 51], had been left behind. Or rather, since Sauron had as yet no single name, and his operations had not been perceived to proceed from a single evil spirit, prime servant of Melkor, she perceived that there was an evil controlling purpose abroad in the world, and that it seemed to proceed from a source further to the East, beyond Eriador and the Misty Mountains.

Celeborn and Galadriel therefore went eastwards, about the year 700 of the Second Age, and established the (primarily but by no means solely) Noldorin realm of Eregion. It may be that Galadriel chose it because she knew of the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm (Moria). There were and always remained some Dwarves on the eastern side of Ered Lindon,<sup>141</sup> where the very ancient mansions of Nogrod and Belegost had been—not far from Nenuial; but they had transferred most of their strength to Khazad-dûm. Celeborn had no liking for Dwarves of any race (as he showed to Gimli in Lothlórien), and never forgave them for their part in the destruction of Doriath; but it was only the host of Nogrod that took part in that assault, and it was destroyed in the battle of Sarn Athrad [*The Silmarillion* pp. 233-5]. The Dwarves of Belegost were filled with dismay at the calamity and fear for its outcome, and this hastened their departure eastwards to Khazad-dûm.<sup>142</sup> Thus the Dwarves of Moria may be presumed to have been innocent of the ruin of Doriath and not hostile to the Elves. In any case, Galadriel was more far-sighted in this than Celeborn; and she perceived from the beginning that Middle-earth could not be saved from 'the residue of evil' that Morgoth had left behind him save by a union of all the peoples who were in their way and in their measure opposed to him. She looked upon the Dwarves also with the eye of a commander, seeing in them the finest warriors to pit against the Orcs. Moreover Galadriel was a Noldo, and she had a natural sympathy with their minds and their passionate love of crafts of hand, sympathy much greater than that found among many of the Eldar: the Dwarves were 'the Children of Aulë', and Galadriel, like others of the Noldor, had been a pupil of Aulë and Yavanna in Valinor.

Galadriel and Celeborn had in their company a Noldorin craftsman named Celebrimbor. [He is here said to have been one of the survivors of Gondolin, who had been among Turgon's greatest artificers; but the text is emended to the later story that made him a descendant of Fëanor, as is mentioned in [Appendix B](#) to *The Lord of the Rings* (in the revised edition only), and more fully detailed in *The Silmarillion* (pp. 176, 286), where he is said to have been the son of Curufin, the fifth son of Fëanor, who was estranged from his father and remained in Nargothrond when Celegorm and Curufin were driven forth.] Celebrimbor had 'an almost "dwarvish" obsession with crafts'; and he soon became the chief artificer of Eregion, entering into a close relationship with the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm, among whom his greatest friend was Narvi. [In the inscription on the West-gate of Moria Gandalf read the words: *Im Narvi hain echant: Celebrimbor o Eregion teithant i thiw hin*: 'I, Narvi,

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<sup>141</sup> Cf. *The Fellowship of the Ring* I 2: 'The ancient East-West Road ran through the Shire to its end at the Grey Havens, and dwarves had always used it on their way to their mines in the Blue Mountains.'

<sup>142</sup> It is said in [Appendix A \(III\)](#) to *The Lord of the Rings* that the ancient cities of Nogrod and Belegost were ruined in the breaking of Thangorodrim; but in the Tale of Years in [Appendix B](#): 'c. 40 Many Dwarves leaving their old cities in Ered Luin go to Moria and swell its numbers.'



made them. Celebrimbor of Hollin drew these signs.’ *The Fellowship of the Ring* II 4.] Both Elves and Dwarves had great profit from this association: so that Eregion became far stronger, and Khazad-dûm far more beautiful, than either would have done alone.

[This account of the origin of Eregion agrees with what is told in *Of the Rings of Power* (*The Silmarillion* p. 286), but neither there nor in the brief references in [Appendix B](#) to *The Lord of the Rings* is there any mention of the presence of Galadriel and Celeborn; indeed in the latter (again, in the revised edition only) Celebrimbor is called the Lord of Eregion.]

The building of the chief city of Eregion, Ost-in-Edhil, was begun in about the year 750 of the Second Age [the date that is given in the [Tale of Years](#) for the founding of Eregion by the Noldor]. News of these things came to the ears of Sauron, and increased the fears that he felt concerning the coming of the Númenóreans to Lindon and the coasts further south, and their friendship with Gil-galad; and he heard tell also of Aldarion, son of Tar-Meneldur the King of Númenor, now become a great ship-builder who brought his vessels to haven far down into the Harad. Sauron therefore left Eriador alone for a while, and he chose the land of Mordor, as it was afterwards called, for a stronghold as a counter to the threat of the Númenórean landings [this is dated [c. 1000](#) in the *Tale of Years*]. When he felt himself to be secure he sent emissaries to Eriador, and finally, in about the year 1200 of the Second Age, came himself, wearing the fairest form that he could contrive.

But in the meantime the power of Galadriel and Celeborn had grown, and Galadriel, assisted in this by her friendship with the Dwarves of Moria, had come into contact with the Nandorin realm of Lórinand on the other side of the Misty Mountains.<sup>143</sup> This was peopled by those Elves who forsook the Great Journey of the Eldar from Cuiviénen and settled in the woods of the Vale of Anduin [*The Silmarillion* p. 94]; and it extended into the forests on both sides of the Great River, including the region where afterwards was Dol Guldur. These Elves had no princes or rulers, and led their lives free of care while all Morgoth’s power was concentrated in the North-west of Middle-earth;<sup>144</sup> ‘but many Sindar and Noldor came to dwell among them, and their

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<sup>143</sup> In a note to the text it is explained that *Lórinand* was the Nandorin name of this region (afterwards called *Lórien* and *Lothlórien*), and contained the Elvish word meaning ‘golden light’: ‘valley of gold’. The Quenya form would be *Lauren-andë*, the Sindarin *Glornan* or *Nan Laur*. Both here and elsewhere the meaning of the name is explained by reference to the golden mallorn-trees of Lothlórien; but they were brought there by Galadriel (for the story of their origin see [pp. 216-17](#)), and in another, later, discussion the name *Lórinand* is said to have been itself a transformation, after the introduction of the mallorns, of a yet older name *Lindórinand*, ‘Vale of the Land of the Singers’. Since the Elves of this land were in origin Teleri, there is here no doubt present the name by which the Teleri called themselves, *Lindar*, ‘the Singers’. From many other discussions of the names of Lothlórien, to some extent at variance among themselves, it emerges that all the later names were probably due to Galadriel herself, combining different elements: *laurë*, ‘gold’, *nan(d)*, ‘valley’, *ndor*, ‘land’, *lin*, ‘sing’ and in *Laurelindórinan*, ‘Valley of Singing Gold’ (which Treebeard told the Hobbits was the earlier name) deliberately echoing the name of the Golden Tree that grew in Valinor, ‘for which, as is plain, Galadriel’s longing increased year by year to, at last, an overwhelming regret’.

*Lórien* itself was originally the Quenya name of a region in Valinor, often used as the name of the Vala (Irmo) to whom it belonged: ‘a place of rest and shadowy trees and fountains, a retreat from cares and griefs’. The further change from *Lórinand*, ‘Valley of Gold’ to *Lórien* ‘may well be due to Galadriel herself’, for ‘the resemblance cannot be accidental. She had endeavoured to make Lórien a refuge and an island of peace and beauty, a memorial of ancient days, but was now filled with regret and misgiving, knowing that the golden dream was hastening to a grey awakening. It may be noted that Treebeard interpreted *Lothlórien* as “Dreamflower.”’

In ‘Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn’ I have retained the name *Lórinand* throughout, although when it was written *Lórinand* was intended as the original and ancient Nandorin name of the region, and the story of the introduction of the mallorns by Galadriel had not yet been devised.

<sup>144</sup> This is a later emendation; the text as originally written stated that *Lórinand* was ruled by native princes.

“Sindarizing” under the impact of Beleriandic culture began’. [It is not made clear when this movement into Lórinand took place; it may be that they came from Eregion by way of Khazad-dûm and under the auspices of Galadriel.] Galadriel, striving to counteract the machinations of Sauron, was successful in Lórinand; while in Lindon Gil-galad shut out Sauron’s emissaries and even Sauron himself [as is more fully reported in *Of the Rings of Power* (*The Silmarillion* p. 287)]. But Sauron had better fortune with the Noldor of Eregion and especially with Celebrimbor, who desired in his heart to rival the skill and fame of Fëanor. [The cozening of the smiths of Eregion by Sauron, and his giving himself the name Annatar, Lord of Gifts, is **told** in *Of the Rings of Power*; but there is there no mention of Galadriel.]

In Eregion Sauron posed as an emissary of the Valar, sent by them to Middle-earth (‘thus anticipating the Istari’) or ordered by them to remain there to give aid to the Elves. He perceived at once that Galadriel would be his chief adversary and obstacle, and he endeavoured therefore to placate her, bearing her scorn with outward patience and courtesy. [No explanation is offered in this rapid outline of why Galadriel scorned Sauron, unless she saw through his disguise, or of why, if she did perceive his true nature, she permitted him to remain in Eregion.]<sup>145</sup> Sauron used all his arts upon Celebrimbor and his fellow-smiths, who had formed a society or brotherhood, very powerful in Eregion, the Gwaith-i-Mírdain; but he worked in secret, unknown to Galadriel and Celeborn. Before long Sauron had the Gwaith-i-Mírdain under his influence, for at first they had great profit from his instruction in secret matters of their craft.<sup>146</sup> So great became his hold on the Mírdain that at length he persuaded them to revolt against Galadriel and Celeborn and to seize power in Eregion; and that was at some time between 1350 and 1400 of the Second Age. Galadriel thereupon left Eregion and passed through Khazad-dûm to Lórinand, taking with her Amroth and Celebrían; but Celeborn would not enter the mansions of the Dwarves, and he remained behind in Eregion, disregarded by Celebrimbor. In Lórinand Galadriel took up rule, and defence against Sauron.

Sauron himself departed from Eregion about the year 1500, after the Mírdain had begun the making of the Rings of Power. Now Celebrimbor was not corrupted in heart or faith, but had accepted Sauron as what he posed to be; and when at length he discovered the existence of the One Ring he revolted against Sauron, and

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<sup>145</sup> In an isolated and undateable note it is said that although the name *Sauron* is used earlier than this in the Tale of Years, his name, implying identity with the great lieutenant of Morgoth in *The Silmarillion*, was not actually known until about the year 1600 of the Second Age, the time of the forging of the One Ring. The mysterious power of hostility, to Elves and Edain, was perceived soon after the year 500, and among the Númenóreans first by Aldarion towards the end of the eighth century (about the time when he established the haven of Vinyalondë, p. 228). But it had no known centre. Sauron endeavoured to keep distinct his two sides: *enemy* and *tempter*. When he came among the Noldor he adopted a specious fair form (a kind of simulated anticipation of the later Istari), and a fair name: *Artano*, ‘high-smith’, or *Aulendil*, meaning one who is devoted to the service of the Vala Aulë. (In *Of the Rings of Power*, p. 287, the name that Sauron gave to himself at this time was *Annatar*, the Lord of Gifts; but that name is not mentioned here.) The note goes on to say that Galadriel was not deceived, saying that this *Aulendil* was not in the train of Aulë in Valinor; ‘but this is not decisive, since Aulë existed before the “Building of Arda”, and the probability is that Sauron was in fact one of the Aulëan Maiar, corrupted “before Arda began” by Melkor’. With this compare the opening sentences in *Of the Rings of Power*: ‘Of old there was Sauron the Maia . . . In the beginning of Arda Melkor seduced him to his allegiance’.

<sup>146</sup> In a letter written in September 1954 my father said: ‘At the beginning of the Second Age he [Sauron] was still beautiful to look at, or could still assume a beautiful visible shape—and was not indeed wholly evil, not unless all “reformers” who want to hurry up with “reconstruction” and “reorganization” are wholly evil, even before pride and the lust to exert their will eat them up. The particular branch of the High Elves concerned, the Noldor or Loremasters, were always vulnerable on the side of “science and technology”, as we should call it: they wanted to have the knowledge that Sauron genuinely had, and those of Eregion refused the warnings of Gil-galad and Elrond. The particular “desire” of the Eregion Elves—an “allegory” if you like of a love of machinery, and technical devices—is also symbolized by their special friendship with the Dwarves of Moria.’

went to Lórinand to take counsel once more with Galadriel. They should have destroyed all the Rings of Power at this time, ‘but they failed to find the strength’. Galadriel counselled him that the Three Rings of the Elves should be hidden, never used, and dispersed, far from Eregion where Sauron believed them to be. It was at that time that she received Nenya, the White Ring, from Celebrimbor, and by its power the realm of Lórinand was strengthened and made beautiful; but its power upon her was great also and unforeseen, for it increased her latent desire for the Sea and for return into the West, so that her joy in Middle-earth was diminished.<sup>147</sup> Celebrimbor followed her counsel that the Ring of Air and the Ring of Fire should be sent out of Eregion; and he entrusted them to Gil-galad in Lindon. (It is said here that at this time [Gil-galad](#) gave Narya, the Red Ring, to Círdan Lord of the Havens, but later in the narrative there is a marginal note that he kept it himself until he set out for the War of the Last Alliance.)

When Sauron learned of the repentance and revolt of Celebrimbor his disguise fell and his wrath was revealed; and gathering a great force he moved over Calenardhon (Rohan) to the invasion of Eriador in the year 1695. When news of this reached Gil-galad he sent out a force under Elrond Halfelven; but Elrond had far to go, and Sauron turned north and made at once for Eregion. The scouts and vanguard of Sauron’s host were already approaching when Celeborn made a sortie and drove them back; but though he was able to join his force to that of Elrond they could not return to Eregion, for Sauron’s host was far greater than theirs, great enough both to hold them off and closely to invest Eregion. At last the attackers broke into Eregion with ruin and devastation, and captured the chief object of Sauron’s assault, the House of the Mírdain, where were their smithies and their treasures. Celebrimbor, desperate, himself withstood Sauron on the steps of the great door of the Mírdain; but he was grappled and taken captive, and the House was ransacked. There Sauron took the Nine Rings and other lesser works of the Mírdain; but the Seven and the Three he could not find. Then Celebrimbor was put to torment, and Sauron learned from him where the Seven were bestowed. This Celebrimbor revealed, because neither the Seven nor the Nine did he value as he valued the Three; the Seven and the Nine were made with Sauron’s aid, whereas the Three were made by Celebrimbor alone, with a different power and purpose. [It is not actually said here that Sauron at this time took possession of the Seven Rings, though the implication seems clear that he did so. In Appendix A (III) to *The Lord of the Rings* it is said that there was a belief among the Dwarves of Durin’s Folk that the Ring of Durin III, King of Khazad-dûm, was given to him by the Elven-smiths themselves, and not by Sauron; but nothing is said in the present text about the way in which the Seven Rings came into the possession of the Dwarves.] Concerning the Three Rings Sauron could learn nothing from Celebrimbor; and he had him put to death. But he guessed the truth, that the Three had been committed to Elvish guardians: and that must mean to Galadriel and Gil-galad.

In black anger he turned back to battle; and bearing as a banner Celebrimbor’s body hung upon a pole, shot through with Orc-arrows, he turned upon the forces of Elrond. Elrond had gathered such few of the Elves of Eregion as had escaped, but he had no force to withstand the onset. He would indeed have been overwhelmed had not Sauron’s host been attacked in the rear; for Durin sent out a force of Dwarves from Khazad-dûm, and with them came Elves of Lórinand led by Amroth. Elrond was able to extricate himself, but he was forced away northwards, and it was at that time [in the year [1697](#), according to the Tale of Years] that he established a refuge and stronghold at Imladris (Rivendell). Sauron withdrew the pursuit of Elrond and turned upon the Dwarves and the Elves of Lórinand, whom he drove back; but the Gates of Moria were shut, and he could not enter. Ever afterwards Moria had Sauron’s hate, and all Orcs were commanded to harry Dwarves whenever they might.

But now Sauron attempted to gain the mastery of Eriador: Lórinand could wait. But as he ravaged the lands, slaying or drawing off all the small groups of Men and hunting the remaining Elves, many fled to swell Elrond’s host to the northward. Now Sauron’s immediate purpose was to take Lindon, where he believed that he had most chance of seizing one, or more, of the Three Rings; and he called in therefore his scattered forces

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<sup>147</sup> Galadriel cannot have made use of the powers of Nenya until a much later time, after the loss of the Ruling Ring; but it must be admitted that the text does not at all suggest this (although she is said just above to have advised Celebrimbor that the Elven Rings should never be used).

and marched west towards the land of Gil-galad, ravaging as he went. But his force was weakened by the necessity of leaving a strong detachment to contain Elrond and prevent him coming down upon his rear.

Now for long years the Númenóreans had brought in their ships to the Grey Havens, and there they were welcome. As soon as Gil-galad began to fear that Sauron would come with open war into Eriador he sent messages to Númenor; and on the shores of Lindon the Númenóreans began to build up a force and supplies for war. In 1695, when Sauron invaded Eriador, Gil-galad called on Númenor for aid. Then Tar-Minastir the King sent out a great navy; but it was delayed, and did not reach the coasts of Middle-earth until the year 1700. By that time Sauron had mastered all Eriador, save only besieged Imladris, and had reached the line of the River Lhûn. He had summoned more forces, which were approaching from the south-east, and were indeed in Enedwaith at the Crossing of Tharbad, which was only lightly held. Gil-galad and the Númenóreans were holding the Lhûn in desperate defence of the Grey Havens, when in the very nick of time the great armament of Tar-Minastir came in; and Sauron's host was heavily defeated and driven back. The Númenórean admiral Ciryatur sent part of his ships to make a landing further to the south.

Sauron was driven away south-east after great slaughter at Sarn Ford (the crossing of the Baranduin); and though strengthened by his force at Tharbad he suddenly found a host of the Númenóreans again in his rear, for Ciryatur had put a strong force ashore at the mouth of the Gwathló (Greyflood), 'where there was a small Númenórean harbour'. [This was Vinyalondë of Tar-Aldarion, afterwards called Lond Daer; see Appendix [p. 338](#).] In the Battle of the Gwathló Sauron was routed utterly and he himself only narrowly escaped. His small remaining force was assailed in the east of Calenardhon, and he with no more than a bodyguard fled to the region afterwards called Dagorlad (Battle Plain), whence broken and humiliated he returned to Mordor, and vowed vengeance upon Númenor. The army that was besieging Imladris was caught between Elrond and Gilgalad, and utterly destroyed. Eriador was cleared of the enemy, but lay largely in ruins.

At this time the first Council was held,<sup>148</sup> and it was there determined that an Elvish stronghold in the east of Eriador should be maintained at Imladris rather than in Eregion. At that time also Gil-galad gave Vilya, the Blue Ring, to Elrond, and appointed him to be his vice-regent in Eriador; but the Red Ring he kept, until he gave it to Círdan when he set out from Lindon in the days of the Last Alliance.<sup>149</sup> For many years the Westlands had peace, and time in which to heal their wounds; but the Númenóreans had tasted power in Middle-earth, and from that time forward they began to make permanent settlements on the western coasts [dated 'c. 1800' in the Tale of Years], becoming too powerful for Sauron to attempt to move west out of Mordor for a long time.

In its concluding passage the narrative returns to Galadriel, telling that the sea-longing grew so strong in her that (though she deemed it her duty to remain in Middle-earth while Sauron was still unconquered) she determined to leave Lórinand and to dwell near the sea. She committed Lórinand to Amroth, and passing again through Moria with Celebrían she came to Imladris, seeking Celeborn. There (it seems) she found him, and there they dwelt together for a long time; and it was then that Elrond first saw Celebrían, and loved her, though he said nothing of it. It was while Galadriel was in Imladris that the Council referred to above was held. But at some later time [there is no indication of the date] Galadriel and Celeborn together with Celebrían departed from Imladris and went to the little-inhabited lands between the mouth of the Gwathló and Ethir Anduin. There they dwelt in Belfalas, at the place that was afterwards called Dol Amroth; there Amroth their son at times visited them, and their company was swelled by Nandorin Elves from Lórinand. It was not until far on in the

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<sup>148</sup> The text was emended to read 'the first White Council'. In the Tale of Years the formation of the White Council is given under the year [2463](#) of the Third Age; but it may be that the name of the Council of the Third Age deliberately echoed that of this Council held long before, the more especially as several of the chief members of the one had been members of the other.

<sup>149</sup> Earlier in this narrative ([p. 306](#)) it is said that Gil-galad gave Narya, the Red Ring, to Círdan as soon as he himself received it from Celebrimbor, and this agrees with the statements in [Appendix B](#) to *The Lord of the Rings* and in *Of the Rings of Power*, that Círdan held it from the beginning. The statement here, at variance with the others, was added in the margin of the text.



Third Age, when Amroth was lost and Lórinand was in peril, that Galadriel returned there, in the year 1981. Here the text ‘Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn’ comes to an end.

It may be noted here that the absence of any indication to the contrary in *The Lord of the Rings* had led commentators to the natural assumption that Galadriel and Celeborn passed the latter half of the Second Age and all the Third in Lothlórien; but this was not so, though their story as outlined in ‘Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn’ was greatly modified afterwards, as will be shown below.

## Amroth And Nimrodel

I have said earlier (p. 302) that if Amroth were indeed thought of as the son of Galadriel and Celeborn when *The Lord of the Rings* was written, so important a connection could hardly have escaped mention. But whether he was or not, this view of his parentage was later rejected. I give next a short tale (dating from 1969 or later) entitled ‘Part of the Legend of Amroth and Nimrodel recounted in brief’.

*Amroth was King of Lórien, after his father Amdir was slain in the Battle of Dagorlad [in the year 3434 of the Second Age]. His land had peace for many years after the defeat of Sauron. Though Sindarin in descent he lived after the manner of the Silvan Elves and housed in the tall trees of a great green mound, ever after called Cerin Amroth. This he did because of his love for Nimrodel. For long years he had loved her, and taken no wife, since she would not wed with him. She loved him indeed, for he was beautiful even for one of the Eldar, and valiant and wise; but she was of the Silvan Elves, and regretted the incoming of the Elves from the West, who (as she said) brought wars and destroyed the peace of old. She would speak only the Silvan tongue, even after it had fallen into disuse among the folk of Lórien;<sup>150</sup> and she dwelt alone beside the falls of the river Nimrodel to which she gave her name. But when the terror came out of Moria and the Dwarves were driven out, and in their stead Orcs crept in, she fled distraught alone south into empty lands [in the year 1981 of the Third Age]. Amroth followed her, and at last he found her under the eaves of Fangorn, which in those days drew much nearer to Lórien.<sup>151</sup> She dared not enter the wood, for the trees, she said, menaced her, and some moved to bar her way.*

*There Amroth and Nimrodel held a long debate; and at the last they plighted their troth. ‘To this I will be true,’ she said, ‘and we shall be wedded when you bring me to a land of peace.’ Amroth vowed that for her sake he would leave his people, even in their time of need, and with her seek for such a land. ‘But there is none now in Middle-earth,’ he said, ‘and will not be for the Elven-folk ever again. We must seek for a passage over the Great Sea to the ancient West.’ Then he told her of the haven in the south, where many of his own people had come long ago. ‘They are now diminished, for most have set sail into the West; but the remnant of them still build ships and offer passage to any of their kin that come to them, weary of Middle-earth. It is said that the grace that the Valar gave to us to pass over the Sea is granted also now to any of those who made the Great Journey, even if they did not come in ages past to the shores and have not yet beheld the Blessed Land.’*

*There is not here the place to tell of their journey into the land of Gondor. It was in the days of King Eärnil the Second, the last but one of the Kings of the Southern Realm, and his lands were troubled. [Eärnil II reigned in Gondor from 1945 to 2043.] Elsewhere it is told [but not in any extant writing] how they became separated, and how Amroth after seeking her in vain went to the Elf-haven and found that only a few still lingered there. Less than a ship-load; and they had only one seaworthy ship. In this they were now preparing to depart, and to leave Middle-earth. They welcomed Amroth, being glad to strengthen their small company; but they were unwilling to await Nimrodel, whose coming seemed to them now beyond hope. ‘If she came through the settled lands of Gondor,’ they said, ‘she would not be molested, and might receive help; for the Men of Gondor are good, and they are ruled by descendants of the Elf-friends of old who can still speak our tongue, after a fashion; but in the mountains are many unfriendly Men and evil things.’*

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<sup>150</sup> On the Silvan Elves and their speech see Appendix A, p. 331.

<sup>151</sup> See Appendix C, p. 337, on the boundaries of Lórien.

*The year was waning to autumn, and before long great winds were to be expected, hostile and dangerous, even to Elven-ships while they were still near to Middle-earth. But so great was the grief of Amroth that nonetheless they stayed their going for many weeks; and they lived on the ship, for their houses on the shore were stripped and empty. Then in the autumn there came a great night of storm, one of the fiercest in the annals of Gondor. It came from the cold Northern Waste, and roared down through Eriador into the lands of Gondor, doing great havoc; the White Mountains were no shield against it, and many of the ships of Men were swept out into the Bay of Belfalas and lost. The light Elven-ship was torn from its moorings and driven into the wild waters towards the coasts of Umbar. No tidings of it were ever heard in Middle-earth; but the Elven-ships made for this journey did not founder, and doubtless it left the Circles of the World and came at last to Eressëa. But it did not bring Amroth thither. The storm fell upon the coasts of Gondor just as dawn was peering through the flying clouds; but when Amroth woke the ship was already far from land. Crying aloud in despair Nimrodel! he leapt into the sea and swam towards the fading shore. The mariners with their Elvish sight for a long time could see him battling with the waves, until the rising sun gleamed through the clouds and far off lit his bright hair like a spark of gold. No eyes of Elves or Men ever saw him again in Middle-earth. Of what befell Nimrodel nothing is said here, though there were many legends concerning her fate.*

The foregoing narrative was actually composed as an offshoot from an etymological discussion of the names of certain rivers in Middle-earth, in this case the Gilrain, a river of Lebennin in Gondor that flowed into the Bay of Belfalas west of Ethir Anduin, and another facet of the legend of Nimrodel emerges from the discussion of the element *rain*. This was probably derived from the stem *ran*—‘wander, stray, go on uncertain course’ (as in *Mithrandir*, and in the name *Rána* of the Moon).

*This would not seem suitable to any of the rivers of Gondor; but the names of rivers may often apply only to part of their course, to their source, or to their lower reaches, or to other features that struck explorers who named them. In this case, however, the fragments of the legend of Amroth and Nimrodel offer an explanation. The Gilrain came swiftly down from the mountains as did the other rivers of that region; but as it reached the end of the outlier of Ered Nimrais that separated it from the Celos [see the [map](#) accompanying Volume III of *The Lord of the Rings*] it ran into a wide shallow depression. In this it wandered for a while, and formed a small mere at the southern end before it cut through a ridge and went on swiftly again to join the Serni. When Nimrodel fled from Lórien it is said that seeking for the sea she became lost in the White Mountains, until at last (by what road or pass is not told) she came to a river that reminded her of her own stream in Lórien. Her heart was lightened, and she sat by a mere, seeing the stars reflected in its dim waters, and listening to the waterfalls by which the river went again on its journey down to the sea. There she fell into a deep sleep of weariness, and so long she slept that she did not come down into Belfalas until Amroth’s ship had been blown out to sea, and he was lost trying to swim back to Belfalas. This legend was well known in the Dor-en-Ernil (the Land of the Prince),<sup>152</sup> and no doubt the name was given in memory of it.*

The essay continues with a brief explanation of how Amroth as King of Lórien related to the rule there of Celeborn and Galadriel:

*The people of Lórien were even then [i.e. at the time of the loss of Amroth] much as they were at the end of the Third Age: Silvan Elves in origin, but ruled by princes of Sindarin descent (as was the realm of Thranduil in the northern parts of Mirkwood; though whether Thranduil and Amroth were akin is not now known.)<sup>153</sup> They had however been much mingled with Noldor (of Sindarin speech), who passed through Moria after the destruction of Eregion by Sauron in the year 1697 of the Second Age. At that time Elrond went westward [sic; probably meaning simply that he did not cross the Misty Mountains] and established the refuge of Imladris; but*

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<sup>152</sup> The origin of the name *Dor-en-Ernil* is nowhere given; its only other occurrence is on the large [map](#) of Rohan, Gondor, and Mordor in *The Lord of the Rings*. On that map it is placed on the other side of the mountains from Dol Amroth, but its occurrence in the present context suggests that *Ernil* was the Prince of Dol Amroth (which might be supposed in any case).

<sup>153</sup> See Appendix B, p. 333, on the Sindarin princes of the Silvan Elves.

*Celeborn went at first to Lórien and fortified it against any further attempts of Sauron to cross the Anduin. When however Sauron withdrew to Mordor, and was (as reported) wholly concerned with conquests in the East, Celeborn rejoined Galadriel in Lindon.*

*Lórien had then long years of peace and obscurity under the rule of its own king Amdír, until the Downfall of Númenor and the sudden return of Sauron to Middle-earth. Amdír obeyed the summons of Gil-galad and brought as large a force as he could muster to the Last Alliance, but he was slain in the Battle of Dagorlad and most of his company with him. Amroth, his son, became king.*

This account is of course greatly at variance with that contained in ‘Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn’. Amroth is no longer the son of Galadriel and Celeborn, but of Amdír, a prince of Sindarin origin. The older story of the relations of Galadriel and Celeborn with Eregion and Lórien seems to have been modified in many important respects, but how much of it would have been retained in any fully written narrative cannot be said. Celeborn’s association with Lórien is now placed much further back (for in ‘Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn’ he never went to Lórien at all during the Second Age); and we learn here that many Noldorin Elves passed through Moria to Lórien *after* the destruction of Eregion. In the earlier account there is no suggestion of this, and the movement of ‘Beleriandic’ Elves into Lórien took place under peaceful conditions many years before (p. 305). The implication of the extract just given is that after Eregion’s fall Celeborn led this migration to Lórien, while Galadriel joined Gil-galad in Lindon; but elsewhere, in a writing contemporary with this, it is said explicitly that they both at that time ‘passed through Moria with a considerable following of Noldorin exiles and dwelt for many years in Lórien’. It is neither asserted nor denied in these late writings that Galadriel (or Celeborn) had relations with Lórien before 1697, and there are no other references outside ‘Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn’ to Celebrimbor’s revolt (at some time between 1350 and 1400) against their rule in Eregion, nor to Galadriel’s departure at that time to Lórien and her taking up rule there, while Celeborn remained behind in Eregion. It is not made clear in the late accounts where Galadriel and Celeborn passed the long years of the Second Age after the defeat of Sauron in Eriador; there are at any rate no further mentions of their agelong sojourn in Belfalas (p. 310).

The discussion of Amroth continues:

*But during the Third Age Galadriel became filled with foreboding, and with Celeborn she journeyed to Lórien and stayed there long with Amroth, being especially concerned to learn all news and rumours of the growing shadow in Mirkwood and the dark stronghold in Dol Guldur. But his people were content with Amroth; he was valiant and wise, and his little kingdom was yet prosperous and beautiful. Therefore after long journeys of enquiry in Rhovanion, from Gondor and the borders of Mordor to Thranduill in the north, Celeborn and Galadriel passed over the mountains to Imladris, and there dwelt for many years; for Elrond was their kinsman, since he had early in the Third Age [in the year 109, according to the Tale of Years] wedded their daughter Celebrián.*

*After the disaster in Moria [in the year 1980] and the sorrows of Lórien, which was now left without a ruler (for Amroth was drowned in the sea in the Bay of Belfalas and left no heir), Celeborn and Galadriel returned to Lórien, and were welcomed by the people. There they dwelt while the Third Age lasted, but they took no title of King or Queen; for they said that they were only guardians of this small but fair realm, the last eastward outpost of the Elves.*

Elsewhere there is one other reference to their movements during those years:

*To Lórien Celeborn and Galadriel returned twice before the Last Alliance and the end of the Second Age; and in the Third Age, when the shadow of Sauron’s recovery arose, they dwelt there again for a long time. In her wisdom Galadriel saw that Lórien would be a stronghold and point of power to prevent the Shadow from crossing the Anduin in the war that must inevitably come before it was again defeated (if that were possible); but that it needed a rule of greater strength and wisdom than the Silvan folk possessed. Nevertheless, it was not until the disaster in Moria, when by means beyond the foresight of Galadriel Sauron’s power actually crossed the Anduin and Lórien was in great peril, its king lost, its people fleeing and likely to leave it deserted to be occupied by Orcs, that Galadriel and Celeborn took up their permanent abode in Lórien, and its government.*

*But they took no title of King or Queen, and were the guardians that in the event brought it unviolated through the War of the Ring.*

In another etymological discussion of the same period the name Amroth is explained as being a nickname derived from his living in a high *talan* or *flet*, the wooden platforms built high up in the trees of Lothlórien in which the Galadhrim dwelt (see *The Fellowship of the Ring* II 6): it meant ‘upclimber, high climber’.<sup>154</sup> It is said here that the custom of dwelling in trees was not a habit of the Silvan Elves in general, but was developed in Lórien by the nature and situation of the land: a flat land with no good stone, except what might be quarried in the mountains westward and brought with difficulty down the Silverlode. Its chief wealth was in its trees, a remnant of the great forests of the Elder Days. But the dwelling in trees was not universal even in Lórien, and the *telain* or *flets* were in origin either refuges to be used in the event of attack, or most often (especially those high up in great trees) outlook posts from which the land and its borders could be surveyed by Elvish eyes: for Lórien after the end of the first millennium of the Third Age became a land of uneasy vigilance, and Amroth must have dwelt in growing disquiet ever since Dol Guldur was established in Mirkwood.

*Such an outlook post, used by the wardens of the north marches, was the flet in which Frodo spent the night. The abode of Celeborn in Caras Galadhon was also of the same origin: its highest flet, which the Fellowship of the Ring did not see, was the highest point in the land. Earlier the flet of Amroth at the top of the great mound or hill of Cerin Amroth, piled by the labour of many hands, had been the highest, and was principally designed to watch Dol Guldur across the Anduin. The conversion of these telain into permanent dwellings was a later development, and only in Caras Galadhon were such dwellings numerous. But Caras Galadhon was itself a fortress, and only a small part of the Galadhrim dwelt within its walls. Living in such lofty houses was no doubt at first thought remarkable, and Amroth was probably the first to do so. It was thus from his living in a high talan that his name—the only one that was later remembered in legend—was most probably derived.*

A note to the words ‘Amroth was probably the first to do so’ states:

*Unless it was Nimrodel. Her motives were different. She loved the waters and the falls of Nimrodel from which she would not long be parted; but as times darkened the stream was too near the north borders, and in a part where few of the Galadhrim now dwelt. Maybe it was from her that Amroth took the idea of living in a high flet.*<sup>155</sup>

Returning to the legend of Amroth and Nimrodel given above, what was the ‘haven in the south’ where Amroth waited for Nimrodel, and where (as he told her) ‘many of his own people had come long ago’ (p. 311)? Two passages in *The Lord of the Rings* bear on this question. One is in *The Fellowship of the Ring* II 6, where Legolas, after singing the song of Amroth and Nimrodel, speaks of ‘the Bay of Belfalas whence the Elves of Lórien set sail’. The other is in *The Return of the King* V 9, where Legolas, looking on Prince Imrahil of Dol Amroth, saw that he was ‘one who had elven-blood in his veins’, and said to him: ‘It is long since the people of Nimrodel left the woodlands of Lórien, and yet still one may see that not all sailed from Amroth’s haven west over water.’ To which Prince Imrahil replied: ‘So it is said in the lore of my land.’

Late and fragmentary notes go some way to explaining these references. Thus in a discussion of linguistic and political interrelations in Middle-earth (dating from 1969 or later) there is a passing reference to the fact that in the days of the earlier settlements of Númenor the shores of the Bay of Belfalas were still mainly desolate

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<sup>154</sup> The explanation supposes that the first element in the name *Amroth* is the same Elvish word as Quenya *amba*, ‘up’, found also in Sindarin *amon*, a hill or mountain with steep sides; while the second element is a derivative from a stem *rath*—meaning ‘climb’ (whence also the noun *rath*, which in the Númenórean Sindarin used in Gondor in the naming of places and persons was applied to all the longer roadways and streets of Minas Tirith, nearly all of which were on an incline: so *Rath Dínen*, the Silent Street, leading down from the Citadel to the Tombs of the Kings).

<sup>155</sup> In the ‘Brief Recounting’ of the legend of Amroth and Nimrodel it is said that Amroth dwelt in the trees of Cerin Amroth ‘because of his love for Nimrodel’ (p. 311).



‘except for a haven and small settlement of Elves at the south of the confluence of Morthond and Ringló’ (*i.e.* just north of Dol Amroth).

*This, according to the traditions of Dol Amroth, had been established by seafaring Sindar from the west havens of Beleriand who fled in three small ships when the power of Morgoth overwhelmed the Eldar and the Atani; but it was later increased by adventurers of the Silvan Elves seeking for the sea who came down Anduin.*

The Silvan Elves (it is remarked here) ‘were never wholly free of an unquiet and a yearning for the Sea which at times drove some of them to wander from their homes’. To relate this story of the ‘three small ships’ to the traditions recorded in *The Silmarillion* we would probably have to assume that they escaped from Brithombar or Eglarest (the Havens of the Falas on the west coast of Beleriand) when they were destroyed in the year after the Nirnaeth Arnoediad (*The Silmarillion* p. 196), but that whereas Círdan and Gil-galad made a refuge on the Isle of Balar these three ships’ companies sailed far further south down the coasts, to Belfalas.

But a quite different account, making the establishment of the Elvish haven later, is given in an unfinished scrap on the origin of the name *Belfalas*. It is said here that while the element *Bel* is certainly derived from a pre-Númenórean name, its source was in fact Sindarin. The note peters out before any further information is given about *Bel*, but the reason given for its Sindarin origin is that ‘there was one small but important element in Gondor of quite exceptional kind: an Eldarin settlement’. After the breaking of Thangorodrim the Elves of Beleriand, if they did not take ship over the Great Sea or remain in Lindon, wandered east over the Blue Mountains into Eriador; but there appears nonetheless to have been a group of Sindar who in the beginning of the Second Age went south. They were a remnant of the people of Doriath who harboured still their grudge against the Noldor; and having remained a while at the Grey Havens, where they learned the craft of shipbuilding, ‘they went in the course of years seeking a place for lives of their own, and at last they settled at the mouth of the Morthond. There was already a primitive harbour there of fisherfolk, but these in fear of the Eldar fled into the mountains.’<sup>156</sup>

In a note written in December 1972 or later, and among the last writings of my father’s on the subject of Middle-earth, there is a discussion of the Elvish strain in Men, as to its being observable in the beardlessness of those who were so descended (it was a characteristic of all Elves to be beardless); and it is here noted in connection with the princely house of Dol Amroth that ‘this line had a special Elvish strain, according to its own legends’ (with a reference to the speeches between Legolas and Imrahil in *The Return of the King* V 9, cited above).

*As Legolas’ mention of Nimrodel shows, there was an ancient Elvish port near Dol Amroth, and a small settlement of Silvan Elves there from Lórien. The legend of the prince’s line was that one of their earliest fathers had wedded an Elf-maiden: in some versions it was indeed (evidently improbably) said to have been Nimrodel herself. In other tales, and more probably, it was one of Nimrodel’s companions who was lost in the upper mountain glens.*

This latter version of the legend appears in more detailed form in a note appended to an unpublished genealogy of the line of Dol Amroth from Angelimar, the twentieth prince, father of Adrahil, father of Imrahil, prince of Dol Amroth at the time of the War of the Ring:

*In the tradition of his house Angelimar was the twentieth in unbroken descent from Galador, first Lord of Dol Amroth (c. Third Age 2004-2129). According to the same traditions Galador was the son of Imrazôr the Númenórean, who dwelt in Belfalas, and the Elven-lady Mithrellas. She was one of the companions of Nimrodel, among many of the Elves that fled to the coast about the year 1980 of the Third Age, when evil arose*

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<sup>156</sup> The place of the Elvish haven in Belfalas is marked with the name *Edhellond* (‘Elf-haven’, see the Appendix to *The Silmarillion* under *edhel* and *londë*) on the decorated map of Middle-earth by Pauline Baynes; but I have found no other occurrence of this name. See Appendix D, p. 339. Cf. *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* (1962), p. 8: ‘In the Langstrand and Dol Amroth there were many traditions of the ancient Elvish dwellings, and of the haven at the mouth of the Morthond from which “westward ships” had sailed as far back as the fall of Eregion in the Second Age.’

*in Moria; and Nimrodel and her maidens strayed in the wooded hills, and were lost. But in this tale it is said that Imrazôr harboured Mithrellas, and took her to wife. But when she had borne him a son, Galador, and a daughter, Gilmith, she slipped away by night and he saw her no more. But though Mithrellas was of the lesser Silvan race (and not of the High Elves or the Grey) it was ever held that the house and kin of the Lords of Dol Amroth was noble by blood as they were fair in face and mind.*

## **The Elessar**

**I**n unpublished writing there is little else to be found concerning the history of Celeborn and Galadriel, save for a very rough manuscript of four pages titled 'The Elessar'. It is in the first stage of composition, but bears a few pencilled emendations; there are no other versions. It reads, with some very slight editorial emendation, as follows:

*There was in Gondolin a jewel-smith named Enerdhil, the greatest of that craft among the Noldor after the death of Fëanor. Enerdhil loved all green things that grew, and his greatest joy was to see the sunlight through the leaves of trees. And it came into his heart to make a jewel within which the clear light of the sun should be imprisoned, but the jewel should be green as leaves. And he made this thing, and even the Noldor marvelled at it. For it is said that those who looked through this stone saw things that were withered or burned healed again or as they were in the grace of their youth, and that the hands of one who held it brought to all that they touched healing from hurt. This gem Enerdhil gave to Idril the King's daughter, and she wore it upon her breast; and so it was saved from the burning of Gondolin. And before Idril set sail she said to Eärendil her son: 'The Elessar I leave with thee, for there are grievous hurts to Middle-earth which thou maybe shalt heal. But to none other shalt thou deliver it.' And indeed at Sirion's Haven there were many hurts to heal both of Men and Elves, and of beasts that fled thither from the horror of the North; and while Eärendil dwelt there they were healed and prospered, and all things were for a while green and fair. But when Eärendil began his great voyages upon the Sea he wore the Elessar upon his breast, for amongst all his searchings the thought was always before him: that he might perhaps find Idril again; and his first memory of Middle-earth was the green stone above her breast, as she sang above his cradle while Gondolin was still in flower. So it was that the Elessar passed away, when Eärendil returned no more to Middle-earth.*

*In ages after there was again an Elessar, and of this two things are said, though which is true only those Wise could say who now are gone. For some say that the second was indeed only the first returned, by the grace of the Valar; and that Olórin (who was known in Middle-earth as Mithrandir) brought it with him out of the West. And on a time Olórin came to Galadriel, who dwelt now under the trees of Greenwood the Great; and they had long speech together. For the years of her exile began to lie heavy on the Lady of the Noldor, and she longed for news of her kin and for the blessed land of her birth, and yet was unwilling to forsake Middle-earth [this sentence was changed to read: but was not permitted yet to forsake Middle-earth]. And when Olórin had told her many tidings she sighed, and said: 'I grieve in Middle-earth, for leaves fall and flowers fade; and my heart yearns, remembering trees and grass that do not die. I would have these in my home.' Then Olórin said: 'Would you then have the Elessar?'*

*And Galadriel said: 'Where now is the Stone of Eärendil? And Enerdhil is gone who made it.' 'Who knows?' said Olórin. 'Surely,' said Galadriel, 'they have passed over Sea, as almost all fair things beside. And must Middle-earth then fade and perish for ever?' 'That is its fate,' said Olórin. 'Yet for a little while that might be amended, if the Elessar should return. For a little, until the Days of Men are come.' 'If—and yet how could that be,' said Galadriel. 'For surely the Valar are now removed and Middle-earth is far from their thought, and all who cling to it are under a shadow.'*

*'It is not so,' said Olórin. 'Their eyes are not dimmed nor their hearts hardened. In token of which look upon this!' And he held before her the Elessar, and she looked on it and wondered. And Olórin said: 'This I bring to you from Yavanna. Use it as you may, and for a while you shall make the land of your dwelling the fairest place in Middle-earth. But it is not for you to possess. You shall hand it on when the time comes. For before you grow*

weary, and at last forsake Middle-earth one shall come who is to receive it, and his name shall be that of the stone: Elessar he shall be called.<sup>157</sup>

The other tale runs so: *that long ago, ere Sauron deluded the smiths of Eregion, Galadriel came there, and she said to Celebrimbor, the chief of the Elven-smiths: 'I am grieved in Middle-earth, for leaves fall and flowers fade that I have loved, so that the land of my dwelling is filled with regret that no Spring can redress.'*

*'How otherwise can it be for the Eldar, if they cling to Middle-earth?' said Celebrimbor. 'Will you then pass over Sea?'*

*'Nay,' she said. 'Angrod is gone, and Aegnor is gone, and Felagund is no more. Of Finarfin's children I am the last.<sup>158</sup> But my heart is still proud. What wrong did the golden house of Finarfin do that I should ask the pardon of the Valar, or be content with an isle in the sea whose native land was Aman the Blessed? Here I am mightier.'*

*'What would you then?' said Celebrimbor.*

*'I would have trees and grass about me that do not die—here in the land that is mine,' she answered. 'What has become of the skill of the Eldar?' And Celebrimbor said: 'Where now is the Stone of Eärendil? And Enerdhil who made it is gone.' 'They have passed over Sea,' said Galadriel, 'with almost all fair things else. But must then Middle-earth fade and perish for ever?'*

*'That is its fate, I deem,' said Celebrimbor. 'But you know that I love you (though you turned to Celeborn of the Trees), and for that love I will do what I can, if haply by my art your grief can be lessened.'* But he did not say to Galadriel that he himself was of Gondolin long ago, and a friend of Enerdhil, though his friend in most things outrivalled him. Yet if Enerdhil had not been then Celebrimbor would have been more renowned. Therefore he took thought, and began a long and delicate labour, and so for Galadriel he made the greatest of his works (save the Three Rings only). And it is said that more subtle and clear was the green gem that he made than that of Enerdhil, but yet its light had less power. For whereas that of Enerdhil was lit by the Sun in its youth, already many years had passed ere Celebrimbor began his work, and nowhere in Middle-earth was the light as clear as it had been, for though Morgoth had been thrust out into the Void and could not enter again, his far shadow lay upon it. Radiant nonetheless was the Elessar of Celebrimbor; and he set it within a great brooch of silver in the likeness of an eagle rising upon outspread wings.<sup>159</sup> *Wielding the Elessar all things grew fair about Galadriel, until the coming of the Shadow to the Forest. But afterwards when Nenya, chief of the*

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<sup>157</sup> This chimes with the passage in *The Fellowship of the Ring* II 8, where Galadriel, giving the green stone to Aragorn, said: 'In this hour take the name that was foretold for you, Elessar, the Elfstone of the house of Elendil!'

<sup>158</sup> The text here and again immediately below has *Finrod*, which I have changed to *Finarfin* to avoid confusion. Before the revised edition of *The Lord of the Rings* was published in 1966 my father changed Finrod to Finarfin, while his son Felagund, previously called Inglor Felagund, became Finrod Felagund. Two passages in the Appendices B and F were accordingly emended for the revised edition.

It is noteworthy that Orodreth, King of Nargothrond after Finrod Felagund, is not here named by Galadriel among her brothers. For a reason unknown to me, my father displaced the second King of Nargothrond and made him a member of the same family in the next generation; but this and associated genealogical changes were never incorporated in the narratives of *The Silmarillion*.

<sup>159</sup> Compare the description of the Elfstone in *The Fellowship of the Ring* II 8: 'Then [Galadriel] lifted from her lap a great stone of a clear green, set in a silver brooch that was wrought in the likeness of an eagle with outspread wings; and as she held it up the gem flashed like the sun shining through the leaves of spring.'

Three,<sup>160</sup> was sent to her by Celebrimbor, she needed it (as she thought) no more, and she gave it to Celebrian her daughter, and so it came to Arwen and to Aragorn who was called Elessar.

At the end is written:

*The Elessar was made in Gondolin by Celebrimbor, and so came to Idril and so to Eärendil. But that passed away. But the second Elessar was made also by Celebrimbor in Eregion at the request of the Lady Galadriel (whom he loved), and it was not under the One, being made before Sauron rose again.*

This narrative goes with ‘Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn’ in certain features, and was probably written at about the same time, or a little earlier. Celebrimbor is here again a jewel-smith of Gondolin, rather than one of the Fëanorians (cf. p. 304); and Galadriel is spoken of as being *unwilling* to forsake Middle-earth (cf. p. 302)—though the text was later emended and the conception of the ban introduced, and at a later point in the narrative she speaks of the pardon of the Valar.

Enerdhil appears in no other writing; and the concluding words of the text show that Celebrimbor was to displace him as the maker of the Elessar in Gondolin. Of Celebrimbor’s love for Galadriel there is no trace elsewhere. In ‘Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn’ the suggestion is that he came to Eregion with them (p. 302); but in that text, as in *The Silmarillion*, Galadriel met Celeborn in Doriath, and it is difficult to understand Celebrimbor’s words ‘though you turned to Celeborn of the Trees’. Obscure also is the reference to Galadriel’s dwelling ‘under the trees of Greenwood the Great’. This might be taken as a loose use (nowhere else evidenced) of the expression to include the woods of Lórien, on the other side of Anduin; but ‘the coming of the Shadow to the Forest’ undoubtedly refers to the arising of Sauron in Dol Guldur, which in Appendix A (III) to *The Lord of the Rings* is called ‘the Shadow in the Forest’. This may imply that Galadriel’s power at one time extended into the southern parts of Greenwood the Great; and support for this may be found in ‘Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn’, p. 305, where the realm of Lórinand (Lórien) is said to have ‘extended into the forests on both sides of the Great River, including the region where afterwards was Dol Guldur’. It is possible, also, that the same conception underlay the statement in Appendix B to *The Lord of the Rings*, in the [headnote](#) to the Tale of Years of the Second Age, as it appeared in the first edition: ‘many of the Sindar passed eastward and established realms in the forests far away. The chief of these were Thranduil in the north of Greenwood the Great, and Celeborn in the south of the forest.’ In the revised edition this remark about Celeborn was omitted, and instead there appears a reference to his dwelling in Lindon (cited above, p. 294).

Lastly, it may be remarked that the healing power here ascribed to the Elessar at the Havens of Sirion is in *The Silmarillion* (p. 247) attributed to the Silmaril.

## Appendices

### *Appendix A: The Silvan Elves And Their Speech*

According to *The Silmarillion* (p. 94) some of the Nandor, the Telerin Elves who abandoned the march of the Eldar on the eastern side of the Misty Mountains, ‘dwelt age-long in the woods of the Vale of the Great River’ (while others, it is said, went down Anduin to its mouths, and yet others entered Eriador: from these last came the Green-elves of Ossiriand).

In a late etymological discussion of the names Galadriel, Celeborn, and Lórien the Silvan Elves of Mirkwood and Lórien are specifically declared to be descended from the Telerin Elves who remained in the Vale of Anduin:

*The Silvan Elves (Tawarwaith) were in origin Teleri, and so remoter kin of the Sindar, though even longer separated from them than the Teleri of Valinor. They were descended from those of the Teleri who, on the Great Journey, were daunted by the Misty Mountains and lingered in the Vale of Anduin, and so never reached*

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<sup>160</sup> But in *The Return of the King* VI 9, where the Blue Ring is seen on Elrond’s finger, it is called ‘Vilya, mightiest of the Three’.

*Beleriand or the Sea. They were thus closer akin to the Nandor (otherwise called the Green-elves) of Ossiriand, who eventually crossed the mountains and came at last into Beleriand.*

The Silvan Elves hid themselves in woodland fastnesses beyond the Misty Mountains, and became small and scattered peoples, hardly to be distinguished from Avari;

*but they still remembered that they were in origin Eldar, members of the Third Clan, and they welcomed those of the Noldor and especially the Sindar who did not pass over the Sea but migrated eastward [i.e. at the beginning of the Second Age]. Under the leadership of these they became again ordered folk and increased in wisdom. Thranduil father of Legolas of the Nine Walkers was Sindarin, and that tongue was used in his house, though not by all his folk.*

*In Lórien, where many of the people were Sindar in origin, or Noldor, survivors from Eregion [see [p. 314](#)], Sindarin had become the language of all the people. In what way their Sindarin differed from the forms of Beleriand—see *The Fellowship of the Ring* [II 6](#), where Frodo reports that the speech of the Silvan folk that they used among themselves was unlike that of the West—is not of course now known. It probably differed in little more than what would now be popularly called ‘accent’: mainly differences of vowel-sounds and intonation sufficient to mislead one who, as Frodo, was not well acquainted with purer Sindarin. There may of course also have been some local words and other features ultimately due to the influence of the former Silvan tongue. Lórien had long been much isolated from the outside world. Certainly some names preserved from its past, such as Amroth and Nimrodel, cannot be fully explained from Sindarin, though fitting it in form. Caras seems to be an old word for a moated fortress, not found in Sindarin. Lórien is probably an alteration of an older name now lost [though earlier the original Silvan or Nandorin name was stated to be Lórinand; see [note 143](#)].*

With these remarks on Silvan names compare Appendix F (I) to *The Lord of the Rings*, section ‘Of the Elves’, [note 438](#) (appearing only in the revised edition).

Another general statement concerning Silvan Elvish is found in a linguistic-historical discussion dating from the same late period as that just cited:

*Although the dialects of the Silvan Elves, when they again met their long separated kindred, had so far diverged from Sindarin as to be hardly intelligible, little study was needed to reveal their kinship as Eldarin tongues. Though the comparison of the Silvan dialects with their own speech greatly interested the loremasters, especially those of Noldorin origin, little is now known of the Silvan Elvish. The Silvan Elves had invented no forms of writing, and those who learned this art from the Sindar wrote in Sindarin as well as they could. By the end of the Third Age the Silvan tongues had probably ceased to be spoken in the two regions that had importance at the time of the War of the Ring: Lórien and the realm of Thranduil in northern Mirkwood. All that survived of them in the records was a few words and several names of persons and places.*

## ***Appendix B: The Sindarin Princes Of The Silvan Elves***

**I**n Appendix B to *The Lord of the Rings*, in the [headnote](#) to the Tale of Years of the Second Age, it is said that ‘before the building of the Barad-dûr many of the Sindar passed eastward, and some established realms in the forests far away, where their people were mostly Silvan Elves. Thranduil, king in the north of Greenwood the Great, was one of these.’

Something more of the history of these Sindarin princes of the Silvan Elves is found in my father’s late philological writings. Thus in one essay Thranduil’s realm is said to have

*extended into the woods surrounding the Lonely Mountain and growing along the west shores of the Long Lake, before the coming of the Dwarves exiled from Moria and the invasion of the Dragon. The Elvish folk of this realm had migrated from the south, being the kin and neighbours of the Elves of Lórien; but they had dwelt in Greenwood the Great east of Anduin. In the Second Age their king, Oropher [the father of Thranduil, father of Legolas], had withdrawn northward beyond the Gladden Fields. This he did to be free from the power and encroachments of the Dwarves of Moria, which had grown to be the greatest of the mansions of the Dwarves recorded in history; and also he resented the intrusions of Celeborn and Galadriel into Lórien. But as yet there*



*was little to fear between the Greenwood and the Mountains and there was constant intercourse between his people and their kin across the River, until the War of the Last Alliance.*

*Despite the desire of the Silvan Elves to meddle as little as might be in the affairs of the Noldor and Sindar, or of any other peoples, Dwarves, Men, or Orcs, Oropher had the wisdom to foresee that peace would not return unless Sauron was overcome. He therefore assembled a great army of his now numerous people, and joining with the lesser army of Malgalad of Lórien he led the host of the Silvan Elves to battle. The Silvan Elves were hardy and valiant, but ill-equipped with armour or weapons in comparison with the Eldar of the West; also they were independent, and not disposed to place themselves under the supreme command of Gil-galad. Their losses were thus more grievous than they need have been, even in that terrible war. Malgalad and more than half his following perished in the great battle of the Dagorlad, being cut off from the main host and driven into the Dead Marshes. Oropher was slain in the first assault upon Mordor, rushing forward at the head of his most doughty warriors before Gilgalad had given the signal for the advance. Thranduil his son survived, but when the war ended and Sauron was slain (as it seemed) he led back home barely a third of the army that had marched to war.*

Malgalad of Lórien occurs nowhere else, and is not said here to be the father of Amroth. On the other hand, Amdir father of Amroth is twice (pp. 311, 315 above) said to have been slain in the Battle of Dagorlad, and it seems therefore that Malgalad can be simply equated with Amdir. But which name replaced the other I cannot say. This essay continues:

*A long peace followed in which the numbers of the Silvan Elves grew again; but they were unquiet and anxious, feeling the change of the world that the Third Age would bring. Men also were increasing in numbers and in power. The dominion of the Númenórean kings of Gondor was reaching out northwards towards the borders of Lórien and the Greenwood. The Free Men of the North (so called by the Elves because they were not under the rule of the Dúnedain, and had not for the most part been subjected by Sauron or his servants) were spreading southwards: mostly east of the Greenwood, though some were establishing themselves in the eaves of the forest and the grasslands of the Vales of Anduin. More ominous were rumours from the further East: the Wild Men were restless. Former servants and worshippers of Sauron, they were released now from his tyranny, but not from the evil and darkness that he had set in their hearts. Cruel wars raged among them, from which some were withdrawing westward, with minds filled with hatred, regarding all that dwelt in the West as enemies to be slain and plundered. But there was in Thranduil's heart a still deeper shadow. He had seen the horror of Mordor and could not forget it. If ever he looked south its memory dimmed the light of the Sun, and though he knew that it was now broken and deserted and under the vigilance of the Kings of Men, fear spoke in his heart that it was not conquered for ever: it would arise again.*

In another passage written at the same time as the foregoing it is said that when a thousand years of the Third Age had passed and the Shadow fell upon Greenwood the Great, the Silvan Elves ruled by Thranduil

*retreated before it as it spread ever northward, until at last Thranduil established his realm in the north-east of the forest and delved there a fortress and great halls underground. Oropher was of Sindarin origin, and no doubt Thranduil his son was following the example of King Thingol long before, in Doriath; though his halls were not to be compared with Menegroth. He had not the arts nor the wealth nor the aid of the Dwarves; and compared with the Elves of Doriath his Silvan folk were rude and rustic. Oropher had come among them with only a handful of Sindar, and they were soon merged with the Silvan Elves, adopting their language and taking names of Silvan form and style. This they did deliberately; for they (and other similar adventurers forgotten in the legends or only briefly named) came from Doriath after its ruin, and had no desire to leave Middle-earth, nor to be merged with the other Sindar of Beleriand, dominated by the Noldorin Exiles for whom the folk of Doriath had no great love. They wished indeed to become Silvan folk and to return, as they said, to the simple life natural to the Elves before the invitation of the Valar had disturbed it.*

Nowhere (I believe) is it made clear how the adoption of the Silvan speech by the Sindarin rulers of the Silvan Elves of Mirkwood, as described here, is to be related to the statement cited on p. 333 that by the end of the Third Age Silvan Elvish had ceased to be spoken in Thranduil's realm.

See further [note 177](#) to 'The Disaster of the Gladden Fields'.

## Appendix C: The Boundaries Of Lórien

In Appendix A (I, iv) to *The Lord of the Rings* the kingdom of Gondor at the summit of its power in the days of King Hyarmendacil I (Third Age 1015-1149) is said to have extended northwards ‘to Celebrant and the southern eaves of Mirkwood’. This my father stated several times to be in error: the correct reading should be ‘to the Field of Celebrant’. According to his late writing on the interrelations of the languages of Middle-earth,

*The river Celebrant (Silverlode) was within the borders of the realm of Lórien, and the effective bounds of the kingdom of Gondor in the north (west of Anduin) was the river Limlight. The whole of the grasslands between Silverlode and Limlight, into which the woods of Lórien formerly extended further south, were known in Lórien as Parth Celebrant (i.e. the field, or enclosed grassland, of Silverlode) and regarded as part of its realm, though not inhabited by its Elvish folk beyond the eaves of the woods. In later days Gondor built a bridge over the upper Limlight, and often occupied the narrow land between the lower Limlight and Anduin as part of its eastern defences, since the great loops of the Anduin (where it came down swiftly past Lórien and entered low flat lands before its descent again into the chasm of the Eryn Mui) had many shallows and wide shoals over which a determined and well-equipped enemy could force a crossing by rafts or pontoons, especially in the two westward bends, known as the North and South Undeeps. It was to this land that the name Parth Celebrant was applied in Gondor; hence its use in defining the ancient northern boundary. In the time of the War of the Ring, when all the land north of the White Mountains (save Anórien) as far as the Limlight had become part of the Kingdom of Rohan, the name Parth (Field of) Celebrant was only used of the great battle in which Eorl the Young destroyed the invaders of Gondor [see pp. 387, 388].*

In another essay my father noted that whereas east and west the land of Lórien was bounded by Anduin and by the mountains (and he says nothing about any extension of the realm of Lórien across the Anduin, see p. 326), it had no clearly defined borders northward and southward.

*Of old the Galadhrim had claimed to govern the woods as far as the falls in the Silverlode where Frodo was bathed; southward it had extended far beyond the Silverlode into more open woodland of smaller trees that merged into Fangorn Forest, though the heart of the realm had always been in the angle between Silverlode and Anduin where Caras Galadhon stood. There were no visible borders between Lórien and Fangorn, but neither the Ents nor the Galadhrim ever passed them. For legend reported that Fangorn himself had met the King of the Galadhrim in ancient days, and Fangorn had said: ‘I know mine, and you know yours; let neither side molest what is the other’s. But if an Elf should wish to walk in my land for his pleasure he will be welcome; and if an Ent should be seen in your land fear no evil.’ Long years had passed, however, since Ent or Elf had set foot in the other land.*

## Appendix D: The Port Of Lond Daer

It was told in ‘Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn’ that in the war against Sauron in Eriador at the end of the seventeenth century of the Second Age the Númenórean admiral Ciryatur put a strong force ashore at the mouth of the Gwathló (Greyflood), where there was ‘a small Númenórean harbour’ (p. 309). This seems to be the first reference to that port, of which a good deal is told in later writings.

The fullest account is in the philological essay concerning the names of rivers which has already been cited in connection with the legend of Amroth and Nimrodel (pp. 313ff.). In this essay the name Gwathló is discussed as follows:

*The river Gwathló is translated ‘Greyflood’. But gwaith is a Sindarin word for ‘shadow’, in the sense of dim light, owing to cloud or mist, or in deep valleys. This does not seem to fit the geography. The wide lands divided by the Gwathló into the regions called by the Númenóreans Minhiriath (‘Between the Rivers’, Baranduin and Gwathló) and Eredwaith (‘Middle-folk’) were mainly plains, open and mountainless. At the point of the confluence of Glanduin and Mitheithel [Hoarwell] the land was almost flat, and the waters became sluggish*

and tended to spread into fenland.<sup>161</sup> But some hundred miles below Tharbad the slope increased. The Gwathló, however, never became swift, and ships of smaller draught could without difficulty sail or be rowed as far as Tharbad.

The origin of the name Gwathló must be sought in history. In the time of the War of the Ring the lands were still in places well-wooded, especially in Minhiriath and in the south-east of Enedwaith; but most of the plains were grasslands. Since the Great Plague of the year 1636 of the Third Age Minhiriath had been almost entirely deserted, though a few secretive hunter-folk lived in the woods. In Enedwaith the remnants of the Dunlendings lived in the east, in the foothills of the Misty Mountains; and a fairly numerous but barbarous fisher-folk dwelt between the mouths of the Gwathló and the Angren (Isen).

But in the earlier days, at the time of the first explorations of the Númenóreans, the situation was quite different. Minhiriath and Enedwaith were occupied by vast and almost continuous forests, except in the central region of the Great Fens. The changes that followed were largely due to the operations of Tar-Aldarion, the Mariner-king, who formed a friendship and alliance with Gil-galad. Aldarion had a great hunger for timber, desiring to make Númenor into a great naval power; his felling of trees in Númenor had caused great dissensions. In voyages down the coasts he saw with wonder the great forests, and he chose the estuary of the Gwathló for the site of a new haven entirely under Númenórean control (Gondor of course did not yet exist). There he began great works, that continued to be extended after his days. This entry into Eriador later proved of great importance in the war against Sauron (Second Age 1693-1701); but it was in origin a timber-port and ship-building harbour. The native people were fairly numerous and warlike, but they were forest-dwellers, scattered communities without central leadership. They were in awe of the Númenóreans, but they did not become hostile until the tree-felling became devastating. Then they attacked and ambushed the Númenóreans when they could, and the Númenóreans treated them as enemies, and became ruthless in their fellings, giving no thought to husbandry or replanting. The fellings had at first been along both banks of the Gwathló, and timber had been floated down to the haven (Lond Daer); but now the Númenóreans drove great tracks and roads into the forests northwards and southwards from the Gwathló, and the native folk that survived fled from Minhiriath into the dark woods of the great Cape of Eryn Vorn, south of the mouth of the Baranduin, which they dared not cross, even if they could, for fear of the Elvenfolk. From Enedwaith they took refuge in the eastern mountains where afterwards was Dunland; they did not cross the Isen nor take refuge in the great promontory between Isen and Lefnui that formed the north arm of the Bay of Belfalas [Ras Morthil or Andrast: see [note 100](#)], because of the 'Púkel-men' . . . [For the continuation of this passage see [p. 495](#).]

The devastation wrought by the Númenóreans was incalculable. For long years these lands were their chief source of timber, not only for their ship-yards at Lond Daer and elsewhere, but also for Númenor itself. Ship-loads innumerable passed west over the sea. The denuding of the lands was increased during the war in Eriador; for the exiled natives welcomed Sauron and hoped for his victory over the Men of the Sea. Sauron knew of the importance to his enemies of the Great Haven and its ship-yards, and he used these haters of Númenor as spies and guides for his raiders. He had not enough force to spare for any assault upon the forts at the Haven or along the banks of the Gwathló, but his raiders made much havoc on the fringe of the forests, setting fire in the woods and burning many of the great wood-stores of the Númenóreans.

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<sup>161</sup> The Glanduin ('border-river') flowed down from the Misty Mountains south of Moria to join the Mitheithel above Tharbad. On the original map to *The Lord of the Rings* the name was not marked (it only occurs once in the book, in Appendix A ([I, iii](#))). It seems that in 1969 my father communicated to Miss Pauline Baynes certain additional names for inclusion in her decorated map of Middle-earth: 'Edhellond' (referred to above, [note 156](#)), 'Andrast', 'Drúwaith Iaur (Old Púkel-land)', 'Lond Daer (ruins)', 'Eryn Vorn', 'R.Adorn', 'Swanfleet', and 'R.Glanduin'. The last three of these names were then written into the original map that accompanies the book, but why this was done I have been unable to discover; and while 'R.Adorn' is correctly placed, 'Swanfleet' and 'River Glandin' [*sic*] are blunderingly placed against the upper course of the Isen. For the correct interpretation of the relation between the names *Glanduin* and *Swanfleet* see pp. [342](#), [344](#).



*When Sauron was at last defeated and driven east out of Eriador most of the old forests had been destroyed. The Gwathló flowed through a land that was far and wide on either bank a desert, treeless but untilled. That was not so when it first received its name from the hardy explorers of Tar-Aldarion's ship who ventured to pass up the river in small boats. As soon as the seaward region of salt airs and great winds was passed the forest drew down to the river-banks, and wide though the waters were the huge trees cast great shadows on the river, under which the boats of the adventurers crept silently up into the unknown land. So the first name they gave to it was 'River of Shadow', Gwath-hîr, Gwathir. But later they penetrated northward as far as the beginning of the great fenlands; though it was still long before they had the need or sufficient men to undertake the great works of drainage and dyke-building that made a great port on the site where Tharbad stood in the days of the Two Kingdoms. The Sindarin word that they used for the fenland was lô, earlier loga [from a stem log—meaning 'wet, soaked, swampy']; and they thought at first that it was the source of the forest-river, not yet knowing the Mitheithel that came down out of the mountains in the north, and gathering the waters of the Bruinen [Loud-water] and Glanduin poured flood-waters into the plain. The name Gwathir was thus changed to Gwathló, the shadowy river from the fens.*

*The Gwathló was one of the few geographical names that became generally known to others than mariners in Númenor, and received an Adûnaic translation. This was Agathurush.*

The history of Lond Daer and Tharbad is also mentioned in this same essay in a discussion of the name Glanduin:

*Glanduin means 'border-river'. It was the name first given (in the Second Age), since the river was the southern boundary of Eregion, beyond which pre Númenórean and generally unfriendly peoples lived, such as the ancestors of the Dunlendings. Later it, with the Gwathló formed by its confluence with the Mitheithel, formed the southern boundary of the North Kingdom. The land beyond, between the Gwathló and the Isen (Sir Angren) was called Enedwaith ('Middle-folk'); it belonged to neither kingdom and received no permanent settlements of men of Númenórean origin. But the great North-South Road, which was the chief route of communication between the Two Kingdoms except by sea, ran through it from Tharbad to the Fords of Isen (Ethraid Engrin). Before the decay of the North Kingdom and the disasters that befell Gondor, indeed until the coming of the Great Plague in Third Age 1636, both kingdoms shared an interest in this region, and together built and maintained the Bridge of Tharbad and the long causeways that carried the road to it on either side of the Gwathló and Mitheithel across the fens in the plains of Minhiriath and Enedwaith.<sup>162</sup> A considerable garrison of soldiers, mariners and engineers had been kept there until the seventeenth century of the Third Age. But from then onwards the region fell quickly into decay; and long before the time of The Lord of the Rings had gone back into wild fen-lands. When Boromir made his great journey from Gondor to Rivendell—the courage and hardihood required is not fully recognized in the narrative—the North-South Road no longer existed except for the crumbling remains of the causeways, by which a hazardous approach to Tharbad might be achieved, only to find ruins on dwindling mounds, and a dangerous ford formed by the ruins of the bridge, impassable if the river had not been there slow and shallow—but wide.*

*If the name Glanduin was remembered at all it would only be in Rivendell; and it would apply only to the upper course of the river where it still ran swiftly, soon to be lost in the plains and disappear in the fens: a network of swamps, pools, and eyots, where the only inhabitants were hosts of swans, and many other water-birds. If the river had any name it was in the language of the Dunlendings. In The Return of the King VI 6 it is called the*

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<sup>162</sup> In the early days of the kingdoms the most expeditious route from one to the other (except for great armaments) was found to be by sea to the ancient port at the head of the estuary of the Gwathló and so to the river-port of Tharbad, and thence by the Road. The ancient sea-port and its great quays were ruinous, but with long labour a port capable of receiving seagoing vessels had been made at Tharbad, and a fort raised there on great earthworks on both sides of the river, to guard the once famed Bridge of Tharbad. The ancient port was one of the earliest ports of the Númenóreans, begun by the renowned mariner-king Tar-Aldarion, and later enlarged and fortified. It was called Lond Daer Enedh, the Great Middle Haven (as being between Lindon in the North and Pelargir on the Anduin). [Author's note.]

*Swanfleet river (not River), simply as being the river that went down into Nîn-in-Eilph, ‘the Waterlands of the Swans’.*<sup>163</sup>

It was my father’s intention to enter, in a revised map of *The Lord of the Rings*, *Glanduin* as the name of the upper course of the river, and to mark the fens as such, with the name *Nîn-in-Eilph* (or *Swanfleet*). In the event his intention came to be misunderstood, for on Pauline Baynes’ map the lower course is marked as ‘R.Swanfleet’, while on the map in the book, as noted above (p. 339), the names are placed against the wrong river.

It may be noted that Tharbad is referred to as ‘a ruined town’ in *The Fellowship of the Ring* II 3, and that Boromir in Lothlórien told that he lost his horse at Tharbad, at the fording of the Greyflood (*ibid.*, II 8). In the Tale of Years the ruining and desertion of Tharbad is dated to the year 2912 of the Third Age, when great floods devastated Enedwaith and Minhiriath.

From these discussions it can be seen that the conception of the Númenórean harbour at the mouth of the Gwathló had been expanded since the time when ‘Concerning Galadriel and Celeborn’ was written, from ‘a small Númenórean harbour’ to Lond Daer, the Great Haven. It is of course the Vinyalondë or New Haven of ‘Aldarion and Erendis’ (p. 228), though that name does not appear in the discussions just cited. It is said in ‘Aldarion and Erendis’ (p. 265) that the works that Aldarion began again at Vinyalondë after he became King ‘were never completed’. This probably means no more than that they were never completed by him; for the later history of Lond Daer presupposes that the haven was at length restored, and made secure from the assaults of the sea, and indeed the same passage in ‘Aldarion and Erendis’ goes on to say that Aldarion ‘laid the foundation for the achievement of Tar-Minastir long years after, in the first war with Sauron, and but for his works the fleets of Númenor could not have brought their power in time to the right place—as he foresaw’.

The statement in the discussion of *Glanduin* above that the port was called Lond Daer Enedh ‘the Great Middle Haven’, as being between the havens of Lindon in the North and Pelargir on the Anduin, must refer to a time long after the Númenórean intervention in the war against Sauron in Eriador; for according to the Tale of Years Pelargir was not built until the year 2350 of the Second Age, and became the chief haven of the Faithful Númenóreans.

## ***Appendix E: The Names Of Celeborn And Galadriel***

It is said in an essay concerning the customs of name-giving among the Eldar in Valinor that they had two ‘given names’ (*essi*), of which the first was given at birth by the father; and this one usually recalled the father’s own name, resembling it in sense or form, or might even be actually the same as the father’s, to which some distinguishing prefix might be added later, when the child was full-grown. The second name was given later, sometimes much later but sometimes soon after the birth, by the mother; and these mother-names had great significance, for the mothers of the Eldar had insight into the characters and abilities of their children, and many also had the gift of prophetic foresight. In addition, any of the Eldar might acquire an *epessë* (‘after-name’), not necessarily given by their own kin, a nickname—mostly given as a title of admiration or honour; and an *epessë* might become the name generally used and recognised in later song and history (as was the case, for instance, with Ereinion, always known by his *epessë* Gil-galad).

Thus the name *Alatáriel*, which, according to the late version of the story of their relationship (p. 298), was given to Galadriel by Celeborn in Aman, was an *epessë* (for its etymology see the Appendix to *The Silmarillion*, entry *kal-*), which she chose to use in Middle-earth, rendered into Sindarin as *Galadriel*, rather than her ‘father-name’ *Artanis*, or her ‘mother-name’ *Nerwen*.

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<sup>163</sup> Sindarin *alph*, a swan, plural *eilph*; Quenya *alqua*, as in *Alqualondë*. The Telerin branch of Eldarin shifted original *kw* to *p* (but original *p* remained unshifted). The much-changed Sindarin of Middle-earth turned the stops to spirants after *l* and *r*. Thus original *alkwa* became *alpa* in Telerin, and *alf* (transcribed *alph*) in Sindarin.

It is only of course in the late version that Celeborn appears with a High-elven, rather than Sindarin, name: *Teleporno*. This is stated to be actually Telerin in form; the ancient stem of the Elvish word for ‘silver’ was *kyelep-*, becoming *celeb* in Sindarin, *telep-*, *telpe* in Telerin, and *tyelep-*, *tyelpe* in Quenya. But in Quenya the form *telpe* became usual, through the influence of Telerin; for the Teleri prized silver above gold, and their skill as silversmiths was esteemed even by the Noldor. Thus *Telperion* was more commonly used than *Tyelperion* as the name of the White Tree of Valinor. (*Alatáriel* was also Telerin; its Quenya form was *Altáriel*.)

The name Celeborn when first devised was intended to mean ‘Silver Tree’; it was also the name of the Tree of Tol Eressëa (*The Silmarillion* p. 59). Celeborn’s close kin had ‘tree-names’ (p. 301): Galadhon his father, Galathil his brother, and Nimloth his niece, who bore the same name as the White Tree of Númenor. In my father’s latest philological writings, however, the meaning ‘Silver Tree’ was abandoned: the second element of *Celeborn* (as the name of a person) was derived from the ancient adjectival form *orna* ‘uprising, tall’, rather than from the related noun *orne* ‘tree’. (*Orne* was originally applied to straighter and more slender trees such as birches, whereas stouter, more spreading trees such as oaks and beeches were called in the ancient language *galada* ‘great growth’ but this distinction was not always observed in Quenya and disappeared in Sindarin, where all trees came to be called *galadh*, and *orn* fell out of common use, surviving only in verse and songs and in many names both of persons and of trees.) That Celeborn was tall is mentioned in a note to the discussion of Númenórean Linear Measures, p. 371.

On occasional confusion of Galadriel’s name with the word *galadh* my father wrote:

*When Celeborn and Galadriel became the rulers of the Elves of Lórien (who were mainly in origin Silvan Elves and called themselves the Galadhrim) the name of Galadriel became associated with trees, an association that was aided by the name of her husband, which also appeared to contain a tree-word; so that outside Lórien among those whose memories of the ancient days and Galadriel’s history had grown dim her name was often altered to Galadhriel. Not in Lórien itself.*

It may be mentioned here that *Galadhrim* is the correct spelling of the name of the Elves of Lórien, and similarly *Caras Galadhon*. My father originally altered the voiced form of *th* (as in Modern English *then*) in Elvish names to *d*, since (as he wrote) *dh* is not used in English and looks uncouth. Afterwards he changed his mind on the point, but *Galadrim* and *Caras Galadon* remained uncorrected until after the appearance of the revised edition of *The Lord of the Rings* (in recent reprints the change has been made). These names are wrongly spelt in the entry *alda* in the Appendix to *The Silmarillion*.





## The Disaster Of The Gladden Fields

*After the fall of Sauron, Isildur, the son and heir of Elendil, returned to Gondor. There he assumed the Elendilmir<sup>164</sup> as King of Arnor, and proclaimed his sovereign lordship over all the Dúnedain in the North and in the South; for he was a man of great pride and vigour. He remained for a year in Gondor, restoring its order and defining its bounds;<sup>165</sup> but the greater part of the army of Arnor returned to Eriador by the Númenórean road from the Fords of Isen to Fornost.*

*When he at last felt free to return to his own realm he was in haste, and he wished to go first to Imladris; for he had left his wife and youngest son there,<sup>166</sup> and he had moreover an urgent need for the counsel of Elrond. He therefore determined to make his way north from Osgiliath up the Vales of Anduin to Cirith Forn en Andrath, the high-climbing pass of the North, that led down to Imladris.<sup>167</sup> He knew the land well, for he had journeyed there often before the War of the Alliance, and had marched that way to the war with men of eastern Arnor in the company of Elrond.<sup>168</sup>*

*It was a long journey, but the only other way, west and then north to the road-meeting in Arnor, and then east to Imladris, was far longer.<sup>169</sup> As swift, maybe, for mounted men, but he had no horses fit for riding;<sup>170</sup> safer,*

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<sup>164</sup> The Elendilmir is named in a footnote to Appendix A (I, iii) to *The Lord of the Rings*: the Kings of Arnor wore no crown, ‘but bore a single white gem, the Elendilmir, Star of Elendil, bound on their brows with a silver fillet’. This note gives references to other mentions of the Star of Elendil in the course of the narrative. There were in fact not one but two gems of this name; see [p. 359](#).

<sup>165</sup> As is related in the Tale of Cirion and Eorl, drawing on older histories, now mostly lost, for its account of the events that led to the Oath of Eorl and the alliance of Gondor with the Rohirrim. [Author’s note.] See [p. 398](#).

<sup>166</sup> Isildur’s youngest son was Vandalil, third King of Arnor: see *Of the Rings of Power* in *The Silmarillion*, [pp. 295-6](#). In Appendix A (I, ii) to *The Lord of the Rings* it is stated that he was born in Imladris.

<sup>167</sup> This pass is named only here by an Elvish name. At Rivendell long after, Glóin the Dwarf referred to it as the High Pass: ‘If it were not for the Beornings, the passage from Dale to Rivendell would long ago have become impossible. They are valiant men and keep open the High Pass and the Ford of Carrock.’ (*The Fellowship of the Ring* II 1.) It was in this pass that Thorin Oakenshield and his company were captured by Orcs (*The Hobbit* [Chapter 4](#)). *Andrath* no doubt means ‘long climb’: see [note 154](#).

<sup>168</sup> Cf. *Of the Rings of Power* in *The Silmarillion*, [p. 295](#): ‘[Isildur] marched north from Gondor by the way that Elendil had come.’

<sup>169</sup> Three hundred leagues and more [*i.e.*, by the route which Isildur intended to take], and for the most part without made roads; in those days the only Númenórean roads were the great road linking Gondor and Arnor, through Calenardhon, then north over the Gwathló at Tharbad, and so at last to Fornost; and the East-West Road from the Grey Havens to Imladris. These roads crossed at a point [Bree] west of Amon Sûl (Weathertop), by Númenórean road-measurements three hundred and ninety-two leagues from Osgiliath, and then east to Imladris one hundred and sixteen: five hundred and eight leagues in all. [Author’s note.]

See the Appendix on Númenórean Linear Measures, [p. 369](#).



maybe, in former days, but Sauron was vanquished, and the people of the Vales had been his allies in victory. He had no fear, save for weather and weariness, but these men must endure whom need sends far abroad in Middle-earth.<sup>171</sup>

So it was, as is told in the legends of later days, that the second year of the Third Age was waning when Isildur set forth from Osgiliath early in Ivanneth,<sup>172</sup> expecting to reach Imladris in forty days, by mid-Narbeleth, ere winter drew nigh in the North. At the Eastgate of the Bridge on a bright morning Meneldil<sup>173</sup> bade him farewell. 'Go now with good speed, and may the Sun of your setting out not cease to shine on your road!'

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<sup>170</sup> The Númenóreans in their own land possessed horses, which they esteemed [see the 'Description of Númenor', pp. 218, 219]. But they did not use them in war; for all their wars were overseas. Also they were of great stature and strength, and their fully-equipped soldiers were accustomed to bear heavy armour and weapons. In their settlements on the shores of Middle-earth they acquired and bred horses, but used them little for riding, except in sport and pleasure. In war they were used only by couriers, and by bodies of light-armed archers (often not of Númenórean race). In the War of the Alliance such horses as they used had suffered great losses, and few were available in Osgiliath. [Author's note.]

<sup>171</sup> They needed some baggage and provisions in houseless country; for they did not expect to find any dwellings of Elves or Men, until they reached Thranduil's realm, almost at their journey's end. On the march each man carried with him two days' provisions (other than the 'need-wallet' mentioned in the text [p. 358]); the rest, and other baggage, was carried by small sturdy horses, of a kind, it was said, that had first been found, wild and free, in the wide plains south and east of the Greenwood. They had been tamed; but though they would carry heavy burdens (at walking pace), they would not allow any man to ride them. Of these they had only ten. [Author's note.]

<sup>172</sup> *Yavannië* 5, according to the Númenórean 'King's Reckoning', still kept with little change in the Shire Calendar. *Yavannië* (*Ivanneth*) thus corresponded to *Halimath*, our September; and *Narbeleth* to our October. Forty days (till *Narbeleth* 15) was sufficient, if all went well. The journey was probably at least three hundred and eight leagues as marched; but the soldiers of the Dúnedain, tall men of great strength and endurance, were accustomed to move fully-armed at eight leagues a day 'with ease': when they went in eight spells of a league, with short breaks at the end of each league (*lár*, Sindarin *daur*, originally meaning a stop or pause), and one hour near midday. This made a 'march' of about ten and a half hours, in which they were walking eight hours. This pace they could maintain for long periods with adequate provision. In haste they could move much faster, at twelve leagues a day (or in great need more), but for shorter periods. At the date of the disaster, in the latitude of Imladris (which they were approaching), there were at least eleven hours of daylight in open country; but at midwinter less than eight. Long journeys were not, however, undertaken in the North between the beginning of *Hithui* (*Hísimë*, November) and the end of *Nínui* (*Nénimë*, February) in time of peace. [Author's note.]

A detailed account of the Calendars in use in Middle-earth is given in [Appendix D](#) to *The Lord of the Rings*.

<sup>173</sup> Meneldil was the nephew of Isildur, son of Isildur's younger brother Anárion, slain in the siege of Barad-dûr. Isildur had established Meneldil as King of Gondor. He was a man of courtesy, but far-seeing and he did not reveal his thoughts. He was in fact well-pleased by the departure of Isildur and his sons, and hoped that affairs in the North would keep them long occupied. [Author's note.]

It is stated in unpublished annals concerning the Heirs of Elendil that Meneldil was the fourth child of Anárion, that he was born in the year 3318 of the Second Age, and that he was the last man to be born in Númenor. The note just cited is the only reference to his character.

*With Isildur went his three sons, Elendur, Aratan, and Ciryon,<sup>174</sup> and his Guard of two hundred knights and soldiers, stern men of Arnor and war-hardened. Of their journey nothing is told until they had passed over the Dagorlad, and on northward into the wide and empty lands south of Greenwood the Great. On the twentieth day, as they came within far sight of the forest crowning the highlands before them with a distant gleam of the red and gold of Ivanneth, the sky became overcast and a dark wind came up from the Sea of Rhûn laden with rain. The rain lasted for four days; so when they came to the entrance to the Vales, between Lórien and Amon Lanc,<sup>175</sup> Isildur turned away from the Anduin, swollen with swift water, and went up the steep slopes on its eastern side to gain the ancient paths of the Silvan Elves that ran near the eaves of the Forest.*

*So it came to pass that late in the afternoon of the thirtieth day of their journey they were passing the north borders of the Gladden Fields,<sup>176</sup> marching along a path that led to Thranduil's realm,<sup>177</sup> as it then was. The*

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<sup>174</sup> All three had fought in the War of the Alliance, but Aratan and Ciryon had not been in the invasion of Mordor and the siege of Barad-dûr, for Isildur had sent them to man his fortress of Minas Ithil, lest Sauron should escape Gilgalad and Elendil and seek to force a way through Cirith Dúath (later called Cirith Ungol) and take vengeance on the Dúnedain before he was overcome. Elendur, Isildur's heir and dear to him, had accompanied his father throughout the war (save the last challenge upon Orodruin) and he was in Isildur's full confidence. [Author's note.]

It is stated in the annals mentioned in the previous [note](#) that Isildur's eldest son was born in Númenor in the year 3299 of the Second Age (Isildur himself was born in 3209).

<sup>175</sup> *Amon Lanc*, 'Naked Hill,' was the highest point in the highland at the south-west corner of the Greenwood, and was so called because no trees grew on its summit. In later days it was Dol Guldur, the first stronghold of Sauron after his awakening. [Author's note.]

<sup>176</sup> The Gladden Fields (*Loeg Ningloron*). In the Elder Days, when the Silvan Elves first settled there, they were a lake formed in a deep depression into which the Anduin poured from the North down the swiftest part of its course, a long descent of some seventy miles, and there mingled with the torrent of the Gladden River (Sîr Ninglor) hastening from the Mountains. The lake had been wider west of Anduin, for the eastern side of the valley was steeper; but on the east it probably reached as far as the feet of the long slopes down from the Forest (then still wooded), its reedy borders being marked by the gentler slope, just below the path that Isildur was following. The lake had become a great marsh, through which the river wandered in a wilderness of islets, and wide beds of reed and rush, and armies of yellow iris that grew taller than a man and gave their name to all the region and to the river from the Mountains about whose lower course they grew most thickly. But the marsh had receded to the east, and from the foot of the lower slopes there were now wide flats, grown with grass and small rushes, on which men could walk. [Author's note.]

<sup>177</sup> Long before the War of the Alliance, Oropher, King of the Silvan Elves east of Anduin, being disturbed by rumours of the rising power of Sauron, had left their ancient dwellings about Amon Lanc, across the river from their kin in Lórien. Three times he had moved northwards, and at the end of the Second Age he dwelt in the western glens of the Eryn Duir, and his numerous people lived and roamed in the woods and vales westward as far as Anduin, north of the ancient Dwarf-Road (*Men-i-Naugrim*). He had joined the Alliance, but was slain in the assault upon the Gates of Mordor. Thranduil his son had returned with the remnant of the army of the Silvan Elves in the year before Isildur's march

The Eryn Duir (Dark Mountains) were a group of high hills in the north-east of the Forest, so called because dense fir-woods grew upon their slopes; but they were not yet of evil name. In later days when the shadow of Sauron spread through Greenwood the Great, and changed its name from Eryn Galen to Taur-nu-Fuin (translated Mirkwood), the Eryn Duir became a haunt of many of his most evil creatures, and were called Eryn-nu-Fuin, the Mountains of Mirkwood. [Author's note.]

*fair day was waning; above the distant mountains clouds were gathering, reddened by the misty sun as it drew down towards them; the deeps of the valley were already in grey shadow. The Dúnedain were singing, for their day's march was near its end, and three parts of the long road to Imladris were behind them. To their right the Forest loomed above them at the top of steep slopes running down to their path, below which the descent into the valley-bottom was gentler.*

*Suddenly as the sun plunged into cloud they heard the hideous cries of Orcs, and saw them issuing from the Forest and moving down the slopes, yelling their war-cries.<sup>178</sup> In the dimmed light their number could only be guessed, but the Dúnedain were plainly many times, even to ten times, outnumbered. Isildur commanded a *thangail*<sup>179</sup> to be drawn up, a shield-wall of two serried ranks that could be bent back at either end if outflanked, until at need it became a closed ring. If the land had been flat or the slope in his favour he would have formed*

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On Oropher see [Appendix B](#) to 'The History of Galadriel and Celeborn;' in one of the passages there cited Oropher's retreat northwards within the Greenwood is ascribed to his desire to move out of range of the Dwarves of Khazad-dûm and of Celeborn and Galadriel in Lórien.

The Elvish names of the Mountains of Mirkwood are not found elsewhere. In Appendix F (II) to *The Lord of the Rings* the Elvish name of Mirkwood is Taur-e-Ndaedelos 'forest of the great fear' the name given here, Taur-nu-Fuin 'forest under night', was the later name of Dorthonion, the forested highland on the northern borders of Beleriand in the Elder Days. The application of the same name, Taur-nu-Fuin, to both Mirkwood and Dorthonion is notable, in the light of the close relation of my father's pictures of them: see *Pictures by J. R. R. Tolkien*, 1979, note to no. 37.

After the end of the War of the Ring Thranduil and Celeborn renamed Mirkwood once more, calling it Eryn Lasgalen, the Wood of Greenleaves ([Appendix B](#) to *The Lord of the Rings*).

*Men-i-Naugrim*, the Dwarf Road, is the Old Forest Road described in *The Hobbit*, [Chapter 7](#). In the earlier draft of this section of the present narrative there is a note referring to 'the ancient Forest Road that led down from the Pass of Imladris and crossed Anduin by a bridge (that had been enlarged and strengthened for the passage of the armies of the Alliance), and so over the eastern valley into the Greenwood. The Anduin could not be bridged at any lower point; for a few miles below the Forest Road the land fell steeply and the river became very swift, until it reached the great basin of the Gladden Fields. Beyond the Fields it quickened again, and was then a great flood fed by many streams, of which the names are forgotten save those of the larger: the Gladden (Sir Ninglor), Silverlode (Celebrant), and Limlight (Limlaith).' In *The Hobbit* the Forest Road traversed the great river by the Old Ford, and there is no mention of there having once been a bridge at the crossing.

<sup>178</sup> A different tradition of the event is represented in the brief account given in *Of the Rings of Power (The Silmarillion* [p. 295](#)): 'Isildur was overwhelmed by a host of Orcs that lay in wait in the Misty Mountains; and they descended upon him at unawares in his camp between the Greenwood and the Great River, nigh to Loeg Ningloron, the Gladden Fields, for he was heedless and set no guard, deeming that all his foes were overthrown.'

<sup>179</sup> *Thangail*, 'shield-fence' was the name of this formation in Sindarin, the normal spoken language of Elendil's people; its 'official' name in Quenya was *sandastan*, 'shield-barrier', derived from primitive *thanda*, 'shield' and *stama*, 'bar, exclude'. The Sindarin word used a different second element: *cail*, a fence or palisade of spikes and sharp stakes. This, in primitive form *kegle*, was derived from a stem *keg*, 'snag, barb', seen also in the primitive word *kegya*, 'hedge', whence Sindarin *cai* (cf. the *Morgai* in Mordor).

The *dirnaith*, Quenya *nernehta*, 'man-spearhead', was a wedge-formation, launched over a short distance against an enemy massing but not yet arrayed, or against a defensive formation on open ground. Quenya *nehte*, Sindarin *naith* was applied to any formation or projection tapering to a point: a spearhead, gore, wedge, narrow promontory (root *nek*, 'narrow'); cf. the Naith of Lórien, the land at the angle of the Celebrant and Anduin, which at the actual junction of the rivers was narrower and more pointed than can be shown on a small-scale map. [Author's note.]



his company into a dírnaith<sup>179</sup> and charged the Orcs, hoping by the great strength of the Dúnedain and their weapons to cleave a way through them and scatter them in dismay; but that could not now be done. A shadow of foreboding fell upon his heart.

*'The vengeance of Sauron lives on, though he may be dead,' he said to Elendur, who stood beside him. 'There is cunning and design here! We have no hope of help: Moria and Lórien are now far behind, and Thranduil four days' march ahead.' 'And we bear burdens of worth beyond all reckoning,' said Elendur; for he was in his father's confidence.*

*The Orcs were now drawing near. Isildur turned to his esquire: 'Ohtar,'<sup>180</sup> he said, 'I give this now into your keeping'; and he delivered to him the great sheath and the shards of Narsil, Elendil's sword. 'Save it from capture by all means that you can find, and at all costs; even at the cost of being held a coward who deserted me. Take your companion with you and flee! Go! I command you!' Then Ohtar knelt and kissed his hand, and the two young men fled down into the dark valley.<sup>181</sup>*

*If the keen-eyed Orcs marked their flight they took no heed. They halted briefly, preparing their assault. First they let fly a hail of arrows, and then suddenly with a great shout they did as Isildur would have done, and hurled a great mass of their chief warriors down the last slope against the Dúnedain, expecting to break up their shield-wall. But it stood firm. The arrows had been unavailing against the Númenórean armour. The great Men towered above the tallest Orcs, and their swords and spears far outreached the weapons of their enemies. The onslaught faltered, broke, and retreated, leaving the defenders little harmed, unshaken, behind piles of fallen Orcs.*

*It seemed to Isildur that the enemy was withdrawing towards the Forest. He looked back. The red rim of the sun gleamed out from the clouds as it went down behind the mountains; night would soon be falling. He gave orders to resume the march at once, but to bend their course down towards the lower and flatter ground where the Orcs would have less advantage.<sup>182</sup> Maybe he believed that after their costly repulse they would give way, though their scouts might follow him during the night and watch his camp. That was the manner of Orcs, who were most often dismayed when their prey could turn and bite.*

*But he was mistaken. There was not only cunning in the attack, but fierce and relentless hatred. The Orcs of the Mountains were stiffened and commanded by grim servants of Barad-dûr, sent out long before to watch the passes,<sup>183</sup> and though it was unknown to them the Ring, cut from his black hand two years before, was still*

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<sup>180</sup> *Ohtar* is the only name used in the legends; but it is probably only the title of address that Isildur used at this tragic moment, hiding his feelings under formality. *Ohtar* 'warrior, soldier' was the title of all who, though fully trained and experienced, had not yet been admitted to the rank of *roquen*, 'knight'. But *Ohtar* was dear to Isildur and of his own kin. [Author's note.]

<sup>181</sup> In the earlier draft Isildur directed *Ohtar* to take two companions with him. In *Of the Rings of Power* (*The Silmarillion* p. 295) and in *The Fellowship of the Ring* II 2 it is told that 'three men only came ever back over the mountains'. In the text given here the implication is that the third was Estelmo, Elendur's esquire, who survived the battle (see p. 357).

<sup>182</sup> They had passed the deep depression of the Gladden Fields, beyond which the ground on the east side of Anduin (which flowed in a deep channel) was firmer and drier, for the lie of the land changed. It began to climb northwards until as it neared the Forest Road and Thranduil's country it was almost level with the eaves of the Greenwood. This Isildur knew well. [Author's note.]

<sup>183</sup> There can be no doubt that Sauron, well-informed of the Alliance, had sent out such Orc-troops of the Red Eye as he could spare, to do what they could to harry any forces that attempted to shorten their road by crossing the Mountains. In the event the main might of Gil-galad, together with Isildur and part of the Men of Arnor, had come over the Passes of Imladris and Caradhras, and the Orcs were dismayed and hid themselves. But they remained alert and watchful, determined to attack any companies of Elves or Men that they outnumbered. Thranduil they had let pass, for even his diminished army was far too strong for them; but they bided their time,

laden with Sauron's evil will and called to all his servants for their aid. The Dúnedain had gone scarcely a mile when the Orcs moved again. This time they did not charge, but used all their forces. They came down on a wide front, which bent into a crescent and soon closed into an unbroken ring about the Dúnedain. They were silent now, and kept at a distance out of the range of the dreaded steel-bows of Númenor,<sup>184</sup> though the light was fast failing, and Isildur had all too few archers for his need.<sup>185</sup> He halted.

There was a pause, though the most keen-eyed among the Dúnedain said that the Orcs were moving inwards, stealthily, step by step. Elendur went to his father, who was standing dark and alone, as if lost in thought. 'Atarinya,' he said, 'what of the power that would cow these foul creatures and command them to obey you? Is it then of no avail?'

'Alas, it is not, senya. I cannot use it. I dread the pain of touching it.'<sup>186</sup> And I have not yet found the strength to bend it to my will. It needs one greater than I now know myself to be. My pride has fallen. It should go to the Keepers of the Three.'

At that moment there came a sudden blast of horns, and the Orcs closed in on all sides, flinging themselves against the Dúnedain with reckless ferocity. Night had come, and hope faded. Men were falling; for some of the greater Orcs leaped up, two at a time, and dead or alive with their weight bore down a Dúnedan, so that other strong claws could drag him out and slay him. The Orcs might pay five to one in this exchange, but it was too cheap. Ciryon was slain in this way and Aratan mortally wounded in an attempt to rescue him.

Elendur, not yet harmed, sought Isildur. He was rallying the men on the east side where the assault was heaviest, for the Orcs still feared the Elendilmir that he bore on his brow and avoided him. Elendur touched him on the shoulder and he turned fiercely, thinking an Orc had crept behind.

'My King,' said Elendur, 'Ciryon is dead and Aratan is dying. Your last counsellor must advise, nay command you, as you commanded Ohtar. Go! Take your burden, and at all costs bring it to the Keepers: even at the cost of abandoning your men and me!'

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for the most part hidden in the Forest, while others lurked along the river-banks. It is unlikely that any news of Sauron's fall had reached them, for he had been straitly besieged in Mordor and all his forces had been destroyed. If any few had escaped, they had fled far to the East with the Ringwraiths. This small detachment in the North, of no account, was forgotten. Probably they thought that Sauron had been victorious, and the warscarred army of Thranduil was retreating to hide in fastnesses of the Forest. Thus they would be emboldened and eager to win their master's praise, though they had not been in the main battles. But it was not his praise they would have won, if any had lived long enough to see his revival. No tortures would have satisfied his anger with the bungling fools who had let slip the greatest prize in Middle-earth; even though they could know nothing of the One Ring, which save to Sauron himself was known only to the Nine Ringwraiths, its slaves. Yet many have thought that the ferocity and determination of their assault on Isildur was in part due to the Ring. It was little more than two years since it had left his hand, and though it was swiftly cooling it was still heavy with his evil will, and seeking all means to return to its lord (as it did again when he recovered and was re-housed). So, it is thought, although they did not understand it the Orc-chiefs were filled with a fierce desire to destroy the Dúnedain and capture their leader. Nonetheless it proved in the event that the War of the Ring was lost at the Disaster of the Gladden Fields. [Author's note.]

<sup>184</sup> On the bows of the Númenóreans see the 'Description of Númenor', p. 220.

<sup>185</sup> No more than twenty, it is said; for no such need had been expected. [Author's note.]

<sup>186</sup> Compare the words of the scroll which Isildur wrote concerning the Ring before he departed from Gondor on his last journey, and which Gandalf reported to the Council of Elrond in Rivendell: 'It was hot when I first took it, hot as a glede, and my hand was scorched, so that I doubt if ever again I shall be free of the pain of it. Yet even as I write it is cooled, and it seemeth to shrink . . .' (*The Fellowship of the Ring* II 2).

*'King's son,' said Isildur, 'I knew that I must do so; but I feared the pain. Nor could I go without your leave. Forgive me, and my pride that has brought you to this doom.'*<sup>187</sup> *Elendur kissed him. 'Go! Go now!'* he said.

*Isildur turned west, and drawing up the Ring that hung in a wallet from a fine chain about his neck, he set it upon his finger with a cry of pain, and was never seen again by any eye upon Middle-earth. But the Elendilmir of the West could not be quenched, and suddenly it blazed forth red and wrathful as a burning star. Men and Orcs gave way in fear; and Isildur, drawing a hood over his head, vanished into the night.*<sup>188</sup>

*Of what befell the Dúnedain only this was later known: ere long they all lay dead, save one, a young esquire stunned and buried under fallen men. So perished Elendur, who should afterwards have been King, and as all foretold who knew him, in his strength and wisdom, and his majesty without pride, one of the greatest, the fairest of the seed of Elendil, most like to his grandsire.*<sup>189</sup>

*Now of Isildur it is told that he was in great pain and anguish of heart, but at first he ran like a stag from the hounds, until he came to the bottom of the valley. There he halted, to make sure that he was not pursued; for Orcs could track a fugitive in the dark by scent, and needed no eyes. Then he went on more warily, for wide flats stretched on into the gloom before him, rough and pathless, with many traps for wandering feet.*

*So it was that he came at last to the banks of Anduin at the dead of night, and he was weary; for he had made a journey that the Dúnedain on such ground could have made no quicker, marching without halt and by day.*<sup>190</sup> *The river was swirling dark and swift before him. He stood for a while, alone and in despair. Then in haste he cast off all his armour and weapons, save a short sword at his belt,*<sup>191</sup> *and plunged into the water. He was a man of strength and endurance that few even of the Dúnedain of that age could equal, but he had little hope to gain the other shore. Before he had gone far he was forced to turn almost north against the current; and strive as he might he was ever swept down towards the tangles of the Gladden Fields. They were nearer than he had thought,*<sup>192</sup> *and even as he felt the stream slacken and had almost won across he found himself struggling among great rushes and clinging weeds. There suddenly he knew that the Ring had gone. By chance, or chance well used, it had left his hand and gone where he could never hope to find it again. At first so overwhelming was his sense of loss that he struggled no more, and would have sunk and drowned. But swift as it had come the mood passed. The pain had left him. A great burden had been taken away. His feet found the river bed, and heaving himself up out of the mud he floundered through the reeds to a marshy islet close to the western shore.*

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<sup>187</sup> The pride that led him to keep the Ring against the counsel of Elrond and Círdan that it should be destroyed in the fires of Orodruin (*The Fellowship of the Ring* II 2, and *Of the Rings of Power*, in *The Silmarillion*, p. 295).

<sup>188</sup> The meaning, sufficiently remarkable, of this passage appears to be that the light of the Elendilmir was proof against the invisibility conferred by the One Ring when worn, if its light would be visible were the Ring not worn; but when Isildur covered his head with a hood its light was extinguished.

<sup>189</sup> It is said that in later days those (such as Elrond) whose memories recalled him were struck by the great likeness to him, in body and mind, of King Elessar, the victor in the War of the Ring, in which both the Ring and Sauron were ended for ever. Elessar was according to the records of the Dúnedain the descendant in the thirty-eighth degree of Elendur's brother Vandalil. So long was it before he was avenged. [Author's note.]

<sup>190</sup> Seven leagues or more from the place of battle. Night had fallen when he fled; he reached Anduin at midnight or near it. [Author's note.]

<sup>191</sup> This was of a kind called *eket*: a short stabbing sword with a broad blade, pointed and two-edged, from a foot to one and a half feet long. [Author's note.]

<sup>192</sup> The place of the last stand had been a mile or more beyond their northern border, but maybe in the dark the fall of the land had bent his course somewhat to the south. [Author's note.]

*There he rose up out of the water: only a mortal man, a small creature lost and abandoned in the wilds of Middle-earth. But to the night-eyed Orcs that lurked there on the watch he loomed up, a monstrous shadow of fear, with a piercing eye like a star. They loosed their poisoned arrows at it, and fled. Needlessly, for Isildur unarmed was pierced through heart and throat, and without a cry he fell back into the water. No trace of his body was ever found by Elves or Men. So passed the first victim of the malice of the masterless Ring: Isildur, second King of all the Dúnedain, lord of Arnor and Gondor, and in that age of the World the last.*

## **The Sources Of The Legend Of Isildur's Death**

*There were eye-witnesses of the event. Ohtar and his companion escaped, bearing with them the shards of Narsil. The tale mentions a young man who survived the slaughter: he was Elendur's esquire, named Estelmo, and was one of the last to fall, but was stunned by a club, and not slain, and was found alive under Elendur's body. He heard the words of Isildur and Elendur at their parting. There were rescuers who came on the scene too late, but in time to disturb the Orcs and prevent their mutilation of the bodies: for there were certain Woodmen who got news to Thranduil by runners, and also themselves gathered a force to ambush the Orcs—of which they got wind, and scattered, for though victorious their losses had been great, and almost all of the great Orcs had fallen: they attempted no such attack again for long years after.*

*The story of the last hours of Isildur and his death was due to surmise: but well-founded. The legend in its full form was not composed until the reign of Elessar in the Fourth Age, when other evidence was discovered. Up to then it had been known, firstly, that Isildur had the Ring, and had fled towards the River; secondly, that his mail, helm, shield and great sword (but nothing else) had been found on the bank not far above the Gladden Fields; thirdly, that the Orcs had left watchers on the west bank armed with bows to intercept any who might escape the battle and flee to the River (for traces of their camps were found, one close to the borders of the Gladden Fields); and fourthly, that Isildur and the Ring, separately or together, must have been lost in the River, for if Isildur had reached the west shore wearing the Ring he should have eluded the watch, and so hardy a man of great endurance could not have failed to come then to Lórien or Moria before he foundered. Though it was a long journey, each of the Dúnedain carried in a sealed wallet on his belt a small phial of cordial and wafers of a waybread that would sustain life in him for many days—not indeed the miruvor<sup>193</sup> or the lembas of the Eldar, but like them, for the medicine and other arts of Númenor were potent and not yet forgotten. No belt or wallet was among the gear discarded by Isildur.*

*Long afterwards, as the Third Age of the Elvish World waned and the War of the Ring approached, it was revealed to the Council of Elrond that the Ring had been found, sunk near the edge of the Gladden Fields and close to the western bank; though no trace of Isildur's body was ever discovered. They were also then aware that Saruman had been secretly searching in the same region; but though he had not found the Ring (which had long before been carried off), they did not yet know what else he might have discovered.*

*But King Elessar, when he was crowned in Gondor, began the re-ordering of his realm, and one of his first tasks was the restoration of Orthanc, where he proposed to set up again the palantír recovered from Saruman. Then all the secrets of the tower were searched. Many things of worth were found, jewels and heirlooms of Eorl, filched from Edoras by the agency of Wormtongue during King Théoden's decline, and other such things, more ancient and beautiful, from mounds and tombs far and wide. Saruman in his degradation had become not a dragon but a jackdaw. At last behind a hidden door that they could not have found or opened had not Elessar had the aid of Gimli the Dwarf a steel closet was revealed. Maybe it had been intended to receive the Ring; but it was almost bare. In a casket on a high shelf two things were laid. One was a small case of gold, attached to a fine chain; it was empty, and bore no letter or token, but beyond all doubt it had once borne the Ring about Isildur's neck. Next to it lay a treasure without price, long mourned as lost for ever: the Elendilmir itself, the*

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<sup>193</sup> A flask of *miruvor*, 'the cordial of Imladris', was given to Gandalf by Elrond when the company set out from Rivendell (*The Fellowship of the Ring* II 3); see also *The Road Goes Ever On*, p. 61.



white star of Elvish crystal upon a fillet of mithril<sup>194</sup> that had descended from Silmarien to Elendil, and had been taken by him as the token of royalty in the North Kingdom.<sup>195</sup> Every king and the chieftains that followed them in Arnor had borne the Elendilmir down even to Elessar himself; but though it was a jewel of great beauty, made by Elven-smiths in Imladris for Valandil Isildur's son, it had not the ancients' nor potency of the one that had been lost when Isildur fled into the dark and came back no more.

Elessar took it up with reverence, and when he returned to the North and took up again the full kingship of Arnor Arwen bound it upon his brow, and men were silent in amaze to see its splendour. But Elessar did not again imperil it, and wore it only on high days in the North Kingdom. Otherwise, when in kingly raiment he bore the Elendilmir which had descended to him. 'And this also is a thing of reverence,' he said, 'and above my worth; forty heads have worn it before.'<sup>196</sup>

When men considered this secret hoard more closely, they were dismayed. For it seemed to them that these things, and certainly the Elendilmir, could not have been found, unless they had been upon Isildur's body when he sank; but if that had been in deep water of strong flow they would in time have been swept far away. Therefore Isildur must have fallen not into the deep stream but into shallow water, no more than shoulder-high. Why then, though an Age had passed, were there no traces of his bones? Had Saruman found them, and scorned them—burned them with dishonour in one of his furnaces? If that were so, it was a shameful deed; but not his worst.

## Appendix: Númenórean Linear Measures

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<sup>194</sup> For that metal was found in Númenor. [Author's note.]

In 'The Line of Elros' (p. 286) Tar-Telemmaitë, the fifteenth Ruler of Númenor, is said to have been called so (i.e. 'silver-handed') because of his love of silver, 'and he bade his servants to seek ever for *mithril*'. But Gandalf said that *mithril* was found in Moria 'alone in the world' (*The Fellowship of the Ring* II 4).

<sup>195</sup> It is told in 'Aldarion and Erendis' (p. 238) that Erendis caused the diamond which Aldarion brought to her from Middle-earth 'to be set as a star in a silver fillet; and at her asking he bound it on her forehead'. For this reason she was known as Tar-Elestirnë, the Lady of the Star-brow; 'and thus came, it is said, the manner of the Kings and Queens afterward to wear as a star a white jewel upon the brow, and they had no crown' (note 112). This tradition cannot be unconnected with that of the Elendilmir, a star-like gem borne on the brow as a token of royalty in Arnor; but the original Elendilmir itself, since it belonged to Silmarien, was in existence in Númenor (whatever its origin may have been) before Aldarion brought Erendis' jewel from Middle-earth, and they cannot be the same.

<sup>196</sup> The actual number was thirty-eight, since the second Elendilmir was made for Valandil (cf. note 189 above).

In the Tale of Years in Appendix B to *The Lord of the Rings* the entry for the year 16 of the Fourth Age (given under Shire Reckoning 1436) states that when King Elessar came to the Brandywine Bridge to greet his friends he gave the Star of the Dúnedain to Master Samwise, while his daughter Elanor was made a maid of honour to Queen Arwen. On the basis of this record Mr Robert Foster says in *The Complete Guide to Middle-earth* that 'the Star [of Elendil] was worn on the brow of the Kings of the North-kingdom until Elessar gave it to Sam Gamgee in Fourth Age 16'. The clear implication of the present passage is that King Elessar retained indefinitely the Elendilmir that was made for Valandil; and it seems to me in any case out of the question that he would have made a gift of it to the Mayor of the Shire, however greatly he esteemed him. The Elendilmir is called by several names: the Star of Elendil, the Star of the North, the Star of the North-kingdom; and the Star of the Dúnedain (occurring only in this entry in the Tale of Years) is assumed to be yet another both in Robert Foster's *Guide* and in J.E.A. Tyler's *Tolkien Companion*. I have found no other reference to it; but it seems to me to be almost certain that it was not, and that Master Samwise received some different (and more suitable) distinction.

A note associated with the passage in ‘The Disaster of the Gladden Fields’ concerning the different routes from Osgiliath to Imladris (pp. 351 and [note 169](#)) runs as follows:

*Measures of distance are converted as nearly as possible into modern terms. ‘League’ is used because it was the longest measurement of distance: in Númenórean reckoning (which was decimal) five thousand rangar (full paces) made a lár, which was very nearly three of our miles. Lár meant ‘pause’, because except in forced marches a brief halt was usually made after this distance had been covered [see [note 172](#) above]. The Númenórean ranga was slightly longer than our yard, approximately thirty-eight inches, owing to their greater stature. Therefore five thousand rangar would be almost exactly the equivalent of 5280 yards, our ‘league’: 5277 yards, two feet and four inches, supposing the equivalence to be exact. This cannot be determined, being based on the lengths given in histories of various things and distances that can be compared with those of our time. Account has to be taken both of the great stature of the Númenóreans (since hands, feet, fingers and paces are likely to be the origin of names of units of length), and also of the variations from these averages or norms in the process of fixing and organising a measurement system both for daily use and for exact calculations. Thus two rangar was often called ‘man-high’, which at thirty-eight inches gives an average height of six feet four inches; but this was at a later date, when the stature of the Dúnedain appears to have decreased, and also was not intended to be an accurate statement of the observed average of male stature among them, but was an approximate length expressed in the well-known unit ranga. (The ranga is often said to have been the length of the stride, from rear heel to front toe, of a full-grown man marching swiftly but at ease; a full stride ‘might be well nigh a ranga and a half’.) It is however said of the great people of the past that they were more than man-high. Elendil was said to be ‘more than man-high by nearly half a ranga’; but he was accounted the tallest of all the Númenóreans who escaped the Downfall [and was indeed generally known as Elendil the Tall]. The Eldar of the Elder Days were also very tall. Galadriel, ‘the tallest of all the women of the Eldar of whom tales tell’, was said to be man-high, but it is noted ‘according to the measure of the Dúnedain and the men of old’, indicating a height of about six feet four inches.*

*The Rohirrim were generally shorter, for in their far-off ancestry they had been mingled with men of broader and heavier build. Éomer was said to have been tall, of like height with Aragorn; but he with other descendants of King Thengel were taller than the norm of Rohan, deriving this characteristic (together in some cases with darker hair) from Morwen, Thengel’s wife, a lady of Gondor of high Númenórean descent.*

A note to the foregoing text adds some information concerning Morwen to what is given in *The Lord of the Rings* (Appendix A (II), ‘[The Kings of the Mark](#)’):

*She was known as Morwen of Lossarnach, for she dwelt there; but she did not belong to the people of that land. Her father had removed thither, for love of its flowering vales, from Belfalas; he was a descendant of a former Prince of that fief, and thus a kinsman of Prince Imrahil. His kinship with Éomer of Rohan, though distant, was recognised by Imrahil, and great friendship grew between them. Éomer wedded Imrahil’s daughter [Lothíriel], and their son, Elfwine the Fair, had a striking likeness to his mother’s father.*

Another note remarks of Celeborn that he was ‘a Linda of Valinor’ (that is, one of the Teleri, whose own name for themselves was Lindar, the Singers), and that

*he was held by them to be tall, as his name indicated (‘silver-tall’); but the Teleri were in general somewhat less in build and stature than the Noldor.*

This is the late version of the story of Celeborn’s origin, and of the meaning of his name; see pp. 300, 301, 346.

In another place my father wrote of Hobbit stature in relation to that of the Númenóreans, and of the origin of the name Halflings:

*The remarks [on the stature of Hobbits] in the Prologue to The Lord of the Rings are unnecessarily vague and complicated, owing to the inclusion of references to survivals of the race in later times; but as far as The Lord of the Rings is concerned they boil down to this: the Hobbits of the Shire were in height between three and four feet, never less and seldom more. They did not of course call themselves Halflings; this was the Númenórean name for them. It evidently referred to their height in comparison with Númenórean men, and was approximately accurate when given. It was applied first to the Harfoots, who became known to the rulers of*

*Arnor in the eleventh century [cf. the entry for 1050 in the Tale of Years], and then later also to Fallohides and Stoors. The Kingdoms of the North and the South remained in close communication at that time, and indeed until much later, and each was well informed of all events in the other region, especially of the migration of peoples of all kinds. Thus though no 'halfling', so far as is known, had ever actually appeared in Gondor before Peregrin Took, the existence of this people within the kingdom of Arthedain was known in Gondor, and they were given the name Halfling, or in Sindarin perian. As soon as Frodo was brought to Boromir's notice [at the Council of Elrond] he recognised him as a member of this race. He had probably until then regarded them as creatures of what we should call fairy-tales or folklore. It seems plain from Pippin's reception in Gondor that in fact 'halflings' were remembered there.*

In another version of this note more is said of the diminishing stature of both Halflings and Númenóreans:

*The dwindling of the Dúnedain was not a normal tendency, shared by peoples whose proper home was Middle-earth; but due to the loss of their ancient land far in the West, nearest of all mortal lands to the Undying Realm. The much later dwindling of hobbits must be due to a change in their state and way of life; they became a fugitive and secret people, driven (as Men, the Big Folk, became more and more numerous, usurping the more fertile and habitable lands) to refuge in forest or wilderness: a wandering and poor folk, forgetful of their arts, living a precarious life absorbed in the search for food, and fearful of being seen.*



# Cirion And Eorl And The Friendship Of Gondor And Rohan

## I. The Northmen And The Wainriders

*The Chronicle of Cirion and Eorl*<sup>197</sup> begins only with the first meeting of Cirion, Steward of Gondor, and Eorl, Lord of the Éothéod, after the Battle of the Field of Celebrant was over and the invaders of Gondor destroyed. But there were lays and legends of the great ride of the Rohirrim from the North both in Rohan and in Gondor, from which accounts that appear in later Chronicles,<sup>198</sup> together with much other matter concerning the Éothéod, were taken. These are here drawn together briefly in chronicle form.

The Éothéod were first known by that name in the days of King Calimehtar of Gondor (who died in the year 1936 of the Third Age), at which time they were a small people living in the Vales of Anduin between the Carrock and the Gladden Fields, for the most part on the west side of the river. They were a remnant of the Northmen, who had formerly been a numerous and powerful confederation of peoples living in the wide plains between Mirkwood and the River Running, great breeders of horses and riders renowned for their skill and endurance, though their settled homes were in the eaves of the Forest, and especially in the East Bight, which had largely been made by their felling of trees.<sup>199</sup>

These Northmen were descendants of the same race of Men as those who in the First Age passed into the West of Middle-earth and became the allies of the Eldar in their wars with Morgoth.<sup>200</sup> They were therefore from afar off kinsmen of the Dúnedain or Númenóreans, and there was great friendship between them and the people of Gondor. They were in fact a bulwark of Gondor, keeping its northern and eastern frontiers from invasion; though that was not fully realised by the Kings until the bulwark was weakened and at last destroyed. The waning of the Northmen of Rhovanion began with the Great Plague, which appeared there in the winter of the year 1635 and soon spread to Gondor. In Gondor the mortality was great, especially among those who dwelt in cities. It was greater in Rhovanion, for though its people lived mostly in the open and had no great cities, the Plague came with a cold winter when horses and men were driven into shelter and their low wooden houses and stables were thronged; moreover they were little skilled in the arts of healing and medicine, of which much was still known in Gondor, preserved from the wisdom of Númenor. When the Plague passed it is said that more than half of the folk of Rhovanion had perished, and of their horses also.

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<sup>197</sup> No writing is extant with this title, but no doubt the narrative given in the third section ('Cirion and Eorl', p. 388) represents a part of it.

<sup>198</sup> Such as the Book of the Kings. [Author's note.]

This work was referred to in the opening passage of Appendix A to *The Lord of the Rings*, as being (with *The Book of the Stewards* and the *Akallabêth*) among the records of Gondor that were opened to Frodo and Peregrin by King Elessar; but in the revised edition the reference was removed.

<sup>199</sup> The East Bight, not named elsewhere, was the great indentation in the eastern border of Mirkwood seen in the [map](#) to *The Lord of the Rings*.

<sup>200</sup> The Northmen appear to have been most nearly akin to the third and greatest of the peoples of the Elf-friends, ruled by the House of Hador. [Author's note.]



*They were slow to recover; but their weakness was not tested for a long time. No doubt the peoples further east had been equally afflicted, so that the enemies of Gondor came chiefly from the south or over sea. But when the invasions of the Wainriders began and involved Gondor in wars that lasted for almost a hundred years, the Northmen bore the brunt of the first assaults. King Narmacil II took a great army north into the plains south of Mirkwood, and gathered all that he could of the scattered remnants of the Northmen; but he was defeated, and himself fell in battle. The remnant of his army retreated over the Dagorlad into Ithilien, and Gondor abandoned all lands east of the Anduin save Ithilien.*<sup>201</sup>

*As for the Northmen, a few, it is said, fled over the Celduin (River Running) and were merged with the folk of Dale under Erebor (with whom they were akin), some took refuge in Gondor, and others were gathered by Marhwini son of Marhari (who fell in the rearguard action after the Battle of the Plains).*<sup>202</sup> *Passing north between Mirkwood and Anduin they settled in the Vales of Anduin, where they were joined by many fugitives who came through the Forest. This was the beginning of the Éothéod,*<sup>203</sup> *though nothing was known of it in Gondor for many years. Most of the Northmen were reduced to servitude, and all their former lands were occupied by the Wainriders.*<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> The escape of the army of Gondor from total destruction was in part due to the courage and loyalty of the horsemen of the Northmen under Marhari (a descendant of Vidugavia ‘King of Rhovanion’) who acted as rearguard. But the forces of Gondor had inflicted such losses on the Wainriders that they had not strength enough to press their invasion, until reinforced from the East, and were content for the time to complete their conquest of Rhovanion. [Author’s note.]

It is told in Appendix A (I, iv) to *The Lord of the Rings* that Vidugavia, who called himself King of Rhovanion, was the most powerful of the princes of the Northmen; he was shown favour by Rómendacil II King of Gondor (died 1366), whom he had aided in war against the Easterlings, and the marriage of Rómendacil’s son Valacar to Vidugavia’s daughter Vidumavi led to the destructive Kin-strife in Gondor in the fifteenth century.

<sup>202</sup> It is an interesting fact, not referred to I believe in any of my father’s writings, that the names of the early kings and princes of the Northmen and the Éothéod are Gothic in form, not Old English (Anglo-Saxon) as in the case of Léod, Eorl, and the later Rohirrim. *Vidugavia* is Latinized in spelling, representing Gothic *Widugauja* (‘wood-dweller’), a recorded Gothic name, and similarly *Vidumavi*, Gothic *Widumawi* (‘wood-maiden’). *Marhwini* and *Marhari* contain the Gothic word *marh*, ‘horse’, corresponding to Old English *meorh*, plural *mearas*, the word used in *The Lord of the Rings* for the horses of Rohan; *wini*, ‘friend’ corresponds to Old English *winē*, seen in the names of several of the Kings of the Mark. Since, as is explained in Appendix F (II), the language of Rohan was ‘made to resemble ancient English’, the names of the ancestors of the Rohirrim are cast into the forms of the earliest recorded Germanic language.

<sup>203</sup> As was the form of the name in later days. [Author’s note.]

This is Old English, ‘horse-people’ see [note 232](#).

<sup>204</sup> The foregoing narrative does not contradict the accounts in Appendix A (I, iv and II) to *The Lord of the Rings*, though it is much briefer. Nothing is said here of the war fought against the Easterlings in the thirteenth century by Minalcar (who took the name of Rómendacil II), the absorption of many Northmen into the armies of Gondor by that king, or of the marriage of his son Valacar to a princess of the Northmen and the Kin-strife of Gondor that resulted from it; but it adds certain features which are not mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings*: that the waning of the Northmen of Rhovanion was due to the Great Plague; that the battle in which King Narmacil II was slain in the year 1856, said in [Appendix A](#) to have been ‘beyond Anduin’, was in the wide lands south of Mirkwood, and was known as the Battle of the Plains; and that his great army was saved from annihilation by the Wainriders through the rearguard defence of Marhari, descendant of Vidugavia. It is also made clearer here that it was after the Battle of the Plains that the Éothéod, a remnant of the Northmen, became a distinct people, dwelling in the Vales of Anduin between the Carrock and the Gladden Fields.

*But at length King Calimehtar, son of Narmacil II, being free from other dangers,<sup>205</sup> determined to avenge the defeat of the Battle of the Plains. Messengers came to him from Marhwini warning him that the Wainriders were plotting to raid Calenardhon over the Undeeps;<sup>206</sup> but they said also that a revolt of the Northmen who had been enslaved was being prepared and would burst into flame if the Wainriders became involved in war. Calimehtar therefore, as soon as he could, led an army out of Ithilien, taking care that its approach should be well known to the enemy. The Wainriders came down with all the strength that they could spare, and Calimehtar gave way before them, drawing them away from their homes. At length battle was joined upon the Dagorlad, and the result was long in doubt. But at its height horsemen that Calimehtar had sent over the Undeeps (left unguarded by the enemy) joined with a great éored<sup>207</sup> led by Marhwini assailed the Wainriders in flank and rear. The victory of Gondor was overwhelming—though not in the event decisive. When the enemy broke and were soon in disordered flight north towards their homes Calimehtar, wisely for his part, did not pursue them. They had left well nigh a third of their host dead to rot upon the Dagorlad among the bones of other and nobler battles of the past. But the horsemen of Marhwini harried the fugitives and inflicted great loss upon them in their long rout over the plains, until they were within far sight of Mirkwood. There they left them, taunting them: ‘Fly east not north, folk of Sauron! See, the homes you stole are in flames!’ For there was a great smoke going up.*

*The revolt planned and assisted by Marhwini had indeed broken out; desperate outlaws coming out of the Forest had roused the slaves, and together had succeeded in burning many of the dwellings of the Wainriders, and their storehouses, and their fortified camps of wagons. But most of them had perished in the attempt; for they were ill-armed, and the enemy had not left their homes undefended: their youths and old men were aided by the younger women, who in that people were also trained in arms and fought fiercely in defence of their homes and their children. Thus in the end Marhwini was obliged to retire again to his land beside the Anduin, and the Northmen of his race never again returned to their former homes. Calimehtar withdrew to Gondor, which enjoyed for a time (from 1899 to 1944) a respite from war before the great assault in which the line of its kings came near to its end.*

*Nonetheless the alliance of Calimehtar and Marhwini had not been in vain. If the strength of the Wainriders of Rhovanion had not been broken, that assault would have come sooner and in greater force, and the realm of Gondor might have been destroyed. But the greatest effect of the alliance lay far in the future which none could then foresee: the two great rides of the Rohirrim to the salvation of Gondor, the coming of Eorl to the Field of Celebrant, and the horns of King Théoden upon the Pelennor but for which the return of the King would have been in vain.<sup>208</sup>*

*In the meanwhile the Wainriders licked their wounds, and plotted their revenge. Beyond the reach of the arms of Gondor, in lands east of the Sea of Rhûn from which no tidings came to its Kings, their kinsfolk spread and multiplied, and they were eager for conquests and booty and filled with hatred of Gondor which stood in their way. It was long, however, before they moved. On the one hand they feared the might of Gondor, and knowing nothing of what passed west of Anduin they believed that its realm was larger and more populous than it was in*

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<sup>205</sup> His grandfather Telumehtar had captured Umbar and broken the power of the Corsairs, and the peoples of Harad were at this period engaged in wars and feuds of their own. [Author’s note.]

The taking of Umbar by Telumehtar Umbardacil was in the year 1810.

<sup>206</sup> The great westward bends of the Anduin east of Fangorn Forest; see the first citation given in Appendix C to ‘The History of Galadriel and Celeborn’, p. 337.

<sup>207</sup> On the word éored see [note 232](#).

<sup>208</sup> This story is very much fuller than the summary account in Appendix A (I, iv) to *The Lord of the Rings*: ‘Calimehtar, son of Narmacil II, helped by a revolt in Rhovanion, avenged his father with a great victory over the Easterlings upon Dagorlad in 1899, and for a while the peril was averted.’

truth at that time. On the other hand the eastern Wainriders had been spreading southward, beyond Mordor, and were in conflict with the peoples of Khand and their neighbours further south. Eventually a peace and alliance was agreed between these enemies of Gondor, and an attack was prepared that should be made at the same time from north and south.

Little or nothing, of course, was known of these designs and movements in Gondor. What is here said was deduced from the events long afterwards by historians, to whom it was also clear that the hatred of Gondor, and the alliance of its enemies in concerted action (for which they themselves had neither the will nor the wisdom) was due to the machinations of Sauron. Forthwini, son of Marhwini, indeed warned King Ondoher (who succeeded his father Calimehtar in the year 1936) that the Wainriders of Rhovanion were recovering from their weakness and fear, and that he suspected that they were receiving new strength from the East, for he was much troubled by raids into the south of his land that came both up the river and through the Narrows of the Forest.<sup>209</sup> But Gondor could do no more at that time than gather and train as great an army as it could find or afford. Thus when the assault came at last it did not find Gondor unprepared, though its strength was less than it needed.

Ondoher was aware that his southern enemies were preparing for war, and he had the wisdom to divide his forces into a northern army and a southern. The latter was the smaller, for the danger from that quarter was held to be less.<sup>210</sup> It was under the command of Eärnil, a member of the Royal House, being a descendant of King Telumehtar, father of Narmacil II. His base was at Pelargir. The northern army was commanded by King Ondoher himself. This had always been the custom of Gondor, that the King, if he willed, should command his army in a major battle, provided that an heir with undisputed claim to the throne was left behind. Ondoher came of a warlike line, and was loved and esteemed by his army, and he had two sons, both of age to bear arms: Artamir the elder, and Faramir some three years younger.

News of the oncoming of the enemy reached Pelargir on the ninth day of Cermië in the year 1944. Eärnil had already made his dispositions: he had crossed the Anduin with half his force, and leaving by design the Fords of the Poros undefended had encamped some forty miles north in South Ithilien. King Ondoher had purposed to lead his host north through Ithilien and deploy it on the Dagorlad, a field of ill omen for the enemies of Gondor. (At that time the forts upon the line of the Anduin north of Sarn Gebir that had been built by Narmacil I were still in repair and manned by sufficient soldiers from Calenardhon to prevent any attempt of an enemy to cross the river at the Undeeps.) But the news of the northern assault did not reach Ondoher until the morning of the twelfth day of Cermië, by which time the enemy was already drawing near, whereas the army of Gondor had been moving more slowly than it would if Ondoher had received earlier warning, and its vanguard had not yet reached the Gates of Mordor. The main force was leading with the King and his Guards, followed by the soldiers of the Right Wing and the Left Wing which would take up their places when they passed out of Ithilien and approached the Dagorlad. There they expected the assault to come from the North or North-east, as it had before in the Battle of the Plains and in the victory of Calimehtar on the Dagorlad.

But it was not so. The Wainriders had mustered a great host by the southern shores of the inland Sea of Rhûn, strengthened by men of their kinsfolk in Rhovanion and from their new allies in Khand. When all was ready they set out for Gondor from the East, moving with all the speed they could along the line of the Ered Lithui, where their approach was not observed until too late. So it came to pass that the head of the army of Gondor had only drawn level with the Gates of Mordor (the Morannon) when a great dust borne on a wind from the

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<sup>209</sup> The Narrows of the Forest must refer to the narrow ‘waist’ of Mirkwood in the south, caused by the indentation of the East Bight (see [note 199](#)).

<sup>210</sup> Justly. For an attack proceeding from Near Harad—unless it had assistance from Umbar, which was not at that time available—could more easily be resisted and contained. It could not cross the Anduin, and as it went north passed into a narrowing land between the river and the mountains. [Author’s note.]

East announced the oncoming of the enemy vanguard.<sup>211</sup> This was composed not only of the war-chariots of the Wainriders but also of a force of cavalry far greater than any that had been expected. Ondoher had only time to turn and face the assault with his right flank close to the Morannon, and to send word to Minohtar, Captain of the Right Wing behind, to cover his left flank as swiftly as he could, when the chariots and horsemen crashed into his disordered line. Of the confusion of the disaster that followed few clear reports were ever brought to Gondor.

Ondoher was utterly unprepared to meet a charge of horse-men and chariots in great weight. With his Guard and his banner he had hastily taken up a position on a low knoll, but this was of no avail.<sup>212</sup> The main charge was hurled against his banner, and it was captured, his Guard was almost annihilated, and he himself was slain and his son Artamir at his side. Their bodies were never recovered. The assault of the enemy passed over them and about both sides of the knoll, driving deep into the disordered ranks of Gondor, hurling them back in confusion upon those behind, and scattering and pursuing many others westward into the Dead Marshes.

Minohtar took command. He was a man both valiant and war-wise. The first fury of the onslaught was spent, with far less loss and greater success than the enemy had looked for. The cavalry and chariots now withdrew, for the main host of the Wainriders was approaching. In such time as he had Minohtar, raising his own banner, rallied the remaining men of the Centre and those of his own command that were at hand. He at once sent messengers to Adrahil of Dol Amroth,<sup>213</sup> the Captain of the Left Wing, commanding him to withdraw with all the speed he could both his own command and those at the rear of the Right Wing who had not yet been engaged. With these forces he was to take up a defensive position between Cair Andros (which was manned) and the mountains of Ephel Dúath, where owing to the great eastward loop of the Anduin the land was at its narrowest, to cover as long as he could the approaches to Minas Tirith. Minohtar himself, to allow time for this retreat, would form a rearguard and attempt to stem the advance of the main host of the Wainriders. Adrahil should at once send messengers to find Eärnil, if they could, and inform him of the disaster of the Morannon and of the position of the retreating northern army.

When the main host of the Wainriders advanced to the attack it was then two hours after noon, and Minohtar had withdrawn his line to the head of the great North Road of Ithilien, half a mile beyond the point where it turned east to the Watch-towers of the Morannon. The first triumph of the Wainriders was now the beginning of their undoing. Ignorant of the numbers and ordering of the defending army they had launched their first onslaught too soon, before the greater part of that army had come out of the narrow land of Ithilien, and the charge of their chariots and cavalry had met with a success far swifter and more overwhelming than they had expected. Their main onslaught was then too long delayed, and they could no longer use their greater numbers

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<sup>211</sup> An isolated note associated with the text remarks that at this period the Morannon was still in the control of Gondor, and the two Watch-towers east and west of it (the Towers of the Teeth) were still manned. The road through Ithilien was still in full repair as far as the Morannon; and there it met a road going north towards the Dagorlad, and another going east along the line of Ered Lithui. [Neither of these roads is marked on the maps to *The Lord of the Rings*.] The eastward road extended to a point north of the site of Barad-dûr; it had never been completed further, and what had been made was now long neglected. Nonetheless its first fifty miles, which had once been fully constructed, greatly speeded the Wainriders' approach.

<sup>212</sup> Historians surmised that it was the same hill as that upon which King Elessar made his stand in the last battle against Sauron with which the Third Age ended. But if so it was still only a natural upswelling that offered little obstacle to horsemen and had not yet been piled up by the labour of Orcs. [Author's note.]

The passages in *The Return of the King* (V 10) here referred to tell that 'Aragorn now set the host in such array as could best be contrived; and they were drawn up on two great hills of blasted stone and earth that orcs had piled in years of labour,' and that Aragorn with Gandalf stood on the one while the banners of Rohan and Dol Amroth were raised on the other.

<sup>213</sup> On the presence of Adrahil of Dol Amroth see [note 235](#).



*with full effect according to the tactics they had intended, being accustomed to warfare in open lands. It may well be supposed that elated by the fall of the King and the rout of a large part of the opposing Centre, they believed that they had already overthrown the defending army, and that their own main army had little more to do than advance to the invasion and occupation of Gondor. If that were so, they were deceived.*

*The Wainriders came on in little order, still exultant and singing songs of victory, seeing as yet no signs of any defenders to oppose them, until they found that the road into Gondor turned south into a narrow land of trees under the shadow of the dark Ephel Dúath, where an army could march, or ride, in good order only down a great highway. Before them it ran on through a deep cutting . . .*

Here the text abruptly breaks off, and the notes and jottings for its continuation are for the most part illegible. It is possible to make out, however, that men of the Éothéod fought with Ondoher; and also that Ondoher's second son Faramir was ordered to remain in Minas Tirith as regent, for it was not permitted by the law that both his sons should go into battle at the same time (a similar observation is made earlier in the narrative, [p. 377](#)). But Faramir did not do so; he went to the war in disguise, and was slain. The writing is here almost impossible to decipher, but it seems that Faramir joined the Éothéod and was caught with a party of them as they retreated towards the Dead Marshes. The leader of the Éothéod (whose name is indecipherable after the first element *Marh-*) came to their rescue, but Faramir died in his arms, and it was only when he searched his body that he found tokens that showed that he was the Prince. The leader of the Éothéod then went to join Minohtar at the head of the North Road in Ithilien, who at that very moment was giving an order for a message to be taken to the Prince in Minas Tirith, who was now the King. It was then that the leader of the Éothéod gave him the news that the Prince had gone disguised to the battle, and had been slain.

The presence of the Éothéod and the part played by their leader may explain the inclusion in this narrative, ostensibly to be an account of the beginnings of the friendship of Gondor and the Rohirrim, of this elaborate story of the battle between the army of Gondor and the Wainriders.

The concluding passage of the fully-written text gives the impression that the host of the Wainriders were about to receive a check to their exaltation and elation as they came down the highway into the deep cutting; but the notes at the end show that they were not long held up by the rearguard defence of Minohtar. 'The Wainriders poured relentlessly into Ithilien', and 'late on the thirteenth day of Cermie they overwhelmed Minohtar', who was slain by an arrow. He is here said to have been King Ondoher's sister-son. 'His men carried him out of the fray, and all that remained of the rearguard fled southwards to find Adrahil.' The chief commander of the Wainriders then called a halt to the advance, and held a feast. Nothing more can be made out; but the brief account in [Appendix A](#) to *The Lord of the Rings* tells how Eärnil came up from the south and routed them:

*In 1944 King Ondoher and both his sons, Artamir and Faramir, fell in battle north of the Morannon, and the enemy poured into Ithilien. But Eärnil, Captain of the Southern Army, won a great victory in South Ithilien and destroyed the army of Harad that had crossed the River Poros. Hastening north, he gathered to him all that he could of the retreating Northern Army and came up against the main camp of the Wainriders, while they were feasting and revelling, believing that Gondor was overthrown and that nothing remained but to take the spoil. Eärnil stormed the camp and set fire to the wains, and drove the enemy in a great rout out of Ithilien. A great part of those who fled before him perished in the Dead Marshes.*

In the [Tale of Years](#) the victory of Eärnil is called the Battle of the Camp. After the deaths of Ondoher and both his sons at the Morannon Arvedui, last king of the northern realm, laid claim to the crown of Gondor; but his claim was rejected, and in the year following the Battle of the Camp Eärnil became King. His son was Eärnur, who died in Minas Morgul after accepting the challenge of the Lord of the Nazgûl, and was the last of the Kings of the southern realm.

## II. The Ride Of Eorl

*While the Éothéod still dwelt in their former home<sup>214</sup> they were well-known to Gondor as a people of good trust, from whom they received news of all that passed in that region. They were a remnant of the Northmen, who were held to be akin in ages past to the Dúnedain, and in the days of the great Kings had been their allies and contributed much of their blood to the people of Gondor. It was thus of great concern to Gondor when the Éothéod removed into the far North, in the days of Eärnil II, last but one of the Kings of the southern realm.<sup>215</sup>*

*The new land of the Éothéod lay north of Mirkwood, between the Misty Mountains westward and the Forest River eastward. Southward it extended to the confluence of the two short rivers that they named Greylin and Langwell. Greylin flowed down from Ered Mithrin, the Grey Mountains, but Langwell came from the Misty Mountains, and this name it bore because it was the source of Anduin, which from its junction with Greylin they called Langflood.<sup>216</sup>*

*Messengers still passed between Gondor and the Éothéod after their departure; but it was some four hundred and fifty of our miles between the confluence of Greylin and Langwell (where was their only fortified burg) and the inflow of Limlight into Anduin, in a direct line as a bird might fly, and much more for those who journeyed on earth; and in like manner some eight hundred miles to Minas Tirith.*

*The Chronicle of Cirion and Eorl reports no events before the Battle of the Field of Celebrant; but from other sources they may be made out to have been of this sort.*

*The wide lands south of Mirkwood, from the Brown Lands to the Sea of Rhûn, which offered no obstacle to invaders from the East until they came to Anduin, were a chief source of concern and unease to the rulers of Gondor. But during the Watchful Peace<sup>217</sup> the forts along the Anduin, especially on the west shore of the Undeeps, had been unmanned and neglected.<sup>218</sup> After that time Gondor was assailed both by Orcs out of Mordor (which had long been unguarded) and by the Corsairs of Umbar, and had neither men nor opportunity for manning the line of Anduin north of the Eryn Mui.*

*Cirion became Steward of Gondor in the year 2489. The menace from the North was ever in his mind, and he gave much thought to ways that might be devised against the threat of invasion from that quarter, as the strength of Gondor diminished. He put a few men into the old forts to keep watch on the Undeeps, and sent scouts and spies into the lands between Mirkwood and Dagorlad. He was thus soon aware that new and dangerous enemies coming out of the East were steadily drifting in from beyond the Sea of Rhûn.*

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<sup>214</sup> Their former home: in the Vales of Anduin between the Carrock and the Gladden Fields, see [p. 375](#).

<sup>215</sup> The cause of the northward migration of the Éothéod is given in Appendix A (II) to *The Lord of the Rings*: ‘[The forefathers of Eorl] loved best the plains, and delighted in horses and all feats of horsemanship, but there were many men in the middle vales of Anduin in those days, and moreover the shadow of Dol Guldur was lengthening; when therefore they heard of the overthrow of the Witch-king [in the year 1975], they sought more room in the North, and drove away the remnants of the people of Angmar on the east side of the Mountains. But in the days of Léod, father of Eorl, they had grown to be a numerous people and were again somewhat straitened in the land of their home.’ The leader of the migration of the Éothéod was named Frumgar; and in the Tale of Years its date is given as [1977](#).

<sup>216</sup> These rivers, unnamed, are marked on the [map](#) to *The Lord of the Rings*. The Greylin is there shown as having two tributary branches.

<sup>217</sup> The Watchful Peace lasted from the years 2063 to 2460, when Sauron was absent from Dol Guldur.

<sup>218</sup> For the forts along the Anduin see [p. 378](#), and for the Undeeps [p. 337](#).

*They were slaying or driving north up the River Running and into the Forest the remnant of the Northmen, friends of Gondor that still dwelt east of Mirkwood.<sup>219</sup> But he could do nothing to aid them, and it became more and more dangerous to gather news; too many of his scouts never returned.*

*It was thus not until the winter of the year 2509 was past that Cirion became aware that a great movement against Gondor was being prepared: hosts of men were mustering all along the southern eaves of Mirkwood. They were only rudely armed, and had no great number of horses for riding, using horses mainly for draught, since they had many large wains, as had the Wainriders (to whom they were no doubt akin) that assailed Gondor in the last days of the Kings. But what they lacked in gear of war they made up in numbers, so far as could be guessed.*

*In this peril Cirion's thought turned at last in desperation to the Éothéod, and he determined to send messengers to them. But they would have to go through Calenardhon and over the Undeeps, and then through lands already watched and patrolled by the Balchoth<sup>220</sup> before they could reach the Vales of Anduin. This would mean a ride of some four hundred and fifty miles to the Undeeps, and more than five hundred thence to the Éothéod, and from the Undeeps they would be forced to go warily and mostly by night until they had passed the shadow of Dol Guldur. Cirion had little hope that any of them would get through. He called for volunteers, and choosing six riders of great courage and endurance he sent them out in pairs with a day's interval between them. Each bore a message learned by heart, and also a small stone incised with the seal of the Stewards,<sup>221</sup> that he should deliver to the Lord of the Éothéod in person, if he succeeded in reaching that land. The message was addressed to Eorl son of Léod, for Cirion knew that he had succeeded his father some years before, when he was but a youth of sixteen, and though now no more than five and twenty was praised in all such tidings as reached Gondor as a man of great courage and wise beyond his years. Yet Cirion had but faint hope that even if the message were received it would be answered. He had no claim on the Éothéod beyond their ancient friendship with Gondor to bring them from so far away with any strength that would avail. The tidings that the Balchoth were destroying the last of their kin in the South, if they did not know it already, might give weight to his appeal, if the Éothéod themselves were not threatened by any attack. Cirion said no more,<sup>222</sup> and ordered what strength he had to meet the storm. He gathered as great a force as he could, and taking command of it himself made ready as swiftly as might be to lead it north to Calenardhon. Hallas his son he left in command at Minas Tirith.*

*The first pair of messengers left on the tenth day of Súlimë; and in the event it was one of these, alone of all the six, who got through to the Éothéod. He was Borondir, a great rider of a family that claimed descent from a captain of the Northmen in the service of the Kings of old.<sup>223</sup> Of the others no tidings were ever heard, save of*

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<sup>219</sup> From an earlier passage in this text (p. 376) one gains the impression that there were no Northmen left in the lands east of Mirkwood after the victory of Calimehtar over the Wainriders on the Dagorlad in the year 1899.

<sup>220</sup> So these people were then called in Gondor: a mixed word of popular speech, from Westron *balc*, 'horrible' and Sindarin *hoth*, 'horde', applied to such peoples as the Orcs. [Author's note.]

See the entry *hoth* in the Appendix to *The Silmarillion*.

<sup>221</sup> The letters R· ND ·R surmounted by three stars, signifying *arandur* (king's servant), steward. [Author's note.]

<sup>222</sup> He did not speak of the thought that he had also in mind: that the Éothéod were, as he had learned, restless, finding their northern lands too narrow and infertile to support their numbers, which had much increased. [Author's note.]

<sup>223</sup> His name was long remembered in the song of *Rochon Methestel* (Rider of the Last Hope) as Borondir Udalraph (Borondir the Stirrupless), for he rode back with the *éohere* at the right hand of Eorl, and was the first to cross the Limlight and cleave a path to the aid of Cirion. He fell at last on the Field of Celebrant defending

*Borondir's companion. He was slain by arrows in ambush as they passed near Dol Guldur, from which Borondir escaped by fortune and the speed of his horse. He was pursued as far north as the Gladden Fields, and often waylaid by men that came out of the Forest and forced him to ride far out of the direct way. He came at last to the Éothéod after fifteen days, for the last two without food; and he was so spent that he could scarce speak his message to Eorl.*

*It was then the twenty-fifth day of Súlimë. Eorl took counsel with himself in silence; but not for long. Soon he rose, and he said: 'I will come. If the Mundburg falls, whither shall we flee from the Darkness?' Then he took Borondir's hand in token of his promise.*

*Eorl at once summoned his council of Elders, and began to prepare for the great riding. But this took many days, for the host had to be gathered and mustered, and thought taken for the ordering of the people and the defence of the land. At that time the Éothéod were at peace and had no fear of war: though it might prove otherwise when it became known that their lord had ridden away to battle far off in the South. Nonetheless Eorl saw well that nothing less than his full strength would serve, and he must risk all or draw back and break his promise.*

*At last the whole host was assembled; and only a few hundreds were left behind to support the men unfitted for such a desperate venture by youth or age. It was then the sixth day of the month of Vîressë. On that day in silence the great éoherë set out, leaving fear behind, and taking with them small hope; for they knew not what lay before them, either on the road or at its end. It is said that Eorl led forth some seven thousand fully-armed riders and some hundreds of horsed archers. At his right hand rode Borondir, to serve as guide so far as he might, since he had lately passed through the lands. But this great host was not threatened or assailed during its long journey down the Vales of Anduin. Such folk of good or evil kind as saw it approach fled out of its path for fear of its might and splendour. As it drew southward and passed by southern Mirkwood (below the great East Bight), which was now infested by the Balchoth, still there was no sign of men, in force or in scouting parties, to bar their road or to spy upon their coming. In part this was due to events unknown to them, which had come to pass since Borondir set out; but other powers also were at work. For when at last the host drew near to Dol Guldur, Eorl turned away westward for fear of the dark shadow and cloud that flowed out from it, and then he rode on within sight of Anduin. Many of the riders turned their eyes thither, half in fear and half in hope to glimpse from afar the shimmer of the Dwimordene, the perilous land that in legends of their people was said to shine like gold in the springtime. But now it seemed shrouded in a gleaming mist; and to their dismay the mist passed over the river and flowed over the land before them.*

*Eorl did not halt. 'Ride on!' he commanded. 'There is no other way to take. After so long a road shall we be held back from battle by a river-mist?'*

*As they drew nearer they saw that the white mist was driving back the glooms of Dol Guldur, and soon they passed into it, riding slowly at first and warily; but under its canopy all things were lit with a clear and shadowless light, while to left and right they were guarded as it were by white walls of secrecy.*

*'The Lady of the Golden Wood is on our side, it seems,' said Borondir.*

*'Maybe,' said Eorl. 'But at least I will trust the wisdom of Felaróf.'<sup>224</sup> He scents no evil. His heart is high, and his weariness is healed: he strains to be given his head. So be it! For never have I had more need of secrecy and speed.'*

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his lord, to the great grief of Gondor and the Éothéod, and was afterwards laid in a tomb in the Hallows of Minas Tirith. [Author's note.]

<sup>224</sup> Eorl's horse. In Appendix A (II) to *The Lord of the Rings* it is told that Eorl's father Léod, who was a tamer of wild horses, was thrown by Felaróf when he dared to mount him, and so he met his death. Afterwards Eorl demanded of the horse that he surrender his freedom till his life's end in weregild for his father; and Felaróf submitted, though he would allow no man but Eorl to mount him. He understood all that men said, and was as long-lived as they, as were his descendants, the *mearas*, 'who would bear no-one but the King of the Mark or



*Then Felaróf sprang forward, and all the host behind followed like a great wind, but in a strange silence, as if their hooves did not beat upon the ground. So they rode on, as fresh and eager as on the morning of their setting-out, during that day and the next; but at dawn of the third day they rose from their rest, and suddenly the mist was gone, and they saw that they were far out in the open lands. On their right the Anduin lay near, but they had almost passed its great eastward loop,<sup>225</sup> and the Undeeps were in sight. It was the morning of the fifteenth day of Viressë, and they had come there at a speed beyond hope.<sup>226</sup>*

Here the text ends, with a note that a description of the Battle of the Field of Celebrant was to follow. In Appendix A (II) to *The Lord of the Rings* there is a summary account of the war:

*A great host of wild men from the North-east swept over Rhovanion and coming down out of the Brown-lands crossed the Anduin on rafts. At the same time by chance or design the Orcs (who at that time before their war with the Dwarves were in great strength) made a descent from the Mountains. The invaders overran Calenardhon, and Cirion, Steward of Gondor, sent north for help . . .*

When Eorl and his Riders came to the Field of Celebrant

*the northern army of Gondor was in peril. Defeated in the Wold and cut off from the south, it had been driven across the Limlight, and was then suddenly assailed by the Orc-host that pressed it towards the Anduin. All hope was lost when, unlooked for, the Riders came out of the North and broke upon the rear of the enemy. Then the fortunes of battle were reversed, and the enemy was driven with slaughter over Limlight. Eorl led his men in pursuit, and so great was the fear that went before the horsemen of the North that the invaders of the Wold were also thrown into panic, and the Riders hunted them over the plains of Calenardhon.*

A similar, briefer, account is given elsewhere in Appendix A (I, iv). From neither is the course of the battle perhaps perfectly clear, but it seems certain that the Riders, having passed over the Undeeps, then crossed the Limlight (see [note 225](#), p. 406) and fell upon the rear of the enemy at the Field of Celebrant; and that ‘the enemy was driven with slaughter over Limlight’ means that the Balchoth were driven back southwards into the Wold.

### III. Cirion And Eorl

The story is preceded by a note on the Halifirien, western-most of the beacons of Gondor along the line of Ered Nimrais.

*The Halifirien<sup>227</sup> was the highest of the beacons, and like Eilenach, the next in height, appeared to stand up alone out of a great wood; for behind it there was a deep cleft, the dark Firien-dale, in the long northward spur*

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his sons, until the time of Shadowfax’. *Felaróf* is a word of the Anglo-Saxon poetic vocabulary, though not in fact recorded in the extant poetry: ‘very valiant, very strong’.

<sup>225</sup> Between the inflow of the Limlight and the Undeeps. [Author’s note.]

This seems certainly in contradiction to the first citation given in Appendix C to ‘The History of Galadriel and Celeborn’, [p. 337](#), where ‘the North and South Undeeps’ are ‘the two westward bends’ of the Anduin, into the northmost of which the Limlight flowed in.

<sup>226</sup> In nine days they had covered more than five hundred miles in a direct line, probably more than six hundred as they rode. Though there were no great natural obstacles on the east side of Anduin, much of the land was now desolate, and roads or horse-paths running southward were lost or little used; only for short periods were they able to ride at speed, and they needed also to husband their own strength and their horses’, since they expected battle as soon as they reached the Undeeps. [Author’s note.]

<sup>227</sup> The Halifirien is twice mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings*. In *The Return of the King* [V 1](#), when Pippin, riding with Gandalf on Shadowfax to Minas Tirith, cried out that he saw fires, Gandalf replied: ‘The beacons of Gondor are alight, calling for aid. War is kindled. See, there is the fire on Amon Dîn, and flame on Eilenach;

of Ered Nimrais, of which it was the highest point. Out of the cleft it rose like a sheer wall, but its outer slopes, especially northwards, were long and nowhere steep, and trees grew upon them almost to its summit. As they descended the trees became ever more dense, especially along the Mering Stream (which rose in the cleft) and northwards out into the plain through which the Stream flowed into the Entwash. The great West Road passed through a long cutting in the wood, to avoid the wet land beyond its northern eaves; but this road had been made in ancient days,<sup>228</sup> and after the departure of Isildur no tree was ever felled in the Firien Wood, except only by the Beacon-wardens whose task it was to keep open the great road and the path towards the summit of the hill. This path turned from the Road near to its entrance into the Wood, and wound its way up to the end of the trees, beyond which there was an ancient stairway of stone leading to the beacon-site, a wide circle levelled by those who had made the stair. The Beacon-wardens were the only inhabitants of the Wood, save wild beasts; they housed in lodges in the trees near the summit, but they did not stay long, unless held there by foul weather, and they came and went in turns of duty. For the most part they were glad to return home. Not because of the peril of the wild beasts, nor did any evil shadow out of dark days lie upon the Wood; but beneath the sounds of the winds, the cries of birds and beasts, or at times the noise of horsemen riding in haste upon the Road, there lay a silence, and a man would find himself speaking to his comrades in a whisper, as if he expected to hear the echo of a great voice that called from far away and long ago.

The name Halifirien meant in the language of the Rohirrim ‘holy mountain’.<sup>229</sup> Before their coming it was known in Sindarin as Amon Anwar, ‘Hill of Awe’; for what reason was not known in Gondor, except only (as later appeared) to the ruling King or Steward. For the few men who ever ventured to leave the Road and wander under the trees the Wood itself seemed reason enough: in the Common Speech it was called ‘the Whispering Wood’. In the great days of Gondor no beacon was built on the Hill while the palantiri still maintained communication between Osgiliath and the three towers of the realm<sup>230</sup> without need of messages or signals. In later days little aid could be expected from the North as the people of Calenardhon declined, nor was armed force sent thither as Minas Tirith became more and more hard put to it to hold the line of the Anduin and guard its southern coast. In Anórien many people still dwelt and had the task of guarding the northern approaches, either out of Calenardhon or across the Anduin at Cair Andros. For communication with them the three oldest beacons (Amon Dîn, Eilenach, and Min-Rimmon) were built and maintained,<sup>231</sup> but though the line of the Mering Stream was fortified (between the impassable marshes of its confluence with the Entwash and the bridge where the Road passed westward out of the Firien Wood) it was not permitted that any fort or beacon should be set upon Amon Anwar.

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and there they go speeding west: Nardol, Erelas, Min-Rimmon, Calenhad, and the Halifirien on the borders of Rohan.’ In [V 3](#) the Riders of Rohan on their way to Minas Tirith passed through the Fenmarch ‘where to their right great oakwoods climbed on the skirts of the hills under the shades of dark Halifirien by the borders of Gondor’. See the large-scale [map](#) of Gondor and Rohan in *The Lord of the Rings*.

<sup>228</sup> It was the great Númenórean road linking the Two Kingdoms, crossing the Isen at the Fords of Isen and the Grey-flood at Tharbad and then on northwards to Fornost; elsewhere called the North-South Road. See [p. 343](#).

<sup>229</sup> This is a modernized spelling for Anglo-Saxon *hálig-firgen*; similarly Firien-dale for *firgen-dæl*, Firien Wood for *firgenwudu*. [Author’s note.]

The g in the Anglo-Saxon word *firgen* ‘mountain’ came to be pronounced as a modern y.

<sup>230</sup> Minas Ithil, Minas Anor, and Orthanc.

<sup>231</sup> It is said elsewhere, in a note on the names of the beacons, that ‘the full beacon system, that was still operating in the War of the Ring, can have been no older than the settlement of the Rohirrim in Calenardhon some five hundred years before; for its principal function was to warn the Rohirrim that Gondor was in danger, or (more rarely) the reverse’.

*In the days of Cirion the Steward there came a great assault by the Balchoth, who allied with Orcs crossed the Anduin into the Wold and began the conquest of Calenardhon. From this deadly peril, which would have brought ruin upon Gondor, the coming of Eorl the Young and the Rohirrim rescued the realm.*

*When the war was over men wondered in what way the Steward would honour Eorl and reward him, and expected that a great feast would be held in Minas Tirith at which this would be revealed. But Cirion was a man who kept his own counsel. As the diminished army of Gondor made its way south he was accompanied by Eorl and an éored<sup>232</sup> of the Riders of the North. When they came to the Mering Stream Cirion turned to Eorl and said, to men's wonder:*

*'Farewell now, Eorl, son of Léod. I will return to my home, where much needs to be set in order. Calenardhon I commit to your care for this time, if you are not in haste to return to your own realm. In three months' time I will meet you here again, and then we will take counsel together.'*

*'I will come,' Eorl answered; and so they parted.*

*As soon as Cirion came to Minas Tirith he summoned some of his most trusted servants. 'Go now to the Whispering Wood,' he said. 'There you must re-open the ancient path to Amon Anwar. It is long overgrown; but the entrance is still marked by a standing stone beside the Road, at that point where the northern region of the Wood closes in upon it. The path turns this way and that, but at each turn there is a standing stone. Following these you will come at length to the end of the trees and find a stone stair that leads on upwards. I charge you to go no further. Do this work as swiftly as you may and then return to me. Fell no trees; only clear a way by which a few men on foot can easily pass upwards. Leave the entrance by the Road still shrouded, so that none that use the Road may be tempted to use the path before I come there myself. Tell no-one whither you go or what you have done. If any ask, say only that the Lord Steward wishes for a place to be made ready for his meeting with the Lord of the Riders.'*

*In due time Cirion set out with Hallas his son and the Lord of Dol Amroth, and two others of his Council; and he met Eorl at the crossing of the Mering Stream. With Eorl were three of his chief captains. 'Let us go now to the place that I have prepared,' said Cirion. Then they left a guard of Riders at the bridge and turned back into*

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<sup>232</sup> According to a note on the ordering of the Rohirrim, the éored 'had no precisely fixed number, but in Rohan it was only applied to Riders, fully trained for war: men serving for a term, or in some cases permanently, in the King's Host. Any considerable body of such men, riding as a unit in exercise or on service, was called an éored. But after the recovery of the Rohirrim and the reorganization of their forces in the days of King Folcwine, a hundred years before the War of the Ring, a "full éored" in battle order was reckoned to contain not less than 120 men (including the Captain), and to be one hundredth part of the Full Muster of the Riders of the Mark, not including those of the King's Household. [The éored with which Éomer pursued the Orcs, *The Two Towers* III 2, had 120 Riders: Legolas counted 105 when they were far away, and Éomer said that fifteen men had been lost in battle with the Orcs.] No such host, of course, had ever ridden all together to war beyond the Mark; but Théoden's claim that he might, in this great peril, have led out an expedition of ten thousand Riders (*The Return of the King* V 3) was no doubt justified. The Rohirrim had increased since the days of Folcwine, and before the attacks of Saruman a Full Muster would probably have produced many more than twelve thousand Riders, so that Rohan would not have been denuded entirely of trained defenders. In the event, owing to losses in the western war, the hastiness of the Muster, and the threat from North and East, Théoden only led out a host of some six thousand spears, though this was still the greatest riding of the Rohirrim that was recorded since the coming of Eorl.'

The full muster of the cavalry was called éoherë (see [note 245](#)). These words, and also Éothéod, are of course Anglo-Saxon in form, since the true language of Rohan is everywhere thus translated (see [note 202](#) above): they contain as their first element *eoh*, 'horse'. Éored, éorod is a recorded Anglo-Saxon word, its second element derived from *rád*, 'riding'; in éoherë the second element is *herë*, 'host, army'. Éothéod has *théod*, 'people' or 'land', and is used both of the Riders themselves and of their country. (Anglo-Saxon *eorl* in the name Eorl the Young is a wholly unrelated word.)

*the tree-shadowed Road, and came to the standing stone. There they left their horses and another strong guard of soldiers of Gondor; and Cirion standing by the stone turned to his companions and said: 'I go now to the Hill of Awe. Follow me, if you will. With me shall come an esquire, and another with Eorl, to bear our arms; all others shall go unarmed as witnesses of our words and deeds in the high place. The path has been made ready, though none have used it since I came here with my father.'*

*Then Cirion led Eorl into the trees and the others followed in order; and after they had passed the first of the inner stones their voices were stilled and they walked warily as if unwilling to make any sound. So they came at last to the upper slopes of the Hill and passed through a belt of white birches and saw the stone stair going up to the summit. After the shadow of the Wood the sun seemed hot and bright, for it was the month of Urimë yet the crown of the Hill was green, as if the year were still in Lótessë.*

*At the foot of the stair there was a small shelf or cove made in the hillside with low turf-banks. There the company sat for a while, until Cirion rose and from his esquire took the white wand of office and the white mantle of the Stewards of Gondor. Then standing on the first step of the stair he broke the silence, saying in a low but clear voice:*

*'I will now declare what I have resolved, with the authority of the Stewards of the Kings, to offer to Eorl son of Léod, Lord of the Éothéod, in recognition of the valour of his people and of the help beyond hope that he brought to Gondor in time of dire need. To Eorl I will give in free gift all the great land of Calenardhon from Anduin to Isen. There, if he will, he shall be king, and his heirs after him, and his people shall dwell in freedom while the authority of the Stewards endures, until the Great King returns.<sup>233</sup> No bond shall be laid upon them other than their own laws and will, save in this only: they shall live in perpetual friendship with Gondor and its enemies shall be their enemies while both realms endure. But the same bond shall be laid also on the people of Gondor.'*

*Then Eorl stood up, but remained for some time silent. For he was amazed by the great generosity of the gift and the noble terms in which it had been offered; and he saw the wisdom of Cirion both on his own behalf as ruler of Gondor, seeking to protect what remained of his realm, and as a friend of the Éothéod of whose needs he was aware. For they were now grown to a people too numerous for their land in the North and longed to return south to their former home, but they were restrained by the fear of Dol Guldur. But in Calenardhon they would have room beyond hope, and yet be far from the shadows of Mirkwood.*

*Yet beyond wisdom and policy both Cirion and Eorl were moved at that time by the great friendship that bound their peoples together, and by the love that was between them as true men. On the part of Cirion the love was that of a wise father, old in the cares of the world, for a son in the strength and hope of his youth; while in Cirion Eorl saw the highest and noblest man of the world that he knew, and the wisest, on whom sat the majesty of the Kings of Men of long ago.*

*At last, when Eorl had swiftly passed all these things through his thought, he spoke, saying: 'Lord Steward of the Great King, the gift that you offer I accept for myself and for my people. It far exceeds any reward that our deeds could have earned, if they had not themselves been a free gift of friendship. But now I will seal that friendship with an oath that shall not be forgotten.'*

*'Then let us go now to the high place,' said Cirion, 'and before these witnesses take such oaths as seem fitting.'*

*Then Cirion went up the stair with Eorl and the others followed; and when they came to the summit they saw there a wide oval place of level turf, unfenced, but at its eastern end there stood a low mound on which grew the white flowers of alfirin,<sup>234</sup> and the westering sun touched them with gold. Then the Lord of Dol Amroth,*

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<sup>233</sup> This was always said in the days of the Stewards, in any solemn pronouncement, though by the time of Cirion (the twelfth Ruling Steward) it had become a formula that few believed would ever come to pass. [Author's note.]

<sup>234</sup> *Alfirin*: the *simbelmynë* of the Kings' mounds below Edoras, and the *uilos* that Tuor saw in the great ravine of Gondolin in the Elder Days; see [note 59](#). *Alfirin* is named, but apparently of a different flower, in a verse that



chief of those in the company of Cirion, went towards the mound and saw, lying on the grass before it and yet unmarred by weed or weather, a black stone; and on the stone three letters were engraved. Then he said to Cirion:

*'Is this then a tomb? But what great man of old lies here?'*

*'Have you not read the letters?'* said Cirion

*'I have,' said the Prince,*<sup>235</sup> *'and therefore I wonder; for the letters are lambe, ando, lambe, but there is no tomb for Elendil, nor has any man since his day dared to use that name.'*<sup>236</sup>

*'Nonetheless this is his tomb,' said Cirion; 'and from it comes the awe that dwells on this hill and in the woods below. From Isildur who raised it to Meneldil who succeeded him, and so down all the line of the Kings, and down the line of the Stewards even to myself, this tomb has been kept a secret by Isildur's command. For he said: "Here is the mid-point of the Kingdom of the South,"<sup>237</sup> and here shall the memorial of Elendil the Faithful abide in the keeping of the Valar, while the Kingdom endures. This hill shall be a hallow, and let no man disturb its peace and silence, unless he be an heir of Elendil." I have brought you here, so that the oaths here taken may seem of deepest solemnity to ourselves and to our heirs upon either side.'*

*Then all those present stood a while in silence with bowed heads, until Cirion said to Eorl: 'If you are ready, take now your oath in such manner as seems to you fitting according to the customs of your people.'*

*Eorl then stood forth, and taking his spear from his esquire he set it upright in the ground. Then he drew his sword and cast it up shining in the sun, and catching it again he stepped forward and laid the blade upon the*

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Legolas sang in Minas Tirith (*The Return of the King* V 9): 'The golden bells are shaken of mallos and alfirin/In the green fields of Lebennin.'

<sup>235</sup> The Lord of Dol Amroth had this title. It was given to his ancestors by Elendil, with whom they had kinship. They were a family of the Faithful who had sailed from Númenor before the Downfall and had settled in the land of Belfalas, between the mouths of Ringló and Gilrain, with a stronghold upon the high promontory of Dol Amroth (named after the last King of Lórien). [Author's note.]

Elsewhere it is said (p. 321) that according to the tradition of their house the first Lord of Dol Amroth was Galador (c. Third Age 2004-2129), the son of Imrazôr the Númenórean, who dwelt in Belfalas, and the Elvenlady Mithrellas, one of the companions of Nimrodel. The [note](#) just cited seems to suggest that this family of the Faithful settled in Belfalas with a stronghold on Dol Amroth before the Downfall of Númenor; and if that is so, the two statements can only be reconciled on the supposition that the line of the Princes, and indeed the place of their dwelling, went back more than two thousand years before Galador's day, and that Galador was called the first Lord of Dol Amroth because it was not until his time (after the drowning of Amroth in the year 1981) that Dol Amroth was so named. A further difficulty is the presence of an Adrahil of Dol Amroth (clearly an ancestor of Adrahil the father of Imrahil, Lord of Dol Amroth at the time of the War of the Ring) as a commander of the forces of Gondor in the battle against the Wainriders in the year 1944 (pp. 379, 381); but it may be supposed that this earlier Adrahil was not called 'of Dol Amroth' at that time.

While not impossible, these explanations to save consistency seem to me to be less likely than that of two distinct and independent 'traditions' of the origins of the Lords of Dol Amroth.

<sup>236</sup> The letters were (L · ND · L): Elendil's name without vowel-marks, which he used as a badge, and a device upon his seals. [Author's note.]

<sup>237</sup> Amon Anwar was in fact the high place nearest to the centre of a line from the inflow of the Limlight down to the southern cape of Tol Falas; and the distance from it to the Fords of Isen was equal to its distance from Minas Tirith. [Author's note.]

mound, but with his hand still about the hilts. He spoke then in a great voice the Oath of Eorl. This he said in the tongue of the Éothéod, which in the Common Speech is interpreted.<sup>238</sup>

Hear now all peoples who bow not to the Shadow in the East, by the gift of the Lord of the Mundburg we will come to dwell in the land that he names Calenardhon, and therefore I vow in my own name and on behalf of the Éothéod of the North that between us and the Great People of the West there shall be friendship for ever: their enemies shall be our enemies, their need shall be our need, and whatsoever evil, or threat, or assault may come upon them we will aid them to the utmost end of our strength. This vow shall descend to my heirs, all such as may come after me in our new land, and let them keep it in faith unbroken, lest the Shadow fall upon them and they become accursed.

Then Eorl sheathed his sword and bowed and went back to his captains.

Cirion then made answer. Standing to his full height he laid his hand upon the tomb and in his right hand held up the white wand of the Stewards, and spoke words that filled those who heard them with awe. For as he stood up the sun went down in flame in the West and his white robe seemed to be on fire; and after he had vowed that Gondor should be bound by a like bond of friendship and aid in all need, he lifted up his voice and said in Quenya:

Vanda sina termaruva Elenna·nóreo alcar enyalien ar Elendil Vorondo voronwë. Nai tiruvantes i hárar mahalmassen mi Númen ar i Eru i or ilyë mahalmar eä tennoio.<sup>239</sup>

And again he said in the Common Speech:

This oath shall stand in memory of the glory of the Land of the Star, and of the faith of Elendil the Faithful, in the keeping of those who sit upon the thrones of the West and of the One who is above all thrones for ever.

Such an oath had not been heard in Middle-earth since Elendil himself had sworn alliance with Gil-galad King of the Eldar.<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Though imperfectly; for it was in ancient terms and made in the forms of verse and high speech that were used by the Rohirrim, in which Eorl had great skill. [Author's note.]

There seems not to be any other version of the Oath of Eorl extant apart from that in the Common Speech given in the text.

<sup>239</sup> *Vanda*: an oath, pledge, solemn promise. *ter-maruva*: *ter*, 'through'; *mar*, 'abide, be settled or fixed', future tense. *Elenna·nóreo*: genitive case, dependent on *alcar*, of *Elenna·nórë*, 'the land named Starwards'. *alcar*: 'glory'. *enyalien*: *en*, 'again'; *yal*, 'summon', in infinitive (or gerundial) form *en-yalië*, here in dative, 'for the re-calling', but governing a direct object, *alcar*: thus 'to recall or "commemorate" the glory'. *Vorondo*: genitive of *voronda*, 'steadfast in allegiance, in keeping oath or promise, faithful', adjectives used as a 'title' or frequently used attribute of a name are placed after the name, and as is usual in Quenya in the case of two declinable names in apposition only the last is declined. [Another reading gives the adjective as *vórimo*, genitive of *vórima*, with the same meaning as *voronda*.] *voronwë*: 'steadfastness, loyalty, faithfulness', the object of *enyalien*.

*Nai*: 'be it that, may it be that'; *Nai tiruvantes*: 'be it that they will guard it', i.e., 'may they guard it' (-nte, inflexion of 3 plural where no subject is previously mentioned). *i hárar*: 'they who are sitting upon'. *mahalmassen*: locative plural of *mahalma*, 'throne'. *mi*, 'in the'. *Númen*: 'West'. *i Eru i*: 'the One who'. *eä*: 'is'. *tennoio*: *tenna*, 'up to, as far as'; *oio*, 'an endless period'; *tennoio*, 'for ever'. [Author's notes.]

<sup>240</sup> And was not used again until King Elessar returned and renewed the bond in that same place with the King of the Rohirrim, Éomer the eighteenth descended from Eorl. It had been held lawful only for the King of Númenor to call Eru to witness, and then only on the most grave and solemn occasions. The line of the Kings had come to an end in Ar-Pharazôn who perished in the Downfall; but Elendil Voronda was descended from Tar-Elendil the fourth King, and was held to be the rightful lord of the Faithful, who had taken no part in the

When all was done and the shadows of evening were falling Cirion and Eorl with their company went down again in silence through the darkling Wood, and came back to the camp by the Mering Stream where tents had been prepared for them. After they had eaten Cirion and Eorl, with the Prince of Dol Amroth and Éomund the chief captain of the host of the Éothéod, sat together and defined the boundaries of the authority of the King of the Éothéod and the Steward of Gondor.

The bounds of the realm of Eorl were to be: in the West the river Angren from its junction with the Adorn and thence northwards to the outer fences of Angrenost, and thence westwards and northwards along the eaves of Fangorn Forest to the river Limlight; and that river was its northern boundary, for the land beyond had never been claimed by Gondor.<sup>241</sup> In the east its bounds were the Anduin and the west-cliff of the Eryn Muil down to the marshes of the Mouths of Onodló, and beyond that river the stream of the Glanhír that flowed through the Wood of Anwar to join the Onodló; and in the south its bounds were the Ered Nimrais as far as the end of their northward arm, but all those vales and inlets that opened northwards were to belong to the Éothéod, as well as the land south of the Hithaeglin that lay between the rivers Angren and Adorn.<sup>242</sup>

In all these regions Gondor still retained under its own command only the fortress of Angrenost, within which was the third Tower of Gondor, the impregnable Orthanc where was held the fourth of the palantíri of the southern realm. In the days of Cirion Angrenost was still manned by a guard of Gondorians, but these had become a small settled people, ruled by an hereditary Captain, and the keys of Orthanc were in the keeping of the Steward of Gondor. The ‘outer fences’ named in the description of the bounds of the realm of Eorl were a wall and dyke running some two miles south of the gates of Angrenost, between the hills in which the Misty Mountains ended; beyond them were the tilled lands of the people of the fortress.

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rebellion of the Kings and had been preserved from destruction. Cirion was the Steward of the Kings descended from Elendil, and so far as Gondor was concerned had as regent all their powers—until the King should come again. Nonetheless his oath astounded those who heard it, and filled them with awe, and was alone (over and above the venerable tomb) sufficient to hallow the place where it was spoken. [Author’s note.]

Elendil’s name Voronda, ‘the Faithful’, which appears also in Cirion’s Oath, was in this note first written Voronwë, which in the Oath is a noun, meaning ‘faithfulness, steadfastness’. But in Appendix A (I, ii) to *The Lord of the Rings* Mardil, the first Ruling Steward of Gondor, is called ‘Mardil Voronwë “the Steadfast”’ and in the First Age the Elf of Gondolin who guided Tuor from Vinyamar was named Voronwë, which in the [Index](#) to *The Silmarillion* I likewise translated ‘the Steadfast’.

<sup>241</sup> See the first citation in Appendix C to ‘The History of Galadriel and Celeborn’, pp. 337, 338.

<sup>242</sup> These names are given in Sindarin according to the usage of Gondor; but many of them were named anew by the Éothéod, being alterations of the older names to fit their own tongue, or translations of them, or names of their own making. In the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings* the names in the language of the Rohirrim are mostly used. Thus Angren=Isen; Angrenost=Isengard; Fangorn (which is also used)=Entwood; Onodló=Entwash; Glanhír=Mering Stream (both mean ‘boundary stream’). [Author’s note.]

The name of the river Limlight is perplexed. There are two versions of the text and note at this point, from one of which it seems that the Sindarin name was *Limlich*, adapted in the language of Rohan as *Limliht* (‘modernized’ as *Limlight*). In the other (later) version, *Limlich* is emended, puzzlingly, to *Limliht* in the text, so that this becomes the Sindarin form. Elsewhere (p. 364) the Sindarin name of this river is given as *Limlaith*. In view of this uncertainty I have given *Limlight* in the text. Whatever the original Sindarin name may have been, it is at least clear that the Rohan form was an alteration of it and not a translation, and that its meaning was not known (although in a note written much earlier than any of the foregoing the name *Limlight* is said to be a partial translation of Elvish *Limlint*, ‘swift-light’). The Sindarin names of the Entwash and the Mering Stream are only found here; with Onodló compare *Onodrim*, *Enyd*, the Ents (*The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix F, ‘[Of Other Races](#)’).

It was agreed also that the Great Road which had formerly run through Anórien and Calenardhon to Athrad Angren (the Fords of Isen),<sup>243</sup> and thence northwards on its way to Arnor, should be open to all travellers of either people without hindrance in time of peace, and its maintenance should from the Mering Stream to the Fords of Isen be in the care of the Éothéod.

By this pact only a small part of the Wood of Anwar, west of the Mering Stream, was included in the realm of Eorl; but Cirion declared that the Hill of Anwar was now a hallowed place of both peoples, and the Eorlings and the Stewards should henceforward share its guard and maintenance. In later days, however, as the Rohirrim grew in power and numbers, while Gondor declined and was ever threatened from the East and by sea, the wardens of Anwar were provided entirely by the people of Eastfold, and the Wood became by custom part of the royal domain of the Kings of the Mark. The Hill they named the Halifirien, and the Wood the Firienholt.<sup>244</sup>

In later times the day of the Oath-taking was reckoned as the first day of the new kingdom, when Eorl took the title of King of the Mark of the Riders. But in the event it was some while before the Rohirrim took possession of the land, and during his life Eorl was known as Lord of the Éothéod and King of Calenardhon. The term Mark signified a borderland, especially one serving as a defence of the inner lands of a realm. The Sindarin names Rohan for the Mark and Rohirrim for the people were devised first by Hallas, son and successor of Cirion, but were often used not only in Gondor but by the Éothéod themselves.<sup>245</sup>

The day after the Oath-taking Cirion and Eorl embraced and took their leave unwillingly. For Eorl said: 'Lord Steward, I have much to do in haste. This land is now rid of enemies; but they are not destroyed at the root, and beyond Anduin and under the eaves of Mirkwood we know not yet what peril lurks. I sent yestereve three messengers north, riders brave and skilled, in the hope that one at least will reach my home before me. For I must now return myself, and with some strength; my land was left with few men, those too young and those too old; and if they are to make so great a journey our women and children, with such goods as we cannot spare, must be guarded, and only the Lord of the Éothéod himself will they follow. I will leave behind me all the strength that I can spare, well nigh half of the host that is now in Calenardhon. Some companies of horsed archers there shall be, to go where need calls, if any bands of the enemy still lurk in the land; but the main force shall remain in the North-east to guard above all the place where the Balchoth made a crossing of the Anduin out of the Brown Lands; for there is still the greatest danger, and there also is my chief hope, if I return,

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<sup>243</sup> *Athrad Angren*: see p. 343, where the Sindarin name for the Fords of Isen is given as *Ethraid Engrin*. It seems then that both singular and plural forms of the name of the Ford(s) existed.

<sup>244</sup> Elsewhere the wood is always called the Firien Wood (a shortening from Halifirien Wood). *Firienholt*—a word recorded in Anglo-Saxon poetry (*firgenholt*)—means the same: 'mountain wood'. See note 229

<sup>245</sup> Their proper form was *Rochand* and *Rochir-rim*, and they were spelt as *Rochand*, or *Rochan*, and *Rochirrim* in the records of Gondor. They contain Sindarin *roch*, 'horse', translating the *éo*—in *Éothéod* and in many personal names of the Rohirrim [see note 232]. In *Rochand* the Sindarin ending *-nd* (*-and*, *-end*, *-ond*) was added; it was commonly used in the names of regions or countries, but the *-d* was usually dropped in speech, especially in long names, such as *Calenardhon*, *Ithilien*, *Lamedon*, etc. *Rochirrim* was modelled on *éo-herë*, the term used by the Éothéod for the full muster of their cavalry in time of war; it was made from *roch*+Sindarin *hîr*, 'lord, master' (entirely unconnected with [the Anglo-Saxon word] *herë*). In the names of peoples Sindarin *rim*, 'great number, host' (Quenya *rimbë*) was commonly used to form collective plurals, as in *Eledhrim* (*Edhelrim*) 'all Elves', *Onodrim*, 'the Ent-folk', *Nogothrim*, 'all Dwarves, the Dwarf-people'. The language of the Rohirrim contained the sound here represented by *ch* (a back spirant as *ch* in Welsh), and, though it was infrequent in the middle of words between vowels, it presented them with no difficulty. But the Common Speech did not possess it, and in pronouncing Sindarin (in which it was very frequent) the People of Gondor, unless learned, represented it by *h* in the middle of words and by *k* at the end of them (where it was most forcibly pronounced in correct Sindarin). Thus arose the names *Rohan* and *Rohirrim* as used in *The Lord of the Rings*. [Author's note.]



*of leading my people into their new land with as little grief and loss as may be. If I return, I say: but be assured that I shall return, for the keeping of my oath, unless disaster befall us and I perish with my people on the long road. For that must be on the east side of Anduin ever under the threat of Mirkwood, and at last must pass through the vale that is haunted by the shadow of the hill that you name Dol Guldur. On the west side there is no road for horsemen, nor for a great host of people and wains, even were not the Mountains infested by Orcs; and none can pass, few or many, through the Dwimordene where dwells the White Lady and weaves nets that no mortal can pass.<sup>246</sup> By the east road will I come, as I came to Celebrant; and may those whom we called in witness of our oaths have us in their keeping. Let us part now in hope! Have I your leave?’*

*‘Indeed you have my leave,’ said Cirion, ‘since I see now that it cannot be otherwise. I perceive that in our peril I have given too little thought to the dangers that you have faced and the wonder of your coming beyond hope over the long leagues from the North. The reward that I offered in joy and fullness of heart at our deliverance now seems little. But I believe that the words of my oath, which I had not fore-thought ere I spoke them, were not put into my mouth in vain. We will part then in hope.’*

*After the manner of the Chronicles no doubt much of what is here put into the mouths of Eorl and Cirion at their parting was said and considered in the debate of the night before; but it is certain that Cirion said at parting his words concerning the inspiration of his oath, for he was a man of little pride and of great courage and generosity of heart, the noblest of the Stewards of Gondor.*

## IV. The Tradition Of Isildur

*It is said that when Isildur returned from the War of the Last Alliance he remained for a time in Gondor, ordering the realm and instructing Meneldil his nephew, before he himself departed to take up the kingship of Arnor. With Meneldil and a company of trusted friends he made a journey about the borders of all the lands to which Gondor laid claim; and as they were returning from the northern bound to Anórien they came to the high hill that was then called Eilenaer but was afterwards called Amon Anwar, ‘Hill of Awe’.<sup>247</sup> That was near to the centre of the lands of Gondor. They made a path through the dense woods of its northward slopes, and so came to its summit, which was green and treeless. There they made a level space, and at its eastward end they raised a mound; within the mound Isildur laid a casket that he bore with him. Then he said: ‘This is a tomb and memorial of Elendil the Faithful. Here it shall stand at the mid-point of the Kingdom of the South in the keeping*

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<sup>246</sup> Eorl appears to have been unconvinced by the token of the White Lady’s goodwill; see [p. 387](#).

<sup>247</sup> *Eilenaer* was a name of pre-Númenórean origin, evidently related to *Eilenach*. [Author’s note.]

According to a note on the beacons, Eilenach was ‘probably an alien name: not Sindarin, Númenórean, or Common Speech . . . Both Eilenach and Eilenaer were notable features. Eilenach was the highest point of the Drúadan Forest. It could be seen far to the West, and its function in the days of the beacons was to transmit the warning of Amon Dîn; but it was not suitable for a large beacon-fire, there being little space on its sharp summit. Hence the name Nardol “Fire-hilltop” of the next beacon westward; it was on the end of a high ridge, originally part of the Drúadan Forest, but long deprived of trees by masons and quarriers who came up the Stonewain Valley. Nardol was manned by a guard, who also protected the quarries; it was well-stored with fuel and at need a great blaze could be lit, visible on a clear night even as far as the last beacon (Halifirien) some hundred and twenty miles to the westward.’

In the same note it is stated that ‘Amon Dîn “the silent hill” was perhaps the oldest, with the original function of a fortified outpost of Minas Tirith, from which its beacon could be seen, to keep watch over the passage into North Ithilien from Dagorlad and any attempt by enemies to cross the Anduin at or near Cair Andros. Why it was given this name is not recorded. Probably because it was distinctive, a rocky and barren hill standing out and isolated from the heavily wooded hills of the Drúadan Forest (Tawar-in-Drúedain), little visited by men, beasts or birds.’

*of the Valar, while the Kingdom endures; and this place shall be a hallow that none shall profane. Let no man disturb its silence and peace, unless he be an heir of Elendil.'*

*They made a stone stair from the fringe of the woods up to the crown of the hill; and Isildur said: 'Up this stair let no man climb, save the King, and those that he brings with him, if he bids them follow him.' Then all those present were sworn to secrecy; but Isildur gave this counsel to Meneldil, that the King should visit the hallow from time to time, and especially when he felt the need of wisdom in days of danger or distress; and thither also he should bring his heir, when he was full-grown to manhood, and tell him of the making of the hallow, and reveal to him the secrets of the realm and other matters that he should know.*

*Meneldil followed Isildur's counsel, and all the Kings that came after him, until Rómendacil I (the fifth after Meneldil). In his time Gondor was first assailed by Easterlings;<sup>248</sup> and lest the tradition should be broken because of war or sudden death or other misfortune, he caused the 'Tradition of Isildur' to be set down in a sealed scroll, together with other things that a new King should know; and this scroll was delivered by the Steward to the King before his crowning.<sup>249</sup> This delivery was from then onwards always performed, though the custom of visiting the hallow of Amon Anwar with his heir was maintained by nearly all the Kings of Gondor.*

*When the days of the Kings came to an end and Gondor was ruled by the Stewards descended from Húrin, the steward of King Minardil, it was held that all the rights and duties of the Kings were theirs 'until the Great King returns'. But in the matter of the 'Tradition of Isildur' they alone were the judges, since it was known only to them. They judged that by the words 'an heir of Elendil' Isildur had meant one of the royal line descended from Elendil who had inherited the throne: but that he did not foresee the rule of the Stewards. If then Mardil had exercised the authority of the King in his absence,<sup>250</sup> the heirs of Mardil who had inherited the Stewardship had the same right and duty until a King returned; each Steward therefore had the right to visit the hallow when he would and to admit to it those who came with him, as he thought fit. As for the words 'while the Kingdom endures', they said that Gondor remained a 'kingdom', ruled by a vice-regent, and that the words must therefore be held to mean 'as long as the state of Gondor endures'.*

*Nonetheless, the Stewards, partly from awe, and partly from the cares of the kingdom, went very seldom to the hallow on the Hill of Anwar, except when they took their heir to the hill-top, according to the custom of the Kings. Sometimes it remained for several years unvisited, and as Isildur had prayed it was in the keeping of the Valar; for though the woods might grow tangled and be avoided by men because of the silence, so that the upward path was lost, still when the way was re-opened the hallow was found unweathered and unprofaned, ever-green and at peace under the sky, until the Kingdom of Gondor was changed.*

*For it came to pass that Cirion, the twelfth of the Ruling Stewards, was faced by a new and great danger: invaders threatened the conquest of all the lands of Gondor north of the White Mountains, and if that were to happen the downfall and destruction of the whole kingdom must soon follow. As is known in the histories, this peril was averted only by the aid of the Rohirrim; and to them Cirion with great wisdom granted all the northern lands, save Anórien, to be under their own rule and king, though in perpetual alliance with Gondor.*

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<sup>248</sup> According to Appendix A (I, iv) to *The Lord of the Rings* it was in the days of Ostohor, the fourth king after Meneldil, that Gondor was first attacked by wild men out of the East; 'but Tarostar, his son, defeated them and drove them out, and took the name of Rómendacil "East-victor"'.

<sup>249</sup> It was also Rómendacil I who established the office of Steward (*Arandur*, 'king's servant'), but he was chosen by the King as a man of high trust and wisdom, usually advanced in years since he was not permitted to go to war or to leave the realm. He was never a member of the Royal House. [Author's note.]

<sup>250</sup> Mardil was the first of the Ruling Stewards of Gondor. He was the Steward to Eärnur the last King, who disappeared in Minas Morgul in the year 2050. 'It was believed in Gondor that the faithless enemy had trapped the King, and that he had died in torment in Minas Morgul; but since there were no witnesses of his death, Mardil the Good Steward ruled Gondor in his name for many years' (*The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A (I, iv)).

*There were no longer sufficient men in the realm to people the northward region, nor even to maintain in force the line of forts along the Anduin that had guarded its eastward boundary. Cirion gave long thought to this matter before he granted Calenardhon to the Horsemen of the North; and he judged that its cession must change wholly the 'Tradition of Isildur' with regard to the hallow of Amon Anwar. To that place he brought the Lord of the Rohirrim, and there by the mound of Elendil he with the greatest solemnity took the Oath of Eorl, and was answered by the Oath of Cirion, confirming for ever the alliance of the Kingdoms of the Rohirrim and of Gondor. But when this was done, and Eorl had returned to the North to bring back all his people to their new dwelling, Cirion removed the tomb of Elendil. For he judged that the 'Tradition of Isildur' was now made void. The hallow was no longer 'at the mid-point of the Kingdom of the South', but on the borders of another realm; and moreover the words 'while the Kingdom endures' referred to the Kingdom as it was when Isildur spoke, after surveying its bounds and defining them. It was true that other parts of the Kingdom had been lost since that day: Minas Ithil was in the hands of the Nazgûl, and Ithilien was desolate; but Gondor had not relinquished its claim to them. Calenardhon it had resigned for ever under oath. The casket therefore that Isildur had set within the mound Cirion removed to the Hallows of Minas Tirith; but the green mound remained as the memorial of a memorial. Nonetheless, even when it had become the site of a great beacon, the Hill of Anwar was still a place of reverence to Gondor and to the Rohirrim, who named it in their own tongue Halifirien, the Holy Mount.*



## The Quest Of Erebor

This story depends for its full understanding on the narrative given in Appendix A (III, *Durin's Folk*) to *The Lord of the Rings*, of which this is an outline:

The Dwarves Thrór and his son Thráin (together with Thráin's son Thorin, afterwards called Oakenshield) escaped from the Lonely Mountain (Erebor) by a secret door when the dragon Smaug descended upon it. Thrór returned to Moria, after giving to Thráin the last of the Seven Rings of the Dwarves, and was killed there by the Orc Azog, who branded his name on Thrór's brow. It was this that led to the War of the Dwarves and the Orcs, which ended in the great Battle of Azanulbizar (Nanduhirion) before the East-gate of Moria in the year 2799. Afterwards Thráin and Thorin Oakenshield dwelt in the Ered Luin, but in the year 2841 Thráin set out from there to return to the Lonely Mountain. While wandering in the lands east of Anduin he was captured and imprisoned in Dol Guldur, where the ring was taken from him. In 2850 Gandalf entered Dol Guldur and discovered that its master was indeed Sauron; and there he came upon Thráin before he died.

There is more than one version of 'The Quest of Erebor', as is explained in an Appendix following the text, where also substantial extracts from an earlier version are given.

I have not found any writing preceding the opening words of the present text ('He would say no more that day'). The 'He' of the opening sentence is Gandalf, 'we' are Frodo, Peregrin, Meriadoc, and Gimli, and 'I' is Frodo, the recorder of the conversation; the scene is a house in Minas Tirith, after the coronation of King Elessar (see [p. 425](#)).

*He would say no more that day. But later we brought the matter up again, and he told us the whole strange story; how he came to arrange the journey to Erebor, why he thought of Bilbo, and how he persuaded the proud Thorin Oakenshield to take him into his company. I cannot remember all the tale now, but we gathered that to begin with Gandalf was thinking only of the defence of the West against the Shadow.*

*'I was very troubled at that time,' he said, 'for Saruman was hindering all my plans. I knew that Sauron had arisen again and would soon declare himself, and I knew that he was preparing for a great war. How would he begin? Would he try first to re-occupy Mordor, or would he first attack the chief strongholds of his enemies? I thought then, and I am sure now, that to attack Lórien and Rivendell, as soon as he was strong enough, was his original plan. It would have been a much better plan for him, and much worse for us.*

*'You may think that Rivendell was out of his reach, but I did not think so. The state of things in the North was very bad. The Kingdom under the Mountain and the strong Men of Dale were no more. To resist any force that Sauron might send to regain the northern passes in the mountains and the old lands of Angmar there were only the Dwarves of the Iron Hills, and behind them lay a desolation and a Dragon. The Dragon Sauron might use with terrible effect. Often I said to myself: "I must find some means of dealing with Smaug. But a direct stroke against Dol Guldur is needed still more. We must disturb Sauron's plans. I must make the Council see that."*

*'Those were my dark thoughts as I jogged along the road. I was tired, and I was going to the Shire for a short rest, after being away from it for more than twenty years. I thought that if I put them out of my mind for a while I might perhaps find some way of dealing with these troubles. And so I did indeed, though I was not allowed to put them out of my mind.*

*'For just as I was nearing Bree I was overtaken by Thorin Oakenshield,<sup>251</sup> who lived then in exile beyond the northwestern borders of the Shire. To my surprise he spoke to me; and it was at that moment that the tide began to turn.*

*'He was troubled too, so troubled that he actually asked for my advice. So I went with him to his halls in the Blue Mountains, and I listened to his long tale. I soon understood that his heart was hot with brooding on his wrongs, and the loss of the treasure of his forefathers, and burdened too with the duty of revenge upon Smaug that he had inherited. Dwarves take such duties very seriously.*

*'I promised to help him if I could. I was as eager as he was to see the end of Smaug, but Thorin was all for plans of battle and war, as if he were really King Thorin the Second, and I could see no hope in that. So I left him and went off to the Shire, and picked up the threads of news. It was a strange business. I did no more than follow the lead of "chance", and made many mistakes on the way.*

*'Somehow I had been attracted by Bilbo long before, as a child, and a young hobbit: he had not quite come of age when I had last seen him. He had stayed in my mind ever since, with his eagerness and his bright eyes, and his love of tales, and his questions about the wide world outside the Shire. As soon as I entered the Shire I heard news of him. He was getting talked about, it seemed. Both his parents had died early for Shire-folk, at about eighty; and he had never married. He was already growing a bit queer, they said, and went off for days by himself. He could be seen talking to strangers, even Dwarves.*

*"Even Dwarves!" Suddenly in my mind these three things came together: the great Dragon with his lust, and his keen hearing and scent; the sturdy heavy-booted Dwarves with their old burning grudge; and the quick, soft-footed Hobbit, sick at heart (I guessed) for a sight of the wide world. I laughed at myself; but I went off at once to have a look at Bilbo, to see what twenty years had done to him, and whether he was as promising as gossip seemed to make out. But he was not at home. They shook their heads in Hobbiton when I asked after him. "Off again," said one hobbit. It was Holman, the gardener, I believe.<sup>252</sup> "Off again. He'll go right off one of these days, if he isn't careful. Why, I asked him where he was going, and when he would be back, and I don't know he says; and then he looks at me queerly. It depends if I meet any, Holman, he says. It's the Elves' New Year tomorrow!<sup>253</sup> A pity, and him so kind a body. You wouldn't find a better from the Downs to the River."*

*"Better and better!" I thought. "I think I shall risk it." Time was getting short. I had to be with the White Council in August at the latest, or Saruman would have his way and nothing would be done. And quite apart from greater matters, that might prove fatal to the quest: the power in Dol Guldur would not leave any attempt on Erebor unhindered, unless he had something else to deal with.*

*'So I rode off back to Thorin in haste, to tackle the difficult task of persuading him to put aside his lofty designs and go secretly—and take Bilbo with him. Without seeing Bilbo first. It was a mistake, and nearly proved disastrous. For Bilbo had changed, of course. At least, he was getting rather greedy and fat, and his old desires had dwindled down to a sort of private dream. Nothing could have been more dismaying than to find it actually*

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<sup>251</sup> The meeting of Gandalf with Thorin is related also in Appendix A (III) to *The Lord of the Rings*, and there the date is given: 15 March, 2941. There is the slight difference between the two accounts that in Appendix A (III) the meeting took place in the inn at Bree and not on the road. Gandalf had last visited the Shire twenty years before, thus in 2921, when Bilbo was thirty-one: Gandalf says later that he had not quite come of age [at thirty-three] when he last saw him.

<sup>252</sup> Holman the gardener: Holman Greenhand, to whom Hamfast Gamgee (Sam's father, the Gaffer) was apprenticed: *The Fellowship of the Ring* I 1, and [Appendix C](#).

<sup>253</sup> The Elvish solar year (*loa*) began with the day called *yestarë*, which was the day before the first day of *tuilë* (Spring); and in the Calendar of Imladris *yestarë* 'corresponded more or less with Shire April 6'. (*The Lord of the Rings*, [Appendix D](#).)



*in danger of coming true! He was altogether bewildered, and made a complete fool of himself. Thorin would have left in a rage, but for another strange chance, which I will mention in a moment.*

*'But you know how things went, at any rate as Bilbo saw them. The story would sound rather different, if I had written it. For one thing he did not realize at all how fatuous the Dwarves thought him, nor how angry they were with me. Thorin was much more indignant and contemptuous than he perceived. He was indeed contemptuous from the beginning, and thought then that I had planned the whole affair simply so as to make a mock of him. It was only the map and the key that saved the situation.*

*'But I had not thought of them for years. It was not until I got to the Shire and had time to reflect on Thorin's tale that I suddenly remembered the strange chance that had put them in my hands; and it began now to look less like chance. I remembered a dangerous journey of mine, ninety-one years before, when I had entered Dol Guldur in disguise, and had found there an unhappy Dwarf dying in the pits. I had no idea who he was. He had a map that had belonged to Durin's folk in Moria, and a key that seemed to go with it, though he was too far gone to explain it. And he said that he had possessed a great Ring.*

*'Nearly all his ravings were of that. The last of the Seven he said over and over again. But all these things he might have come by in many ways. He might have been a messenger caught as he fled, or even a thief trapped by a greater thief. But he gave the map and the key to me. "For my son," he said; and then he died, and soon after I escaped myself. I stowed the things away, and by some warning of my heart I kept them always with me, safe, but soon almost forgotten. I had other business in Dol Guldur more important and perilous than all the treasure of Erebor.*

*'Now I remembered it all again, and it seemed clear that I had heard the last words of Thráin the Second,<sup>254</sup> though he did not name himself or his son; and Thorin, of course, did not know what had become of his father, nor did he ever mention "the last of the Seven Rings". I had the plan and the key of the secret entrance to Erebor, by which Thrór and Thráin had escaped, according to Thorin's tale. And I had kept them, though without any design of my own, until the moment when they would prove most useful.*

*'Fortunately, I did not make any mistake in my use of them. I kept them up my sleeve, as you say in the Shire, until things looked quite hopeless. As soon as Thorin saw them he really made up his mind to follow my plan, as far as a secret expedition went at any rate. Whatever he thought of Bilbo he would have set out himself. The existence of a secret door, only discoverable by Dwarves, made it seem at least possible to find out something of the Dragon's doings, perhaps even to recover some gold, or some heirloom to ease his heart's longings.*

*'But that was not enough for me. I knew in my heart that Bilbo must go with him, or the whole quest would be a failure—or, as I should say now, the far more important events by the way would not come to pass. So I had still to persuade Thorin to take him. There were many difficulties on the road afterwards, but for me this was the most difficult part of the whole affair. Though I argued with him far into the night after Bilbo had retired, it was not finally settled until early the next morning.*

*'Thorin was contemptuous and suspicious. "He is soft," he snorted. "Soft as the mud of his Shire, and silly. His mother died too soon. You are playing some crooked game of your own, Master Gandalf. I am sure that you have other purposes than helping me."*

*"You are quite right," I said. "If I had no other purposes, I should not be helping you at all. Great as your affairs may seem to you, they are only a small strand in the great web. I am concerned with many strands. But that should make my advice more weighty, not less." I spoke at last with great heat. "Listen to me, Thorin Oakenshield!" I said. "If this hobbit goes with you, you will succeed. If not, you will fail. A foresight is on me, and I am warning you."*

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<sup>254</sup> Thráin the Second: Thráin the First, Thorin's distant ancestor, escaped from Moria in the year 1981 and became the first King under the Mountain. (*The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A (III).)

*“I know your fame,” Thorin answered. “I hope it is merited. But this foolish business of your hobbit makes me wonder whether it is foresight that is on you, and you are not crazed rather than foreseeing. So many cares may have disordered your wits.”*

*“They have certainly been enough to do so,” I said. “And among them I find most exasperating a proud Dwarf who seeks advice from me (without claim on me that I know of), and then rewards me with insolence. Go your own ways, Thorin Oakenshield, if you will. But if you flout my advice, you will walk to disaster. And you will get neither counsel nor aid from me again until the Shadow falls on you. And curb your pride and your greed, or you will fall at the end of whatever path you take, though your hands be full of gold.”*

*‘He blenched a little at that; but his eyes smouldered. “Do not threaten me!” he said. “I will use my own judgement in this matter, as in all that concerns me.”*

*“Do so then!” I said. “I can say no more—unless it is this: I do not give my love or trust lightly, Thorin; but I am fond of this hobbit, and wish him well. Treat him well, and you shall have my friendship to the end of your days.”*

*‘I said that without hope of persuading him; but I could have said nothing better. Dwarves understand devotion to friends and gratitude to those who help them. “Very well,” Thorin said at last after a silence. “He shall set out with my company, if he dares (which I doubt). But if you insist on burdening me with him, you must come too and look after your darling.”*

*“Good!” I answered. “I will come, and stay with you as long as I can: at least until you have discovered his worth.” It proved well in the end, but at the time I was troubled, for I had the urgent matter of the White Council on my hands.*

*‘So it was that the Quest of Erebor set out. I do not suppose that when it started Thorin had any real hope of destroying Smaug. There was no hope. Yet it happened. But alas! Thorin did not live to enjoy his triumph or his treasure. Pride and greed overcame him in spite of my warning.”’*

*‘But surely,’ I said, ‘he might have fallen in battle anyway? There would have been an attack of Orcs, however generous Thorin had been with his treasure.’*

*‘That is true,’ said Gandalf. ‘Poor Thorin! He was a great Dwarf of a great House, whatever his faults; and though he fell at the end of the journey, it was largely due to him that the Kingdom under the Mountain was restored, as I desired. But Dáin Ironfoot was a worthy successor. And now we hear that he fell fighting before Erebor again, even while we fought here. I should call it a heavy loss, if it was not a wonder rather that in his great age<sup>255</sup> he could still wield his axe as mightily as they say he did, standing over the body of King Brand before the Gate of Erebor until the darkness fell.*

*‘It might all have gone very differently indeed. The main attack was diverted southwards, it is true; and yet even so with his far-stretched right hand Sauron could have done terrible harm in the North, while we defended Gondor, if King Brand and King Dáin had not stood in his path. When you think of the great Battle of Pelennor, do not forget the Battle of Dale. Think of what might have been. Dragon-fire and savage swords in Eriador! There might be no Queen in Gondor. We might now only hope to return from the victory here to ruin and ash. But that has been averted—because I met Thorin Oakenshield one evening on the edge of spring not far from Bree. A chance-meeting, as we say in Middle-earth.’*

## Appendix

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<sup>255</sup> Dáin II Ironfoot was born in the year 2767; at the Battle of Azanulbizar (Nanduhirion) in 2799 he slew before the East-gate of Moria the great Orc Azog, and so avenged Thrór, Thorin’s grandfather. He died in the Battle of Dale in 3019. (*The Lord of the Rings*, Appendices A (III) and B.) Frodo learnt from Glóin at Rivendell that ‘Dáin was still King under the Mountain, and was now old (having passed his two hundred and fiftieth year), venerable, and fabulously rich’. (*The Fellowship of the Ring* II 1.)

## ***Note On The Texts Of ‘The Quest Of Erebor’***

The textual situation in this piece is complex and hard to unravel. The earliest version is a complete but rough and much-emended manuscript, which I will here call A; it bears the title ‘The History of Gandalf’s Dealings with Thráin and Thorin Oakenshield’. From this a typescript, B, was made, with a great deal of further alteration, though mostly of a very minor kind. This is entitled ‘The Quest of Erebor’, and also ‘Gandalf’s Account of how he came to arrange the Expedition to Erebor and send Bilbo with the Dwarves’. Some extensive extracts from the typescript text are given [below](#).

In addition to A and B (‘the earlier version’), there is another manuscript, C, untitled, which tells the story in a more economical and tightly-constructed form, omitting a good deal from the first version and introducing some new elements, but also (particularly in the latter part) largely retaining the original writing. It seems to me to be quite certain that C is later than B, and C is the version that has been given above, although some writing has apparently been lost from the beginning, setting the scene in Minas Tirith for Gandalf’s recollections.

The opening paragraphs of B (given [below](#)) are almost identical with a passage in Appendix A (III, *Durin’s Folk*) to *The Lord of the Rings*, and obviously depend on the narrative concerning Thrór and Thráin that precedes them in [Appendix A](#); while the ending of *The Quest of Erebor* is also found in almost exactly the same words in Appendix A (III), here again in the mouth of Gandalf, speaking to Frodo and Gimli in Minas Tirith. In view of the letter cited in the Introduction (pp. 15-16) it is clear that my father wrote ‘*The Quest of Erebor*’ to stand as part of the narrative of *Durin’s Folk* in Appendix A.

### ***Extracts From The Earlier Version***

The typescript B of the earlier version begins thus:

*So Thorin Oakenshield became the Heir of Durin, but an heir without hope. At the sack of Erebor he had been too young to bear arms, but at Azanulbizar he had fought in the van of the assault; and when Thráin was lost he was ninety-five, a great Dwarf of proud bearing. He had no Ring, and (for that reason maybe) he seemed content to remain in Eriador. There he laboured long, and gained such wealth as he could; and his people were increased by many of the wandering Folk of Durin that heard of his dwelling and came to him. Now they had fair halls in the mountains, and store of goods, and their days did not seem so hard, though in their songs they spoke ever of the Lonely Mountain far away, and the treasure and the bliss of the Great Hall in the light of the Arkenstone. The years lengthened. The embers in the heart of Thorin grew hot again, as he brooded on the wrongs of his House and of the vengeance upon the Dragon that was bequeathed to him. He thought of weapons and armies and alliances, as his great hammer rang in the forge; but the armies were dispersed and the alliances broken and the axes of his people were few; and a great anger without hope burned him, as he smote the red iron on the anvil.*

*Gandalf had not yet played any part in the fortunes of Durin’s House. He had not had many dealings with the Dwarves; though he was a friend to those of good will, and liked well the exiles of Durin’s Folk who lived in the West. But on a time it chanced that he was passing through Eriador (going to the Shire, which he had not seen for some years) when he fell in with Thorin Oakenshield, and they talked together on the road, and rested for the night at Bree.*

*In the morning Thorin said to Gandalf: ‘I have much on my mind, and they say you are wise and know more than most of what goes on in the world. Will you come home with me and hear me, and give me your counsel?’*

*To this Gandalf agreed, and when they came to Thorin’s hall he sat long with him and heard all the tale of his wrongs.*

*From this meeting there followed many deeds and events of great moment: indeed the finding of the One Ring, and its coming to the Shire, and the choosing of the Ring-bearer. Many therefore have supposed that Gandalf foresaw all these things, and chose his time for the meeting with Thorin. Yet we believe that it was not so. For in his tale of the War of the Ring Frodo the Ringbearer left a record of Gandalf’s words on this very point. This is what he wrote:*



In place of the words ‘This is what he wrote’ A, the earliest manuscript, has: ‘That passage was omitted from the tale, since it seemed long; but most of it we now set out here.’

*After the crowning we stayed in a fair house in Minas Tirith with Gandalf, and he was very merry, and though we asked him questions about all that came into our minds his patience seemed as endless as his knowledge. I cannot now recall most of the things that he told us; often we did not understand them. But I remember this conversation very clearly. Gimli was there with us, and he said to Peregrin:*

*‘There is a thing I must do one of these days: I must visit that Shire of yours.<sup>256</sup> Not to see more Hobbits! I doubt if I could learn anything about them that I do not know already. But no Dwarf of the House of Durin could fail to look with wonder on that land. Did not the recovery of the Kingship under the Mountain, and the fall of Smaug, begin there? Not to mention the end of Barad-dûr, though both were strangely woven together. Strangely, very strangely,’ he said, and paused.*

*Then looking hard at Gandalf he went on: ‘But who wove the web? I do not think I have ever considered that before. Did you plan all this then, Gandalf? If not, why did you lead Thorin Oakenshield to such an unlikely door? To find the Ring and bring it far away into the West for hiding, and then to choose the Ringbearer—and to restore the Mountain Kingdom as a mere deed by the way: was not that your design?’*

*Gandalf did not answer at once. He stood up, and looked out of the window, west, seawards; and the sun was then setting, and a glow was in his face. He stood so a long while silent. But at last he turned to Gimli and said: ‘I do not know the answer. For I have changed since those days, and I am no longer trammelled by the burden of Middle-earth as I was then. In those days I should have answered you with words like those I used to Frodo, only last year in the spring. Only last year! But such measures are meaningless. In that far distant time I said to a small and frightened hobbit: Bilbo was meant to find the Ring, and not by its maker, and you therefore were meant to bear it. And I might have added: and I was meant to guide you both to those points.*

*‘To do that I used in my waking mind only such means as were allowed to me, doing what lay to my hand according to such reasons as I had. But what I knew in my heart, or knew before I stepped on these grey shores: that is another matter. Olórin I was in the West that is forgotten, and only to those who are there shall I speak more openly.’*

A has here: ‘and only to those who are there (or who may, perhaps, return thither with me) shall I speak more openly.’

*Then I said: ‘I understand you a little better now, Gandalf, than I did before. Though I suppose that, whether meant or not, Bilbo might have refused to leave home, and so might I. You could not compel us. You were not even allowed to try. But I am still curious to know why you did what you did, as you were then, an old grey man as you seemed.’*

Gandalf then explained to them his doubts at that time concerning Sauron’s first move, and his fears for Lórien and Rivendell (cf. p. 416). In this version, after saying that a direct stroke against Sauron was even more urgent than the question of Smaug, he went on:

*‘That is why, to jump forward, I went off as soon as the expedition against Smaug was well started, and persuaded the Council to attack Dol Guldur first, before he attacked Lórien. We did, and Sauron fled. But he was always ahead of us in his plans. I must confess that I thought he really had retreated again, and that we might have another spell of watchful peace. But it did not last long. Sauron decided to take the next step. He returned at once to Mordor, and in ten years he declared himself.*

*‘Then everything grew dark. And yet that was not his original plan; and it was in the end a mistake. Resistance still had somewhere where it could take counsel free from the Shadow. How could the Ringbearer have*

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<sup>256</sup> Gimli must at least have passed through the Shire on journeys from his original home in the Blue Mountains (see p. 435).

escaped, if there had been no Lórien or Rivendell? And those places might have fallen, I think, if Sauron had thrown all his power against them first, and not spent more than half of it in the assault on Gondor.

‘Well, there you have it. That was my chief reason. But it is one thing to see what needs doing, and quite another to find the means. I was beginning to be seriously troubled about the situation in the North when I met Thorin Oakenshield one day: in the middle of March 2941, I think. I heard all his tale, and I thought: “Well, here is an enemy of Smaug at any rate! And one worthy of help. I must do what I can. I should have thought of Dwarves before.”

‘And then there was the Shire-folk. I began to have a warm place in my heart for them in the Long Winter, which none of you can remember.<sup>257</sup> They were very hard put to it then: one of the worst pinches they have been in, dying of cold, and starving in the dreadful dearth that followed. But that was the time to see their courage, and their pity one for another. It was by their pity as much as by their tough uncomplaining courage that they survived. I wanted them still to survive. But I saw that the Westlands were in for another very bad time again, sooner or later, though of quite a different sort: pitiless war. To come through that I thought they would need something more than they now had. It is not easy to say what. Well, they would want to know a bit more, understand a bit clearer what it was all about, and where they stood.

‘They had begun to forget: forget their own beginnings and legends, forget what little they had known about the greatness of the world. It was not yet gone, but it was getting buried: the memory of the high and the perilous. But you cannot teach that sort of thing to a whole people quickly. There was not time. And anyway you must begin at some point, with some one person. I dare say he was “chosen” and I was only chosen to choose him; but I picked out Bilbo.’

‘Now that is just what I want to know,’ said Peregrin. ‘Why did you do that?’

‘How would you select any one Hobbit for such a purpose?’ said Gandalf. ‘I had not time to sort them all out; but I knew the Shire very well by that time, although when I met Thorin I had been away for more than twenty years on less pleasant business. So naturally thinking over the Hobbits that I knew, I said to myself: “I want a dash of the Took” (but not too much, Master Peregrin) “and I want a good foundation of the stolid sort, a Baggins perhaps.” That pointed at once to Bilbo. And I had known him once very well, almost up to his coming of age, better than he knew me. I liked him then. And now I found that he was “unattached”—to jump on again, for of course I did not know all this until I went back to the Shire. I learned that he had never married. I thought that odd, though I guessed why it was; and the reason that I guessed was not the one that most of the Hobbits gave me: that he had early been left very well off and his own master. No, I guessed that he wanted to remain “unattached” for some reason deep down which he did not understand himself—or would not acknowledge, for it alarmed him. He wanted, all the same, to be free to go when the chance came, or he had made up his courage. I remembered how he used to pester me with questions when he was a youngster about the Hobbits that had occasionally “gone off”, as they said in the Shire. There were at least two of his uncles on the Took side that had done so.’

These uncles were Hildifons Took, who ‘went off on a journey and never returned’, and Isengar Took (the youngest of the Old Took’s twelve children), who was ‘said to have “gone to sea” in his youth’ (*The Lord of the Rings* Appendix C, [Family Tree](#) of Took of Great Smials).

When Gandalf accepted Thorin’s invitation to go with him to his home in the Blue Mountains

‘we actually passed through the Shire, though Thorin would not stop long enough for that to be useful. Indeed I think it was annoyance with his haughty disregard of the Hobbits that first put into my head the idea of entangling him with them. As far as he was concerned they were just food-growers who happened to work the fields on either side of the Dwarves’ ancestral road to the Mountains.’

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<sup>257</sup> There is an account of the Long Winter of 2758-9 as it affected Rohan in Appendix A (II) to *The Lord of the Rings*; and the [entry](#) in the Tale of Years mentions that ‘Gandalf came to the aid of the Shirefolk’.

In this earlier version Gandalf gave a long account of how, after his visit to the Shire, he returned to Thorin and persuaded him ‘to put aside his lofty designs and go secretly—and take Bilbo with him’—which sentence is all that is said of it in the later version (p. 418).

*‘At last I made up my mind, and I went back to Thorin. I found him in conclave with some of his kinsfolk. Balin and Glóin were there, and several others.*

*“Well, what have you got to say?” Thorin asked me as soon as I came in.*

*“This first,” I answered. “Your own ideas are those of a king, Thorin Oakenshield; but your kingdom is gone. If it is to be restored, which I doubt, it must be from small beginnings. Far away here, I wonder if you fully realize the strength of a great Dragon. But that is not all: there is a Shadow growing fast in the world far more terrible. They will help one another.” And they certainly would have done so, if I had not attacked Dol Guldur at the same time. “Open war would be quite useless; and anyway it is impossible for you to arrange it. You will have to try something simpler and yet bolder, indeed something desperate.”*

*“You are both vague and disquieting,” said Thorin. “Speak more plainly!”*

*“Well, for one thing,” I said, “you will have to go on this quest yourself, and you will have to go secretly. No messengers, heralds, or challenges for you, Thorin Oakenshield. At most you can take with you a few kinsmen or faithful followers. But you will need something more, something unexpected.”*

*“Name it!” said Thorin.’*

*“One moment!” I said. “You hope to deal with a Dragon; and he is not only very great, but he is now also old and very cunning. From the beginning of your adventure you must allow for this: his memory, and his sense of smell.”*

*“Naturally,” said Thorin. “Dwarves have had more dealings with Dragons than most, and you are not instructing the ignorant.”*

*“Very good,” I answered; “but your own plans did not seem to me to consider this point. My plan is one of stealth. Stealth.<sup>258</sup> Smaug does not lie on his costly bed without dreams, Thorin Oakenshield. He dreams of Dwarves! You may be sure that he explores his hall day by day, night by night, until he is sure that no faintest air of a Dwarf is near, before he goes to his sleep: his half-sleep, prick-eared for the sound of—Dwarf-feet.”*

*“You make your stealth sound as difficult and hopeless as any open attack,” said Balin. “Impossibly difficult!”*

*“Yes, it is difficult,” I answered. “But not impossibly difficult, or I would not waste my time here. I would say absurdly difficult. So I am going to suggest an absurd solution to the problem. Take a Hobbit with you! Smaug has probably never heard of Hobbits, and he has certainly never smelt them.”*

*“What!” cried Glóin. “One of those simpletons down in the Shire? What use on earth, or under it, could he possibly be? Let him smell as he may, he would never dare to come within smelling distance of the nakedest dragonet new from the shell!”*

*“Now, now!” I said, “that is quite unfair. You do not know much about the Shire-folk, Glóin. I suppose you think them simple, because they are generous and do not haggle; and think them timid because you never sell them any weapons. You are mistaken. Anyway, there is one that I have my eye on as a companion for you, Thorin. He is neat-handed and clever, though shrewd, and far from rash. And I think he has courage. Great courage, I guess, according to the way of his people. They are, you might say, ‘brave at a pinch’. You have to put these Hobbits in a tight place before you find out what is in them.”*

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<sup>258</sup> At this point a sentence in the manuscript, A, was perhaps unintentionally omitted in the typescript, in view of Gandalf’s subsequent remark about Smaug’s never having smelt a Hobbit: ‘Also a scent that cannot be placed, at least not by Smaug, the enemy of Dwarves.’

*“The test cannot be made,” Thorin answered. “As far as I have observed, they do all that they can to avoid tight places.”*

*“Quite true,” I said. “They are a very sensible people. But this Hobbit is rather unusual. I think he could be persuaded to go into a tight place. I believe that in his heart he really desires to—to have, as he would put it, an adventure.”*

*“Not at my expense!” said Thorin, rising and striding about angrily. “This is not advice, it is foolery! I fail to see what any Hobbit, good or bad, could do that would repay me for a day’s keep, even if he could be persuaded to start.”*

*“Fail to see! You would fail to hear it, more likely,” I answered. “Hobbits move without effort more quietly than any Dwarf in the world could manage, though his life depended on it. They are, I suppose, the most soft-footed of all mortal kinds. You do not seem to have observed that, at any rate, Thorin Oakenshield, as you tramped through the Shire, making a noise (I may say) that the inhabitants could hear a mile away. When I said that you would need stealth, I meant it: professional stealth.”*

*“Professional stealth?” cried Balin, taking up my words rather differently than I had meant them. “Do you mean a trained treasure-seeker? Can they still be found?”*

*I hesitated. This was a new turn, and I was not sure how to take it. “I think so,” I said at last. “For a reward they will go in where you dare not, or at any rate cannot, and get what you desire.”*

*Thorin’s eyes glistened as the memories of lost treasures moved in his mind; but “A paid thief, you mean,” he said scornfully. “That might be considered, if the reward was not too high. But what has all this to do with one of those villagers? They drink out of clay, and they cannot tell a gem from a bead of glass.”*

*“I wish you would not always speak so confidently without knowledge,” I said sharply. “These villagers have lived in the Shire some fourteen hundred years, and they have learned many things in the time. They had dealings with the Elves, and with the Dwarves, a thousand years before Smaug came to Erebor. None of them are wealthy as your forefathers reckoned it, but you will find some of their dwellings have fairer things in them than you can boast here, Thorin. The Hobbit that I have in mind has ornaments of gold, and eats with silver tools, and drinks wine out of shapely crystal.”*

*“Ah! I see your drift at last,” said Balin. “He is a thief, then? That is why you recommend him?”*

*At that I fear I lost my temper and my caution. This Dwarvish conceit that no-one can have or make anything “of value” save themselves, and that all fine things in other hands must have been got, if not stolen, from the Dwarves at some time, was more than I could stand at that moment. “A thief?” I said, laughing. “Why yes, a professional thief, of course! How else would a Hobbit come by a silver spoon? I will put the thief’s mark on his door, and then you will find it.” Then being angry I got up, and I said with a warmth that surprised myself: “You must look for that door, Thorin Oakenshield! I am serious.” And suddenly I felt that I was indeed in hot earnest. This queer notion of mine was not a joke, it was right. It was desperately important that it should be carried out. The Dwarves must bend their stiff necks.*

*“Listen to me, Durin’s Folk!” I cried. “If you persuade this Hobbit to join you, you will succeed. If you do not, you will fail. If you refuse even to try, then I have finished with you. You will get no more advice or help from me until the Shadow falls on you!”*

*Thorin turned and looked at me in astonishment, as well he might. “Strong words!” he said. “Very well, I will come. Some foresight is on you, if you are not merely crazed.”*

*“Good!” I said. “But you must come with good will, not merely in the hope of proving me a fool. You must be patient and not easily put off, if neither the courage nor the desire for adventure that I speak of are plain to see at first sight. He will deny them. He will try to back out; but you must not let him.”*

*“Haggling will not help him, if that is what you mean,” said Thorin. “I will offer him a fair reward for anything that he recovers, and no more.”*

*'It was not what I meant, but it seemed useless to say so. "There is one other thing," I went on; "you must make all your plans and preparations beforehand. Get everything ready! Once persuaded he must have no time for second thoughts. You must go straight from the Shire, east on your quest."*

*"He sounds a very strange creature, this thief of yours," said a young Dwarf called Fili (Thorin's nephew, as I afterwards learned). "What is his name, or the one that he uses?"*

*"Hobbits use their real names," I said. "The only one that he has is Bilbo Baggins."*

*"What a name!" said Fili, and laughed.'*

*"He thinks it very respectable," I said. "And it fits well enough; for he is a middle-aged bachelor, and getting a bit flabby and fat. Food is perhaps at present his main interest. He keeps a very good larder, I am told, and maybe more than one. At least you will be well entertained."*

*"That is enough," said Thorin. "If I had not given my word, I would not come now. I am in no mood to be made a fool of. For I am serious also. Deadly serious, and my heart is hot within me."*

*'I took no notice of this. "Look now, Thorin," I said, "April is passing and Spring is here. Make everything ready as soon as you can. I have some business to do, but I shall be back in a week. When I return, if all is in order, I will ride on ahead to prepare the ground. Then we will all visit him together on the following day."*

*'And with that I took my leave, not wishing to give Thorin more chance of second thoughts than Bilbo was to have. The rest of the story is well known to you—from Bilbo's point of view. If I had written the account, it would have sounded rather different. He did not know all that went on: the care, for instance, that I took so that the coming of a large party of Dwarves to Bywater, off the main road and their usual beat, should not come to his ears too soon.*

*'It was on the morning of Tuesday, April the 25<sup>th</sup>, 2941, that I called to see Bilbo; and though I knew more or less what to expect, I must say that my confidence was shaken. I saw that things would be far more difficult than I had thought. But I persevered. Next day, Wednesday, April the 26<sup>th</sup>, I brought Thorin and his companions to Bag End; with great difficulty so far as Thorin was concerned—he hung back at the last. And of course Bilbo was completely bewildered and behaved ridiculously. Everything in fact went extremely badly for me from the beginning; and that unfortunate business about the "professional thief", which the Dwarves had got firmly into their heads, only made matters worse. I was thankful that I had told Thorin we should all stay the night at Bag End, since we should need time to discuss ways and means. It gave me a last chance. If Thorin had left Bag End before I could see him alone, my plan would have been ruined.'*

It will be seen that some elements of this conversation were in the later version taken up into the argument between Gandalf and Thorin at Bag End.

From this point the narrative in the later version follows the earlier very closely, which is not therefore further cited here, except for a passage at the end. In the earlier, when Gandalf ceased speaking, Frodo records that Gimli laughed.

*'It still sounds absurd,' he said, 'even now that all has turned out more than well. I knew Thorin, of course; and I wish I had been there, but I was away at the time of your first visit to us. And I was not allowed to go on the quest: too young, they said, though at sixty-two I thought myself fit for anything. Well, I am glad to have heard the full tale. If it is full. I do not really suppose that even now you are telling us all you know.'*

*'Of course not,' said Gandalf.*

And after this Meriadoc questioned Gandalf further about Thráin's map and key; and in the course of his reply (most of which is retained in the later version, at a different point in the narrative) Gandalf said:

*'It was nine years after Thráin had left his people that I found him, and he had then been in the pits of Dol Guldur for five years at least. I do not know how he endured so long, nor how he had kept these things hidden through all his torments. I think that the Dark Power had desired nothing from him except the Ring only, and when he had taken that he troubled no further, but just flung the broken prisoner into the pits to rave until he died. A small oversight; but it proved fatal. Small oversights often do.'*



## The Hunt For The Ring

### I. Of The Journey Of The Black Riders According To The Account That Gandalf Gave To Frodo

*Gollum was captured in Mordor in the year 3017 and taken to Barad-dûr, and there questioned and tormented. When he had learned what he could from him, Sauron released him and sent him forth again. He did not trust Gollum, for he divined something indomitable in him, which could not be overcome, even by the Shadow of Fear, except by destroying him. But Sauron perceived the depth of Gollum's malice towards those that had 'robbed' him, and guessing that he would go in search of them to avenge himself, Sauron hoped that his spies would thus be led to the Ring.*

*Gollum, however, was before long captured by Aragorn, and taken to Northern Mirkwood; and though he was followed, he could not be rescued before he was in safe keeping. Now Sauron had never paid heed to the 'halflings', even if he had heard of them, and he did not yet know where their land lay. From Gollum, even under pain, he could not get any clear account, both because Gollum indeed had no certain knowledge himself, and because what he knew he falsified. Ultimately indomitable he was, except by death, as Sauron guessed, both from his halfling nature, and from a cause which Sauron did not fully comprehend, being himself consumed by lust for the Ring. Then he became filled with a hatred of Sauron even greater than his terror, seeing in him truly his greatest enemy and rival. Thus it was that he dared to pretend that he believed that the land of the Halflings was near to the places where he had once dwelt beside the banks of the Gladden.*

*Now Sauron learning of the capture of Gollum by the chiefs of his enemies was in great haste and fear. Yet all his ordinary spies and emissaries could bring him no tidings. And this was due largely both to the vigilance of the Dúnedain and to the treachery of Saruman, whose own servants either waylaid or misled the servants of Sauron.*

*Of this Sauron became aware, but his arm was not yet long enough to reach Saruman in Isengard. Therefore he hid his knowledge of Saruman's double-dealing and concealed his wrath, biding his time, and preparing for the great war in which he planned to sweep all his enemies into the western sea. At length he resolved that no others would serve him in this case but his mightiest servants, the Ringwraiths, who had no will but his own, being each utterly subservient to the ring that had enslaved him, which Sauron held.*

*Now few could withstand even one of these fell creatures, and (as Sauron deemed) none could withstand them when gathered together under their terrible captain, the Lord of Morgul. Yet this weakness they had for Sauron's present purpose: so great was the terror that went with them (even invisible and unclad) that their coming forth might soon be perceived and their mission be guessed by the Wise.*

*So it was that Sauron prepared two strokes—in which many after saw the beginnings of the War of the Ring. They were made together. The Orcs assailed the realm of Thranduil, with orders to recapture Gollum; and the Lord of Morgul was sent forth openly to battle against Gondor. These things were done towards the end of June 3018. Thus Sauron tested the strength and preparedness of Denethor, and found them more than he had hoped. But that troubled him little, since he had used little force in the assault, and his chief purpose was that the coming forth of the Nazgûl should appear only as part of his policy of war against Gondor.*

*Therefore when Osgiliath was taken and the bridge broken Sauron stayed the assault, and the Nazgûl were ordered to begin the search for the Ring. But Sauron did not under-estimate the powers and vigilance of the Wise, and the Nazgûl were commanded to act as secretly as they could. Now at that time the Chieftain of the*



*Ringwraiths dwelt in Minas Morgul with six companions, while the second to the Chief, Khamûl the Shadow of the East, abode in Dol Guldur as Sauron's lieutenant, with one other as his messenger.*<sup>259</sup>

*The Lord of Morgul therefore led his companions over Anduin, unclad and unmounted, and invisible to eyes, and yet a terror to all living things that they passed near. It was, maybe, on the first day of July that they went forth. They passed slowly and in stealth, through Anórien, and over the Entwade, and so into the Wold, and rumour of darkness and a dread of men knew not what went before them. They reached the west-shores of Anduin a little north of Sarn Gebir, as they had trysted; and there received horses and raiment that were secretly ferried over the River. This was (it is thought) about the seventeenth of July. Then they passed northward seeking for the Shire, the land of the Halflings.*

*About the twenty-second of July they met their companions, the Nazgûl of Dol Guldur, in the Field of Celebrant. There they learned that Gollum had eluded both the Orcs that recaptured him, and the Elves that pursued them, and had vanished.*<sup>260</sup> *They were told also by Khamûl that no dwelling of Halflings could be discovered in the Vales of Anduin, and that the villages of the Stoors by the Gladden had long been deserted. But the Lord of Morgul, seeing no better counsel, determined still to seek northward, hoping maybe to come upon Gollum as well as to discover the Shire. That this would prove to be not far from the hated land of Lórien seemed to him not unlikely, if it was not indeed within the fences of Galadriel. But the power of the White Ring he would not defy, nor enter yet into Lórien. Passing therefore between Lórien and the Mountains the Nine rode ever on into the North; and terror went before them and lingered behind them; but they did not find what they sought nor learn any news that availed them.*

*At length they returned; but the summer was now far waned, and the wrath and fear of Sauron was mounting. When they came back to the Wold September had come; and there they met messengers from Barad-dûr conveying threats from their Master that filled even the Morgul-lord with dismay. For Sauron had now learned of the words of prophecy heard in Gondor, and the going forth of Boromir, of Saruman's deeds, and the capture of Gandalf. From these things he concluded indeed that neither Saruman nor any other of the Wise had possession yet of the Ring, but that Saruman at least knew where it might be hidden. Speed alone would now serve, and secrecy must be abandoned.*

*The Ringwraiths therefore were ordered to go straight to Isengard. They rode then through Rohan in haste, and the terror of their passing was so great that many folk fled from the land, and went wildly away north and west, believing that war out of the East was coming on the heels of the black horses.*

*Two days after Gandalf had departed from Orthanc, the Lord of Morgul halted before the Gate of Isengard. Then Saruman, already filled with wrath and fear by the escape of Gandalf, perceived the peril of standing between enemies, a known traitor to both. His dread was great, for his hope of deceiving Sauron, or at the least*

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<sup>259</sup> According to the entry in the Tale of Years for [2951](#) Sauron sent three, not two, of the Nazgûl to reoccupy Dol Guldur. The two statements can be reconciled on the assumption that one of the Ringwraiths of Dol Guldur returned afterwards to Minas Morgul, but I think it more likely that the formulation of the present text was superseded when the Tale of Years was compiled; and it may be noted that in a rejected version of the present passage there was only one Nazgûl in Dol Guldur (not named as Khamûl, but referred to as 'the Second Chief (the Black Easterling)'), while one remained with Sauron as his chief messenger.

From notes recounting in detail the movements of the Black Riders in the Shire it emerges that it was Khamûl who came to Hobbiton and spoke to Gaffer Gamgee, who followed the Hobbits along the road to Stock, and who narrowly missed them at the Bucklebury Ferry (see [p. 445](#)). The Rider who accompanied him, whom he summoned by cries on the ridge above Woodhall, and with whom he visited Farmer Maggot, was 'his companion from Dol Guldur'. Of Khamûl it is said here that he was the most ready of all the Nazgûl, after the Black Captain himself, to perceive the presence of the Ring, but also the one whose power was most confused and diminished by daylight.

<sup>260</sup> He had indeed in his terror of the Nazgûl dared to hide in Moria. [Author's note.]

of receiving his favour in victory, was utterly lost. Now either he himself must gain the Ring or come to ruin and torment. But he was wary and cunning still, and he had ordered Isengard against just such an evil chance. The Circle of Isengard was too strong for even the Lord of Morgul and his company to assail without great force of war. Therefore to his challenge and demands he received only the answer of the voice of Saruman, that spoke by some art as though it came from the Gate itself.

*'It is not a land that you look for,' it said. 'I know what you seek, though you do not name it. I have it not, as surely its servants perceive without telling; for if I had it, then you would bow before me and call me Lord. And if I knew where this thing was hid, I should not be here, but long gone before you to take it. There is one only whom I guess to have this knowledge: Mithrandir, enemy of Sauron. And since it is but two days since he departed from Isengard, seek him nearby.'*

Such was still the power of the voice of Saruman that even the Lord of the Nazgûl did not question what it said, whether it was false or short of the full truth; but straightway he rode from the Gate and began to hunt for Gandalf in Rohan. Thus it was that on the evening of the next day the Black Riders came upon Grima Wormtongue as he hastened to bring word to Saruman that Gandalf was come to Edoras, and had warned King Théoden of the treacherous designs of Isengard. In that hour the Wormtongue came near to death by terror; but being inured to treachery he would have told all that he knew under less threat.

*'Yea, yea, verily I can tell you, Lord,' he said. 'I have overheard their speech together in Isengard. The land of the Halflings: it was thence that Gandalf came, and desires to return. He seeks now only a horse.'*

*'Spare me! I speak as swiftly as I may. West through the Gap of Rohan yonder, and then north and a little west, until the next great river bars the way; the Greyflood it is called. Thence from the crossing at Tharbad the old road will lead you to the borders. "The Shire", they call it.'*

*'Yea, verily, Saruman knows of it. Goods came to him from that land down the road. Spare me, Lord! Indeed I will say naught of our meeting to any that live.'*

The Lord of the Nazgûl spared the life of the Wormtongue, not out of pity, but because he deemed that so great a terror was upon him that he would never dare to speak of their encounter (as proved true), and he saw that the creature was evil and was likely to do great harm yet to Saruman, if he lived. So he left him lying on the ground, and rode away, and did not trouble to go back to Isengard. Sauron's vengeance could wait.

Now he divided his company into four pairs, and they rode separately, but he himself went ahead with the swiftest pair. Thus they passed west out of Rohan, and explored the desolation of Enedwaith, and came at last to Tharbad. Thence they rode through Minhiriath, and even though they were not yet assembled a rumour of dread spread about them, and the creatures of the wild hid themselves, and lonely men fled away. But some fugitives on the road they captured; and to the delight of the Captain two proved to be spies and servants of Saruman. One of them had been used much in the traffic between Isengard and the Shire, and though he had not himself been beyond the Southfarthing he had charts prepared by Saruman which clearly depicted and described the Shire. These the Nazgûl took, and then sent him on to Bree to continue spying; but warned him that he was now in the service of Mordor, and that if ever he tried to return to Isengard they would slay him with torture.

Night was waning on the twenty-second day of September when drawing together again they came to Sarn Ford and the southernmost borders of the Shire. They found them guarded, for the Rangers barred their way. But this was a task beyond the power of the Dúnedain; and maybe it would still have proved so even if their captain, Aragorn, had been with them. But he was away to the north, upon the East Road near Bree; and the hearts even of the Dúnedain misgave them. Some fled northward, hoping to bear news to Aragorn, but they were pursued and slain or driven away into the wild. Some still dared to bar the ford, and held it while day lasted, but at night the Lord of Morgul swept them away, and the Black Riders passed into the Shire; and ere the cocks crowed in the small hours of the twenty-third day of September some were riding north through the land, even as Gandalf upon Shadowfax was riding over Rohan far behind.

## **II. Other Versions Of The Story**



I have chosen to give the version printed above as being the most finished as a narrative; but there is much other writing that bears on these events, adding to or modifying the story in important particulars. These manuscripts are confusing and their relations obscure, though they all doubtless derive from the same period, and it is sufficient to note the existence of two other primary accounts beside the one printed (here called for convenience 'A'). A second version ('B') agrees very largely with A in its narrative structure, but a third ('C'), in the form of a plot-outline beginning at a later point in the story, introduces some substantial differences, and this I am inclined to think is the latest in order of composition. In addition there is some material ('D') more particularly concerned with Gollum's part in the events, and various other notes bearing on this part of the history.

In D it is said that what Gollum revealed to Sauron of the Ring and the place of its finding was sufficient to warn Sauron that this was indeed the One, but that of its present whereabouts he could only discover that it was stolen by a creature named *Baggins* in the Misty Mountains, and that *Baggins* came from a land called *Shire*. Sauron's fears were much allayed when he perceived from Gollum's account that *Baggins* must have been a creature of the same sort.

*Gollum would not know the term 'Hobbit', which was local and not a universal Westron word. He would probably not use 'Halfling' since he was one himself, and Hobbits disliked the name. That is why the Black Riders seem to have had two main pieces of information only to go on: Shire and Baggins.*

From all the accounts it is clear that Gollum did at least know in which direction the *Shire* lay; but though no doubt more could have been wrung from him by torture, Sauron plainly had no inkling that *Baggins* came from a region far removed from the Misty Mountains or that Gollum knew where it was, and assumed that he would be found in the Vales of Anduin, in the same region as Gollum himself had once lived.

*This was a very small and natural error—but possibly the most important mistake that Sauron made in the whole affair. But for it, the Black Riders would have reached the Shire weeks sooner.*

In the text B more is told of the journey of Aragorn with the captive Gollum northwards to the realm of Thranduil, and more consideration is given to Sauron's doubts about the use of the Ringwraiths in the search for the Ring.

[After his release from Mordor] *Gollum soon disappeared into the Dead Marshes, where Sauron's emissaries could not or would not follow him. No other spies of Sauron could bring him any news. (Sauron probably had very little power yet in Eriador, and few agents there; and such as he sent were often hindered or misled by the servants of Saruman.) At length therefore he resolved to use the Ringwraiths. He had been reluctant to do so, until he knew precisely where the Ring was, for several reasons. They were by far the most powerful of his servants, and the most suitable for such a mission, since they were entirely enslaved to their Nine Rings, which he now himself held; they were quite incapable of acting against his will, and if one of them, even the Witch-king their captain, had seized the One Ring, he would have brought it back to his Master. But they had disadvantages, until open war began (for which Sauron was not yet ready). All except the Witch-king were apt to stray when alone by daylight; and all, again save the Witch-king, feared water, and were unwilling, except in dire need, to enter it or to cross streams unless dryshod by a bridge.<sup>261</sup> Moreover, their chief weapon was terror. This was actually greater when they were unclad and invisible; and it was greater also when they were gathered together. So any mission on which they were sent could hardly be conducted with secrecy; while the passage of Anduin and other rivers presented an obstacle. For such reasons Sauron long hesitated, since he did not desire that his chief enemies should become aware of his servants' errand. It must be supposed that Sauron did not know at first that anyone save Gollum and 'the thief Baggins' had any knowledge of the Ring. Until*

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<sup>261</sup> At the Ford of Bruinen only the Witch-king and two others, with the lure of the Ring straight before them, had dared to enter the river; the others were driven into it by Glorfindel and Aragorn. [Author's note.]

Gandalf came and questioned him<sup>262</sup> Gollum did not know that Gandalf had any connexion with Bilbo, he had not even known of Gandalf's existence.

*But when Sauron learned of Gollum's capture by his enemies the situation was drastically changed. When and how this happened cannot of course be known for certain. Probably long after the event. According to Aragorn Gollum was taken at nightfall on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Hoping to escape detection by any of Sauron's spies he drove Gollum through the north end of the Eryn Muir, and crossed Anduin just above Sarn Gebir. Driftwood was often cast up there on the shoals by the east shore, and binding Gollum to a log he swam across with him, and continued his journey north by tracks as westerly as he could find, through the skirts of Fangorn, and so over Limlight, then over Nimrodel and Silverlode through the eaves of Lórien,<sup>263</sup> and then on, avoiding Moria and Dimrill Dale, over Gladden until he came near the Carrock. There he crossed Anduin again, with the help of the Beornings, and passed into the Forest. The whole journey, on foot, was not much short of nine hundred miles, and this Aragorn accomplished with weariness in fifty days, reaching Thranduil on the twenty-first of March.<sup>264</sup>*

*It is thus most likely that the first news of Gollum would be learned by the servants of Dol Guldur after Aragorn entered the Forest; for though the power of Dol Guldur was supposed to come to an end at the Old Forest Road, its spies were many in the wood. The news evidently did not reach the Nazgûl commander of Dol Guldur for some time, and he probably did not inform Barad-dûr until he had tried to learn more of Gollum's whereabouts. It would then no doubt be late in April before Sauron heard that Gollum had been seen again, apparently captive in the hands of a Man. This might mean little. Neither Sauron nor any of his servants yet knew of Aragorn or who he was. But evidently later (since the lands of Thranduil would now be closely watched), possibly a month later, Sauron heard the disquieting news that the Wise were aware of Gollum, and that Gandalf had passed into Thranduil's realm.*

*Sauron must then have been filled with anger and alarm. He resolved to use the Ringwraiths as soon as he could, for speed rather than secrecy was now important. Hoping to alarm his enemies and disturb their counsels with the fear of war (which he did not intend to make for some time), he attacked Thranduil and Gondor at about the same time.<sup>265</sup> He had these two additional objects: to capture or kill Gollum, or at least to deprive his enemies of him; and to force the passage of the bridge of Osgiliath, so that the Nazgûl could cross, while testing the strength of Gondor.*

*In the event Gollum escaped. But the passage of the bridge was effected. The forces there used were probably much less than men in Gondor thought. In the panic of the first assault, when the Witch-king was allowed to reveal himself briefly in his full terror,<sup>266</sup> the Nazgûl crossed the bridge at night and dispersed northwards. Without belittling the valour of Gondor, which indeed Sauron found greater far than he had hoped, it is clear*

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<sup>262</sup> Gandalf, as he recounted to the Council of Elrond, questioned Gollum while he was imprisoned by the Elves of Thranduil.

<sup>263</sup> Gandalf told the Council of Elrond that after he left Minas Tirith 'messages came to me out of Lórien that Aragorn had passed that way, and that he had found the creature called Gollum'.

<sup>264</sup> Gandalf arrived two days later, and left on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March early in the morning. After the Carrock he had a horse, but he had the High Pass over the Mountains to cross. He got a fresh horse at Rivendell, and making the greatest speed he could he reached Hobbiton late on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, after a journey of nearly eight hundred miles. [Author's note.]

<sup>265</sup> Both here and in the [Tale of Years](#) the assault on Osgiliath is dated the 20<sup>th</sup> of June.

<sup>266</sup> This statement no doubt relates to Boromir's account of the battle at Osgiliath which he gave to the Council of Elrond: 'A power was there that we have not felt before. Some said that it could be seen, like a great black horseman, a dark shadow under the moon.'

*that Boromir and Faramir were able to drive back the enemy and destroy the bridge, only because the attack had now served its main purpose.*

My father nowhere explained the Ringwraiths' fear of water. In the account just cited it is made a chief motive in Sauron's assault on Osgiliath, and it reappears in detailed notes on the movements of the Black Riders in the Shire: thus of the Rider (who was in fact Khamûl of Dol Guldur, see [note 259](#)) seen on the far side of Bucklebury Ferry just after the Hobbits had crossed (*The Fellowship of the Ring* I 5) it is said that 'he was well aware that the Ring had crossed the river; but the river was a barrier to his sense of its movement', and that the Nazgûl would not touch the 'Elvish' waters of Baranduin. But it is not made clear how they crossed other rivers that lay in their path, such as the Greyflood, where there was only 'a dangerous ford formed by the ruins of the bridge' (p. 344). My father did indeed note that the idea was difficult to sustain.

The account of the vain journey of the Nazgûl up the Vales of Anduin is much the same in version B as in that printed in full above (A), but with the difference that in B the Stoor settlements were not entirely deserted at that time; and such of the Stoors as dwelt there were slain or driven away by the Nazgûl.<sup>267</sup> In all the texts the precise dates are slightly at variance both with each other and with those given in the [Tale of Years](#); these differences are here neglected.

In D is found an account of how Gollum fared after his escape from the Orcs of Dol Guldur and before the Fellowship entered the West-gate of Moria. This is in a rough state and has required some slight editorial revision.

*It seems clear that pursued both by Elves and Orcs Gollum crossed the Anduin, probably by swimming, and so eluded the hunt of Sauron; but being still hunted by Elves, and not yet daring to pass near Lórien (only the lure of the Ring itself made him dare to do this afterwards), he hid himself in Moria.<sup>268</sup> That was probably in the autumn of the year; after which all trace of him was lost.*

*What then happened to Gollum cannot of course be known for certain. He was peculiarly fitted to survive in such straits, though at cost of great misery; but he was in great peril of discovery by the servants of Sauron that lurked in Moria,<sup>269</sup> especially since such bare necessity of food as he must have he could only get by thieving dangerously. No doubt he had intended to use Moria simply as a secret passage westward, his purpose being to find 'Shire' himself as quickly as he could; but he became lost, and it was a very long time before he found his way about. It thus seems probable that he had not long made his way towards the West-gate when the Nine Walkers arrived. He knew nothing, of course, about the action of the doors. To him they would seem huge and immovable; and though they had no lock or bar and opened outwards to a thrust, he did not discover that. In any case he was now far away from any source of food, for the Orcs were mostly in the East-end of Moria, and was become weak and desperate, so that even if he had known all about the doors he still could not have thrust them open.<sup>270</sup> It was thus a piece of singular good fortune for Gollum that the Nine Walkers arrived when they did.*

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<sup>267</sup> In a letter written in 1959 my father said: 'Between [2463](#) [when Déagol the Stoor found the One Ring, according to the [Tale of Years](#)] and the beginning of Gandalf's special enquiries concerning the Ring (nearly 500 years later) they [the Stoors] appear indeed to have died out altogether (except, of course, for Sméagol); or to have fled from the shadow of Dol Guldur.'

<sup>268</sup> According to the author's note given in [note 260](#) above, Gollum fled into Moria from terror of the Nazgûl; cf. also the suggestion on [p. 438](#) that one of the purposes of the Lord of Morgul in riding on northward beyond the Gladden was the hope of finding Gollum.

<sup>269</sup> These were in fact not very numerous, it would seem; but sufficient to keep any intruders out, if no better armed or prepared than Balin's company, and not in great numbers. [Author's note.]

<sup>270</sup> According to the Dwarves this needed usually the thrust of two; only a very strong Dwarf could open them singlehanded. Before the desertion of Moria doorwards were kept inside the West-gate, and one at least was

The story of the coming of the Black Riders to Isengard in September 3018, and their subsequent capture of Gríma Wormtongue, as told in A and B, is much altered in version C, which takes up the narrative only at their return southward over the Limlight. In A and B it was two days after Gandalf's escape from Orthanc that the Nazgûl came to Isengard; Saruman told them that Gandalf was gone, and denied all knowledge of the Shire,<sup>271</sup> but was betrayed by Gríma whom they captured on the following day as he hastened to Isengard with news of Gandalf's coming to Edoras. In C, on the other hand, the Black Riders arrived at the Gate of Isengard while Gandalf was still a prisoner in the tower. In this account, Saruman, in fear and despair, and perceiving the full horror of service to Mordor, resolved suddenly to yield to Gandalf, and to beg for his pardon and help. Temporizing at the Gate, he admitted that he had Gandalf within, and said that he would go and try to discover what he knew; if that were unavailing, he would deliver Gandalf up to them. Then Saruman hastened to the summit of Orthanc—and found Gandalf gone. Away south against the setting moon he saw a great Eagle flying towards Edoras.

*Now Saruman's case was worse. If Gandalf had escaped there was still a real chance that Sauron would not get the Ring, and would be defeated. In his heart Saruman recognized the great power and the strange 'good fortune' that went with Gandalf. But now he was left alone to deal with the Nine. His mood changed, and his pride reasserted itself in anger at Gandalf's escape from impenetrable Isengard, and in a fury of jealousy. He went back to the Gate, and he lied, saying that he had made Gandalf confess. He did not admit that this was his own knowledge, not being aware of how much Sauron knew of his mind and heart.*<sup>272</sup>

*'I will report this myself to the Lord of Barad-dûr,' he said loftily, 'to whom I speak from afar on great matters that concern us. But all that you need to know on the mission that he has given you is where "the Shire" lies. That, says Mithrandir, is northwest from here some six hundred miles, on the borders of the seaward Elvish country.' To his pleasure Saruman saw that even the Witch-king did not relish that. 'You must cross Isen by the Fords, and then rounding the Mountains' end make for Tharbad upon Greyflood. Go with speed, and I will report to your Master that you have done so.'*

*This skilful speech convinced even the Witch-king for the moment that Saruman was a faithful ally, high in Sauron's confidence. At once the Riders left the Gate and rode in haste to the Fords of Isen. Behind them Saruman sent out wolves and Orcs in vain pursuit of Gandalf; but in this he had other purposes also, to impress his power upon the Nazgûl, perhaps also to prevent them from lingering near, and in his anger he wished to do some injury to Rohan, and to increase the fear of him which his agent Wormtongue was building up in Théoden's heart. Wormtongue had been in Isengard not long since, and was then on his way back to Edoras; among the pursuers were some bearing messages to him.*

*When he was rid of the Riders Saruman retired to Orthanc, and sat in earnest and dreadful thought. It seems that he resolved still to temporize, and still to hope to get the Ring for himself. He thought that the direction of the Riders to the Shire might hinder them rather than help them, for he knew of the guard of the Rangers, and he believed also (knowing of the oracular dream-words and of Boromir's mission) that the Ring had gone and was already on the way to Rivendell. At once he marshalled and sent out into Eriador all the spies, spy-birds, and agents that he could muster.*

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always there. In this way a single person (and so any intruder or person trying to escape) could not get out without permission. [Author's note.]

<sup>271</sup> In A Saruman denied knowledge of where the Ring was hid; in B he 'denied all knowledge of the land that they sought'. But this is probably no more than a difference of wording.

<sup>272</sup> Earlier in this version it is said that Sauron had at this time, by means of the *palantíri*, at last begun to daunt Saruman, and could in any case often read his thought even when he withheld information. Thus Sauron was aware that Saruman had some guess at the place where the Ring was; and Saruman actually revealed that he had got as his prisoner Gandalf, who knew the most.



In this version the element of Gríma's capture by the Ringwraiths and his betrayal of Saruman is thus absent; for of course there is insufficient time by this account for Gandalf to reach Edoras and attempt to warn King Théoden, and for Gríma in his turn to set out for Isengard to warn Saruman, before the Black Riders were already gone from Rohan.<sup>273</sup> The revelation of Saruman's lying to them here comes about through the man whom they captured and found to be bearing maps of the Shire (p. 441); and more is told of this man and of Saruman's dealings with the Shire.

*When the Black Riders were far across Enedwaith and drawing near at last to Tharbad, they had what was for them a great stroke of good fortune, but disastrous for Saruman,<sup>274</sup> and deadly perilous for Frodo.*

*Saruman had long taken an interest in the Shire—because Gandalf did, and he was suspicious of him; and because (again in secret imitation of Gandalf) he had taken to the 'Halflings' leaf', and needed supplies, but in pride (having once scoffed at Gandalf's use of the weed) kept this as secret as he could. Latterly other motives were added. He liked to extend his power, especially into Gandalf's province, and he found that the money he could provide for the purchase of 'leaf' was giving him power, and was corrupting some of the Hobbits, especially the Bracegirdles, who owned many plantations, and so also the Sackville-Bagginses.<sup>275</sup> But also he had begun to feel certain that in some way the Shire was connected with the Ring in Gandalf's mind. Why this strong guard upon it? He therefore began to collect detailed information about the Shire, its chief persons and families, its roads, and other matters. For this he used Hobbits within the Shire, in the pay of the Bracegirdles and the Sackville-Bagginses, but his agents were Men, of Dunlendish origin. When Gandalf had refused to treat with him Saruman had redoubled his efforts. The Rangers were suspicious, but did not actually refuse entry to the servants of Saruman—for Gandalf was not at liberty to warn them, and when he had gone off to Isengard Saruman was still recognised as an ally.*

*Some while ago one of Saruman's most trusted servants (yet a ruffianly fellow, an outlaw driven from Dunland, where many said that he had Orc-blood) had returned from the borders of the Shire, where he had been negotiating for the purchase of 'leaf' and other supplies. Saruman was beginning to store Isengard against war. This man was now on his way back to continue the business, and to arrange for the transport of many goods before autumn failed.<sup>276</sup> He had orders also to get into the Shire if possible and learn if there had been any departures of persons well-known recently. He was well supplied with maps, lists of names, and notes concerning the Shire.*

*This Dunlending was overtaken by several of the Black Riders as they approached the Tharbad crossing. In an extremity of terror he was haled to the Witch-king and questioned. He saved his life by betraying Saruman. The Witch-king thus learned that Saruman knew well all along where the Shire was, and knew much about it, which he could and should have told to Sauron's servants if he had been a true ally. The Witch-king also obtained much information, including some about the only name that interested him: Baggins. It was for this reason that Hobbiton was singled out as one of the points for immediate visit and enquiry.*

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<sup>273</sup> The entry for the 18<sup>th</sup> of September 3018 in the Tale of Years reads: 'Gandalf escapes from Orthanc in the early hours. The Black Riders cross the Fords of Isen.' Laconic as this entry is, giving no hint that the Riders visited Isengard, it seems to be based on the story told in version C.

<sup>274</sup> No indication is given in any of these texts of what passed between Sauron and Saruman as a result of the latter's unmasking.

<sup>275</sup> Lobelia Bracegirdle married Otho Sackville-Baggins; their son was Lotho, who seized control of the Shire at the time of the War of the Ring, and was then known as 'the Chief'. Farmer Cotton referred in conversation with Frodo to Lotho's property in leaf-plantations in the Southfarthing (*The Return of the King* VI 8).

<sup>276</sup> The usual way was by the crossing of Tharbad to Dunland (rather than direct to Isengard), whence goods were sent more secretly on to Saruman. [Author's note.]

*The Witch-king had now a clearer understanding of the matter. He had known something of the country long ago, in his wars with the Dúnedain, and especially of the Tyrn Gorthad of Cardolan, now the Barrow-downs, whose evil wights had been sent there by himself.<sup>277</sup> Seeing that his Master suspected some move between the Shire and Rivendell, he saw also that Bree (the position of which he knew) would be an important point, at least for information.<sup>278</sup> He put therefore the Shadow of Fear on the Dunlending, and sent him on to Bree as an agent. He was the squint-eyed southerner at the Inn.<sup>279</sup>*

In version B it is noted that the Black Captain did not know whether the Ring was still in the Shire; that he had to find out. The Shire was too large for a violent onslaught such as he had made on the Stooks; he must use as much stealth and as little terror as he could, and yet also guard the eastern borders. Therefore he sent some of the Riders into the Shire, with orders to disperse while traversing it; and of these Khamûl was to find Hobbiton (see [note 259](#)), where ‘Baggins’ lived, according to Saruman’s papers. But the Black Captain established a camp at Andrath, where the Greenway passed in a defile between the Barrow-downs and the South Downs;<sup>280</sup> and from there some others were sent to watch and patrol the eastern borders, while he himself visited the Barrow-downs. In notes on the movements of the Black Riders at that time it is said that the Black Captain stayed there for some days, and the Barrow-wights were roused, and all things of evil spirit, hostile to Elves and Men, were on the watch with malice in the Old Forest and on the Barrow-downs.

### III. Concerning Gandalf, Saruman And The Shire

Another set of papers from the same period consists of a large number of unfinished accounts of Saruman’s earlier dealings with the Shire, especially as they concerned the ‘Halflings’ leaf’, a matter that is touched on in connection with the ‘squint-eyed southerner’ (see pp. [449](#), [450](#)). The following text is one version among many, but though briefer than some is the most finished.

*Saruman soon became jealous of Gandalf, and this rivalry turned at last to a hatred, the deeper for being concealed, and the more bitter in that Saruman knew in his heart that the Grey Wanderer had the greater strength, and the greater influence upon the dwellers in Middle-earth, even though he hid his power and desired neither fear nor reverence. Saruman did not revere him, but he grew to fear him, being ever uncertain how much Gandalf perceived of his inner mind, troubled more by his silences than by his words. So it was that openly he treated Gandalf with less respect than did others of the Wise, and was ever ready to gainsay him or to make little of his counsels; while secretly he noted and pondered all that he said, setting a watch, so far as he was able, upon all his movements.*

*It was in this way that Saruman came to give thought to the Halflings and the Shire, which otherwise he would have deemed beneath his notice. He had at first no thought that the interest of his rival in this people had any connexion with the great concerns of the Council, least of all with the Rings of Power. For indeed in the beginning it had no such connexion, and was due only to Gandalf’s love for the Little People, unless his heart had some deep premonition beyond his waking thought. For many years he visited the Shire openly, and would*

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<sup>277</sup> Cf. *The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A ([I](#), [iii](#)): ‘It was at this time [during the Great Plague that reached Gondor in 1636] that an end came of the Dúnedain of Cardolan, and evil spirits out of Angmar and Rhudaur entered into the deserted mounds and dwelt there.’

<sup>278</sup> Since the Black Captain knew so much, it is perhaps strange that he had had so little idea of where the Shire, the land of the Halflings, lay; according to the [Tale of Years](#) there were already Hobbits settled in Bree at the beginning of the fourteenth century of the Third Age, when the Witch-king came north to Angmar.

<sup>279</sup> See *The Fellowship of the Ring* [I](#) [9](#). When Strider and the Hobbits left Bree (*ibid.*, [I](#) [11](#)) Frodo caught a glimpse of the Dunlending (‘a sallow face with sly, slanting eyes’) in Bill Ferny’s house on the outskirts of Bree, and thought: ‘He looks more than half like a goblin.’

<sup>280</sup> Cf. Gandalf’s [words](#) at the Council of Elrond: ‘Their Captain remained in secret away south of Bree.’

*speak of its people to any who would listen; and Saruman would smile, as at the idle tales of an old land-rover, but he took heed nonetheless.*

*Seeing then that Gandalf thought the Shire worth visiting, Saruman himself visited it, but disguised and in the utmost secrecy, until he had explored and noted all its ways and lands, and thought then he had learned all that there was to know of it. And even when it seemed to him no longer wise nor profitable to go thither, he still had spies and servants that went in or kept an eye upon its borders. For he was still suspicious. He was himself so far fallen that he believed all others of the Council had each their deep and far-reaching policies for their own enhancement, to which all that they did must in some way refer. So when long after he learned something of the finding of Gollum's Ring by the Halfling, he could believe only that Gandalf had known of this all the time; and this was his greatest grievance, since all that concerned the Rings he deemed his especial province. That Gandalf's mistrust of him was merited and just in no way lessened his anger.*

*Yet in truth Saruman's spying and great secrecy had not in the beginning any evil purpose, but was no more than a folly born of pride. Small matters, unworthy it would seem to be reported, may yet prove of great moment ere the end. Now truth to tell, observing Gandalf's love of the herb that he called 'pipe-weed' (for which, he said, if for nothing else, the Little People should be honoured), Saruman had affected to scoff at it, but in private he made trial of it, and soon began to use it; and for this reason the Shire remained important to him. Yet he dreaded lest this should be discovered, and his own mockery turned against him, so that he would be laughed at for imitating Gandalf, and scorned for doing so by stealth. This then was the reason for his great secrecy in all his dealings with the Shire, even from the first before any shadow of doubt had fallen upon it, and it was little guarded, free for those who wished to enter. For this reason also Saruman ceased to go thither in person; for it came to his knowledge that he had not been all unobserved by the keen-eyed Halflings, and some, seeing the figure as it were of an old man clad in grey or russet stealing through the woods or passing through the dusk, had mistaken him for Gandalf.*

*After that Saruman went no more to the Shire, fearing that such tales might spread and come maybe to the ears of Gandalf. But Gandalf knew of these visits, and guessed their object, and he laughed, thinking this the most harmless of Saruman's secrets; but he said nothing to others, for it was never his wish that anyone should be put to shame. Nonetheless he was not ill-pleased when the visits of Saruman ceased, doubting him already, though he could not himself yet foresee that a time would come when Saruman's knowledge of the Shire would prove perilous and of the greatest service to the Enemy, bringing victory to within a nail's breadth of his grasp.*

*In another version there is a description of the occasion when Saruman openly scoffed at Gandalf's use of the 'pipe-weed':*

*Now because of his dislike and fear, in the later days Saruman avoided Gandalf, and they seldom met, except at the assemblies of the White Council. It was at the great Council held in 2851 that the 'Halflings' leaf' was first spoken of, and the matter was noted with amusement at the time, though it was afterwards remembered in a different light. The Council met in Rivendell, and Gandalf sat apart, silent, but smoking prodigiously (a thing he had never done before on such an occasion), while Saruman spoke against him, and urged that contrary to Gandalf's advice Dol Guldur should not yet be molested. Both the silence and the smoke seemed greatly to annoy Saruman, and before the Council dispersed he said to Gandalf: 'When weighty matters are in debate, Mithrandir, I wonder a little that you should play with your toys of fire and smoke, while others are in earnest speech.'*

*But Gandalf laughed, and replied: 'You would not wonder, if you used this herb yourself. You might find that smoke blown out cleared your mind of shadows within. Anyway, it gives patience, to listen to error without anger. But it is not one of my toys. It is an art of the Little People away in the West: merry and worthy folk, though not of much account, perhaps, in your high policies.'*

*Saruman was little appeased by this answer (for he hated mockery, however gentle), and he said then coldly: 'You jest, Lord Mithrandir, as is your way. I know well enough that you have become a curious explorer of the small: weeds, wild things, and childish folk. Your time is your own to spend, if you have nothing worthier to do; and your friends you may make as you please. But to me the days are too dark for wanderers' tales, and I have no time for the simples of peasants.'*

*Gandalf did not laugh again; and he did not answer, but looking keenly at Saruman he drew on his pipe and sent out a great ring of smoke with many smaller rings that followed it. Then he put up his hand, as if to grasp them, and they vanished. With that he got up and left Saruman without another word; but Saruman stood for some time silent, and his face was dark with doubt and displeasure.*

This story appears in half a dozen different manuscripts, and in one of them it is said that Saruman was suspicious,

*doubting whether he read rightly the purport of Gandalf's gesture with the rings of smoke (above all whether it showed any connexion between the Halflings and the great matter of the Rings of Power, unlikely though that might seem); and doubting that one so great could concern himself with such a people as the Halflings for their own sake merely.*

In another (struck through) Gandalf's purpose is made explicit:

*It was a strange chance, that being angered by his insolence Gandalf chose this way of showing to Saruman his suspicion that desire to possess them had begun to enter into his policies and his study of the lore of the Rings; and of warning him that they would elude him. For it cannot be doubted that Gandalf had as yet no thought that the Halflings (and still less their smoking) had any connection with the Rings.<sup>281</sup> If he had had any such thought, then certainly he would not have done then what he did. Yet later when the Halflings did indeed become involved in this greatest matter, Saruman could believe only that Gandalf had known or foreknown this, and had concealed the knowledge from him and from the Council—for just such a purpose as Saruman would conceive: to gain possession and to forestall him.*

In the Tale of Years the entry for 2851 refers to the meeting of the White Council in that year, when Gandalf urged an attack on Dol Guldur but was overruled by Saruman; and a footnote to the entry reads: 'It afterwards became clear that Saruman had then begun to desire to possess the One Ring himself, and hoped that it might reveal itself, seeking its master, if Sauron were let be for a time.' The foregoing story shows that Gandalf himself suspected Saruman of this at the time of the Council of 2851; though my father afterwards commented that it appears from Gandalf's story to the Council of Elrond of his meeting with Radagast that he did not seriously suspect Saruman of treachery (or of desiring the Ring for himself) until he was imprisoned in Orthanc.

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<sup>281</sup> As the concluding sentence of this quotation shows, the meaning is: 'Gandalf had as yet no thought that the Halflings would have in the future any connexion with the Rings.' The meeting of the White Council in 2851 took place ninety years before Bilbo found the Ring.





## The Battles Of The Fords Of Isen

*The chief obstacles to an easy conquest of Rohan by Saruman were Théodred and Éomer: they were vigorous men, devoted to the King, and high in his affections, as his only son and his sister-son; and they did all that they could to thwart the influence over him that Gríma gained when the King's health began to fail. This occurred early in the year 3014, when Théoden was sixty-six; his malady may thus have been due to natural causes, though the Rohirrim commonly lived till near or beyond their eightieth year. But it may well have been induced or increased by subtle poisons, administered by Gríma. In any case Théoden's sense of weakness and dependence on Gríma was largely due to the cunning and skill of this evil counsellor's suggestions. It was his policy to bring his chief opponents into discredit with Théoden, and if possible to get rid of them. It proved impossible to set them at odds with one another: Théoden before his 'sickness' had been much loved by all his kin and people, and the loyalty of Théodred and Éomer remained steadfast, even in his apparent dotage Éomer also was not an ambitious man, and his love and respect for Théodred (thirteen years older than he) was only second to his love of his foster-father.<sup>282</sup> Gríma therefore tried to play them one against the other in the mind of Théoden, representing Éomer as ever eager to increase his own authority and to act without consulting the King or his Heir. In this he had some success, which bore fruit when Saruman at last succeeded in achieving the death of Théodred.*

*It was clearly seen in Rohan, when the true accounts of the battles at the Fords were known, that Saruman had given special orders that Théodred should at all costs be slain. At the first battle all his fiercest warriors were engaged in reckless assaults upon Théodred and his guard, disregarding other events of the battle, which might otherwise have resulted in a much more damaging defeat for the Rohirrim. When Théodred was at last slain Saruman's commander (no doubt under orders) seemed satisfied for the time being, and Saruman made the mistake, fatal as it proved, of not immediately throwing in more forces and proceeding at once to a massive invasion of Westfold;<sup>283</sup> though the valour of Grimbold and Elfhelm contributed to his delay. If the invasion of Westfold had begun five days earlier, there can be little doubt that the reinforcements from Edoras would never*

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<sup>282</sup> Éomer was the son of Théoden's sister Théodwyn, and of Éomund of Eastfold, chief Marshal of the Mark. Éomund was slain by Orcs in 3002, and Théodwyn died soon after; their children Éomer and Éowyn were then taken to live in King Théoden's house, together with Théodred, the King's only child. (*The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A (II).)

<sup>283</sup> The Ents are here left out of account, as they were by all save Gandalf. But unless Gandalf could have brought about the rising of the Ents several days earlier (as from the narrative was plainly not possible), it would not have saved Rohan. The Ents might have destroyed Isengard, and even captured Saruman (if after victory he had not himself followed his army). The Ents and Huorns, with the aid of such Riders of the Eastmark as had not yet been engaged, might have destroyed the forces of Saruman in Rohan, but the Mark would have been in ruins, and leaderless. Even if the Red Arrow had found any one with authority to receive it, the call from Gondor would not have been heeded—or at most a few companies of weary men would have reached Minas Tirith, too late except to perish with it. [Author's note.]

For the Red Arrow see *The Return of the King* V 3, where it was brought to Théoden by an errand-rider from Gondor as a token of the need of Minas Tirith.

*have come near Helm's Deep, but would have been surrounded and overwhelmed in the open plain; if indeed Edoras had not itself been attacked and captured before the arrival of Gandalf.*<sup>284</sup>

*It has been said that the valour of Grimbold and Elfhelm contributed to Saruman's delay, which proved disastrous for him. The above account perhaps underestimates its importance.*

*The Isen came down swiftly from its sources above Isengard, but in the flat land of the Gap it became slow until it turned west; then it flowed on through country falling by long slopes down into the low-lying coast-lands of furthest Gondor and the Enedwaith, and it became deep and rapid. Just above this westward bend were the Fords of Isen. There the river was broad and shallow, passing in two arms about a large eyot, over a stony shelf covered with stones and pebbles brought down from the north. Only here, south of Isengard, was it possible for large forces, especially those heavily armed or mounted, to cross the river. Saruman thus had this advantage: he could send his troops down either side of the Isen and attack the Fords, if they were held against him, from both sides. Any force of his west of Isen could if necessary retreat upon Isengard. On the other hand, Théodred might send men across the Fords, either in sufficient strength to engage Saruman's troops or to defend the western bridgehead; but if they were worsted, they would have no retreat except back over the Fords with the enemy at their heels, and possibly also awaiting them on the eastern bank. South and west along the Isen they had no way home,<sup>285</sup> unless they were provisioned for a long journey into Western Gondor.*

*Saruman's attack was not unforeseen, but it came sooner than was expected. Théodred's scouts had warned him of a mustering of troops before the Gates of Isengard, mainly (as it seemed) on the west side of Isen. He therefore manned the approaches, east and west, to the Fords with sturdy men on foot from the levies of Westfold. Leaving three companies of Riders, together with horse-herds and spare mounts, on the east bank, he himself passed over with the main strength of his cavalry: eight companies and a company of archers, intending to overthrow Saruman's army before it was fully prepared.*

*But Saruman had not revealed his intentions nor the full strength of his forces. They were already on the march when Théodred set out. Some twenty miles north of the Fords he encountered their vanguard and scattered it with loss. But when he rode on to attack the main host the resistance stiffened. The enemy was in fact in positions prepared for the event, behind trenches manned by pikemen, and Théodred in the leading éored was brought to a stand and almost surrounded, for new forces hastening from Isengard were now outflanking him upon the west.*

*He was extricated by the onset of the companies coming up behind him; but as he looked eastward he was dismayed. It had been a dim and misty morning, but the mists were now rolling back through the Gap on a breeze from the west, and away east of the river he descried other forces now hasting towards the Fords, though their strength could not be guessed. He at once ordered a retreat. This the Riders, well trained in the manoeuvre, managed in good order and with little further loss; but the enemy was not shaken off or long*

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<sup>284</sup> The first battle of the Fords of Isen, in which Théodred was slain, was fought on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February; Gandalf reached Edoras seven days later, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of March. (*The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix B, year 3019.) See [note 288](#).

<sup>285</sup> Beyond the Gap the land between Isen and Adorn was nominally part of the realm of Rohan; but though Folcwine had reclaimed it, driving out the Dunlendings that had occupied it, the people that remained were largely of mixed blood, and their loyalty to Edoras was weak: the slaying of their lord, Freca, by King Helm was still remembered. Indeed at this time they were more disposed to side with Saruman, and many of their warriors had joined Saruman's forces. In any case there was no way into their land from the west except for bold swimmers. [Author's note.]

The region between Isen and Adorn was declared to be a part of the realm of Eorl at the time of the Oath of Cirion and Eorl: see [p. 395](#).

In the year 2754 Helm Hammerhand, King of the Mark, slew with his fist his arrogant vassal Freca, lord of lands on either side of the Adorn; see *The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A (II).

outdistanced, for the retreat was often delayed, when the rearguard under Grimbold was obliged to turn at bay and drive back the most eager of their pursuers.

When Théodred gained the Fords the day was waning. He set Grimbold in command of the garrison of the west bank, stiffened with fifty dismounted Riders. The rest of his Riders and all the horses he at once sent across the river, save his own company: with these on foot he manned the eyot, to cover the retreat of Grimbold if he was driven back. This was barely done when disaster came. Saruman's eastern force came down with unexpected speed; it was much smaller than the western force, but more dangerous. In its van were some Dunlending horsemen and a great pack of the dreadful Orcish wolfriders, feared by horses.<sup>286</sup> Behind them came two battalions of the fierce Uruks, heavily armed but trained to move at great speed for many miles. The horsemen and wolfriders fell on the horse-herds and picketed horses and slew or dispersed them. The garrison of the east bank, surprised by the sudden assault of the massed Uruks, was swept away, and the Riders that had just crossed from the west were caught still in disarray, and though they fought desperately they were driven from the Fords along the line of the Isen with the Uruks in pursuit.

As soon as the enemy had gained possession of the eastern end of the Fords there appeared a company of men or orcmen (evidently dispatched for the purpose), ferocious, mail-clad, and armed with axes. They hastened to the eyot and assailed it from both sides. At the same time Grimbold on the west bank was attacked by Saruman's forces on that side of the Isen. As he looked eastward, dismayed by the sounds of battle and the hideous orc-cries of victory, he saw the axe-men driving Théodred's men from the shores of the eyot towards the low knoll in its centre, and he heard Théodred's great voice crying To me, Eorlingas! At once Grimbold, taking a few men that stood near him, ran back to the eyot. So fierce was his onset from the rear of the attackers that Grimbold, a man of great strength and stature, clove his way through, till with two others he reached Théodred standing at bay on the knoll. Too late. As he came to his side Théodred fell, hewn down by a great orc-man. Grimbold slew him and stood over the body of Théodred, thinking him dead; and there he would himself soon have died, but for the coming of Elfhelm.

Elfhelm had been riding in haste along the horse-road from Edoras, leading four companies in answer to Théodred's summons; he was expecting battle, but not yet for some days. But near the junction of the horse-road with the road down from the Deeping<sup>287</sup> his outriders on the right flank reported that two wolfriders had been seen abroad on the fields. Sensing that things were amiss, he did not turn aside to Helm's Deep for the night as he had intended but rode with all speed towards the Fords. The horse-road turned north-west after its meeting with the Deeping-road, but again bent sharply west when level with the Fords, which it approached by a straight path of some two miles long. Elfhelm thus heard and saw nothing of the fighting between the retreating garrison and the Uruks south of the Fords. The sun had sunk and light was failing when he drew near the last bend in the road, and there encountered some horses running wild and a few fugitives who told him of the disaster. Though his men and horses were now weary he rode as fast as he could along the straight, and as he came in sight of the east bank he ordered his companies to charge.

It was the turn of the Isengarders to be surprised. They heard the thunder of hooves, and saw coming like black shadows against the darkening East a great host (as it seemed) with Elfhelm at its head, and beside him a white standard borne as a guide to those that followed. Few stood their ground. Most fled northwards, pursued by two of Elfhelm's companies. The others he dismounted to guard the east bank, but at once with the men of his

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<sup>286</sup> They were very swift and skilled in avoiding ordered men in close array, being used mostly to destroy isolated groups or to hunt down fugitives; but at need they would pass with reckless ferocity through any gaps in companies of horsemen, slashing at the bellies of the horses. [Author's note.]

<sup>287</sup> The Deeping: this is so written and is clearly correct, since it occurs again later. My father noted elsewhere that the Deeping-coomb (and Deeping-stream) should be so spelt, rather than Deeping Coomb, 'since *Deeping* is not a verbal ending but one indicating relationship: the coomb or deep valley belonging to the *Deep* (*Helm's Deep*) to which it led up'. (Notes on Nomenclature to assist translators, published in *A Tolkien Compass*, edited by Jared Lobdell, 1975, page 181.)

own company rushed to the eyot. The axemen were now caught between the surviving defenders and the onslaught of Elfhelm, with both banks still held by the Rohirrim. They fought on, but before the end were slain to a man. Elfhelm himself, however, sprang up towards the knoll; and there he found Grimbald fighting two great axemen for possession of Théodred's body. One Elfhelm at once slew, and the other fell before Grimbald.

They stooped then to lift the body, and found that Théodred still breathed; but he lived only long enough to speak his last words: Let me lie here—to keep the Fords till Éomer comes! Night fell. A harsh horn sounded, and then all was silent. The attack on the west bank ceased, and the enemy there faded away into the dark. The Rohirrim held the Fords of Isen; but their losses were heavy, not least in horses; the King's son was dead, and they were leaderless, and did not know what might yet befall.

When after a cold and sleepless night the grey light returned there was no sign of the Isengarders, save those many that they left dead upon the field. Wolves were howling far off, waiting for the living men to depart. Many men scattered by the sudden assault of the Isengarders began to return, some still mounted, some leading horses recaptured. Later in the morning most of Théodred's Riders that had been driven south down the river by a battalion of black Uruks came back battle-worn but in good order. They had a like tale to tell. They came to a stand on a low hill and prepared to defend it. Though they had drawn off part of the attacking force of Isengard, retreat south unprovisioned was in the end hopeless. The Uruks had resisted any attempt to burst eastwards, and were driving them towards the now hostile country of the Dunlendish 'west-march'. But as the Riders prepared to resist their assault, though it was now full night, a horn was sounded; and soon they discovered that the enemy had gone. They had too few horses to attempt any pursuit, or even to act as scouts, so far as that would have availed by night. After some time they began cautiously to advance north again, but met no opposition. They thought that the Uruks had gone back to reinforce their hold on the Fords, and expected there to meet in battle again, and they wondered much to find the Rohirrim in command. It was not till later that they discovered whither the Uruks had gone.

So ended the First Battle of the Fords of Isen. Of the Second Battle no such clear accounts were ever made, owing to the much greater events that immediately followed. Erkenbrand of Westfold assumed command of the West-mark when news of the fall of Théodred reached him in the Hornburg on the next day. He sent errand-riders to Edoras to announce this and to bear to Théoden his son's last words, adding his own prayer that Éomer should be sent at once with all help that could be spared.<sup>288</sup> 'Let the defence of Edoras be made here in the West,' he said, 'and not wait till it is itself besieged.' But Gríma used the curtness of this advice to further his policy of delay. It was not until his defeat by Gandalf that any action was taken. The reinforcements with Éomer and the King himself set out in the afternoon of March the 2<sup>nd</sup>, but that night the Second Battle of the Fords was fought and lost, and the invasion of Rohan began.

Erkenbrand did not at once himself proceed to the battle-field. All was in confusion. He did not know what forces he could muster in haste; nor could he yet estimate the losses that Théodred's troops had actually suffered. He judged rightly that invasion was imminent, but that Saruman would not dare to pass on eastward to attack Edoras while the fortress of the Hornburg was unreduced, if it was manned and well stored. With this business and the gathering of such men of Westfold as he could, he was occupied for three days. The command in the field he gave to Grimbald, until he could come himself; but he assumed no command over Elfhelm and his Riders, who belonged to the Muster of Edoras. The two commanders were, however, friends and both loyal and wise men, and there was no dissension between them; the ordering of their forces was a compromise between their differing opinions. Elfhelm held that the Fords were no longer important, but rather a snare to entrap men better placed elsewhere, since Saruman could clearly send forces down either side of the Isen as suited his purpose; and his immediate purpose would undoubtedly be to overrun Westfold and invest the

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<sup>288</sup> The messages did not reach Edoras until about noon on February the 27<sup>th</sup>. Gandalf came there early in the morning of March the 2<sup>nd</sup> (February had thirty days!): it was thus, as Gríma said, not then fully five days since news of Théodred's death had reached the King. [Author's note.]

The reference is to *The Two Towers* III 6.



Hornburg, before any effective help could come from Edoras. His army, or most of it, would therefore come down the east side of the Isen; for though by that way, over rougher ground without roads, their approach would be slower, they would not have to force the passage of the Fords. Elfhelm therefore advised that the Fords should be abandoned; all the available men on foot should be assembled on the east side, and placed in a position to hold up the advance of the enemy: a long line of rising ground running from west to east some few miles north of the Fords; but the cavalry should be withdrawn eastward to a point from which, when the advancing enemy was engaged with the defence, a charge with the greatest impact could be delivered on their flank and drive them into the river. 'Let Isen be their snare and not ours!'

Grimbold on the other hand was not willing to abandon the Fords. This was in part due to the tradition of Westfold in which he and Erkenbrand had been bred; but was not without some reason. 'We do not know,' he said, 'what force Saruman has still at his command. But if it is indeed his purpose to ravage Westfold and drive its defenders into Helm's Deep and there contain them, then it must be very great. He is unlikely to display it all at once. As soon as he guesses or discovers how we have disposed our defence, he will certainly send great strength at all speed down the road from Isengard, and crossing the undefended Fords come in our rear, if we are all gathered northwards.'

In the end Grimbold manned the western end of the Fords with the greater part of his foot-soldiers; there they were in a strong position in the earth-forts that guarded the approaches. He remained with the rest of his men, including what remained to him of Théodred's cavalry, on the east bank. The eyot he left bare.<sup>289</sup> Elfhelm however withdrew his Riders and took up his position on the line where he had wished the main defence to stand; his purpose was to descry as soon as could be any attack coming down on the east of the river and to disperse it before it could reach the Fords.

All went ill, as most likely it would have done in any case: Saruman's strength was too great. He began his attack by day, and before noon of March the 2<sup>nd</sup> a strong force of his best fighters, coming down by the Road from Isengard, attacked the forts on the west of the Fords. This force was in fact only a small part of those that he had in hand, no more than he deemed sufficient to dispose of the weakened defence. But the garrison of the Fords, though greatly outnumbered, resisted stubbornly. At length, however, when both the forts were heavily engaged, a troop of Uruks forced the passage between them and began to cross the Fords. Grimbold, trusting in Elfhelm to hold off attack on the east side, came across with all the men he had left and flung them back—for a while. But the enemy commander then threw in a battalion that had not been committed, and broke the defences. Grimbold was obliged to withdraw across the Isen. It was then near sunset. He had suffered much loss, but had inflicted far heavier losses on the enemy (mostly Orcs), and he still held the east bank strongly. The enemy did not attempt to cross the Fords and fight their way up the steep slopes to dislodge him; not yet.

Elfhelm had been unable to take part in this action. In the dusk he withdrew his companies and retired towards Grimbold's camp, setting his men in groups at some distance from it to act as a screen against attack from north and east. From southwards they expected no evil, and hoped for succour. After the retreat across the Fords errand-riders had been dispatched at once to Erkenbrand and to Edoras telling of their plight. Fearing, indeed knowing, that greater evil would befall them ere long, unless help beyond hope reached them swiftly, the defenders prepared to do what they could to hold up Saruman's advance before they were overwhelmed.<sup>290</sup> The greater part stood to arms, only a few at a time attempting to snatch such brief rest and sleep as they could. Grimbold and Elfhelm were sleepless, awaiting the dawn and dreading what it might bring.

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<sup>289</sup> It is told that he set up on stakes all about the eyot the heads of the axemen that had been slain there, but above the hasty mound of Théodred in the middle was set his banner. 'That will be defence enough,' he said. [Author's note.]

<sup>290</sup> This, it is said, was Grimbold's resolve. Elfhelm would not desert him, but had he himself been in command, he would have abandoned the Fords under cover of night and withdrawn southwards to meet Erkenbrand and swell the forces still available for the defence of the Deeping-coomb and the Hornburg. [Author's note.]

*They did not have to wait so long. It was not yet midnight when points of red light were seen coming from the north and already drawing near on the west of the river. It was the vanguard of the whole remaining forces of Saruman that he was now committing to battle for the conquest of Westfold.<sup>291</sup> They came on at great speed, and suddenly all the host burst into flame, as it seemed. Hundreds of torches were kindled from those borne by the leaders of troops, and gathering into their stream the forces already manning the west bank they swept over the Fords like a river of fire with a great clamour of hate. A great company of bowmen might have made them rue the light of their torches, but Grimbald had only a handful of archers. He could not hold the east bank, and withdrew from it, forming a great shieldwall about his camp. Soon it was surrounded, and the attackers cast torches among them, and some they sent high over the heads of the shieldwall, hoping to kindle fires among the stores and terrify such horses as Grimbald still had. But the shieldwall held. Then, since the Orcs were of less avail in such fighting because of their stature, fierce companies of the Dunlendish hillmen were thrown against it. But for all their hatred the Dunlendings were still afraid of the Rohirrim if they met face to face, and they were also less skilled in warfare and less well armed.<sup>292</sup> The shieldwall still held.*

*In vain Grimbald looked for help to come from Elfhelm. None came. At last then he determined to carry out if he could the plan that he had already made, if he should find himself in just such a desperate position. He had at length recognised the wisdom of Elfhelm, and understood that though his men might fight on till all were slain, and would if he ordered it, such valour would not help Erkenbrand: any man that could break out and escape southwards would be more useful, though he might seem inglorious.*

*The night had been overcast and dark, but now the waxing moon began to glimmer through drifting cloud. A wind was moving from the East: the forerunner of the great storm that when day came would pass over Rohan and burst over Helm's Deep the next night. Grimbald was aware suddenly that most of the torches had been extinguished and the fury of the assault had abated.<sup>293</sup> He therefore at once mounted those riders for whom horses were available, not many more than half an éored, and placed them under the command of Dúnhere.<sup>294</sup> The shieldwall was opened on the east side and the Riders passed through, driving back their assailants on that side; then dividing and wheeling round they charged the enemy to the north and south of the camp. The sudden manoeuvre was for a space successful. The enemy was confused and dismayed; many thought at first that a large force of Riders had come from the east. Grimbald himself remained on foot with a rearguard of picked men, already chosen, and covered for the moment by these and the Riders under Dúnhere the remainder*

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<sup>291</sup> This was the great host that Meriadoc saw leaving Isengard, as he related afterwards to Aragorn, Legolas and Gimli (*The Two Towers* III 9): 'I saw the enemy go: endless lines of marching Orcs; and troops of them mounted on great wolves. And there were battalions of Men, too. Many of them carried torches, and in the flare I could see their faces . . . They took an hour to pass out of the gates. Some went off down the highway to the Fords, and some turned away and went eastward. A bridge has been built down there, about a mile away, where the river runs in a very deep channel.'

<sup>292</sup> They were without body-armour, having only among them a few hauberks gained by theft or in loot. The Rohirrim had the advantage in being supplied by the metal-workers of Gondor. In Isengard as yet only the heavy and clumsy mail of the Orcs was made, by them for their own uses. [Author's note.]

<sup>293</sup> It seems that Grimbald's valiant defence had not been altogether unavailing. It had been unexpected, and Saruman's commander was late: he had been delayed for some hours, whereas it was intended that he should sweep over the Fords, scatter the weak defences, and without waiting to pursue them hasten to the road and proceed then south to join in the assault on the Deeping. He was now in doubt. He awaited, maybe, some signal from the other army that had been sent down the east side of the Isen. [Author's note.]

<sup>294</sup> A valiant captain, nephew of Erkenbrand. By courage and skill in arms he survived the disaster of the Fords, but fell in the Battle of the Pelennor, to the great grief of Westfold. [Author's note.]

Dúnhere was Lord of Harrowdale (*The Return of the King* V 3).

retreated with what speed they could. But Saruman's commander soon perceived that the shieldwall was broken and the defenders in flight. Fortunately the moon was overtaken by cloud and all was dark again, and he was in haste. He did not allow his troops to press the pursuit of the fugitives far into the darkness, now that the Fords were captured. He gathered his force as best he could and made for the road southward. So it was that the greater part of Grimbold's men survived. They were scattered in the night, but, as he had ordered, they made their ways away from the Road, east of the great turn where it bent west towards the Isen. They were relieved but amazed to encounter no enemies, not knowing that a large army had already some hours before passed southward and that Isengard was now guarded by little but its own strength of wall and gate.<sup>295</sup>

It was for this reason that no help had come from Elfhelm. More than half of Saruman's force had actually been sent down east of Isen. They came on more slowly than the western division, for the land was rougher and without roads; and they bore no lights. But before them, swift and silent, went several troops of the dreaded wolfriders. Before Elfhelm had any warning of the approach of enemies on his side of the river the wolfriders were between him and Grimbold's camp; and they were also attempting to surround each of his small groups of Riders. It was dark and all his force was in disarray. He gathered all that he could into a close body of horsemen, but he was obliged to retreat eastward. He could not reach Grimbold, though he knew that he was in straits and had been about to come to his aid when attacked by the wolfriders. But he also guessed rightly that the wolfriders were only the forerunners of a force far too great for him to oppose that would make for the southward road. The night was wearing away; he could only await the dawn.

What followed is less clear, since only Gandalf had full knowledge of it. He received news of the disaster only in the late afternoon of March the 3<sup>rd</sup>.<sup>296</sup> The King was then at a point not far east of the junction of the Road with the branch going to the Hornburg. From there it was about ninety miles in a direct line to Isengard; and Gandalf must have ridden there with the greatest speed that Shadowfax could command. He reached Isengard in the early darkness,<sup>297</sup> and left again in no more than twenty minutes. Both on the outward journey, when his direct route would take him close to the Fords, and on his return south to find Erkenbrand, he must have met Grimbold and Elfhelm. They were convinced that he was acting for the King, not only by his appearance on Shadowfax, but also by his knowledge of the name of the errand-rider, Ceorl, and the message that he brought; and they took as orders the advice that he gave.<sup>298</sup> Grimbold's men he sent southward to join Erkenbrand . . .

## Appendix

### I

In writing associated with the present text some further particulars are given concerning the Marshals of the Mark in the year 3019 and after the end of the War of the Ring:

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<sup>295</sup> This sentence is not very clear, but in view of what follows it seems to refer to that part of the great army out of Isengard that came down the east side of the Isen.

<sup>296</sup> The news was brought by the Rider named Ceorl, who returning from the Fords fell in with Gandalf, Théoden and Éomer as they rode west with reinforcements from Edoras: *The Two Towers* III 7.

<sup>297</sup> As the narrative suggests, Gandalf must already have made contact with Treebeard, and knew that the patience of the Ents was at an end; and he had also read the meaning of Legolas' words (*The Two Towers* III 7, at the beginning of the chapter): Isengard was veiled in an impenetrable shadow, the Ents had already surrounded it. [Author's note.]

<sup>298</sup> When Gandalf came with Théoden and Éomer to the Fords of Isen after the Battle of the Hornburg he explained to them: 'Some men I sent with Grimbold of Westfold to join Erkenbrand. Some I set to make this burial. They have now followed your marshal, Elfhelm. I sent him with many Riders to Edoras.' (*The Two Towers* III 8.) The present text ends in the middle of the next sentence.

*Marshal of the Mark (or Riddermark) was the highest military rank and the title of the King's lieutenants (originally three), commanders of the royal forces of fully equipped and trained Riders. The First Marshal's ward was the capital, Edoras, and the adjacent King's Lands (including Harrowdale). He commanded the Riders of the Muster of Edoras, drawn from this ward, and from some parts of the West-mark and East-mark<sup>299</sup> for which Edoras was the most convenient place of assembly. The Second and Third Marshals were assigned commands according to the needs of the time. In the beginning of the year 3019 the threat from Saruman was the most urgent, and the Second Marshal, the King's son Théodred, had command over the West-mark with his base at Helm's Deep; the Third Marshal, the King's nephew Éomer, had as his ward the East-mark with his base at his home, Aldburg in the Folde.<sup>300</sup>*

*In the days of Théoden there was no man appointed to the office of First Marshal. He came to the throne as a young man (at the age of thirty-two), vigorous and of martial spirit, and a great horseman. If war came, he would himself command the Muster of Edoras; but his kingdom was at peace for many years, and he rode with his knights and his Muster only on exercises and in displays; though the shadow of Mordor reawakened grew ever greater from his childhood to his old age. In this peace the Riders and other armed men of the garrison of Edoras were governed by an officer of the rank of marshal (in the years 3012-19 this was Elfhelm). When Théoden became, as it seemed, prematurely old, this situation continued, and there was no effective central command: a state of affairs encouraged by his counsellor Grima. The King, becoming decrepit and seldom leaving his house, fell into the habit of issuing orders to Háma, Captain of his Household, to Elfhelm, and even to the Marshals of the Mark, by the mouth of Grima Wormtongue. This was resented, but the orders were obeyed, within Edoras. As far as fighting was concerned, when the war with Saruman began Théodred without orders assumed general command. He summoned a muster of Edoras, and drew away a large part of its Riders, under Elfhelm, to strengthen the Muster of Westfold and help it to resist the invasion.*

*In times of war or unquiet each Marshal of the Mark had under his immediate orders, as part of his 'household' (that is, quartered under arms at his residence) an éored ready for battle which he could use in an emergency at his own discretion. This was what Éomer had in fact done;<sup>301</sup> but the charge against him, urged by Grima, was that the King had in this case forbidden him to take any of the still uncommitted forces of the East-mark from Edoras, which was insufficiently defended; that he knew of the disaster at the Fords of Isen and the death of Théodred before he pursued the Orcs into the remote Wold; and that he had also against general orders allowed strangers to go free, and had even lent them horses.*

*After the fall of Théodred command in the West-mark (again without orders from Edoras) was assumed by Erkenbrand, Lord of Deeping-coomb and of much other land in Westfold. He had in youth been, as most lords, an officer in the King's Riders, but he was so no longer. He was, however, the chief lord in the West-mark, and since its people were in peril it was his right and duty to gather all those among them able to bear arms to resist invasion. He thus took command also of the Riders of the Western Muster; but Elfhelm remained in independent command of the Riders of the Muster of Edoras that Théodred had summoned to his assistance.*

*After the healing of Théoden by Gandalf, the situation changed. The King again took command in person. Éomer was reinstated, and became virtually First Marshal, ready to take command if the King fell or his strength failed; but the title was not used, and in the presence of the King in arms he could only advise and not*

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<sup>299</sup> These were terms only used with reference to military organisation. Their boundary was the Snowbourn River to its junction with the Entwash, and thence north along the Entwash. [Author's note.]

<sup>300</sup> Here Eorl had his house; it passed after Brego son of Eorl removed to Edoras into the hands of Eofor, third son of Brego, from whom Éomund, father of Éomer, claimed descent. The Folde was part of the King's Lands, but Aldburg remained the most convenient base for the Muster of the East-mark. [Author's note.]

<sup>301</sup> *I.e.*, when Éomer pursued the Orcs, captors of Meriadoc and Peregrin, who had come down into Rohan from the Eryn Muil. The words that Éomer used to Aragorn were: 'I led forth my éored, men of my own household' (*The Two Towers* III 2).



issue orders. The part he actually played was thus much the same as that of Aragorn: a redoubtable champion among the companions of the King.<sup>302</sup>

When the Full Muster was made in Harrowdale, and the 'line of journey' and order of battle considered and as far as possible determined,<sup>303</sup> Éomer remained in this position, riding with the King (as commander of the leading éored, the King's Company) and acting as his chief counsellor. Elfhelm became a Marshal of the Mark, leading the first éored of the Muster of the East-mark. Grimbold (not previously mentioned in the narrative) had the function, but not the title, of the Third Marshal, and commanded the Muster of the West-mark.<sup>304</sup> Grimbold fell in the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, and Elfhelm became the lieutenant of Éomer as King; he was left in command of all the Rohirrim in Gondor when Éomer went to the Black Gate, and he routed the hostile army that had invaded Anórien (The Return of the King V, end of [chapter 9](#) and beginning of [chapter 10](#)). He is named as one of the chief witnesses of Aragorn's coronation (ibid., VI 5).

It is recorded that after Théoden's funeral, when Éomer reordered his realm, Erkenbrand was made Marshal of the West-mark, and Elfhelm Marshal of the East-mark, and these titles were maintained, instead of Second and Third Marshal, neither having precedence over the other. In time of war a special appointment was made to the office of Underking: its holder either ruled the realm in the King's absence with the army, or took command in the field if for any reason the King remained at home. In peace the office was only filled when the King because of sickness or old age deputed his authority; the holder was then naturally the Heir to the throne, if he was a man of sufficient age. But in war the Council was unwilling that an old King should send his Heir to battle beyond the realm, unless he had at least one other son.

## II

A long note to the text (at the place where the differing views of the commanders on the importance of the Fords of Isen is discussed, pages [466](#), [467](#)) is given here. The first part of it largely repeats history that is given elsewhere in this book, but I have thought it best to give it in full.

*In ancient days the southern and eastern bounds of the North Kingdom had been the Greyflood; the western bounds of the South Kingdom was the Isen. To the land between (the Enedwaith or 'middle region') few Númenóreans had ever come, and none had settled there. In the days of the Kings it was part of the realm of Gondor,<sup>305</sup> but it was of little concern to them, except for the patrolling and upkeep of the great Royal Road.*

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<sup>302</sup> Those who did not know of the events at court naturally assumed that the reinforcements sent west were under Éomer's command as the only remaining Marshal of the Mark. [Author's note.]

The reference here is to the words of Ceorl, the Rider who met the reinforcements coming from Edoras and told them what had happened in the Second Battle of the Fords of Isen (*The Two Towers* III 7).

<sup>303</sup> Théoden called a council of 'the marshals and captains' at once, and before he took a meal; but it is not described, since Meriadoc was not present ('I wonder what they are all talking about.'). [Author's note.]

The reference is to *The Return of the King* V 3.

<sup>304</sup> Grimbold was a lesser marshal of the Riders of West-mark in Théodred's command, and was given this position, as a man of valour in both the battles at the Fords, because Erkenbrand was an older man, and the King felt the need of one of dignity and authority to leave behind in command of such forces as could be spared for the defence of Rohan. [Author's note.]

Grimbold is not mentioned in the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings* until the final ordering of the Rohirrim before Minas Tirith (*The Return of the King* V 5).

<sup>305</sup> The statement that Enedwaith was in the days of the Kings part of the realm of Gondor seems to conflict with that immediately preceding, that 'the western bounds of the South Kingdom was the Isen'. Elsewhere (see [p. 343](#)) it is said that Enedwaith 'belonged to neither kingdom'.

*This went all the way from Osgiliath and Minas Tirith to Fornost in the far North, crossed the Fords of Isen and passed through Enedwaith, keeping to the higher land in the centre and north-east until it had to descend to the west lands about the lower Greyflood, which it crossed on a raised causeway leading to a great bridge at Tharbad. In those days the region was little peopled. In the marshlands of the mouths of Greyflood and Isen lived a few tribes of 'Wild Men', fishers and fowlers, but akin in race and speech to the Drúedain of the woods of Anórien.<sup>306</sup> In the foothills of the western side of the Misty Mountains lived the remnants of the people that the Rohirrim later called the Dunlendings: a sullen folk, akin to the ancient inhabitants of the White Mountain valleys whom Isildur cursed.<sup>307</sup> They had little love of Gondor, but though hardy and bold enough were too few and too much in awe of the might of the Kings to trouble them, or to turn their eyes away from the East, whence all their chief perils came. The Dunlendings suffered, like all the peoples of Arnor and Gondor, in the Great Plague of the years 1636-7 of the Third Age, but less than most, since they dwelt apart and had few dealings with other men. When the days of the Kings ended (1975-2050) and the waning of Gondor began, they ceased in fact to be subjects of Gondor; the Royal Road was unkept in Enedwaith, and the Bridge of Tharbad becoming ruinous was replaced only by a dangerous ford. The bounds of Gondor were the Isen, and the Gap of Calenardhon (as it was then called). The Gap was watched by the fortresses of Aglarond (the Hornburg) and Angrenost (Isengard), and the Fords of Isen, the only easy entrance to Gondor, were ever guarded against any incursion from the 'Wild Lands'.*

*But during the Watchful Peace (from 2063 to 2460) the people of Calenardhon dwindled: the more vigorous, year by year, went eastward to hold the line of the Anduin; those that remained became rustic and far removed from the concerns of Minas Tirith. The garrisons of the forts were not renewed, and were left to the care of local hereditary chieftains whose subjects were of more and more mixed blood. For the Dunlendings drifted steadily and unchecked over the Isen. Thus it was, when the attacks on Gondor from the East were renewed, and Orcs and Easterlings overran Calenardhon and besieged the forts, which would not have long held out. Then the Rohirrim came, and after the victory of Eorl on the Field of Celebrant in the year 2510 his numerous and warlike people with great wealth of horses swept into Calenardhon, driving out or destroying the eastern invaders. Cirion the Steward gave them possession of Calenardhon, which was thenceforth called the Riddermark, or in Gondor Rochand (later Rohan). The Rohirrim at once began the settlement of this region, though during the reign of Eorl their eastern bounds along the Eryn Muil and Anduin were still under attack. But under Brego and Aldor the Dunlendings were rooted out again and driven away beyond the Isen, and the Fords of Isen were guarded. Thus the Rohirrim earned the hatred of the Dunlendings, which was not appeased until the return of the King, then far off in the future. Whenever the Rohirrim were weak or in trouble the Dunlendings renewed their attacks.*

*No alliance of peoples was ever more faithfully kept on both sides than the alliance of Gondor and Rohan under the Oath of Cirion and Eorl; nor were any guardians of the wide grassy plains of Rohan more suited to their land than the Riders of the Mark. Nonetheless there was a grave weakness in their situation, as was most clearly shown in the days of the War of the Ring when it came near to causing the ruin of Rohan and of Gondor. This was due to many things. Above all, the eyes of Gondor had ever been eastward, whence all their*

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<sup>306</sup> Cf. p. 340, where it is said that 'a fairly numerous but barbarous fisher-folk dwelt between the mouths of the Gwathló and the Angren (Isen)'. No mention is made there of any connection between these people and the Drúedain, though the latter are said to have dwelt (and to have survived there into the Third Age) in the promontory of Andrast, south of the mouths of Isen (p. 496 and note 323).

<sup>307</sup> Cf. *The Lord of the Rings* Appendix F ('Of Men'): '[The Dunlendings] were a remnant of the peoples that had dwelt in the vales of the White Mountains in ages past. The Dead Men of Dunharrow were of their kin. But in the Dark Years others had removed to the southern dales of the Misty Mountains; and thence some had passed into the empty lands as far north as the Barrow-downs. From them came the Men of Bree; but long before these had become subjects of the North Kingdom of Arnor and had taken up the Westron tongue. Only in Dunland did Men of this race hold to their old speech and manners: a secret folk, unfriendly to the Dúnedain, hating the Rohirrim.'

perils came; the enmity of the 'wild' Dunlendings seemed of small account to the Stewards. Another point was that the Stewards retained under their own rule the Tower of Orthanc and the Ring of Isengard (Angrenost); the keys of Orthanc were taken to Minas Tirith, the Tower was shut, and the Ring of Isengard remained manned only by an hereditary Gondorian chieftain and his small people, to whom were joined the old hereditary guards of Aglarond. The fortress there was repaired with the aid of masons of Gondor and then committed to the Rohirrim.<sup>308</sup> From it the guards of the Fords were supplied. For the most part their settled dwellings were about the feet of the White Mountains and in the glens and valleys of the south. To the northern bounds of the Westfold they went seldom and only at need, regarding the eaves of Fangorn (the Entwood) and the frowning walls of Isengard with dread. They meddled little with the 'Lord of Isengard' and his secret folk, whom they believed to be dealers in dark magic. And to Isengard the emissaries from Minas Tirith came ever more seldom, until they ceased; it seemed that amidst their cares the Stewards had forgotten the Tower, though they held the keys.

Yet the western frontier and the line of the Isen was naturally commanded by Isengard, and this had evidently been well understood by the Kings of Gondor. The Isen flowed down from its sources along the eastern wall of the Ring, and as it went on southwards it was still a young river that offered no great obstacle to invaders, though its waters were still very swift and strangely cold. But the Great Gate of Angrenost opened west of Isen, and if the fortress were well manned enemies from the westlands must be in great strength if they thought to pass on into Westfold. Moreover Angrenost was less than half the distance of Aglarond from the Fords, to which a wide horseroad ran from the Gates, for most of the way over level ground. The dread that haunted the great Tower, and fear of the glooms of Fangorn that lay behind, might protect it for a while, but if it were unmanned and neglected, as it was in the latter days of the Stewards, that protection would not long avail.

So it proved. In the reign of King Déor (2699 to 2718) the Rohirrim found that to keep a watch on the Fords was not enough. Since neither Rohan nor Gondor gave heed to this far corner of the realm, it was not known until later what had happened there. The line of the Gondorian chieftains of Angrenost had failed, and the command of the fortress passed into the hands of a family of the people. These, as has been said, were already long before of mixed blood, and they were now more friendly disposed to the Dunlendings than to the 'wild Northmen' who had usurped the land; with Minas Tirith far away they no longer had any concern. After the death of King Aldor, who had driven out the last of the Dunlendings and even raided their lands in Enedwaith by way of reprisal, the Dunlendings unmarked by Rohan but with the connivance of Isengard began to filter into northern Westfold again, making settlements in the mountain glens west and east of Isengard and even in the southern eaves of Fangorn. In the reign of Déor they became openly hostile, raiding the herds and studs of the Rohirrim in Westfold. It was soon clear to the Rohirrim that these raiders had not crossed the Isen either by the Fords or at any point far south of Isengard, for the Fords were guarded.<sup>309</sup> Déor therefore led an expedition northwards, and was met by a host of Dunlendings. These he overcame; but he was dismayed to find that Isengard was also hostile. Thinking that he had relieved Isengard of a Dunlendish siege, he sent messengers to its Gates with words of good will, but the Gates were shut upon them and the only answer they got was by bowshot. As was later known, the Dunlendings, having been admitted as friends, had seized the Ring of Isengard, slaying the few survivors of its ancient guards who were not (as were most) willing to merge with the Dunlendish folk. Déor sent word at once to the Steward in Minas Tirith (at that time, in the year 2710, Egalmoth), but he was unable to send help, and the Dunlendings remained in occupation of Isengard until, reduced by the great famine after the Long Winter (2758-9) they were starved out and capitulated to Fréaláf

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<sup>308</sup> By whom it was called *Glæmscrafu*, but the fortress *Súthburg*, and after King Helm's day the *Hornburg*. [Author's note.]

*Glæmscrafu* (in which the *sc* is pronounced as *sh*) is Anglo-Saxon, 'caves of radiance', with the same meaning as *Aglarond*.

<sup>309</sup> Attacks were often made on the garrison of the west bank, but these were not pressed: they were in fact only made to distract the attention of the Rohirrim from the north. [Author's note.]

*(afterwards first King of the Second Line). But Déor had no power to storm or besiege Isengard, and for many years the Rohirrim had to keep a strong force of Riders in the north of Westfold; this was maintained until the great invasions of 2758.*<sup>310</sup>

*It can thus be readily understood that when Saruman offered to take command of Isengard and repair it and reorder it as part of the defences of the West he was welcomed both by King Fréaláf and by Beren the Steward. So when Saruman took up his abode in Isengard, and Beren gave to him the keys of Orthanc, the Rohirrim returned to their policy of guarding the Fords of Isen, as the most vulnerable point in their western frontier.*

*There can be little doubt that Saruman made his offer in good faith, or at least with good will towards the defence of the West, so long as he himself remained the chief person in that defence, and the head of its council. He was wise, and perceived clearly that Isengard with its position and its great strength, natural and by craft, was of utmost importance. The line of the Isen, between the pincers of Isengard and the Hornburg, was a bulwark against invasion from the East (whether incited and guided by Sauron, or otherwise), either aiming at encircling Gondor or at invading Eriador. But in the end he turned to evil and became an enemy; and yet the Rohirrim, though they had warnings of his growing malice towards them, continued to put their main strength in the west at the Fords, until Saruman in open war showed them that the Fords were small protection without Isengard and still less against it.*

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<sup>310</sup> An account of these invasions of Gondor and Rohan is given in *The Lord of the Rings* Appendix A (I, iv and II).

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## PART FOUR



၁၂ ပဉ္စမ ဘာဝဏ် ဟူ၍ ဟောပြောရာ၌ နှစ် ဘဝတို့  
 လှေ ဟူ၍ ဟောပြောရာ၌ နှစ် ဘဝတို့ ပါ၍ ဟောပြောရာ၌  
 နှစ် ဘဝတို့ နှစ် ဘဝတို့ ဟောပြောရာ၌ နှစ် ဘဝတို့





## The Drúedain

*The Folk of Haleth were strangers to the other Atani, speaking an alien language; and though united with them in alliance with the Eldar, they remained a people apart. Among themselves they adhered to their own language, and though of necessity they learned Sindarin for communication with the Eldar and the other Atani, many spoke it haltingly, and some of those who seldom went beyond the borders of their own woods did not use it at all. They did not willingly adopt new things or customs, and retained many practices that seemed strange to the Eldar and the other Atani, with whom they had few dealings except in war. Nonetheless they were esteemed as loyal allies and redoubtable warriors, though the companies that they sent to battle beyond their borders were small. For they were and remained to their end a small people, chiefly concerned to protect their own woodlands, and they excelled in forest warfare. Indeed for long even those Orcs specially trained for this dared not set foot near their borders. One of the strange practices spoken of was that many of their warriors were women, though few of these went abroad to fight in the great battles. This custom was evidently ancient,<sup>311</sup> for their chieftainess Haleth was a renowned Amazon with a picked bodyguard of women.<sup>312</sup>*

*The strangest of all the customs of the Folk of Haleth was the presence among them of people of a wholly different kind,<sup>313</sup> the like of which neither the Eldar in Beleriand nor the other Atani had ever seen before. They were not many, a few hundreds maybe, living apart in families or small tribes, but in friendship, as members of the same community.<sup>314</sup> The Folk of Haleth called them by the name drûg, that being a word of their own language. To the eyes of Elves and other Men they were unlovely in looks: they were stumpy (some four foot high) but very broad, with heavy buttocks and short thick legs; their wide faces had deep-set eyes with heavy brows, and flat noses, and grew no hair below their eyebrows, except in a few men (who were proud of the distinction) a small tail of black hair in the midst of the chin. Their features were usually impassive, the most mobile being their wide mouths; and the movement of their wary eyes could not be observed save from close at hand, for they were so black that the pupils could not be distinguished, but in anger they glowed red. Their voices were deep and guttural, but their laughter was a surprise: it was rich and rolling, and set all who heard*

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<sup>311</sup> Not due to their special situation in Beleriand, and maybe rather a cause of their small numbers than its result. They increased in numbers far more slowly than the other Atani, hardly more than was sufficient to replace the wastage of war; yet many of their women (who were fewer than the men) remained unwed. [Author's note.]

<sup>312</sup> In *The Silmarillion* Bëor described the Haladin (afterwards called the People or Folk of Haleth) to Felagund as 'a people from whom we are sundered in speech' (p. 142). It is said also that 'they remained a people apart' (p. 146), and that they were of smaller stature than the men of the House of Bëor; 'they used few words, and did not love great concourse of men; and many among them delighted in solitude, wandering free in the greenwoods while the wonder of the lands of the Eldar was new upon them' (p. 148). Nothing is said in *The Silmarillion* about the Amazonian element in their society, other than that the Lady Haleth was a warrior and the leader of the people, nor of their adherence to their own language in Beleriand.

<sup>313</sup> Though they spoke the same language (after their fashion). They retained however a number of words of their own. [Author's note].

<sup>314</sup> After the fashion in which in the Third Age the Men and Hobbits of Bree lived together; though there was no kinship between the Drûg-folk and the Hobbits. [Author's note].

it, *Elves or Men*, laughing too for its pure merriment untainted by scorn or malice.<sup>315</sup> In peace they often laughed at work or play when other Men might sing. But they could be relentless enemies, and when once aroused their red wrath was slow to cool, though it showed no sign save the light in their eyes; for they fought in silence and did not exult in victory, not even over Orcs, the only creatures for whom their hatred was implacable.

The Eldar called them *Drúedain*, admitting them to the rank of *Atani*,<sup>316</sup> for they were much loved while they lasted. Alas! they were not long-lived, and were ever few in number, and their losses were heavy in their feud with the Orcs, who returned their hatred and delighted to capture them and torture them. When the victories of Morgoth destroyed all the realms and strongholds of Elves and Men in Beleriand, it is said that they had dwindled to a few families, mostly of women and children, some of whom came to the last refuges at the Mouths of Sirion.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>315</sup> To the unfriendly who, not knowing them well, declared that Morgoth must have bred the Orcs from such a stock the Eldar answered: ‘Doubtless Morgoth, since he can make no living thing, bred Orcs from various kinds of Men, but the *Drúedain* must have escaped his Shadow; for their laughter and the laughter of Orcs are as different as is the light of Aman from the darkness of Angband.’ But some thought, nonetheless, that there had been a remote kinship, which accounted for their special enmity. Orcs and *Drûgs* each regarded the other as renegades. [Author’s note.]

In *The Silmarillion* the Orcs are said to have been bred by Melkor from captured Elves in the beginning of their days (p. 50; cf. pp. 93-94); but this was only one of several diverse speculations on the origin of the Orcs. It may be noted that in *The Return of the King* V 5 the laughter of Ghân-buri-Ghân is described: ‘At that old Ghân made a curious gurgling noise, and it seemed that he was laughing.’ He is described as having a scanty beard that ‘straggled on his lumpy chin like dry moss’, and dark eyes that showed nothing.

<sup>316</sup> It is stated in isolated notes that their own name for themselves was *Drughu* (in which the *gh* represents a spirantal sound). This name adopted into Sindarin in Beleriand became *Drû* (plurals *Drúin* and *Drúath*); but when the Eldar discovered that the *Drû*-folk were steadfast enemies of Morgoth, and especially of the Orcs, the ‘title’ *adan* was added, and they were called *Drúedain* (singular *Drúadan*), to mark both their humanity and friendship with the Eldar, and their racial difference from the people of the Three Houses of the Edain. *Drû* was then only used in compounds such as *Drúnos*, ‘a family of the *Drû*-folk’, *Drúwaith*, ‘the wilderness of the *Drû*-folk’. In Quenya *Drughu* became *Rú*, and *Rúatan*, plural *Rúatani*. For their other names in later times (Wild Men, Woses, Púkel-men) see p. 496 and note 324.

<sup>317</sup> In the annals of Númenor it is said that this remnant was permitted to sail over sea with the *Atani*, and in the peace of the new land thrived and increased again, but took no more part in war, for they dreaded the sea. What happened to them later is only recorded in one of the few legends that survived the Downfall, the story of the first sailings of the Númenóreans back to Middle-earth, known as *The Mariner’s Wife*. In a copy of this written and preserved in Gondor there is a note by the scribe on a passage in which the *Drúedain* in the household of King Aldarion the Mariner are mentioned: it relates that the *Drúedain*, who were ever noted for their strange foresight, were disturbed to hear of his voyages, foreboding that evil would come of them, and begged him to go no more. But they did not succeed, since neither his father nor his wife could prevail on him to change his courses, and the *Drúedain* departed in distress. From that time onward the *Drúedain* of Númenor became restless, and despite their fear of the sea one by one, or in twos and threes, they would beg for passages in the great ships that sailed to the North-western shores of Middle-earth. If any asked ‘Why would you go, and whither?’ they answered: ‘The Great Isle no longer feels sure under our feet, and we wish to return to the lands whence we came.’ Thus their numbers dwindled again slowly through the long years, and none were left when Elendil escaped from the Downfall: the last had fled the land when Sauron was brought to it. [Author’s note.]

There is no trace, either in the materials relating to the story of Aldarion and Erendis or elsewhere, of the presence of *Drúedain* in Númenor apart from the foregoing, save for a detached note which says that ‘the Edain

*In their earlier days they had been of great service to those among whom they dwelt, and they were much sought after; though few would ever leave the land of the Folk of Haleth.<sup>318</sup> They had a marvellous skill as trackers of all living creatures, and they taught to their friends what they could of their craft; but their pupils did not equal them, for the Drúedain used their scent, like hounds save that they were also keen-eyed. They boasted that they could smell an Orc to windward further away than other Men could see them, and could follow its scent for weeks except through running water. Their knowledge of all growing things was almost equal to that of the Elves (though untaught by them); and it is said that if they removed to a new country they knew within a short time all things that grew there, great or minute, and gave names to those that were new to them, discerning those that were poisonous, or useful as food.<sup>319</sup>*

*The Drúedain, as also the other Atani, had no form of writing until they met the Eldar; but the runes and scripts of the Eldar were never learned by them. They came no nearer to writing by their own invention than the use of a number of signs, for the most part simple, for the marking of trails or the giving of information and warning. In the far distant past they appear already to have had small tools of flint for scraping and cutting, and these they still used, although the Atani had a knowledge of metals and some smith-craft before they came to Beleriand,<sup>320</sup> for metals were hard to come by and forged weapons and tools very costly. But when in Beleriand by association with the Eldar and in traffic with the Dwarves of Ered Lindon these things became more common, the Drúedain showed great talent for carving in wood or stone. They already had a knowledge of pigments, derived chiefly from plants, and they drew pictures and patterns on wood or flat surfaces of stone; and sometimes they would scrape knobs of wood into faces that could be painted. But with sharper and stronger tools they delighted in carving figures of men and beasts, whether toys and ornaments or large images, to which the most skilled among them could give vivid semblance of life. Sometimes these images were strange and fantastic, or even fearful: among the grim jests to which they put their skill was the making of Orc-figures which they set at the borders of the land, shaped as if fleeing from it, shrieking in terror. They made also images of themselves and placed them at the entrances to tracks or at turnings of woodland paths. These they called 'watch-stones' of which the most notable were set near the Crossings of Teiglin, each representing a Drúadan, larger than the life, squatting heavily upon a dead Orc. These figures served not merely as insults*

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who at the end of the War of the Jewels sailed over sea to Númenor contained few remnants of the Folk of Haleth, and the very few Drúedain that accompanied them died out long before the Downfall'.

<sup>318</sup> A few lived in the household of Húrin of the House of Hador, for he had dwelt among the Folk of Haleth in his youth and had kinship with their lord. [Author's note.]

On the relationship of Húrin to the Folk of Haleth see *The Silmarillion* p. 158.

It was my father's intention ultimately to transform Sador, the old serving-man in Húrin's house in Dor-lómin, into a Drûg.

<sup>319</sup> They had a law against the use of all poisons for the hurt of any living creatures, even those who had done them injury—save only Orcs, whose poisoned darts they countered with others more deadly. [Author's note.]

Elfhelm told Meriadoc Brandybuck that the Wild Men used poisoned arrows (*The Return of the King* V 5), and the same was believed of them by the inhabitants of Enedwaith in the Second Age (p. 495). At a later point in this essay something is told of the dwellings of the Drúedain, which it is convenient to cite here. Living among the Folk of Haleth, who were a woodland people, 'they were content to live in tents or shelters, lightly built round the trunks of large trees, for they were a hardy race. In their former homes, according to their own tales, they had used caves in the mountains, but mainly as store-houses, only occupied as dwellings and sleeping-places in severe weather. They had similar refuges in Beleriand to which all but the most hardy retreated in times of storm or bitter winter; but these places were guarded and not even their closest friends among the Folk of Haleth were welcomed there.'

<sup>320</sup> Acquired according to their legends from the Dwarves. [Author's note.]



*to their enemies; for the Orcs feared them and believed them to be filled with the malice of the Oghor-hai (for so they named the Drúedain), and able to hold communication with them. Therefore they seldom dared to touch them, or to try to destroy them, and unless in great numbers would turn back at a 'watch-stone'; and go no further.*

*But among the powers of this strange people perhaps most to be remarked was their capacity of utter silence and stillness, which they could at times endure for many days on end, sitting with their legs crossed, their hands upon their knees or in their laps, and their eyes closed or looking at the ground. Concerning this a tale was related among the Folk of Haleth:*

On a time, one of the most skilled in stone-carving among the Drûgs made an image of his father, who had died; and he set it up by a pathway near to their dwelling. Then he sat down beside it and passed into a deep silence of recollection. It chanced that not long after a forester came by on a journey to a distant village, and seeing two Drûgs he bowed and wished them good day. But he received no answer, and he stood for some time in surprise, looking closely at them. Then he went on his way, saying to himself: 'Great skill have they in stone-work, but I have never seen any more lifelike.' Three days later he returned, and being very weary he sat down and propped his back against one of the figures. His cloak he cast about its shoulders to dry, for it had been raining, but the sun was now shining hot. There he fell asleep; but after a while he was wakened by a voice from the figure behind him. 'I hope you are rested,' it said, 'but if you wish for more sleep, I beg you to move to the other one. He will never need to stretch his legs again; and I find your cloak too hot in the sun.'

*It is said that the Drúedain would often sit thus in times of grief or loss, but sometimes for pleasure in thought, or in the making of plans. But they could also use this stillness when on guard; and then they would sit or stand, hidden in shadow, and though their eyes might seem closed or staring with a blank gaze nothing passed or came near that was not marked and remembered. So intense was their unseen vigilance that it could be felt as a hostile menace by intruders, who retreated in fear before any warning was given; but if any evil thing passed on, then they would utter as a signal a shrill whistle, painful to endure close at hand and heard far off. The service of the Drúedain as guards was much esteemed by the Folk of Haleth in times of peril; and if such guards were not to be had they would have figures carved in their likeness to set near their houses, believing that (being made by the Drúedain themselves for the purpose) they would hold some of the menace of the living men.*

*Indeed, though they held the Drúedain in love and trust, many of the Folk of Haleth believed that they possessed uncanny and magical powers; and among their tales of marvels there were several that told of such things. One of these is recorded here.*

## **The Faithful Stone**

*On a time there was a Drûg named Aghan, well-known as a leech. He had a great friendship with Barach, a forester of the Folk, who lived in a house in the woods two miles or more from the nearest village. The dwellings of Aghan's family were nearer, and he spent most of his time with Barach and his wife, and was much loved by their children. There came a time of trouble, for a number of daring Orcs had secretly entered the woods nearby, and were scattered in twos and threes, waylaying any that went abroad alone, and at night attacking houses far from neighbours. The household of Barach were not much afraid, for Aghan stayed with them at night and kept watch outside. But one morning he came to Barach and said: 'Friend, I have ill news from my kin, and I fear I must leave you a while. My brother has been wounded, and he lies now in pain and calls for me, since I have skill in treating Orc-wounds. I will return as soon as I may.' Barach was greatly troubled, and his wife and children wept, but Aghan said: 'I will do what I can. I have had a watch-stone brought here and set near your house.' Barach went out with Aghan and looked at the watch-stone. It was large and heavy and sat under some bushes not far from his doors. Aghan laid his hand upon it, and after a silence said: 'See, I have left with it some of my powers. May it keep you from harm!'*

*Nothing untoward happened for two nights, but on the third night Barach heard the shrill warning call of the Drûgs—or dreamed that he heard it, for it roused no-one else. Leaving his bed he took his bow from the wall and went to a narrow window; and he saw two Orcs setting fuel against his house and preparing to kindle it.*

*Then Barach was shaken with fear, for marauding Orcs carried with them brimstone or some other devilish stuff that was quickly inflamed and not quenched with water. Recovering himself he bent his bow, but at that moment, just as the flames leapt up, he saw a Drûg come running up behind the Orcs. One he felled with a blow of his fist, and the other fled; then he plunged barefoot into the fire, scattering the burning fuel and stamping on the Orc-flames that ran along the ground. Barach made for the doors, but when he had unbarred them and sprang out the Drûg had disappeared. There was no sign of the smitten Orc. The fire was dead, and there remained only a smoke and a stench.*

*Barach went back indoors to comfort his family, who had been roused by the noises and the burning reek; but when it was daylight he went out again and looked about. He found that the watch-stone had gone, but he kept that to himself. 'Tonight I must be the watchman,' he thought; but later in the day Aghan came back, and was welcomed with joy. He was wearing high buskins such as the Drûgs sometimes wore in hard country, among thorns or rocks, and he was weary. But he was smiling, and seemed pleased; and he said: 'I bring good news. My brother is no longer in pain and will not die, for I came in time to withstand the venom. And now I learn that the marauders have been slain, or else fled. How have you fared?'*

*'We are still alive,' said Barach. 'But come with me, and I will show you and tell you more.' Then he led Aghan to the place of the fire and told him of the attack in the night. 'The watch-stone has gone—Orc-work, I guess. What have you to say to that?'*

*'I will speak, when I have looked and thought longer,' said Aghan; and then he went hither and thither scanning the ground, and Barach followed him. At length Aghan led him to a thicket at the edge of the clearing in which the house stood. There the watch-stone was, sitting on a dead Orc; but its legs were all blackened and cracked, and one of its feet had split off and lay loose at its side. Aghan looked grieved; but he said: 'Ah well! He did what he could. And better that his legs should trample Orc-fire than mine.'*

*Then he sat down and unlaced his buskins, and Barach saw that under them there were bandages on his legs. Aghan undid them. 'They are healing already,' he said. 'I had kept vigil by my brother for two nights, and last night I slept. I woke before morning came, and I was in pain, and found my legs blistered. Then I guessed what had happened. Alas! If some power passes from you to a thing that you have made, then you must take a share in its hurts.'*<sup>321</sup>

## Further Notes On The Drúedain

**M**y father was at pains to emphasize the radical difference between the Drúedain and the Hobbits. They were of quite different physical shape and appearance. The Drúedain were taller, and of heavier and stronger build. Their facial features were unlovely (judged by general human standards); and while the head-hair of the Hobbits was abundant (but close and curly) the Drúedain had only sparse and lank hair on their heads and none at all on their legs and feet. They were at times merry and gay, like Hobbits, but they had a grimmer side to their nature and could be sardonic and ruthless; and they had, or were credited with, strange or magical powers. They were moreover a frugal people, eating sparingly even in times of plenty and drinking nothing but water. In some ways they resembled rather the Dwarves: in build and stature and endurance; in their skill in carving stone; in the grim side of their character; and in their strange powers. But the 'magic' skills with which the Dwarves were credited were quite different; and the Dwarves were far grimmer, and also long-lived, whereas the Drúedain were short-lived compared with other kinds of Men.

Only once, in an isolated note, is anything said explicitly concerning the relationship between the Drúedain of Beleriand in the First Age, who guarded the houses of the Folk of Haleth in the Forest of Brethil, and the remote ancestors of Ghân-buri-Ghân, who guided the Rohirrim down the Stonewain Valley on their way to

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<sup>321</sup> Of this story my father remarked: 'The tales, such as *The Faithful Stone*, that speak of their transferring part of their "powers" to their artefacts, remind one in miniature of Sauron's transference of power to the foundations of the Barad-dûr and to the Ruling Ring.'

Minas Tirith (*The Return of the King* V 5), or the makers of the images on the road to Dunharrow (*ibid.*, V 3).<sup>322</sup> This note states:

*An emigrant branch of the Drúedain accompanied the Folk of Haleth at the end of the First Age, and dwelt in the Forest [of Brethil] with them. But most of them had remained in the White Mountains, in spite of their persecution by later-arrived Men, who had relapsed into the service of the Dark.*

It is also said here that the identity of the statues of Dunharrow with the remnants of the Drúath (perceived by Meriadoc Brandybuck when he first set eyes on Ghân-buri-Ghân) was originally recognized in Gondor, though at the time of the establishment of the Númenórean kingdom by Isildur they survived only in the Drúadan Forest and in the Drúwaith Iaur (see [below](#)).

We can thus if we wish elaborate the ancient legend of the coming of the Edain in *The Silmarillion* (pp. 140-3) by the addition of the Drúedain, descending out of Ered Lindon into Ossiriand with the Haladin (the Folk of Haleth). Another note says that historians in Gondor believed that the first Men to cross the Anduin were indeed the Drúedain. They came (it was believed) from lands south of Mordor, but before they reached the coasts of Haradwaith they turned north into Ithilien, and eventually finding a way across the Anduin (probably near Cair Andros) settled in the vales of the White Mountains and the wooded lands at their northern feet. 'They were a secretive people, suspicious of other kinds of Men by whom they had been harried and persecuted as long as they could remember, and they had wandered west seeking a land where they could be hidden and have peace.' But nothing more is said, here or elsewhere, concerning the history of their association with the Folk of Haleth.

In an essay, cited previously, on the names of rivers in Middle-earth there is a glimpse of the Drúedain in the Second Age. It is said here (see [p. 341](#)) that the native people of Enedwaith, fleeing from the devastations of the Númenóreans along the course of the Gwathló,

*did not cross the Isen nor take refuge in the great promontory between Isen and Lefnui that formed the north arm of the Bay of Belfalas, because of the 'Púkel-men', who were a secret and fell people, tireless and silent hunters, using poisoned darts. They said that they had always been there, and had formerly lived also in the White Mountains. In ages past they had paid no heed to the Great Dark One (Morgoth), nor did they later ally themselves with Sauron; for they hated all invaders from the East. From the East, they said, had come the tall Men who drove them from the White Mountains, and they were wicked at heart. Maybe even in the days of the War of the Ring some of the Drú-folk lingered in the mountains of Andrast, the western outlier of the White Mountains, but only the remnant in the woods of Anórien were known to the people of Gondor.*

This region between Isen and Lefnui was the Drúwaith Iaur, and in yet another scrap of writing on this subject it is stated that the word *Iaur* 'old' in this name does not mean 'original' but 'former':

*The 'Púkel-men' occupied the White Mountains (on both sides) in the First Age. When the occupation of the coastlands by the Númenóreans began in the Second Age they survived in the mountains of the promontory [of Andrast], which was never occupied by the Númenóreans. Another remnant survived at the eastern end of the range [in Anórien]. At the end of the Third Age the latter, much reduced in numbers, were believed to be the only survivors; hence the other region was called 'the Old Púkel-wilderness' (Drúwaith Iaur). It remained a 'wilderness' and was not inhabited by Men of Gondor or of Rohan, and was seldom entered by any of them; but Men of the Anfalas believed that some of the old 'Wild Men' still lived there secretly.*<sup>323</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> 'At each turn of the road there were great standing stones that had been carved in the likeness of men, huge and clumsy-limbed, squatting cross-legged with their stumpy arms folded on fat bellies. Some in the wearing of the years had lost all features save the dark holes of their eyes that still stared sadly at the passer-by.'

<sup>323</sup> The name *Drúwaith Iaur* (Old Púkel-land) appears on Miss Pauline Baynes' decorated map of Middle-earth (see [note 161](#)), placed well to the north of the mountains of the promontory of Andrast. My father stated however that the name was inserted by him and was correctly placed.

*But in Rohan the identity of the statues of Dunharrow called 'Púkel-men' with the 'Wild Men' of the Drúadan Forest was not recognized, neither was their 'humanity': hence the reference by Ghân-buri-Ghân to persecution of the 'Wild Men' by the Rohirrim in the past ['leave Wild Men alone in the woods and do not hunt them like beasts any more']. Since Ghân-buri-Ghân was attempting to use the Common Speech he called his people 'Wild Men' (not without irony); but this was not of course their own name for themselves.*<sup>324</sup>

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A marginal jotting states that after the Battles of the Fords of Isen it was found that many Drúedain did indeed survive in the Drúwaith Iaur, for they came forth from the caves where they dwelt to attack remnants of Saruman's forces that had been driven away southwards.

In a passage cited on [p. 479](#) there is a reference to tribes of 'Wild Men', fishers and fowlers, on the coasts of Enedwaith, who were akin in race and speech to the Drúedain of Anórien.

<sup>324</sup> Once in *The Lord of the Rings* the term 'Woses' is used, when Elfhelm said to Meriadoc Brandybuck: 'You hear the Woses, the Wild Men of the Woods.' *Wose* is a modernization (in this case, the form that the word would have had now if it still existed in the language) of an Anglo-Saxon word *wása*, which is actually found only in the compound *wudu-wása*, 'wild man of the woods'. (Saeros the Elf of Doriath called Túrin a 'woodwose', [p. 105](#) above. The word survived long in English and was eventually corrupted into 'woodhouse'.) The actual word employed by the Rohirrim (of which 'wose' is a translation, according to the method employed throughout) is once mentioned: *róg*, plural *rógin*.

It seems that the term 'Púkel-men' (again a translation: it represents Anglo-Saxon *púcel*, 'goblin, demon', a relative of the word *púca* from which *Puck* is derived) was only used in Rohan of the images of Dunharrow.



## The Istari

The fullest account of the Istari was written, as it appears, in 1954 (see the Introduction, [pp. 17-18](#), for an account of its origin). I give it here in full, and will refer to it subsequently as ‘the essay on the Istari’.

*Wizard is a translation of Quenya istar (Sindarin ithron): one of the members of an ‘order’ (as they called it), claiming to possess, and exhibiting, eminent knowledge of the history and nature of the World. The translation (though suitable in its relation to ‘wise’ and other ancient words of knowing, similar to that of istar in Quenya) is not perhaps happy, since the Heren Istarion or ‘Order of Wizards’ was quite distinct from the ‘wizards’ and ‘magicians’ of later legend; they belonged solely to the Third Age and then departed, and none save maybe Elrond, Círdan, and Galadriel discovered of what kind they were or whence they came.*

*Among Men they were supposed (at first) by those that had dealings with them to be Men who had acquired lore and arts by long and secret study. They first appeared in Middle-earth about the year 1000 of the Third Age, but for long they went about in simple guise, as it were of Men already old in years but hale in body, travellers and wanderers, gaining knowledge of Middle-earth and all that dwelt therein, but revealing to none their powers and purposes. In that time Men saw them seldom and heeded them little. But as the shadow of Sauron began to grow and take shape again, they became more active, and sought ever to contest the growth of the Shadow, and to move Elves and Men to beware of their peril. Then far and wide rumour of their comings and goings, and their meddling in many matters, was noised among Men; and Men perceived that they did not die, but remained the same (unless it were that they aged somewhat in looks), while the fathers and sons of Men passed away. Men, therefore, grew to fear them, even when they loved them, and they were held to be of the Elven-race (with whom, indeed, they often consorted).*

*Yet they were not so. For they came from over the Sea out of the Uttermost West; though this was for long known only to Círdan, Guardian of the Third Ring, master of the Grey Havens, who saw their landings upon the western shores. Emissaries they were from the Lords of the West, the Valar, who still took counsel for the governance of Middle-earth, and when the shadow of Sauron began first to stir again took this means of resisting him. For with the consent of Eru they sent members of their own high order, but clad in bodies as of Men, real and not feigned, but subject to the fears and pains and weariness of earth, able to hunger and thirst and be slain; though because of their noble spirits they did not die, and aged only by the cares and labours of many long years. And this the Valar did, desiring to amend the errors of old, especially that they had attempted to guard and seclude the Eldar by their own might and glory fully revealed; whereas now their emissaries were forbidden to reveal themselves in forms of majesty, or to seek to rule the wills of Men or Elves by open display of power, but coming in shapes weak and humble were bidden to advise and persuade Men and Elves to good, and to seek to unite in love and understanding all those whom Sauron, should he come again, would endeavour to dominate and corrupt.*

*Of this Order the number is unknown; but of those that came to the North of Middle-earth, where there was most hope (because of the remnant of the Dúnedain and of the Eldar that abode there), the chiefs were five. The first to come was one of noble mien and bearing, with raven hair, and a fair voice, and he was clad in white; great skill he had in works of hand, and he was regarded by well-nigh all, even by the Eldar, as the head of the Order.<sup>325</sup> Others there were also: two clad in sea-blue, and one in earthen brown; and last came one who*

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<sup>325</sup> In *The Two Towers* [III 8](#) it is said that Saruman was ‘accounted by many the chief of Wizards’, and at the Council of Elrond (*The Fellowship of the Ring* [II 2](#)) Gandalf explicitly stated this: ‘Saruman the White is the greatest of my order.’



*seemed the least, less tall than the others, and in looks more aged, grey-haired and grey-clad, and leaning on a staff. But Círdan from their first meeting at the Grey Havens divined in him the greatest spirit and the wisest; and he welcomed him with reverence, and he gave to his keeping the Third Ring, Narya the Red.*

*‘For,’ said he, ‘great labours and perils lie before you, and lest your task prove too great and wearisome, take this Ring for your aid and comfort. It was entrusted to me only to keep secret, and here upon the West-shores it is idle; but I deem that in days ere long to come it should be in nobler hands than mine, that may wield it for the kindling of all hearts to courage.’<sup>326</sup> And the Grey Messenger took the Ring, and kept it ever secret; yet the White Messenger (who was skilled to uncover all secrets) after a time became aware of this gift, and begrudged it, and it was the beginning of the hidden ill-will that he bore to the Grey, which afterwards became manifest.*

*Now the White Messenger in later days became known among Elves as Curunír, the Man of Craft, in the tongues of Northern Men Saruman; but that was after he returned from his many journeys and came into the realm of Gondor and there abode. Of the Blue little was known in the West, and they had no names save Ithryn Luin ‘the Blue Wizards’; for they passed into the East with Curunír, but they never returned, and whether they remained in the East, pursuing there the purposes for which they were sent; or perished; or as some hold were ensnared by Sauron and became his servants, is not now known.<sup>327</sup> But none of these chances were impossible to be; for, strange indeed though this may seem, the Istari, being clad in bodies of Middle-earth, might even as Men and Elves fall away from their purposes, and do evil, forgetting the good in the search for power to effect it.*

A separate passage written in the margin no doubt belongs here:

*For it is said indeed that being embodied the Istari had need to learn much anew by slow experience, and though they knew whence they came the memory of the Blessed Realm was to them a vision from afar off, for which (so long as they remained true to their mission) they yearned exceedingly. Thus by enduring of free will the pangs of exile and the deceits of Sauron they might redress the evils of that time.*

*Indeed, of all the Istari, one only remained faithful, and he was the last-comer. For Radagast, the fourth, became enamoured of the many beasts and birds that dwelt in Middle-earth, and forsook Elves and Men, and spent his days among the wild creatures. Thus he got his name (which is in the tongue of Númenór of old, and signifies, it is said, ‘tender of beasts’).<sup>328</sup> And Curunír’Lân, Saruman the White, fell from his high errand, and becoming proud and impatient and enamoured of power sought to have his own will by force, and to oust Sauron; but he was ensnared by that dark spirit, mightier than he.*

*But the last-comer was named among the Elves Mithrandir, the Grey Pilgrim, for he dwelt in no place, and gathered to himself neither wealth nor followers, but ever went to and fro in the Westlands from Gondor to Angmar, and from Lindon to Lórien, befriending all folk in times of need. Warm and eager was his spirit (and it*

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<sup>326</sup> Another version of Círdan’s words to Gandalf on giving him the Ring of Fire at the Grey Havens is found in *Of the Rings of Power (The Silmarillion* p. 304), and in closely similar words in Appendix B to *The Lord of the Rings* ([headnote](#) to the Tale of Years of the Third Age).

<sup>327</sup> In a letter written in 1958 my father said that he knew nothing clearly about ‘the other two’, since they were not concerned in the history of the North-west of Middle-earth. ‘I think,’ he wrote, ‘they went as emissaries to distant regions, East and South, far out of Númenórean range: missionaries to “enemy-occupied” lands, as it were. What success they had I do not know; but I fear that they failed, as Saruman did, though doubtless in different ways; and I suspect they were founders or beginners of secret cults and “magic” traditions that outlasted the fall of Sauron.’

<sup>328</sup> In a very late note on the names of the Istari Radagast is said to be a name deriving from the Men of the Vales of Anduin, ‘not now clearly interpretable’. Rhosgobel, called ‘the old home of Radagast’ in *The Fellowship of the Ring* II 3, is said to have been ‘in the forest borders between the Carrock and the Old Forest Road’.

*was enhanced by the ring Narya), for he was the Enemy of Sauron, opposing the fire that devours and wastes with the fire that kindles, and succours in wanhope and distress; but his joy, and his swift wrath, were veiled in garments grey as ash, so that only those that knew him well glimpsed the flame that was within. Merry he could be, and kindly to the young and simple, and yet quick at times to sharp speech and the rebuking of folly; but he was not proud, and sought neither power nor praise, and thus far and wide he was beloved among all those that were not themselves proud. Mostly he journeyed unwearyingly on foot, leaning on a staff; and so he was called among Men of the North Gandalf, 'the Elf of the Wand'. For they deemed him (though in error, as has been said) to be of Elven-kind, since he would at times work wonders among them, loving especially the beauty of fire; and yet such marvels he wrought mostly for mirth and delight, and desired not that any should hold him in awe or take his counsels out of fear.*

*Elsewhere it is told how it was that when Sauron rose again, he also arose and partly revealed his power, and becoming the chief mover of the resistance to Sauron was at last victorious, and brought all by vigilance and labour to that end which the Valar under the One that is above them had designed. Yet it is said that in the ending of the task for which he came he suffered greatly, and was slain, and being sent back from death for a brief while was clothed then in white, and became a radiant flame (yet veiled still save in great need). And when all was over and the Shadow of Sauron was removed, he departed for ever over the Sea. Whereas Curunír was cast down, and utterly humbled, and perished at last by the hand of an oppressed slave; and his spirit went whithersoever it was doomed to go, and to Middle-earth, whether naked or embodied, came never back.*

In *The Lord of the Rings* the only general statement about the Istari is found in the [headnote](#) to the Tale of Years of the Third Age in Appendix B:

*When maybe a thousand years had passed, and the first shadow had fallen on Greenwood the Great, the Istari or Wizards appeared in Middle-earth. It was afterwards said that they came out of the Far West and were messengers sent to contest the power of Sauron, and to unite all those who had the will to resist him; but they were forbidden to match his power with power, or to seek to dominate Elves or Men by force and fear.*

*They came therefore in the shape of Men, though they were never young and aged only slowly, and they had many powers of mind and hand. They revealed their true names to few, but used such names as were given to them. The two highest of this order (of whom it is said there were five) were called by the Eldar Curunír, 'the Man of Skill', and Mithrandir, 'the Grey Pilgrim', but by Men in the North Saruman and Gandalf. Curunír journeyed often into the East, but dwelt at last in Isengard. Mithrandir was closest in friendship with the Eldar, and wandered mostly in the West, and never made for himself any lasting abode.*

There follows an account of the guardianship of the Three Rings of the Elves, in which it is said that Círdan gave the Red Ring to Gandalf when he first came to the Grey Havens from over the Sea ('for Círdan saw further and deeper than any other in Middle-earth').

The essay on the Istari just cited thus tells much about them and their origin that does not appear in *The Lord of the Rings* (and also contains some incidental remarks of great interest about the Valar, their continuing concern for Middle-earth, and their recognition of ancient error, which cannot be discussed here). Most notable are the description of the Istari as 'members of their own high order' (the order of the Valar), and the statements about their physical embodiment.<sup>329</sup> But also to be remarked are the coming of the Istari to Middle-earth at different times; Círdan's perception that Gandalf was the greatest of them; Saruman's knowledge that Gandalf possessed the Red Ring, and his jealousy; the view taken of Radagast, that he did not remain faithful to his mission; the two other 'Blue Wizards', unnamed, who passed with Saruman into the East, but unlike him never returned into the Westlands; the number of the order of the Istari (said here to be unknown, though 'the chiefs' of those that came to the North of Middle-earth were five); the explanation of the names Gandalf and Radagast; and the Sindarin word *ithron*, plural *ithryn*.

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<sup>329</sup> It appears indeed from the mention of Olórin in the *Valaquenta* (*The Silmarillion* pp. 30-31) that the Istari were Maiar; for Olórin was Gandalf.

The passage concerning the Istari in *Of the Rings of Power* (in *The Silmarillion*, p. 300) is very close indeed to the statement in Appendix B to *The Lord of the Rings* cited [above](#), even in wording; but it does include this sentence, agreeing with the essay on the Istari:

*Curunír was the eldest and came first, and after him came Mithrandir and Radagast, and others of the Istari who went into the East of Middle-earth, and do not come into these tales.*

Most of the remaining writings about the Istari (as a group) are unhappily no more than very rapid jottings, often illegible. Of major interest, however, is a brief and very hasty sketch of a narrative, telling of a council of the Valar, summoned it seems by Manwë ('and maybe he called upon Eru for counsel?'), at which it was resolved to send out three emissaries to Middle-earth. 'Who would go? For they must be mighty, peers of Sauron, but must forgo might, and clothe themselves in flesh so as to treat on equality and win the trust of Elves and Men. But this would imperil them, dimming their wisdom and knowledge, and confusing them with fears, cares, and wearinesses coming from the flesh.' But two only came forward: Curumo, who was chosen by Aulë, and Alatar, who was sent by Oromë. Then Manwë asked, where was Olórin? And Olórin, who was clad in grey, and having just entered from a journey had seated himself at the edge of the council, asked what Manwë would have of him. Manwë replied that he wished Olórin to go as the third messenger to Middle-earth (and it is remarked in parentheses that 'Olórin was a lover of the Eldar that remained', apparently to explain Manwë's choice). But Olórin declared that he was too weak for such a task, and that he feared Sauron. Then Manwë said that that was all the more reason why he should go, and that he commanded Olórin (illegible words follow that seem to contain the word 'third'). But at that Varda looked up and said: 'Not as the third'; and Curumo remembered it.

The note ends with the statement that Curumo [Saruman] took Aiwendil [Radagast] because Yavanna begged him, and that Alatar took Pallando as a friend.<sup>330</sup>

On another page of jottings clearly belonging to the same period it is said that 'Curumo was obliged to take Aiwendil to please Yavanna wife of Aulë'. There are here also some rough tables relating the names of the Istari to the names of the Valar: Olórin to Manwë and Varda, Curumo to Aulë, Aiwendil to Yavanna, Alatar to Oromë, and Pallando also to Oromë (but this replaces Pallando to Mandos and Nienna).

The meaning of these relations between Istari and Valar is clearly, in the light of the brief narrative just cited, that each Istar was chosen by each Vala for his innate characteristics—perhaps even that they were members of the 'people' of that Vala, in the same sense as is said of Sauron in the *Valaquenta* (*The Silmarillion* p. 32) that 'in his beginning he was of the Maiar of Aulë, and he remained mighty in the lore of that people'. It is thus very notable that Curumo (Saruman) was chosen by Aulë. There is no hint of an explanation of why Yavanna's evident desire that the Istari should include in their number one with a particular love of the things of her making could only be achieved by imposing Radagast's company on Saruman; while the suggestion in the essay on the Istari (p. 505) that in becoming enamoured of the wild creatures of Middle-earth Radagast neglected the purpose for which he was sent is perhaps not perfectly in accord with the idea of his being specially chosen by Yavanna. Moreover both in the essay on the Istari and in *Of the Rings of Power* Saruman came first and he came alone. On the other hand it is possible to see a hint of the story of Radagast's unwelcome company in Saruman's extreme scorn for him, as related by Gandalf to the Council of Elrond:

*"“Radagast the Brown!” laughed Saruman, and he no longer concealed his scorn. “Radagast the Bird-tamer! Radagast the Simple! Radagast the Fool! Yet he had just the wit to play the part that I set him.”"*

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<sup>330</sup> Curumo would seem to be Saruman's name in Quenya, recorded nowhere else; Curunír was the Sindarin form. Saruman, his name among Northern men, contains the Anglo-Saxon word *searu*, *saru*, 'skill, cunning, cunning device'. Aiwendil must mean 'lover of birds' cf. *Linaewen*, 'lake of birds' in Nevrastr (see the Appendix to *The Silmarillion*, entry [lin \(1\)](#)) For the meaning of Radagast see p. 505 and [note 328](#). Pallando, despite the spelling, perhaps contains *palan*, 'afar', as in *palantír* and in *Palarran*, 'Far Wanderer', the name of Aldarion's ship.



Whereas in the essay on the Istari it is said that the two who passed into the East had no names save *Ithryn Luin* ‘the Blue Wizards’ (meaning of course that they had no names in the West of Middle-earth), here they are named, as Alatar and Pallando, and are associated with Oromë, though no hint is given of the reason for this relationship. It might be (though this is the merest guess) that Oromë of all the Valar had the greatest knowledge of the further parts of Middle-earth, and that the Blue Wizards were destined to journey in those regions and to remain there.

Beyond the fact that these notes on the choosing of the Istari certainly date from after the completion of *The Lord of the Rings* I can find no evidence of their relation, in time of composition, to the essay on the Istari.<sup>331</sup>

I know of no other writings about the Istari save some very rough and in part uninterpretable notes that are certainly much later than any of the foregoing, and probably date from 1972:

*We must assume that they [the Istari] were all Maiar, that is persons of the ‘angelic’ order, though not necessarily of the same rank. The Maiar were ‘spirits’, but capable of self-incarnation, and could take ‘humane’ (especially Elvish) forms. Saruman is said (e.g. by Gandalf himself) to have been the chief of the Istari—that is, higher in Valinórean stature than the others. Gandalf was evidently the next in order. Radagast is presented as a person of much less power and wisdom. Of the other two nothing is said in published work save the reference to the Five Wizards in the altercation between Gandalf and Saruman [The Two Towers III 10]. Now these Maiar were sent by the Valar at a crucial moment in the history of Middle-earth to enhance the resistance of the Elves of the West, waning in power, and of the uncorrupted Men of the West, greatly outnumbered by those of the East and South. It may be seen that they were free each to do what they could in this mission; that they were not commanded or supposed to act together as a small central body of power and wisdom; and that each had different powers and inclinations and were chosen by the Valar with this in mind.*

Other writings are concerned exclusively with Gandalf (Olórin, Mithrandir). On the reverse of the isolated page containing the narrative of the choice of the Istari by the Valar appears the following very remarkable note:

*Elendil and Gil-galad were partners; but this was ‘the Last Alliance’ of Elves and Men. In Sauron’s final overthrow, Elves were not effectively concerned at the point of action. Legolas probably achieved least of the*

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<sup>331</sup> In a letter written in 1956 my father said that ‘There is hardly any reference in *The Lord of the Rings* to things that do not actually exist, on its own plane (of secondary or sub-creational reality)’, and added in a footnote to this: ‘The cats of Queen Berúthiel and the names of the other two wizards (five minus Saruman, Gandalf, Radagast) are all that I recollect.’ (In Moria Aragorn said of Gandalf that ‘He is surer of finding the way home in a blind night than the cats of Queen Berúthiel’ (*The Fellowship of the Ring* II 4).)

Even the story of Queen Berúthiel does exist, however, if only in a very ‘primitive’ outline, in one part illegible. She was the nefarious, solitary, and loveless wife of Tarannon, twelfth King of Gondor (Third Age 830-913) and first of the ‘Ship-kings’, who took the crown in the name of Falastur ‘Lord of the Coasts’, and was the first childless king (*The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A I (ii and iv)). Berúthiel lived in the King’s House in Osgiliath, hating the sounds and smells of the sea and the house that Tarannon built below Pelargir ‘upon arches whose feet stood deep in the wide waters of Ethir Anduin’ she hated all making, all colours and elaborate adornment, wearing only black and silver and living in bare chambers, and the gardens of the house in Osgiliath were filled with tormented sculptures beneath cypresses and yews. She had nine black cats and one white, her slaves, with whom she conversed, or read their memories, setting them to discover all the dark secrets of Gondor, so that she knew those things ‘that men wish most to keep hidden’, setting the white cat to spy upon the black, and tormenting them. No man in Gondor dared touch them; all were afraid of them, and cursed when they saw them pass. What follows is almost wholly illegible in the unique manuscript, except for the ending, which states that her name was erased from the Book of the Kings (‘but the memory of men is not wholly shut in books, and the cats of Queen Berúthiel never passed wholly out of men’s speech’), and that King Tarannon had her set on a ship alone with her cats and set adrift on the sea before a north wind. The ship was last seen flying past Umbar under a sickle moon, with a cat at the masthead and another as a figure-head on the prow.

*Nine Walkers. Galadriel, the greatest of the Eldar surviving in Middle-earth, was potent mainly in wisdom and goodness, as a director or counsellor in the struggle, unconquerable in resistance (especially in mind and spirit) but incapable of punitive action. In her scale she had become like Manwë with regard to the greater total action. Manwë, however, even after the Downfall of Númenor and the breaking of the old world, even in the Third Age when the Blessed Realm had been removed from the 'Circles of the World', was still not a mere observer. It is clearly from Valinor that the emissaries came who were called the Istari (or Wizards), and among them Gandalf, who proved to be the director and coordinator both of attack and defence.*

*Who was 'Gandalf'? It is said that in later days (when again a shadow of evil arose in the Kingdom) it was believed by many of the 'Faithful' of that time that 'Gandalf' was the last appearance of Manwë himself, before his final withdrawal to the watchtower of Taniquetil. (That Gandalf said that his name 'in the West' had been Olórin was, according to this belief, the adoption of an incognito, a mere by-name.) I do not (of course) know the truth of the matter, and if I did it would be a mistake to be more explicit than Gandalf was. But I think it was not so. Manwë will not descend from the Mountain until the Dagor Dagorath, and the coming of the End, when Melkor returns.<sup>332</sup> To the overthrow of Morgoth he sent his herald Eönwë. To the defeat of Sauron would he not then send some lesser (but mighty) spirit of the angelic people, one coëval and equal, doubtless, with Sauron in their beginnings, but not more? Olórin was his name. But of Olórin we shall never know more than he revealed in Gandalf.*

This is followed by sixteen lines of a poem in alliterative verse:

*Wilt thou learn the lore that was long secret  
of the Five that came from a far country?  
One only returned. Others never again  
under Men's dominion Middle-earth shall seek  
until Dagor Dagorath and the Doom cometh.  
How hast thou heard it: the hidden counsel  
of the Lords of the West in the land of Aman?  
The long roads are lost that led thither,  
and to mortal Men Manwë speaks not.  
From the West-that-was a wind bore it  
to the sleeper's ear, in the silences  
under night-shadow, when news is brought  
from lands forgotten and lost ages  
over seas of years to the searching thought.  
Not all are forgotten by the Elder King.  
Sauron he saw as a slow menace. . . .*

There is much here that bears on the larger question of the concern of Manwë and the Valar with the fate of Middle-earth after the Downfall of Númenor, which must fall quite outside the scope of this book.

After the words 'But of Olórin we shall never know more than he revealed in Gandalf' my father added later:

*save that Olórin is a High-elven name, and must therefore have been given to him in Valinor by the Eldar, or be a 'translation' meant to be significant to them. In either case, what was the significance of the name, given or assumed? Olor is a word often translated 'dream', but that does not refer to (most) human 'dreams', certainly not the dreams of sleep. To the Eldar it included the vivid contents of their memory, as of their imagination: it referred in fact to clear vision, in the mind, of things not physically present at the body's situation. But not only to an idea, but to a full clothing of this in particular form and detail.*

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<sup>332</sup> This is a reference to 'the Second Prophecy of Mandos', which does not appear in *The Silmarillion*; its elucidation cannot be attempted here, since it would require some account of the history of the mythology in relation to the published version.

An isolated etymological note explains the meaning similarly:

olo-s: vision, 'phantasy': Common Elvish name for 'construction of the mind' not actually (pre)existing in Eä apart from the construction, but by the Eldar capable of being by Art (Karmë) made visible and sensible. Olos is usually applied to fair constructions having solely an artistic object (i.e. not having the object of deception, or of acquiring power).

Words deriving from this root are cited: Quenya *olos* 'dream, vision', plural *olozi/olori*; *Mla*-(impersonal) 'to dream' *olosta* 'dreamy'; A reference is then made to *Olofantur*, which was the earlier 'true' name of Lórien, the Vala who was 'master of visions and dreams', before it was changed to *Irmo* in *The Silmarillion* (as *Nurufantur* was changed to *Námo* (Mandos): though the plural *Fëanturi* for these two 'brethren' survived in the *Valaquenta*).

These discussions of *olos*, *olor* are clearly to be connected with the passage in the *Valaquenta* (*The Silmarillion* pp. 30) where it is said that

*Olórin dwelt in Lórien in Valinor, and that though he loved the Elves, he walked among them unseen, or in form as one of them, and they did not know whence came the fair visions or the promptings of wisdom that he put into their hearts.*

In an earlier version of this passage it is said that Olórin was 'counsellor of Irmo', and that in the hearts of those who hearkened to him awoke thoughts 'of fair things that had not yet been but might yet be made for the enrichment of Arda'.

There is a long note to elucidate the passage in *The Two Towers* IV 5 where Faramir at Henneth Annûn told that Gandalf had said:

*Many are my names in many countries. Mithrandir among the Elves, Tharkûn to the Dwarves; Olórin I was in my youth in the West that is forgotten,<sup>333</sup> in the South Incánus, in the North Gandalf; to the East I go not.*

This note dates from before the publication of the second edition of *The Lord of the Rings* in 1966, and reads as follows:

*The date of Gandalf's arrival is uncertain. He came from beyond the Sea, apparently at about the same time as the first signs were noted of the re-aring of 'the Shadow': the reappearance and spread of evil things. But he is seldom mentioned in any annals or records during the second millennium of the Third Age. Probably he wandered long (in various guises), engaged not in deeds and events but in exploring the hearts of Elves and Men who had been and might still be expected to be opposed to Sauron. His own statement (or a version of it, and in any case not fully understood) is preserved that his name in youth was Olórin in the West, but he was called Mithrandir by the Elves (Grey Wanderer), Tharkûn by the Dwarves (said to mean 'Staff-man'), Incánus in the South, and Gandalf in the North, but 'to the East I go not'.*

*'The West' here plainly means the Far West beyond the Sea, not part of Middle-earth; the name Olórin is of High-Elven form. 'The North' must refer to the North-western regions of Middle-earth, in which most of the inhabitants or speaking-peoples were and remained uncorrupted by Morgoth or Sauron. In those regions resistance would be strongest to the evils left behind by the Enemy, or to Sauron his servant, if he should reappear. The bounds of this region were naturally vague; its eastern frontier was roughly the River Carnen to its junction with Celduin (the River Running), and so to Núrnen, and thence south to the ancient confines of South Gondor. (It did not originally exclude Mordor, which was occupied by Sauron, although outside his original realms 'in the East', as a deliberate threat to the West and the Númenóreans.) 'The North' thus includes all this great area: roughly West to East from the Gulf of Lune to Núrnen, and North and South from Carn Dûm to the southern bounds of ancient Gondor between it and Near Harad. Beyond Núrnen Gandalf had never gone.*

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<sup>333</sup> Gandalf said again 'Olórin I was in the West that is forgotten' when he spoke to the Hobbits and Gimli in Minas Tirith after the coronation of King Elessar: see 'The Quest of Erebor', p. 426.

*This passage is the only evidence that survives for his having extended his travels further South. Aragorn claims to have penetrated 'the far countries of Rhûn and Harad where the stars are strange' (The Fellowship of the Ring II 2).<sup>334</sup> It need not be supposed that Gandalf did so. These legends are North-centred—because it is represented as an historical fact that the struggle against Morgoth and his servants occurred mainly in the North, and especially the North-west, of Middle-earth, and that was so because the movement of Elves, and of Men afterwards escaping from Morgoth, had been inevitably westward, towards the Blessed Realm, and north-westward because at that point the shores of Middle-earth were nearest to Aman. Harad 'South' is thus a vague term, and although before its downfall Men of Númenor had explored the coasts of Middle-earth far southward, their settlements beyond Umbar had been absorbed, or being made by men already in Númenor corrupted by Sauron had become hostile and parts of Sauron's dominions. But the southern regions in touch with Gondor (and called by men of Gondor simply Harad 'South', Near or Far) were probably both more convertible to the 'Resistance', and also places where Sauron was most busy in the Third Age, since it was a source to him of man-power most readily used against Gondor. Into these regions Gandalf may well have journeyed in the earlier days of his labours.*

*But his main province was 'the North', and within it above all the North-west, Lindon, Eriador, and the Vales of Anduin. His alliance was primarily with Elrond and the northern Dúnedain (Rangers). Peculiar to him was his love and knowledge of the 'Halflings', because his wisdom had presage of their ultimate importance, and at the same time he perceived their inherent worth. Gondor attracted his attention less, for the same reason that made it more interesting to Saruman: it was a centre of knowledge and power. Its rulers by ancestry and all their traditions were irrevocably opposed to Sauron, certainly politically: their realm arose as a threat to him, and continued to exist only in so far and so long as his threat to them could be resisted by armed force. Gandalf could do little to guide their proud rulers or to instruct them, and it was only in the decay of their power, when they were ennobled by courage and steadfastness in what seemed a losing cause, that he began to be deeply concerned with them.*

*The name Incánus is apparently 'alien', that is neither Westron, nor Elvish (Sindarin or Quenya), nor explicable by the surviving tongues of Northern Men. A note in the Thain's Book says that it is a form adapted to Quenya of a word in the tongue of the Haradrim meaning simply 'North-spy' (Inka+nus).<sup>335</sup>*

*Gandalf is a substitution in the English narrative on the same lines as the treatment of Hobbit and Dwarf names. It is an actual Norse name (found applied to a Dwarf in Völuspá)<sup>336</sup> used by me since it appears to contain gandr, a staff, especially one used in 'magic', and might be supposed to mean 'Elvish wight with a (magic) staff'. Gandalf was not an Elf, but would be by Men associated with them, since his alliance and friendship with Elves was well-known. Since the name is attributed to 'the North' in general, Gandalf must be supposed to represent a Westron name, but one made up of elements not derived from Elvish tongues.*

*A wholly different view of the meaning of Gandalf's words 'in the South Incánus', and of the etymology of the name, is taken in a note written in 1967:*

*It is very unclear what was meant by 'in the South'. Gandalf disclaimed ever visiting 'the East', but actually he appears to have confined his journeys and guardianship to the western lands, inhabited by Elves and peoples in general hostile to Sauron. At any rate it seems unlikely that he ever journeyed or stayed long enough in the Harad (or Far Harad!) to have there acquired a special name in any of the alien languages of those little known regions. The South should thus mean Gondor (at its widest those lands under the suzerainty of Gondor at the height of its power). At the time of this Tale, however, we find Gandalf always called Mithrandir in*

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<sup>334</sup> The 'strange stars' apply strictly only to the Harad, and must mean that Aragorn travelled or voyaged some distance into the southern hemisphere. [Author's note.]

<sup>335</sup> A mark over the last letter of *Inkanus* suggests that the final consonant was *sh*.

<sup>336</sup> One of the poems of the collection of very ancient Norse poetry known as the 'Poetic Edda' or the 'Elder Edda'.

*Gondor (by men of rank or Númenórean origin, as Denethor, Faramir, etc.). This is Sindarin, and given as the name used by the Elves; but men of rank in Gondor knew and used this language. The 'popular' name in the Westron or Common Speech was evidently one meaning 'Greymantle', but having been devised long before was now in an archaic form. This is maybe represented by the Greyhame used by Éomer in Rohan.*

My father concluded here that 'in the South' did refer to Gondor, and that Incánus was (like Olórin) a Quenya name, but one devised in Gondor in earlier times while Quenya was still much used by the learned, and was the language of many historical records, as it had been in Númenor.

*Gandalf, it is said in the Tale of Years, appeared in the West early in the eleventh century of the Third Age. If we assume that he first visited Gondor, sufficiently often and for long enough to acquire a name or names there—say in the reign of Atanatar Alcarin, about 1800 years before the War of the Ring—it would be possible to take Incánus as a Quenya name devised for him which later become obsolete, and was remembered only by the learned.*

On this assumption an etymology is proposed from the Quenya elements *in(id)*—'mind' and *kan*—'ruler', especially in *cáno, cánu* 'ruler, governor, chieftain' (which latter constitutes the second element in the names *Turgon* and *Fingon*). In this note my father referred to the Latin word *incánus* 'grey-haired' in such a way as to suggest that this was the actual origin of this name of Gandalf's when *The Lord of the Rings* was written, which if true would be very surprising; and at the end of the discussion he remarked that the coincidence in form of the Quenya name and the Latin word must be regarded as an 'accident', in the same way that Sindarin *Orthanc* 'forked height' happens to coincide with the Anglo-Saxon word *orpanc* 'cunning device', which is the translation of the actual name in the language of the Rohirrim.





## The Palantíri

*The palantíri were no doubt never matters of common use or common knowledge, even in Númenor. In Middle-earth they were kept in guarded rooms, high in strong towers, only kings and rulers, and their appointed wardens, had access to them, and they were never consulted, nor exhibited, publicly. But until the passing of the Kings they were not sinister secrets. Their use involved no peril, and no king or other person authorized to survey them would have hesitated to reveal the source of his knowledge of the deeds or opinions of distant rulers, if obtained through the Stones.*<sup>337</sup>

*After the days of the Kings, and the loss of Minas Ithil, there is no further mention of their open and official use. There was no answering Stone left in the North after the shipwreck of Arvedui Last-king in the year 1975.<sup>338</sup> In 2002 the Ithil-stone was lost. There then remained only the Anor-stone in Minas Tirith and the Orthanc-stone.*<sup>339</sup>

*Two things contributed then to the neglect of the Stones, and their passing out of the general memory of the people. The first was ignorance of what had happened to the Ithil-stone: it was reasonably assumed that it was destroyed by the defenders before Minas Ithil was captured and sacked;<sup>340</sup> but it was clearly possible that it had been seized and had come into the possession of Sauron, and some of the wiser and more farseeing may have considered this. It would appear that they did so, and realized that the Stone would be of little use to him for the damage of Gondor, unless it made contact with another Stone that was in accord with it.<sup>341</sup> It was for this reason, it may be supposed, that the Anor-stone, about which all the records of the Stewards are silent until the War of the Ring, was kept as a closely-guarded secret, accessible only to the Ruling Stewards and never by them used (it seems) until Denethor II.*

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<sup>337</sup> Doubtless they were used in the consultations between Arnor and Gondor in the year 1944 concerning the succession to the Crown. The ‘messages’ received in Gondor in 1973, telling of the dire straits of the Northern Kingdom, was possibly their last use until the approach of the War of the Ring. [Author’s note.]

<sup>338</sup> With Arvedui were lost the Stones of Annúminas and Amon Sûl (Weathertop). The third *palantír* of the North was that in the tower Elostirion on Emyr Beraid, which had special properties (see [note 352](#)).

<sup>339</sup> The Stone of Osgiliath had been lost in the waters of Anduin in 1437, during the civil war of the Kin-strife.

<sup>340</sup> On the destructibility of the *palantíri* see [p. 529](#). In the entry in the Tale of Years for 2002, and also in Appendix A ([I, iv](#)), it is stated as a fact that the *palantír* was captured in the fall of Minas Ithil; but my father noted that these annals were made after the War of the Ring, and that the statement, however certain, was a deduction. The Ithil-stone was never found again, and probably perished in the ruin of Barad-dûr; see [p. 529](#).

<sup>341</sup> By themselves the Stones could only *see*: scenes or figures in distant places, or in the past. These were without explanation; and at any rate for men of later days it was difficult to direct what visions should be revealed by the will or desire of a surveyor. But when another mind occupied a Stone in accord, thought could be ‘transferred’ (received as ‘speech’), and visions of the things in the mind of the surveyor of one Stone could be seen by the other surveyor. [See further pp. [530](#), [531](#) and [note 357](#).] These powers were originally used mainly in consultation, for the purpose of exchanging news necessary to government, or advice and opinions; less often in simple friendship and pleasure or in greetings and condolence. It was only Sauron who used a Stone for the transference of his superior will, dominating the weaker surveyor and forcing him to reveal hidden thought and to submit to commands. [Author’s note.]

*The second reason was the decay of Gondor, and the waning of interest in or knowledge of ancient history among all but a few even of the high men of the realm, except insofar as it concerned their genealogies: their descent and kinship. Gondor after the Kings declined into a 'Middle Age' of fading knowledge, and simpler skills. Communications depended on messengers and errand-riders, or in times of urgency upon beacons, and if the Stones of Anor and Orthanc were still guarded as treasures out of the past, known to exist only by a few, the Seven Stones of old were by the people generally forgotten, and the rhymes of lore that spoke of them were if remembered no longer understood; their operations were transformed in legend into the Elvish powers of the ancient kings with their piercing eyes, and the swift birdlike spirits that attended on them, bringing them news or bearing their messages.*

*The Orthanc-stone appears to have been at this time long disregarded by the Stewards: it was no longer of any use to them, and was secure in its impregnable tower. Even if it too had not been overshadowed by the doubt concerning the Ithil-stone, it stood in a region with which Gondor became less and less directly concerned. Calenardhon, never densely populated, had been devastated by the Dark Plague of 1636, and thereafter steadily denuded of inhabitants of Númenórean descent by migration to Ithilien and lands nearer Anduin. Isengard remained a personal possession of the Stewards, but Orthanc itself became deserted, and eventually it was closed and its keys removed to Minas Tirith. If Beren the Steward considered the Stone at all when he gave these to Saruman, he probably thought that it could be in no safer hands than those of the head of the Council opposed to Sauron.*

*Saruman had no doubt from his investigations<sup>342</sup> gained a special knowledge of the Stones, things that would attract his attention, and had become convinced that the Orthanc-stone was still intact in its tower. He acquired the keys of Orthanc in 2759, nominally as warden of the tower and lieutenant of the Steward of Gondor. At that time the matter of the Orthanc-stone would hardly concern the White Council. Only Saruman, having gained the favour of the Stewards, had yet made sufficient study of the records of Gondor to perceive the interest of the palantíri and the possible uses of those that survived; but of this he said nothing to his colleagues. Owing to Saruman's jealousy and hatred of Gandalf he ceased to cooperate with the Council, which last met in 2953. Without any formal declaration Saruman then seized Isengard as his own domain and paid no further attention to Gondor. The Council no doubt disapproved of this; but Saruman was a free agent, and had the right, if he wished, to act independently according to his own policy in the resistance to Sauron.<sup>343</sup>*

*The Council in general must independently have known of the Stones and their ancient dispositions, but they did not regard them as of much present importance: they were things that belonged to the history of the Kingdoms of the Dúnedain, marvellous and admirable, but mostly now lost or rendered of little use. It must be remembered that the Stones were originally 'innocent', serving no evil purpose. It was Sauron who made them sinister, and instruments of domination and deceit.*

*Though (warned by Gandalf) the Council may have begun to doubt Saruman's designs as regarded the Rings, not even Gandalf knew that he had become an ally, or servant, of Sauron. This Gandalf only discovered in July 3018. But, although Gandalf had in latter years enlarged his own and the Council's knowledge of Gondor's history by study of its documents, his and their chief concern was still with the Ring: the possibilities latent in*

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<sup>342</sup> Cf. Gandalf's [remarks](#) to the Council of Elrond concerning Saruman's long study of the scrolls and books of Minas Tirith.

<sup>343</sup> For any more 'worldly' policy of power and warlike strength Isengard was well placed, being the key to the Gap of Rohan. This was a weak point in the defences of the West, especially since the decay of Gondor. Through it hostile spies and emissaries could pass in secret, or eventually, as in the former Age, forces of war. The Council seems to have been unaware, since for many years Isengard had been closely guarded, of what went on within its Ring. The use, and possibly special breeding, of Orcs was kept secret, and cannot have begun much before 2990 at earliest. The orc-troops seem never to have been used beyond the territory of Isengard before the attack on Rohan. Had the Council known of this they would, of course, at once have realized that Saruman had become evil. [Author's note.]

*the Stones were not realized. It is evident that at the time of the War of the Ring the Council had not long become aware of the doubt concerning the fate of the Ithil-stone, and failed (understandably even in such persons as Elrond, Galadriel, and Gandalf, under the weight of their cares) to appreciate its significance, to consider what might be the result if Sauron became possessed of one of the Stones, and anyone else should then make use of another. It needed the demonstration on Dol Baran of the effects of the Orthanc-stone on Peregrin to reveal suddenly that the 'link' between Isengard and Barad-dûr (seen to exist after it was discovered that forces of Isengard had been joined with others directed by Sauron in the attack on the Fellowship at Parth Galen) was in fact the Orthanc-stone—and one other palantír.*

*In his talk to Peregrin as they rode on Shadowfax from Dol Baran (The Two Towers III 11) Gandalf's immediate object was to give the Hobbit some idea of the history of the palantíri, so that he might begin to realize the ancientry, dignity, and power of things that he had presumed to meddle with. He was not concerned to exhibit his own processes of discovery and deduction, except in its last point: to explain how Sauron came to have control of them, so that they were perilous for anyone, however exalted, to use. But Gandalf's mind was at the same time earnestly busy with the Stones, considering the bearings of the revelation at Dol Baran upon many things that he had observed and pondered: such as the wide knowledge of events far away possessed by Denethor, and his appearance of premature old age, first observable when he was not much above sixty years old, although he belonged to a race and family that still normally had longer lives than other men. Undoubtedly Gandalf's haste to reach Minas Tirith, in addition to the urgency of the time and the imminence of war, was quickened by his sudden fear that Denethor also had made use of a palantír, the Anor-stone, and his desire to judge what effect this had had on him: whether in the crucial test of desperate war it would not prove that he (like Saruman) was no longer to be trusted and might surrender to Mordor. Gandalf's dealings with Denethor on arrival in Minas Tirith, and in the following days, and all things that they are reported to have said to one another, must be viewed in the light of this doubt in Gandalf's mind.<sup>344</sup>*

*The importance of the palantír of Minas Tirith in his thoughts thus dated only from Peregrin's experience on Dol Baran. But his knowledge or guesses concerning its existence were, of course, much earlier. Little is known of Gandalf's history until the end of the Watchful Peace (2460) and the formation of the White Council (2463), and his special interest in Gondor seems only to have been shown after Bilbo's finding of the Ring (2941) and Sauron's open return to Mordor (2951).<sup>345</sup> His attention was then (as was Saruman's) concentrated on the Ring of Isildur; but in his reading in the archives of Minas Tirith he may be assumed to have learned much about the palantíri of Gondor, though with less immediate appreciation of their possible significance than that shown by Saruman, whose mind was in contrast to Gandalf's always more attracted by artefacts and instruments of power than by persons. Gandalf all the same probably at that time already knew more than did Saruman about the nature and ultimate origin of the palantíri, since all that concerned the ancient realm of Arnor and the later history of those regions was his special province, and he was in close alliance with Elrond.*

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<sup>344</sup> Denethor was evidently aware of Gandalf's guesses and suspicions, and at once both angered and sardonically amused by them. Note his words to Gandalf at their meeting in Minas Tirith (*The Return of the King* V 1): 'I know already sufficient of these deeds for my own counsel against the menace of the East', and especially his mocking words that followed: 'Yea; for though the Stones be lost, they say, still the lords of Gondor have keener sight than lesser men, and many messages come to them.' Quite apart from the *palantíri*, Denethor was a man of great mental powers, and a quick reader of thoughts behind faces and words, but he may well also have actually seen in the Anor-stone visions of events in Rohan and Isengard. [Author's note.]

See further [p. 531](#).

<sup>345</sup> Note the passage in *The Two Towers* IV 5 where Faramir (who was born in 2983) recollected seeing Gandalf in Minas Tirith when he was a child, and again two or three times later; and said that it was interest in records that brought him. The last time would have been in 3017, when Gandalf found the scroll of Isildur. [Author's note.]



*But the Anor-stone had become a secret: no mention of its fate after the fall of Minas Ithil appeared in any of the annals or records of the Stewards. History would indeed make it clear that neither Orthanc nor the White Tower in Minas Tirith had ever been captured or sacked by enemies, and it might therefore be supposed that the Stones were most probably intact and remained in their ancient sites; but it could not be certain that they had not been removed by the Stewards, and perhaps ‘buried deep’<sup>346</sup> in some secret treasure-chamber, even one in some last hidden refuge in the mountains, comparable to Dunharrow.*

*Gandalf should have been reported as saying that he did not think that Denethor had presumed to use it, until his wisdom failed.<sup>347</sup> He could not state it as a known fact, for when and why Denethor had dared to use the Stone was and remains a matter of conjecture. Gandalf might well think as he did on the matter, but it is probable, considering Denethor and what is said about him, that he began to use the Anor-stone many years before 3019, and earlier than Saruman ventured or thought it useful to use the Stone of Orthanc. Denethor succeeded to the Stewardship in 2984, being then fifty-four years old: a masterful man, both wise and learned beyond the measure of those days, and strong-willed, confident in his own powers, and dauntless. His ‘grimness’ was first observable to others after his wife Finduilas died in 2988, but it seems fairly plain that he had at once turned to the Stone as soon as he came to power, having long studied the matter of the palantíri and the traditions regarding them and their use preserved in the special archives of the Stewards, available beside the Ruling Steward only to his heir. During the end of the rule of his father, Ecthelion II, he must have greatly desired to consult the Stone, as anxiety in Gondor increased, while his own position was weakened by the fame of ‘Thorongil’<sup>348</sup> and the favour shown to him by his father. At least one of his motives must have been jealousy of Thorongil, and hostility to Gandalf, to whom, during the ascendancy of Thorongil, his father paid much attention; Denethor desired to surpass these ‘usurpers’ in knowledge and information, and also if possible to keep an eye on them when they were elsewhere.*

*The breaking strain of Denethor’s confrontation of Sauron must be distinguished from the general strain of using the Stone.<sup>349</sup> The latter Denethor thought that he could endure (and not without reason); confrontation with Sauron almost certainly did not occur for many years, and was probably never originally contemplated by Denethor. For the uses of the palantíri, and the distinction between their solitary use for ‘seeing’ and their use for communication with another respondent Stone and its ‘surveyor’, see pp. 530, 531. Denethor could, after he had acquired the skill, learn much of distant events by the use of the Anor-stone alone, and even after Sauron became aware of his operations he could still do so, as long as he retained the strength to control his Stone to his own purposes, in spite of Sauron’s attempt to ‘wrench’ the Anor-stone always towards himself. It must also be considered that the Stones were only a small item in Sauron’s vast designs and operations: a means of dominating and deluding two of his opponents, but he would not (and could not) have the Ithil-stone under perpetual observation. It was not his way to commit such instruments to the use of subordinates; nor had he any servant whose mental powers were superior to Saruman’s or even Denethor’s.*

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<sup>346</sup> This is a reference to Gandalf’s words to Peregrin (*The Two Towers* III 11): ‘Who knows where the lost Stones of Arnor and Gondor now lie, buried, or drowned deep?’

<sup>347</sup> This is a reference to Gandalf’s words after the death of Denethor in *The Return of the King* V 7, at the end of the chapter. My father’s emendation (arising from the present discussion) of ‘Denethor did not presume to use it’ to ‘Denethor would not presume to use it’ was (apparently by mere oversight) not incorporated in the revised edition. See the Introduction, p. 18.

<sup>348</sup> Thorongil (‘Eagle of the Star’) was the name given to Aragorn when he served in disguise Ecthelion II of Gondor; see *The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A (I, iv).

<sup>349</sup> The use of the *palantíri* was a mental strain, especially on men of later days not trained to the task, and no doubt in addition to his anxieties this strain contributed to Denethor’s ‘grimness’. It was probably felt earlier by his wife than by others and increased her unhappiness, to the hastening of her death. [Author’s note.]

*In the case of Denethor, the Steward was strengthened, even against Sauron himself, by the fact that the Stones were far more amenable to legitimate users: most of all to true 'Heirs of Elendil' (as Aragorn), but also to one with inherited authority (as Denethor), as compared to Saruman, or Sauron. It may be noted that the effects were different. Saruman fell under the domination of Sauron and desired his victory, or no longer opposed it. Denethor remained steadfast in his rejection of Sauron, but was made to believe that his victory was inevitable, and so fell into despair. The reasons for this difference were no doubt that in the first place Denethor was a man of great strength of will, and maintained the integrity of his personality until the final blow of the (apparently) mortal wound of his only surviving son. He was proud, but this was by no means merely personal: he loved Gondor and its people, and deemed himself appointed by destiny to lead them in this desperate time. And in the second place the Anor-stone was his by right, and nothing but expediency was against his use of it in his grave anxieties. He must have guessed that the Ithil-stone was in evil hands, and risked contact with it, trusting his strength. His trust was not entirely unjustified. Sauron failed to dominate him and could only influence him by deceptions. Probably he did not at first look towards Mordor, but was content with such 'far views' as the Stone would afford; hence his surprising knowledge of events far off. Whether he ever thus made contact with the Orthanc-stone and Saruman is not told; probably he did, and did so with profit to himself. Sauron could not break in on these conferences: only the surveyor using the Master Stone of Osgiliath could 'eavesdrop'. While two of the other Stones were in response, the third would find them both blank.*<sup>350</sup>

*There must have been a considerable lore concerning the palantíri preserved in Gondor by the Kings and Stewards, and handed down even after use was no longer made of them. These Stones were an inalienable gift to Elendil and his heirs, to whom alone they belonged by right; but this does not mean that they could only be used rightfully by one of these 'heirs'. They could be used lawfully by anyone authorized by either the 'heir of Anárion' or the 'heir of Isildur', that is, a lawful King of Gondor or Arnor. Actually they must normally have been used by such deputies. Each Stone had its own warden, one of whose duties was to 'survey the Stone' at regular intervals, or when commanded, or in times of need. Other persons also were appointed to visit the Stones, and ministers of the Crown concerned with 'intelligence' made regular and special inspections of them, reporting the information so gained to the King and Council, or to the King privately, as the matter demanded. In Gondor latterly, as the office of Steward rose in importance and became hereditary, providing as it were a permanent 'under-study' to the King, and an immediate viceroy at need, the command and use of the Stones seems mainly to have been in the hands of the Stewards, and the traditions concerning their nature and use to have been guarded and transmitted in their House. Since the Stewardship had become hereditary from 1998 onwards,<sup>351</sup> so the authority to use, or again to depute the use, of the Stones, was lawfully transmitted in their line, and belonged therefore fully to Denethor.*<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>350</sup> An unplaced marginal note observes that Saruman's integrity 'had been undermined by purely personal pride and lust for the domination of his own will. His study of the Rings had caused this, for his pride believed that he could use them, or It, in defiance of any other will. He, having lost any devotion to other persons or causes, was open to the domination of a superior will, to its threats, and to its display of power.' And moreover he had himself no *right* to the Orthanc-stone.

<sup>351</sup> 1998 was the year of the death of Pelendur, Steward of Gondor. 'After the days of Pelendur the Stewardship became hereditary as a kingship, from father to son or nearest kin,' *The Lord of the Rings*, Appendix A (I, iv).

<sup>352</sup> The case was different in Arnor. Lawful possession of the Stones belonged to the King (who normally used the Stone of Annúminas); but the Kingdom became divided and the high-kingship was in dispute. The Kings of Arthedain, who were plainly those with the just claim, maintained a special warden at Amon Sûl, whose Stone was held to be the chief of the Northern *palantíri*, being the largest and most powerful and the one through which communication with Gondor was mainly conducted. After the destruction of Amon Sûl by Angmar in 1409 both Stones were placed at Fornost, where the King of Arthedain dwelt. These were lost in the shipwreck of Arvedui, and no deputy was left with any authority direct or inherited to use the Stones. One only remained in the North, the Elendil Stone on Eryn Beraid, but this was one of special properties, and not employable in communications. Hereditary right to use it would no doubt still reside in the 'heir of Isildur', the recognized

*It must however be noted with regard to the narrative of The Lord of the Rings that over and above such deputed authority, even hereditary, any 'heir of Elendil' (that is, a recognized descendant occupying a throne or lordship in the Númenórean realms by virtue of this descent) had the right to use any of the palantíri. Aragorn thus claimed the right to take the Orthanc-stone into his possession, since it was now, for the time being, without owner or warden; and also because he was de jure the rightful King of both Gondor and Arnor, and could, if he willed, for just cause withdraw all previous grants to himself.*

*The 'lore of the Stones' is now forgotten, and can only be partly recovered by conjecture and from things recorded about them. They were perfect spheres, appearing when at rest to be made of solid glass or crystal deep black in hue. At smallest they were about a foot in diameter, but some, certainly the Stones of Osgiliath and Amon Sûl, were much larger and could not be lifted by one man. Originally they were placed in sites suitable to their sizes and intended uses, standing on low round tables of black marble in a central cup or depression, in which they could at need be revolved by hand. They were very heavy but perfectly smooth, and would suffer no damage if by accident or malice they were unseated and rolled off their tables. They were indeed unbreakable by any violence then controlled by men, though some believed that great heat, such as that of Orodruin, might shatter them, and surmised that this had been the fate of the Ithil-stone in the fall of Barad-dûr.*

*Though without any external markings of any kind they had permanent poles, and were originally so placed in their sites that they stood 'upright': their diameters from pole to pole pointed to the earth's centre, but the permanent nether pole must then be at the bottom. The faces along the circumference in this position were the viewing faces, receiving the visions from the outside, but transmitting them to the eye of a 'surveyor' upon the far side. A surveyor, therefore, who wished to look west would place himself on the east side of the Stone, and if he wished to shift his vision northward must move to his left, southward. But the minor Stones, those of Orthanc, Ithil, and Anor, and probably Annúminas, had also fixed orientation in their original situation, so that (for example) their west face would only look west and turned in other directions was blank. If a Stone became unseated or disturbed it could be re-set by observation, and it was then useful to revolve it. But when removed and cast down, as was the Orthanc-stone, it was not so easy to set right. So it was 'by chance' as Men call it (as Gandalf would have said) that Peregrin, fumbling with the Stone, must have set it on the ground more or less 'upright', and sitting westward of it have had the fixed east-looking face in the proper position. The major Stones were not so fixed: their circumference could be revolved and they could still 'see' in any direction.<sup>353</sup>*

*Alone the palantíri could only 'see': they did not transmit sound. Ungoverned by a directing mind they were wayward, and their 'visions' were (apparently at least) haphazard. From a high place their westward face, for instance, would look to vast distance, its vision blurred and distorted to either side and above and below, and its foreground obscured by things behind receding in ever-diminishing clarity. Also, what they 'saw' was directed or hindered by chance, by darkness, or by 'shrouding' (see [below](#)). The vision of the palantíri was not 'blinded' or 'occluded' by physical obstacles, but only by darkness; so they could look through a mountain as they could look through a patch of dark or shadow, but see nothing within that did not receive some light. They*

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chieftain of the Dúnedain, and descendant of Arvedui. But it is not known whether any of them, including Aragorn, ever looked into it, desiring to gaze into the lost West. This Stone and its tower were maintained and guarded by Círdan and the Elves of Lindon. [Author's note.]

It is told in Appendix A ([I, iii](#)) to *The Lord of the Rings* that the *palantír* of Emyr Beraid 'was unlike the others and not in accord with them; it looked only to the Sea. Elendil set it there so that he could look back with "straight sight" and see Eressëa in the vanished West; but the bent seas below covered Númenor for ever.' Elendil's vision of Eressëa in the *palantír* of Emyr Beraid is told of also in *Of the Rings of Power* (*The Silmarillion* [p. 292](#)); 'it is believed that thus he would at times see far away even the Tower of Avallónë upon Eressëa, where the Master-stone abode, and yet abides'. It is notable that in the present account there is no reference to this Master-stone.

<sup>353</sup> A later, detached note denies that the *palantíri* were polarized or oriented, but gives no further detail.

could see through walls but see nothing within rooms, caves, or vaults unless some light fell on it; and they could not themselves provide or project light. It was possible to guard against their sight by the process called 'shrouding', by which certain things or areas would be seen in a Stone only as a shadow or a deep mist. How this was done (by those aware of the Stones and the possibility of being watched by them) is one of the lost mysteries of the *palantíri*.<sup>354</sup>

A viewer could by his will cause the vision of the Stone to concentrate on some point, on or near its direct line.<sup>355</sup> The uncontrolled 'visions' were small, especially in the minor Stones, though they were much larger to the eye of a beholder who placed himself at some distance from the surface of the *palantír* (about three feet at best). But controlled by the will of a skilled and strong surveyor, remoter things could be enlarged, brought as it were nearer and clearer, while their background was almost suppressed. Thus a man at a considerable distance might be seen as a tiny figure, half an inch high, difficult to pick out against a landscape or a concourse of other men; but concentration could enlarge and clarify the vision till he was seen in clear if reduced detail like a picture apparently a foot or more in height, and recognized if he was known to the surveyor. Great concentration might even enlarge some detail that interested the surveyor, so that it could be seen (for instance) if he had a ring on his hand.

But this 'concentration' was very tiring and might become exhausting. Consequently it was only undertaken when information was urgently desired, and chance (aided by other information maybe) enabled the surveyor to pick out items (significant for him and his immediate concern) from the welter of the Stone's visions. For example, Denethor sitting before the Anor-stone anxious about Rohan, and deciding whether or not at once to order the kindling of the beacons and the sending out of the 'arrow', might place himself in a direct line looking north-west by west through Rohan, passing close to Edoras and on towards the Fords of Isen. At that time there might be visible movements of men in that line. If so, he could concentrate on (say) a group, see them as Riders, and finally discover some figure known to him: Gandalf, for instance, riding with the reinforcements to Helm's Deep, and suddenly breaking away and racing northwards.<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>354</sup> The later note referred to in [note 353](#) treats some of these aspects of the *palantíri* slightly differently; in particular the concept of 'shrouding' seems differently employed. This note, very hasty and somewhat obscure, reads in part: 'They retained the images received, so that each contained within itself a multiplicity of images and scenes, some from a remote past. They could not "see" in the dark; that is, things that were in the dark were not recorded by them. They themselves could be and usually were kept in the dark, because it was much easier then to see the scenes that they presented, and as the centuries passed to limit their "overcrowding". How they were thus "shrouded" was kept secret and so is now unknown. They were not "blinded" by physical obstacles, as a wall, a hill, or a wood, so long as the distant objects were themselves in light. It was said, or guessed, by later commentators that the Stones were placed in their original sites in spherical cases that were locked to prevent their misuse by the unauthorized; but that this casing also performed the office of shrouding them and making them quiescent. The cases must therefore have been made of some metal or other substance not now known.' Marginal jottings associated with this note are partly illegible, but so much can be made out, that the remoter the past the clearer the view, while for distant viewing there was a 'proper distance', varying with the Stones, at which distant objects were clearer. The greater *palantíri* could look much further than the lesser; for the lesser the 'proper distance' was of the order of five hundred miles, as between the Orthanc-stone and that of Anor. 'Ithil was too near, but was largely used for [illegible words], not for personal contacts with Minas Anor.'

<sup>355</sup> The orientation was not, of course, divided into separate 'quarters' but continuous; so that its *direct* line of vision to a surveyor sitting south-east would be to the north-west, and so on. [Author's note.]

<sup>356</sup> See *The Two Towers* [III 7](#).

*The palantiri could not themselves survey men's minds, at unawares or unwilling; for the transference of thought depended on the wills of the user on either side, and thought (received as speech)<sup>357</sup> was only transmittable by one Stone to another in accord.*

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<sup>357</sup> In a detached note this aspect is more explicitly described: 'Two persons, each using a Stone "in accord" with the other, could converse, but not by sound, which the Stones did not transmit. Looking one at the other they would exchange "thought"—not their full or true thought, or their intentions, but "silent speech", the thoughts they wished to transmit (already formalized in linguistic form in their minds or actually spoken aloud), which would be received by their respondents and of course immediately transformed into "speech", and only reportable as such.'



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# NARN I CHÎN HÚRIN

THE TALE OF THE CHILDREN OF HÚRIN



J.R.R. TOLKIEN

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J.R.R. TOLKIEN  
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*The Tale of the Children of Húrin*

edited by

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## Preface

It is undeniable that there are a very great many readers of *The Lord of the Rings* for whom the legends of the Elder Days (as previously published in varying forms in *The Silmarillion*, *Unfinished Tales*, and *The History of Middle-earth*) are altogether unknown, unless by their reputations as strange and inaccessible in mode and manner. For this reason it has seemed to me for a long time that there was a good case for presenting my father's long version of the legend of the Children of Húrin as an independent work, between its own covers, with a minimum of editorial presence, and above all in continuous narrative without gaps or interruptions, if this could be done without distortion or invention, despite the unfinished state in which he left some parts of it.

I have thought that if the story of the fate of Túrin and Niënor, the children of Húrin and Morwen, could be presented in this way, a window might be opened onto a scene and a story set in an unknown Middle-earth that are vivid and immediate, yet conceived as handed down from remote ages: the drowned lands in the west beyond the Blue Mountains where Treebeard walked in his youth, and the life of Túrin Turambar, in Dor-lómin, Doriath, Nargothrond, and the Forest of Brethil.

This book is thus primarily addressed to such readers as may perhaps recall that the hide of Shelob was so horrendously hard that it 'could not be pierced by any strength of men, not though Elf or Dwarf should forge the steel or the children of Húrin hand of Beren or of Túrin wield it', or that Elrond named Túrin to Frodo at Rivendell as one of 'the mighty Elf-friends of old'; but know no more of him.

When my father was a young man, during the years of the First World War and long before there was any inkling of the tales that were to form the narrative of *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings*, he began the writing of a collection of stories that he called *The Book of Lost Tales*. That was his first work of imaginative literature, and a substantial one, for though it was left unfinished there are fourteen completed tales. It was in *The Book of Lost Tales* that there first appeared in narrative the Gods, or Valar; Elves and Men as the Children of Ilúvatar (the Creator); Melkor-Morgoth the great Enemy; Balrogs and Orcs; and the lands in which the Tales are set, Valinor 'land of the Gods' beyond the western ocean, and the 'Great Lands' (afterwards called 'Middle-earth', between the seas of east and west).

Among the *Lost Tales* three were of much greater length and fullness, and all three are concerned with Men as well as Elves: they are *The Tale of Tinúviel* (which appears in brief form in *The Lord of the Rings* as the story of Beren and Lúthien that Aragorn told to the hobbits on Weathertop; this my father wrote in 1917), *Turambar and the Foalókë* (Túrin Turambar and the Dragon, certainly in existence by 1919, if not before), and *The Fall of Gondolin* (1916-17). In an often-quoted passage of a long letter describing his work that my father wrote in 1951, three years before the publication of *The Fellowship of the Ring*, he told of his early ambition: 'once upon a time (my crest has long since fallen) I had a mind to make a body of more or less connected legend, ranging from the large and cosmogonic, to the level of romantic fairy-story—the larger founded on the lesser in contact with the earth, the lesser drawing splendour from the vast backcloths . . . I would draw some of the great tales in fullness, and leave many only placed in the scheme, and sketched.'

It is seen from this reminiscence that from far back it was a part of his conception of what came to be called *The Silmarillion* that some of the 'Tales' should be told in much fuller form; and indeed in that same letter of 1951 he referred expressly to the three stories which I have mentioned above as being much the longest in *The Book of Lost Tales*. Here he called the tale of Beren and Lúthien 'the chief of the stories of *The Silmarillion*', and of it he said: 'the story is (I think a beautiful and powerful) heroic-fairy-romance, receivable in itself with only a very general vague knowledge of the background. But it is also a fundamental link in the cycle, deprived of its full significance out of its place therein.' 'There are other stories almost equally full in treatment,' he went

on, ‘and equally independent, and yet linked to the general history’: these are *The Children of Húrin* and *The Fall of Gondolin*.

It thus seems unquestionable, from my father’s own words, that if he could achieve final and finished narratives on the scale he desired, he saw the three ‘Great Tales’ of the Elder Days (Beren and Lúthien, the Children of Húrin, and the Fall of Gondolin) as works sufficiently complete in themselves as not to demand knowledge of the great body of legend known as *The Silmarillion*. On the other hand, as my father observed in the same place, the tale of the Children of Húrin is integral to the history of Elves and Men in the Elder Days, and there are necessarily a good many references to events and circumstances in that larger story.

It would be altogether contrary to the conception of this book to burden its reading with an abundance of notes giving information about persons and events that are in any case seldom of real importance to the immediate narrative. However, it may be found helpful here and there if some such assistance is provided, and I have accordingly given in the Introduction a very brief sketch of Beleriand and its peoples near the end of the Elder Days, when Túrin and Niënor were born; and, as well as a map of Beleriand and the lands to the North, I have included a list of all names occurring in the text with very concise indications concerning each, and simplified genealogies.

At the end of the book is an Appendix in two parts: the first concerned with my father’s attempts to achieve a final form for the three tales, and the second with the composition of the text in this book, which differs in many respects from that in *Unfinished Tales*.

I am very grateful to my son Adam Tolkien for his indispensable help in the arrangement and presentation of the material in the Introduction and Appendix, and for easing the book into the (to me) daunting world of electronic transmission.



## Introduction

### Middle-Earth In The Elder Days

The character of Túrin was of deep significance to my father, and in dialogue of directness and immediacy he achieved a poignant portrait of his boyhood, essential to the whole: his severity and lack of gaiety, his sense of justice and his compassion; of Húrin also, quick, gay, and sanguine, and of Morwen his mother, reserved, courageous, and proud; and of the life of the household in the cold country of Dor-lómin during the years, already full of fear, after Morgoth broke the Siege of Angband, before Túrin was born.

But all this was in the Elder Days, the First Age of the world, in a time unimaginably remote. The depth in time to which this story reaches back was memorably conveyed in a passage in *The Lord of the Rings*. At the great council in Rivendell Elrond spoke of the Last Alliance of Elves and Men and the defeat of Sauron at the end of the Second Age, more than three thousand years before:

*Thereupon Elrond paused a while and sighed. 'I remember well the splendour of their banners,' he said. 'It recalled to me the glory of the Elder Days and the hosts of Beleriand, so many great princes and captains were assembled. And yet not so many, nor so fair, as when Thangorodrim was broken, and the Elves deemed that evil was ended for ever, and it was not so.'*

*'You remember?' said Frodo, speaking his thought aloud in his astonishment. 'But I thought,' he stammered as Elrond turned towards him, 'I thought that the fall of Gil-galad was a long age ago.'*

*'So it was indeed,' answered Elrond gravely. 'But my memory reaches back even to the Elder Days. Eärendil was my sire, who was born in Gondolin before its fall; and my mother was Elwing, daughter of Dior, son of Lúthien of Doriath. I have seen three ages in the West of the world, and many defeats, and many fruitless victories.'*

Some six and a half thousand years before the Council of Elrond was held in Rivendell, Túrin was born in Dor-lómin, 'in the winter of the year,' as is recorded in the *Annals of Beleriand*, 'with omens of sorrow'.

But the tragedy of his life is by no means comprehended solely in the portrayal of character, for he was condemned to live trapped in a malediction of huge and mysterious power, the curse of hatred set by Morgoth upon Húrin and Morwen and their children, because Húrin defied him, and refused his will. And Morgoth, the Black Enemy, as he came to be called, was in his origin, as he declared to Húrin brought captive before him, 'Melkor, first and mightiest of the Valar, who was before the world.' Now become permanently incarnate, in form a gigantic and majestic, but terrible, King in the northwest of Middle-earth, he was physically present in his huge fortress of Angband, the Hells of Iron: the black reek that issued from the summits of Thangorodrim, the mountains that he piled above Angband, could be seen far off staining the northern sky. It is said in the *Annals of Beleriand* that 'the gates of Morgoth were but one hundred and fifty leagues distant from the bridge of Menegroth; far and yet all too near.' These words refer to the bridge leading to the dwellings of the Elvish king Thingol, who took Túrin to be his fosterson: they were called Menegroth, the Thousand Caves, far south and east of Dor-lómin.

But being incarnate Morgoth was afraid. My father wrote of him: 'As he grew in malice, and sent forth from himself the evil that he conceived in lies and creatures of wickedness, his power passed into them and was dispersed, and he himself became ever more earth-bound, unwilling to issue from his dark strongholds.' Thus when Fingolfin, High King of the Noldorin Elves, rode alone to Angband to challenge Morgoth to combat, he cried at the gate: 'Come forth, thou coward king, to fight with thine own hand! Den-dweller, wielder of thralls, liar and lurker, foe of Gods and Elves, come! For I would see thy craven face.' Then (it is told) 'Morgoth came.

For he could not refuse such a challenge before the face of his captains.’ He fought with the great hammer Grond, which at each blow made a great pit, and he beat Fingolfin to the ground; but as he died he pinned the great foot of Morgoth to the earth, ‘and the black blood gushed forth and filled the pits of Grond. Morgoth went ever halt thereafter.’ So also, when Beren and Lúthien, in the shapes of a wolf and a bat, made their way into the deepest hall in Angband, where Morgoth sat, Lúthien cast a spell on him: and ‘suddenly he fell, as a hill sliding in avalanche, and hurled like thunder from his throne lay prone upon the floors of hell. The iron crown rolled echoing from his head.’

The curse of such a being, who can claim that ‘the shadow of my purpose lies upon Arda [the Earth], and all that is in it bends slowly and surely to my will’, is unlike the curses or imprecations of beings of far less power. Morgoth is not ‘invoking’ evil or calamity on Húrin and his children, he is not ‘calling on’ a higher power to be the agent: for he, ‘Master of the fates of Arda’ as he named himself to Húrin, intends to bring about the ruin of his enemy by the force of his own gigantic will. Thus he ‘designs’ the future of those whom he hates, and so he says to Húrin: ‘Upon all whom you love *my thought* shall weigh as *a cloud of Doom*, and it shall bring them down into darkness and despair.’

The torment that he devised for Húrin was ‘to see with Morgoth’s eyes’. My father gave a definition of what this meant: if one were forced to look into Morgoth’s eye he would ‘see’ (or receive in his mind from Morgoth’s mind) a compellingly credible picture of events, distorted by Morgoth’s bottomless malice; and if indeed any could refuse Morgoth’s command, Húrin did not. This was in part, my father said, because his love of his kin and his anguished anxiety for them made him desire to learn all that he could of them, no matter what the source; and in part from pride, believing that he had defeated Morgoth in debate, and that he could ‘outstare’ Morgoth, or at least retain his critical reason and distinguish between fact and malice.

Throughout Túrin’s life from the time of his departure from Dor-lómin, and the life of his sister Niënor who never saw her father, this was the fate of Húrin, seated immovably in a high place of Thangorodrim in increasing bitterness inspired by his tormentor.

In the tale of Túrin, who named himself Turambar ‘Master of Fate’, the curse of Morgoth seems to be seen as power unleashed to work evil, seeking out its victims; so the fallen Vala himself is said to fear that Túrin ‘would grow to such a power that the curse that he had laid upon him would become void, [and he would escape](#) the doom that had been designed for him’. And afterwards in Nargothrond Túrin concealed his true name, so that when Gwindor revealed it he was angered: ‘You have done ill to me, friend, to betray my right name, and call down my doom upon me, from which I would lie hid.’ It was Gwindor who had told Túrin of the rumour that ran through Angband, where Gwindor had been held prisoner, that Morgoth had laid a curse on Húrin and all his kin. But now he replied to Túrin’s wrath: ‘the doom lies in yourself, not in your name.’

So essential is this complex conception in the story that my father even proposed an alternative title to it: *Narn e: ‘Rach Morgoth, The Tale of the Curse of Morgoth*. And his view of it is seen in these words: ‘So ended the tale of Túrin the hapless; the worst of the works of Morgoth among Men in the ancient world.’

When Treebeard strode through the forest of Fangorn carrying Merry and Pippin each in the crook of his arm he [sang](#) to them of places that he had known in remote times, and of the trees that grew there:

*In the willow-meads of Tasarinan I walked in the Spring.  
Ah! the sight and the smell of the Spring in Nan-tasarion!  
And I said that was good.  
I wandered in Summer in the elm-woods of Ossiriand.  
Ah! the light and the music in the Summer by the Seven  
Rivers of Ossir!  
And I thought that was best.  
To the beeches of Neldoreth I came in the Autumn.  
Ah! the gold and the red and the sighing of leaves in the  
Autumn in Taur-na-Neldor!  
It was more than my desire.  
To the pine-trees upon the highland of Dorthonion I*

*climbed in the Winter.  
Ah! the wind and the whiteness and the black branches  
of Winter upon Orod-na-Thôn!  
My voice went up and sang in the sky.  
And now all those lands lie under the wave,  
And I walk in Ambarona, in Tauremorna, in Aldalómë,  
In my own land, in the country of Fangorn,  
Where the roots are long,  
And the years lie thicker than the leaves In Tauremornalómë.*

The memory of Treebeard, ‘Ent the earthborn, old as mountains’, was indeed long. He was remembering ancient forests in the great country of Beleriand, which was destroyed in the tumults of the Great Battle at the end of the Elder Days. The Great Sea poured in and drowned all the lands west of the Blue Mountains, called Ered Luin and Ered Lindon: so that the [map](#) accompanying *The Silmarillion* ends in the east with that mountain-chain, whereas the [map](#) accompanying *The Lord of the Rings* ends in the west with the same range; and the coastal lands beyond the mountains named on that map Forlindon and Harlindon (North Lindon and South Lindon) were all that remained in the Third Age of the country called both Ossiriland, Land of Seven Rivers, and also Lindon, in whose elm-woods Tree-beard once walked.

He walked also among the great pine-trees on the highland of Dorthonion (‘Land of Pines’), which afterwards came to be called Taur-nu-Fuin, ‘the Forest under Night’, when Morgoth turned it into ‘a region of dread and dark enchantment, [of wandering and despair](#)’; and he came to Neldoreth, the northern forest of Doriath, realm of Thingol.

It was in Beleriand and the lands to the north that Túrin’s terrible destiny was played out; and indeed both Dorthonion and Doriath where Treebeard walked were crucial in his life. He was born into a world of warfare, though he was still a child when the last and greatest battle in the wars of Beleriand was fought. A very brief sketch of how this came about will answer questions that arise and references that are made in the course of the narrative.

In the north the boundaries of Beleriand seem to have been formed by the Ered Wethrin, the Mountains of Shadow, beyond which lay Húrin’s country, Dor-lómin, a part of Hithlum; while in the east Beleriand extended to the feet of the Blue Mountains. Further east lay lands that scarcely appear in the history of the Elder Days; but the peoples that shaped that history came out of the east by the passes of the Blue Mountains.

The Elves appeared on earth far off in the distant east, beside a lake that was named Cuiviénen, Water of Awakening; and thence they were summoned by the Valar to leave Middle-earth, and passing over the Great Sea to come to the ‘Blessed Realm’ of Aman in the west of the world, the land of the Gods. Those who accepted the summons were led on a great march across Middle-earth from Cuiviénen by the Vala Oromë, the Hunter, and they are called the Eldar, the Elves of the Great Journey, the High Elves: distinct from those who, refusing the summons, chose Middle-earth for their land and their destiny. They are the ‘lesser Elves’, called Avari, the Unwilling.

But not all the Eldar, though they had crossed the Blue Mountains, departed over the Sea; and those who remained in Beleriand are named the Sindar, the Grey Elves. Their high king was Thingol (which means ‘Grey-cloak’), who ruled from Menegroth, the Thousand Caves in Doriath. And not all the Eldar who crossed the Great Sea remained in the land of the Valar; for one of their great kindreds, the Noldor (the ‘Loremasters’), returned to Middle-earth, and they are called the Exiles. The prime mover in their rebellion against the Valar was Fëanor, ‘Spirit of Fire’: he was the eldest son of Finwë, who had led the host of the Noldor from Cuiviénen, but was now dead. This cardinal event in the history of the Elves was thus briefly conveyed by my father in [Appendix A](#) to *The Lord of the Rings*:

*Fëanor was the greatest of the Eldar in arts and lore, but also the proudest and most selfwilled. He wrought the Three Jewels, the Silmarilli, and filled them with the radiance of the Two Trees, Telperion and Laurelin, that gave light to the land of the Valar. The Jewels were coveted by Morgoth the Enemy, who stole them and, after destroying the Trees, took them to Middle-earth, and guarded them in his great fortress of Thangorodrim [the*

mountains above Angband]. Against the will of the Valar Fëanor forsook the Blessed Realm and went in exile to Middle-earth, leading with him a great part of his people; for in his pride he purposed to recover the Jewels from Morgoth by force. Thereafter followed the hopeless war of the Eldar and the Edain against Thangorodrim, in which they were at last utterly defeated.

Fëanor was slain in battle soon after the return of the Noldor to Middle-earth, and his seven sons held wide lands in the east of Beleriand, between Dorthonion (Taur-nu-Fuin) and the Blue Mountains; but their power was destroyed in the terrible Battle of Unnumbered Tears which is described in *The Children of Húrin*, and thereafter 'the Sons of Fëanor wandered as leaves before the wind'.

The second son of Finwë was Fingolfin (the half-brother of Fëanor), who was held the overlord of all the Noldor; and he with his son Fingon ruled Hithlum, which lay to the north and west of the great chain of Ered Wethrin, the Mountains of Shadow. Fingolfin dwelt in Mithrim, by the great lake of that name, while Fingon held Dor-lómin in the south of Hithlum. Their chief fortress was Barad Eithel (the Tower of the Well) at Eithel Sirion (Sirion's Well), where the river Sirion rose in the east face of the Mountains of Shadow: Sador, the old crippled servant of Húrin and Morwen, served as a soldier there for many years, as he told Túrin. After Fingolfin's death in single combat with Morgoth Fingon became the High King of the Noldor in his stead. Túrin saw him once, when he 'and many of his lords had ridden through Dor-lómin and passed over the bridge of Nen Lalaith, glittering in silver and white'.

The second son of Fingolfin was Turgon. He dwelt at first, after the return of the Noldor, in the house named Vinyamar, beside the sea in the region of Nevrast, west of Dor-lómin; but he built in secret the hidden city of Gondolin, which stood on a hill in the midst of the plain called Tumladen, wholly surrounded by the Encircling Mountains, east of the river Sirion. When Gondolin was built, after many years of labour, Turgon removed from Vinyamar and dwelt with his people, both Noldor and Sindar, in Gondolin; and for centuries this Elvish redoubt of great beauty was preserved in the most profound secrecy, its only entry undiscoverable and heavily guarded, so that no stranger could ever pass in; and Morgoth was unable to learn where it lay. Not until the Battle of Unnumbered Tears, when more than three hundred and fifty years had passed since he left Vinyamar, did Turgon emerge with his great army from Gondolin.

The third son of Finwë, the brother of Fingolfin and half-brother of Fëanor, was Finarfin. He did not return to Middle-earth, but his sons and daughter came with the host of Fingolfin and his sons. The eldest son of Finarfin was Finrod, who, inspired by the magnificence and beauty of Menegroth in Doriath, founded the underground fortress-city of Nargothrond, for which he was named Felagund, interpreted to mean 'Lord of Caves' or 'Cave-hewer' in the tongue of the Dwarves. The doors of Nargothrond opened onto the gorge of the river Narog in West Beleriand, where that river passed through the high hills called Taur-en-Faroth, or the High Faroth; but Finrod's realm extended far and wide, east to the river Sirion, and west to the river Nenning that reached the sea at the haven of Eglarest. But Finrod was slain in the dungeons of Sauron, chief servant of Morgoth, and Orodreth, the second son of Finarfin, took the crown of Nargothrond: this took place in the year following the birth of Túrin in Dor-lómin.

The other sons of Finarfin, Angrod and Aegnor, vassals of their brother Finrod, dwelt on Dorthonion, looking northwards over the vast plain of Ard-galen. Galadriel, Finrod's sister, dwelt long in Doriath with Melian the Queen. Melian was a Maia, a spirit of great power who took human form and dwelt in the forests of Beleriand with King Thingol: she was the mother of Lúthien, and the foremother of Elrond. Not long before the return of the Noldor from Aman, when great armies out of Angband came south into Beleriand, Melian (in the words of *The Silmarillion*) 'put forth her power and fenced all that dominion [the forests of Neldoreth and Region] round about with an unseen wall of shadow and bewilderment: the Girdle of Melian, that none thereafter could pass against her will or the will of King Thingol, unless one should come with a power greater than that of Melian the Maia.' Thereafter the land was named Doriath, 'the Land of the Fence'.

In the sixtieth year after the return of the Noldor, ending many years of peace, a great host of Orcs came down from Angband, but was utterly defeated and destroyed by the Noldor. This was called *Dagor Aglareb*, the Glorious Battle; but the Elvish lords took warning from it, and set the Siege of Angband, which lasted for almost four hundred years.



It was said that Men (whom the Elves called *Atani* ‘the Second’, and *Hildor* ‘the Followers’) arose far off in the east of Middle-earth towards the end of the Elder Days; but of their earliest history the Men who entered Beleriand in the days of the Long Peace, when Angband was besieged and its gates shut, would never speak. The leader of these first Men to cross the Blue Mountains was named Bëor the Old; and to Finrod Felagund, King of Nargothrond, who first encountered them Bëor declared: ‘A darkness lies behind us; and we have turned our backs on it, and we do not desire to return thither even in thought. Westwards our hearts have been turned, and we believe that there we shall find Light.’ Sador, the old servant of Húrin, [spoke in the same way](#) to Túrin in his boyhood. But it was said afterwards that when Morgoth learned of the arising of Men he left Angband for the last time and went into the East; and that the first Men to enter Beleriand ‘had repented and rebelled against the Dark Power, and were cruelly hunted and oppressed by those that worshipped it, and its servants’.

These Men belonged to three Houses, known as the House of Bëor, the House of Hador, and the House of Haleth. Húrin’s father Galdor the Tall was of the House of Hador, being indeed his son; but his mother was of the House of Haleth, while Morwen his wife was of the House of Bëor, and related to Beren.

The people of the Three Houses were the *Edain* (the Sindarin form of *Atani*), and they were called Elf-friends. Hador dwelt in Hithlum and was given the lordship of Dor-lómin by King Fingolfin; the people of Bëor settled in Dorthonion; and the people of Haleth at this time dwelt in the Forest of Brethil. After the ending of the Siege of Angband Men of a very different sort came over the mountains; they were commonly referred to as Easterlings, and some of them played an important part in the story of Túrin.

The Siege of Angband ended with a terrible suddenness (though long prepared) on a night of midwinter, 395 years after it had begun. Morgoth released rivers of fire that ran down from Thangorodrim, and the great grassy plain of Ard-galen that lay to the north of the highland of Dorthonion was transformed into a parched and arid waste, known thereafter by a changed name, *Anfauglith*, the Gasping Dust.

This catastrophic assault was called *Dagor Bragollach*, the Battle of Sudden Flame. Glaurung Father of Dragons emerged from Angband now for the first time in his full might; vast armies of Orcs poured southwards; the Elvish lords of Dorthonion were slain, and a great part of the warriors of Bëor’s people. King Fingolfin and his son Fingon were driven back with the warriors of Hithlum to the fortress of Eithel Sirion in the east face of the Mountains of Shadow, and in its defence Hador Goldenhead was killed. Then Galdor, Húrin’s father, became the lord of Dor-lómin; for the torrents of fire were stopped by the barrier of the Mountains of Shadow, and Hithlum and Dor-lómin remained unconquered.

It was in the year after the Bragollach that Fingolfin, in a fury of despair, rode to Angband and challenged Morgoth. Two years later Húrin and Huor went to Gondolin. After four more years, in a renewed assault on Hithlum, Húrin’s father Galdor was slain in the fortress of Eithel Sirion: Sador was there, [as he told Túrin](#), and saw Húrin (then a young man of twenty-one) ‘take up his lordship and his command’.

All these things were fresh in memory in Dor-lómin when Túrin was born, nine years after the Battle of Sudden Flame.

[illegible]





## Chapter I: The Childhood Of Túrin

**H**ador Goldenhead was a lord of the Edain and well-beloved by the Eldar. He dwelt while his days lasted under the lordship of Fingolfin, who gave to him wide lands in that region of Hithlum which was called Dor-lómin. His daughter Glóredhel wedded Haldir son of Halmir, lord of the Men of Brethil; and at the same feast his son Galdor the Tall wedded Hareth, the daughter of Halmir.

Galdor and Hareth had two sons, Húrin and Huor. Húrin was by three years the elder, but he was shorter in stature than other men of his kin; in this he took after his mother's people, but in all else he was like Hador, his grandfather, strong in body and fiery of mood. But the fire in him burned steadily, and he had great endurance of will. Of all Men of the North he knew most of the counsels of the Noldor. Huor his brother was tall, the tallest of all the Edain save his own son Tuor only, and a swift runner; but if the race were long and hard Húrin would be the first home, for he ran as strongly at the end of the course as at the beginning. There was great love between the brothers, and they were seldom apart in their youth.

Húrin wedded Morwen, the daughter of Baragund son of Bregolas of the House of Bëor; and she was thus of close kin to Beren One-hand. Morwen was dark-haired and tall, and for the light of her glance and the beauty of her face men called her Eledhwen, the elven-fair; but she was somewhat stern of mood and proud. The sorrows of the House of Bëor saddened her heart; for she came as an exile to Dor-lómin from Dorthonion after the ruin of the Bragollach.

Túrin was the name of the eldest child of Húrin and Morwen, and he was born in that year in which Beren came to Doriath and found Lúthien Tinúviel, Thingol's daughter. Morwen bore a daughter also to Húrin, and she was named Urwen; but she was called Lalaith, which is Laughter, by all that knew her in her short life.

Huor wedded Rían, the cousin of Morwen; she was the daughter of Belegund son of Bregolas. By hard fate was she born into such days, for she was gentle of heart and loved neither hunting nor war. Her love was given to trees and to the flowers of the wild, and she was a singer and a maker of songs. Two months only had she been wedded to Huor when he went with his brother to the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, and she never saw him again.

But now the tale returns to Húrin and Huor in the days of their youth. It is said that for a while the sons of Galdor dwelt in Brethil as foster-sons of Haldir their uncle, after the custom of Northern men in those days. They often went to battle with the Men of Brethil against the Orcs, who now harried the northern borders of their land; for Húrin, though only seventeen years of age, was strong, and Huor the younger was already as tall as most full-grown men of that people.

On a time Húrin and Huor went with a company of scouts, but they were ambushed by the Orcs and scattered, and the brothers were pursued to the ford of Brithiach. There they would have been taken or slain but for the power of Ulmo that was still strong in the waters of Sirion; and it is said that a mist arose from the river and hid them from their enemies, and they escaped over the Brithiach into Dimbar. There they wandered in great hardship among the hills beneath the sheer walls of the Crissaegrim, until they were bewildered in the deceits of that land and knew not the way to go on or to return. There Thorondor espied them, and he sent two of his Eagles to their aid; and the Eagles bore them up and brought them beyond the Encircling Mountains to the secret vale of Tumladen and the hidden city of Gondolin, which no Man had yet seen.

There Turgon the King received them well, when he learned of their kin; for Hador was an Elf-friend, and Ulmo, moreover, had counselled Turgon to deal kindly with the sons of that House, from whom help should come to him at need. Húrin and Huor dwelt as guests in the King's house for well nigh a year; and it is said that in this time Húrin, whose mind was swift and eager, gained much lore of the Elves, and learned also something of the counsels and purposes of the King. For Turgon took great liking for the sons of Galdor, and spoke much

with them; and he wished indeed to keep them in Gondolin out of love, and not only for his law that no stranger, be he Elf or Man, who found the way to the secret kingdom or looked upon the city should ever depart again, until the King should open the leaguer, and the hidden people should come forth.

But Húrin and Huor desired to return to their own people and share in the wars and griefs that now beset them. And Húrin said to Turgon: 'Lord, we are but mortal Men, and unlike the Eldar. They may endure for long years awaiting battle with their enemies in some far distant day; but for us the time is short, and our hope and strength soon wither. Moreover we did not find the road to Gondolin, and indeed we do not know surely where this city stands; for we were brought in fear and wonder by the high ways of the air, and in mercy our eyes were veiled.' Then Turgon granted his prayer, and he said: 'By the way that you came you have leave to return, if Thorondor is willing. I grieve at this parting; yet in a little while, as the Eldar account it, we may meet again.'

But Maeglin, the King's sister-son, who was mighty in Gondolin, grieved not at all at their going, though he begrudged them the favour of the King, for he had no love for any of the kindred of Men; and he said to Húrin: 'The King's grace is greater than you know, and some might wonder wherefore the strict law is abated for two knave-children of Men. It would be safer if they had no choice but to abide here as our servants to their life's end.'

'The King's grace is great indeed,' answered Húrin, 'but if our word is not enough, then we will swear oaths to you.' And the brothers swore never to reveal the counsels of Turgon, and to keep secret all that they had seen in his realm. Then they took their leave, and the Eagles coming bore them away by night, and set them down in Dor-lómin before the dawn. Their kinsfolk rejoiced to see them, for messengers from Brethil had reported that they were lost; but they would not tell even to their father where they had been, save that they were rescued in the wilderness by the Eagles that brought them home. But Galdor said: 'Did you then dwell a year in the wild? Or did the Eagles house you in their eyries? But you found food and fine raiment, and return as young princes, not as waifs of the wood.' 'Be content, father,' said Húrin, 'that we have returned; for only under an oath of silence was this permitted. That oath is still on us.' Then Galdor questioned them no more, but he and many others guessed at the truth. For both the oath of silence and the Eagles pointed to Turgon, men thought.

So the days passed, and the shadow of the fear of Morgoth lengthened. But in the four hundred and sixty-ninth year after the return of the Noldor to Middle-earth there was a stirring of hope among Elves and Men; for the rumour ran among them of the deeds of Beren and Lúthien, and the putting to shame of Morgoth even upon his throne in Angband, and some said that Beren and Lúthien yet lived, or had returned from the Dead. In that year also the great counsels of Maedhros were almost complete, and with the reviving strength of the Eldar and the Edain the advance of Morgoth was stayed, and the Orcs were driven back from Beleriand. Then some began to speak of victories to come, and of redressing the Battle of the Bragollach, when Maedhros should lead forth the united hosts, and drive Morgoth underground, and seal the Doors of Angband.

But the wiser were uneasy still, fearing that Maedhros revealed his growing strength too soon, and that Morgoth would be given time enough to take counsel against him. 'Ever will some new evil be hatched in Angband beyond the guess of Elves and Men,' they said. And in the autumn of that year, to point their words, there came an ill wind from the North under leaden skies. The Evil Breath it was called, for it was pestilent; and many sickened and died in the fall of the year in the northern lands that bordered on the Anfauglith, and they were for the most part the children or the rising youth in the houses of Men.

In that year Túrin son of Húrin was yet only five years old, and Urwen his sister was three in the beginning of spring. Her hair was like the yellow lilies in the grass as she ran in the fields, and her laughter was like the sound of the merry stream that came singing out of the hills past the walls of her father's house. Nen Lalaith it was named, and after it all the people of the household called the child Lalaith, and their hearts were glad while she was among them.

But Túrin was loved less than she. He was dark-haired as his mother, and promised to be like her in mood also; for he was not merry, and spoke little, though he learned to speak early and ever seemed older than his years. Túrin was slow to forget injustice or mockery; but the fire of his father was also in him, and he could be sudden and fierce. Yet he was quick to pity, and the hurts or sadness of living things might move him to tears; and he was like his father in this also, for Morwen was stern with others as with herself. He loved his mother, for her

speech to him was forthright and plain; but his father he saw little, for Húrin was often long away from home with the host of Fingon that guarded Hithlum's eastern borders, and when he returned his quick speech, full of strange words and jests and half-meanings, bewildered Túrin and made him uneasy. At that time all the warmth of his heart was for Lalaith his sister; but he played with her seldom, and liked better to guard her unseen and to watch her going upon grass or under tree, as she sang such songs as the children of the Edain made long ago when the tongue of the Elves was still fresh upon their lips.

'Fair as an Elf-child is Lalaith,' said Húrin to Morwen; 'but briefer, alas! And so fairer, maybe, or dearer.' And Túrin hearing these words pondered them, but could not understand them. For he had seen no Elf-children. None of the Eldar at that time dwelt in his father's lands, and once only had he seen them, when King Fingon and many of his lords had ridden through Dor-lómin and passed over the bridge of Nen Lalaith, glittering in silver and white.

But before the year was out the truth of his father's words was shown; for the Evil Breath came to Dor-lómin, and Túrin took sick, and lay long in a fever and dark dream. And when he was healed, for such was his fate and the strength of life that was in him, he asked for Lalaith. But his nurse answered: 'Speak no more of Lalaith, son of Húrin; but of your sister Urwen you must ask tidings of your mother.'

And when Morwen came to him, Túrin said to her: 'I am no longer sick, and I wish to see Urwen; but why must I not say Lalaith any more?'

'Because Urwen is dead, and laughter is stilled in this house,' she answered. 'But you live, son of Morwen; and so does the Enemy who has done this to us.'

She did not seek to comfort him any more than herself; for she met her grief in silence and coldness of heart. But Húrin mourned openly, and he took up his harp and would make a song of lamentation; but he could not, and he broke his harp, and going out he lifted up his hand towards the North, crying: 'Marrer of Middle-earth, would that I might see you face to face, and mar you as my lord Fingolfin did!'

But Túrin wept bitterly at night alone, though to Morwen he never again spoke the name of his sister. To one friend only he turned at that time, and to him he spoke of his sorrow and the emptiness of the house. This friend was named Sador, a house-man in the service of Húrin; he was lame, and of small account. He had been a woodman, and by ill-luck or the mishandling of his axe he had hewn his right foot, and the footless leg had shrunken; and Túrin called him Labadal, which is 'Hopafot', though the name did not displease Sador, for it was given in pity and not in scorn. Sador worked in the outbuildings, to make or mend things of little worth that were needed in the house, for he had some skill in the working of wood; and Túrin would fetch him what he lacked, to spare his leg, and sometimes he would carry off secretly some tool or piece of timber that he found unwatched, if he thought his friend might use it. Then Sador smiled, but bade him return the gifts to their places; 'Give with a free hand, but give only your own,' he said. He rewarded as he could the kindness of the child, and carved for him the figures of men and beasts; but Túrin delighted most in Sador's tales, for he had been a young man in the days of the Bragollach, and loved now to dwell upon the short days of his full manhood before his maiming.

'That was a great battle, they say, son of Húrin. I was called from my tasks in the wood in the need of that year; but I was not in the Bragollach, or I might have got my hurt with more honour. For we came too late, save to bear back the bier of the old lord, Hador, who fell in the guard of King Fingolfin. I went for a soldier after that, and I was in Eithel Sirion, the great fort of the Elf-kings, for many years; or so it seems now, and the dull years since have little to mark them. In Eithel Sirion I was when the Black King assailed it, and Galdor your father's father was the captain there in the King's stead. He was slain in that assault; and I saw your father take up his lordship and his command, though but new come to manhood. There was a fire in him that made the sword hot in his hand, they said. Behind him we drove the Orcs into the sand; and they have not dared to come within sight of the walls since that day. But alas! my love of battle was sated, for I had seen spilled blood and wounds enough; and I got leave to come back to the woods that I yearned for. And there I got my hurt; for a man that flies from his fear may find that he has only taken a short cut to meet it.'

In this way Sador would speak to Túrin as he grew older; and Túrin began to ask many questions that Sador found hard to answer, thinking that others nearer akin should have had the teaching. And one day Túrin said to

him: 'Was Lalaith indeed like an Elf-child, as my father said? And what did he mean, when he said that she was briefer?'

'Very like,' said Sador; 'for in their first youth the children of Men and Elves seem close akin. But the children of Men grow more swiftly, and their youth passes soon; such is our fate.'

Then Túrin asked him: 'What is fate?'

'As to the fate of Men,' said Sador, 'you must ask those that are wiser than Labadal. But as all can see, we weary soon and die; and by mischance many meet death even sooner. But the Elves do not weary, and they do not die save by great hurt. From wounds and griefs that would slay Men they may be healed; and even when their bodies are marred they return again, some say. It is not so with us.'

'Then Lalaith will not come back?' said Túrin. 'Where has she gone?'

'She will not come back,' said Sador. 'But where she has gone no man knows; or I do not.'

'Has it always been so? Or do we suffer some curse of the wicked King, perhaps, like the Evil Breath?'

'I do not know. A darkness lies behind us, and out of it few tales have come. The fathers of our fathers may have had things to tell, but they did not tell them. Even their names are forgotten. The Mountains stand between us and the life that they came from, flying from no man now knows what.'

'Were they afraid?' said Túrin.

'It may be,' said Sador. 'It may be that we fled from the fear of the Dark, only to find it here before us, and nowhere else to fly to but the Sea.'

'We are not afraid any longer,' said Túrin, 'not all of us. My father is not afraid, and I will not be; or at least, as my mother, I will be afraid and not show it.'

It seemed then to Sador that Túrin's eyes were not the eyes of a child, and he thought: 'Grief is a hone to a hard mind.' But aloud he said: 'Son of Húrin and Morwen, how it will be with your heart Labadal cannot guess; but seldom and to few will you show what is in it.'

Then Túrin said: 'Perhaps it is better not to tell what you wish, if you cannot have it. But I wish, Labadal, that I were one of the Eldar. Then Lalaith might come back, and I should still be here, even if she were long away. I shall go as a soldier with an Elf-king as soon as I am able, as you did, Labadal.'

'You may learn much of them,' said Sador, and he sighed. 'They are a fair folk and wonderful, and they have a power over the hearts of Men. And yet I think sometimes that it might have been better if we had never met them, but had walked in lowlier ways. For already they are ancient in knowledge; and they are proud and enduring. In their light we are dimmed, or we burn with too quick a flame, and the weight of our doom lies the heavier on us.'

'But my father loves them,' said Túrin, 'and he is not happy without them. He says that we have learned nearly all that we know from them, and have been made a nobler people; and he says that the Men that have lately come over the Mountains are hardly better than Orcs.'

'That is true,' answered Sador; 'true at least of some of us. But the up-climbing is painful, and from high places it is easy to fall low.'

At this time Túrin was almost eight years old, in the month of Gwaeron in the reckoning of the Edain, in the year that cannot be forgotten. Already there were rumours among his elders of a great mustering and gathering of arms, of which Túrin heard nothing; though he marked that his father often looked steadfastly at him, as a man might look at something dear that he must part from.

Now Húrin, knowing her courage and her guarded tongue, often spoke with Morwen of the designs of the Elven-kings, and of what might befall, if they went well or ill. His heart was high with hope, and he had little fear for the outcome of the battle; for it did not seem to him that any strength in Middle-earth could overthrow the might and splendour of the Eldar. 'They have seen the Light in the West,' he said, 'and in the end Darkness must flee from their faces.' Morwen did not gainsay him; for in Húrin's company the hopeful ever seemed the

more likely. But there was knowledge of Elven-lore in her kindred also, and to herself she said: 'And yet did they not leave the Light, and are they not now shut out from it? It may be that the Lords of the West have put them out of their thought; and how then can even the Elder Children overcome one of the Powers?'

No shadow of such doubt seemed to lie on Húrin Thalion; yet one morning in the spring of that year he awoke heavy as after unquiet sleep, and a cloud lay on his brightness that day; and in the evening he said suddenly: 'When I am summoned, Morwen Eledhwen, I shall leave in your keeping the heir of the House of Hador. The lives of Men are short, and in them there are many ill chances, even in time of peace.'

'That has ever been so,' she answered. 'But what lies under your words?'

'Prudence, not doubt,' said Húrin; yet he looked troubled. 'But one who looks forward must see this: that things will not remain as they were. This will be a great throw, and one side must fall lower than it now stands. If it be the Elven-kings that fall, then it must go evilly with the Edain; and we dwell nearest to the Enemy. This land might pass into his dominion. But if things do go ill, I will not say to you: *Do not be afraid!* For you fear what should be feared, and that only; and fear does not dismay you. But I say: *Do not wait!* I shall return to you as I may, but do not wait! Go south as swiftly as you can—if I live I shall follow, and I shall find you, though I have to search through all Beleriand.'

'Beleriand is wide, and houseless for exiles,' said Morwen. 'Whither should I flee, with few or with many?'

Then Húrin thought for a while in silence. 'There is my mother's kin in Brethil,' he said. 'That is some thirty leagues, as the eagle flies.'

'If such an evil time should indeed come, what help would there be in Men?' said Morwen. 'The House of Bëor has fallen. If the great House of Hador falls, in what holes shall the little Folk of Haleth creep?'

'In such as they can find,' said Húrin. 'But do not doubt their valour, though they are few and unlearned. Where else is hope?'

'You do not speak of Gondolin,' said Morwen.

'No, for that name has never passed my lips,' said Húrin. 'Yet the word is true that you have heard: I have been there. But I tell you now truly, as I have told no other, and will not: I do not know where it stands.'

'But you guess, and guess near, I think,' said Morwen. 'It may be so,' said Húrin. 'But unless Turgon himself released me from my oath, I could not tell that guess, even to you; and therefore your search would be vain. But were I to speak, to my shame, you would at best but come at a shut gate; for unless Turgon comes out to war (and of that no word has been heard, and it is not hoped) no-one will come in.'

'Then if your kin are not hopeful, and your friends deny you,' said Morwen, 'I must take counsel for myself; and to me now comes the thought of Doriath.'

'Ever your aim is high,' said Húrin.

'Over-high, you would say?' said Morwen. 'But last of all defences will the Girdle of Melian be broken, I think; and the House of Bëor will not be despised in Doriath. Am I not now kin of the king? For Beren son of Barahir was grandson of Bregor, as was my father also.'

'My heart does not lean to Thingol,' said Húrin. 'No help will come from him to King Fingon; and I know not what shadow falls on my spirit when Doriath is named.'

'At the name of Brethil my heart also is darkened,' said Morwen.

Then suddenly Húrin laughed, and he said: 'Here we sit debating things beyond our reach, and shadows that come out of dream. Things will not go so ill; but if they do, then to your courage and counsel all is committed. Do then what your heart bids you; but do it swiftly. And if we gain our ends, then the Elven-kings are resolved to restore all the fiefs of Bëor's house to his heir; and that is you, Morwen daughter of Baragund. Wide lordships we should then wield, and a high inheritance come to our son. Without the malice in the North he should come to great wealth, and be a king among Men.'

'Húrin Thalion,' said Morwen, 'this I judge truer to say: that you look high, but I fear to fall low.'

‘That at the worst you need not fear,’ said Húrin.

That night Túrin half-woke, and it seemed to him that his father and mother stood beside his bed, and looked down on him in the light of the candles that they held; but he could not see their faces.

On the morning of Túrin’s birthday Húrin gave his son a gift, an Elf-wrought knife, and the hilt and the sheath were silver and black; and he said: ‘Heir of the House of Hador, here is a gift for the day. But have a care! It is a bitter blade, and steel serves only those that can wield it. It will cut your hand as willingly as aught else.’ And setting Túrin on a table he kissed his son, and said: ‘You overtop me already, son of Morwen; soon you will be as high on your own feet. In that day many may fear your blade.’

Then Túrin ran from the room and went away alone, and in his heart was a warmth like the warmth of the sun upon the cold earth that sets growth astir. He repeated to himself his father’s words, Heir of the House of Hador; but other words came also to his mind: Give with a free hand, but give of your own. And he went to Sador and cried: ‘Labadal, it is my birthday, the birthday of the heir of the House of Hador! And I have brought you a gift to mark the day. Here is a knife, just such as you need; it will cut anything that you wish, as fine as a hair.’

Then Sador was troubled, for he knew well that Túrin had himself received the knife that day; but men held it a grievous thing to refuse a free-given gift from any hand. He spoke then to him gravely: ‘You come of a generous kin, Túrin son of Húrin. I have done nothing to equal your gift, and I cannot hope to do better in the days that are left to me; but what I can do, I will.’ And when Sador drew the knife from the sheath he said: ‘This is a gift indeed: a blade of elven steel. Long have I missed the feel of it.’

Húrin soon marked that Túrin did not wear the knife, and he asked him whether his warning had made him fear it. Then Túrin answered: ‘No; but I gave the knife to Sador the woodwright.’

‘Do you then scorn your father’s gift?’ said Morwen; and again Túrin answered: ‘No; but I love Sador, and I am sorry for him.’

Then Húrin said: ‘All three gifts were your own to give, Túrin: love, pity, and the knife the least.’

‘Yet I doubt if Sador deserves them,’ said Morwen. ‘He is self-maimed by his own want of skill, and he is slow with his tasks, for he spends much time on trifles unbidden.’

‘Give him pity nonetheless,’ said Húrin. ‘An honest hand and a true heart may hew amiss; and the harm may be harder to bear than the work of a foe.’

‘But you must wait now for another blade,’ said Morwen. ‘Thus the gift shall be a true gift and at your own cost.’

Nonetheless Túrin marked that Sador was treated more kindly thereafter, and was set now to the making of a great chair for the lord to sit on in his hall.

There came a bright morning in the month of Lothron when Túrin was roused by sudden trumpets; and running to the doors he saw in the court a great press of men on foot and on horse, and all fully armed as for war. There also stood Húrin, and he spoke to the men and gave commands; and Túrin learned that they were setting out that day for Barad Eithel. These were Húrin’s guards and household men; but all the men of his land that could be spared were summoned. Some had gone already with Huor his father’s brother; and many others would join the Lord of Dor-lómin on the road, and go behind his banner to the great muster of the King.

Then Morwen bade farewell to Húrin without tears; and she said: ‘I will guard what you leave in my keeping, both what is and what shall be.’

And Húrin answered her: ‘Farewell, Lady of Dor-lómin; we ride now with greater hope than ever we have known before. Let us think that at this midwinter the feast shall be merrier than in all our years yet, with a fearless spring to follow after!’ Then he lifted Túrin to his shoulder, and cried to his men: ‘Let the heir of the House of Hador see the light of your swords!’ And the sun glittered on fifty blades as they leaped forth, and the court rang with the battle-cry of the Edain of the North: *Lacho calad! Drego morn!* Flame Light! Flee Night!

Then at last Húrin sprang into his saddle, and his golden banner was unfurled, and the trumpets sang again in the morning; and thus Húrin Thalion rode away to the Nirnaeth Arnoediad.

But Morwen and Túrin stood still by the doors, until far away they heard the faint call of a single horn on the wind: Húrin had passed over the shoulder of the hill, beyond which he could see his house no more.



## Chapter II: The Battle Of Unnumbered Tears

Many songs are yet sung and many tales are yet told by the Elves of the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, the Battle of Unnumbered Tears, in which Fingon fell and the flower of the Eldar withered. If all were now retold a man's life would not suffice for the hearing. Here then shall be recounted only those deeds which bear upon the fate of the House of Hador and the children of Húrin the Steadfast.

Having gathered at length all the strength that he could Maedhros appointed a day, the morning of Midsummer. On that day the trumpets of the Eldar greeted the rising of the Sun, and in the east was raised the standard of the sons of Fëanor; and in the west the standard of Fingon, King of the Noldor.

Then Fingon looked out from the walls of Eithel Sirion, and his host was arrayed in the valleys and woods upon the east of Ered Wethrin, well hid from the eyes of the Enemy; but he knew that it was very great. For there all the Noldor of Hithlum were assembled, and to them were gathered many Elves of the Falas and of Nargothrond; and he had great strength of Men. Upon the right were stationed the host of Dor-lómin and all the valour of Húrin and Huor his brother, and to them had come Haldir of Brethil, their kinsman, with many men of the woods.

Then Fingon looked east and his elven-sight saw far off a dust and the glint of steel like stars in a mist, and he knew that Maedhros had set forth; and he rejoiced. Then he looked towards Thangorodrim, and there was a dark cloud about it and a black smoke went up; and he knew that the wrath of Morgoth was kindled and that their challenge would be accepted, and a shadow of doubt fell upon his heart. But at that moment a cry went up, passing on the wind from the south from vale to vale, and Elves and Men lifted up their voices in wonder and joy. For unsummoned and unlooked-for Turgon had opened the leaguer of Gondolin, and was come with an army, ten thousand strong, with bright mail and long swords and spears like a forest. Then when Fingon heard afar the great trumpet of Turgon, the shadow passed and his heart was uplifted, and he shouted aloud: *'Utúlie'n aurë! Aiya Eldalië ar Atanatarni, utúlie'n aurë! The day has come! Behold, people of the Eldar and Fathers of Men, the day has come!'* And all those who heard his great voice echo in the hills answered crying: *'Auta i lómë! The night is passing!'*

It was not long before the great battle was joined. For Morgoth knew much of what was done and designed by his foes and had laid his plans against the hour of their assault. Already a great force out of Angband was drawing near to Hithlum, while another and greater went to meet Maedhros to prevent the union of the powers of the kings. And those that came against Fingon were clad all in dun raiment and showed no naked steel, and thus were already far over the sands of Anfauglith before their approach became known.

Then the hearts of the Noldor grew hot, and their captains wished to assail their foes on the plain; but Fingon spoke against this.

'Beware of the guile of Morgoth, lords!' he said. 'Ever his strength is more than it seems, and his purpose other than he reveals. Do not reveal your own strength, but let the enemy spend his first in assault on the hills.' For it was the design of the kings that Maedhros should march openly over the Anfauglith with all his strength, of Elves and of Men and of Dwarves; and when he had drawn forth, as he hoped, the main armies of Morgoth in answer, then Fingon should come on from the West, and so the might of Morgoth should be taken as between hammer and anvil and be broken to pieces; and the signal for this was to be the firing of a great beacon in Dorthonion.

But the Captain of Morgoth in the west had been commanded to draw out Fingon from his hills by whatever means he could. He marched on, therefore, until the front of his battle was drawn up before the stream of Sirion, from the walls of the Barad Eithel to the Fen of Serech; and the outposts of Fingon could see the eyes of



their enemies. But there was no answer to his challenge, and the taunts of his Orcs faltered as they looked upon the silent walls and the hidden threat of the hills.

Then the Captain of Morgoth sent out riders with tokens of parley, and they rode up before the very walls of the outworks of the Barad Eithel. With them they brought Gelmir son of Guilin, a lord of Nargothrond, whom they had captured in the Bragollach, and had blinded; and their heralds showed him forth crying: 'We have many more such at home, but you must make haste if you would find them. For we shall deal with them all when we return, even so.' And they hewed off Gelmir's arms and legs, and left him.

By ill chance at that point in the outposts stood Gwindor son of Guilin with many folk of Nargothrond; and indeed he had marched to war with such strength as he could gather because of his grief for the taking of his brother. Now his wrath was like a flame, and he leapt forth upon horse-back, and many riders with him, and they pursued the heralds of Angband and slew them; and all the folk of Nargothrond followed after, and they drove on deep into the ranks of Angband. And seeing this the host of the Noldor was set on fire, and Fingon put on his white helm, and sounded his trumpets, and all his host leapt forth from the hills in sudden onslaught.

The light of the drawing of the swords of the Noldor was like a fire in a field of reeds; and so fell and swift was their onset that almost the designs of Morgoth went astray. Before the decoying army that he had sent west could be strengthened it was swept away and destroyed, and the banners of Fingon passed over the Anfauglith and were raised before the walls of Angband.

Ever in the forefront of that battle went Gwindor and the folk of Nargothrond, and even now they could not be restrained; and they burst through the outer gates and slew the guards within the very courts of Angband; and Morgoth trembled upon his deep throne, hearing them beat upon his doors. But Gwindor was trapped there and taken alive and his folk slain; for Fingon could not come to his aid. By many secret doors in Thangorodrim Morgoth let forth his main strength that he had held in waiting, and Fingon was beaten back with great loss from the walls of Angband.

Then in the plain of the Anfauglith, on the fourth day of the war, there began the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, all the sorrow of which no tale can contain. Of all that befell in the eastward battle: of the routing of Glaurung the Dragon by the Dwarves of Belegost; of the treachery of the Easterlings and the overthrow of the host of Maedhros and the flight of the sons of Fëanor, no more is here said. In the west the host of Fingon retreated over the sands, and there fell Haldir son of Halmir and most of the Men of Brethil. But on the fifth day as night fell, and they were still far from Ered Wethrin, the armies of Angband surrounded the army of Fingon, and they fought until day, pressed ever closer. In the morning came hope, for the horns of Turgon were heard, as he marched up with the main host of Gondolin; for Turgon had been stationed southward guarding the passes of Sirion, and he had restrained most of his folk from the rash onslaught. Now he hastened to the aid of his brother; and the Noldor of Gondolin were strong and their ranks shone like a river of steel in the sun, for the sword and harness of the least of the warriors of Turgon was worth more than the ransom of any king among Men.

Now the phalanx of the guard of the King broke through the ranks of the Orcs, and Turgon hewed his way to the side of his brother. And it is said that the meeting of Turgon with Húrin who stood beside Fingon was glad in the midst of the battle. For a while then the hosts of Angband were driven back, and Fingon again began his retreat. But having routed Maedhros in the east Morgoth had now great forces to spare, and before Fingon and Turgon could come to the shelter of the hills they were assailed by a tide of foes thrice greater than all the force that was left to them. Gothmog, high-captain of Angband, was come; and he drove a dark wedge between the Elven-hosts, surrounding King Fingon, and thrusting Turgon and Húrin aside towards the Fen of Serech. Then he turned upon Fingon. That was a grim meeting. At last Fingon stood alone with his guard dead about him, and he fought with Gothmog, until a Balrog came behind him and cast a thong of steel round him. Then Gothmog hewed him with his black axe, and a white flame sprang up from the helm of Fingon as it was cloven. Thus fell the King of the Noldor; and they beat him into the dust with their maces, and his banner, blue and silver, they trod into the mire of his blood.

The field was lost; but still Húrin and Huor and the remnant of the House of Hador stood firm with Turgon of Gondolin; and the hosts of Morgoth could not yet win the passes of Sirion. Then Húrin spoke to Turgon,

saying: 'Go now, lord, while time is! For you are the last of the House of Fingolfin, and in you lives the last hope of the Eldar. While Gondolin stands Morgoth shall still know fear in his heart.'

'Not long now can Gondolin remain hidden, and being discovered it must fall,' said Turgon.

'Yet if it stands only a little while,' said Huor, 'then out of your house shall come the hope of Elves and Men. This I say to you, lord, with the eyes of death: though we part here for ever, and I shall not look on your white walls again, from you and from me a new star shall arise. Farewell!'

Maeglin, Turgon's sister-son, who stood by, heard these words and did not forget them.

Then Turgon took the counsel of Húrin and Huor, and he gave orders that his host should begin a retreat into the passes of Sirion; and his captains Ecthelion and Glorfindel guarded the flanks to right and left so that none of the enemy should pass them by, for the only road in that region was narrow and ran near the west bank of the growing stream of Sirion. But the Men of Dor-lómin held the rearguard, as Húrin and Huor desired; for they did not wish in their hearts to escape from the Northlands; and if they could not win back to their homes, there they would stand to the end. So it was that Turgon fought his way southward, until coming behind the guard of Húrin and Huor, he passed down Sirion and escaped; and he vanished into the mountains and was hidden from the eyes of Morgoth. But the brothers drew the remnant of the mighty men of the House of Hador about them, and foot by foot they withdrew, until they came behind the Fen of Serech, and had the stream of Rivil before them. There they stood and gave way no more.

Then all the hosts of Angband swarmed against them, and they bridged the stream with their dead, and encircled the remnant of Hithlum as a gathering tide about a rock. There, as the Sun westered and the shadows of the Ered Wethrin grew dark, Huor fell pierced with a venomous arrow in the eye, and all the valiant men of Hador were slain about him in a heap; and the Orcs hewed their heads and piled them as a mound of gold in the sunset.

Last of all Húrin stood alone. Then he cast aside his shield, and seized the axe of an orc-captain and wielded it two-handed; and it is sung that the axe smoked in the black blood of the troll-guard of Gothmog until it withered, and each time that he slew Húrin cried aloud: '*Aure entuluva!* Day shall come again!' Seventy times he uttered that cry; but they took him at last alive, by the command of Morgoth, who thought thus to do him more evil than by death. Therefore the Orcs grappled Húrin with their hands, which clung to him still, though he hewed off their arms; and ever their numbers were renewed, till he fell buried beneath them. Then Gothmog bound him and dragged him to Angband with mockery.

Thus ended the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, as the Sun went down beyond the Sea. Night fell in Hithlum, and there came a great storm of wind out of the West.

Great was the triumph of Morgoth, though all the purposes of his malice were not yet accomplished. One thought troubled him deeply and marred his victory with unquiet: Turgon had escaped his net, of all his foes the one whom he had most desired to take or destroy. For Turgon of the great House of Fingolfin was now by right King of all the Noldor; and Morgoth feared and hated the House of Fingolfin, because they had scorned him in Valinor and had the friendship of Ulmo his foe; and because of the wounds that Fingolfin gave him in battle. And most of all Morgoth feared Turgon, for of old in Valinor his eye had lighted on him, and whenever he drew near a dark shadow had fallen on his spirit, foreboding that in some time that yet lay hidden in doom, from Turgon ruin should come to him.



## Chapter III: The Words Of Húrin And Morgoth

Now by the command of Morgoth the Orcs with great labour gathered all the bodies of their enemies, and all their harness and weapons, and piled them in a mound in the midst of the plain of Anfauglith, and it was like a great hill that could be seen from afar, and the Eldar named it Haudh-en-Nirnaeth. But grass came there and grew again long and green upon that hill alone in all the desert; and no servant of Morgoth thereafter trod upon the earth beneath which the swords of the Eldar and the Edain crumbled into rust. The realm of Fingon was no more, and the Sons of Fëanor wandered as leaves before the wind. To Hithlum none of the Men of Hador's House returned, nor any tidings of the battle and the fate of their lords. But Morgoth sent thither Men who were under his dominion, swarthy Easterlings; and he shut them in that land and forbade them to leave it. This was all that he gave them of the rich rewards that he had promised them for their treachery to Maedhros: to plunder and harass the old and the children and womenfolk of Hador's people. The remnant of the Eldar of Hithlum, all those who did not escape into the wilds and the mountains, he took to the mines of Angband and they became his thralls. But the Orcs went freely through all the North and pressed ever southward into Beleriand. There Doriath yet remained, and Nargothrond; but Morgoth gave little heed to them, either because he knew little of them, or because their hour was not yet come in the designs of his malice. But his thought ever returned to Turgon.

Therefore Húrin was brought before Morgoth, for Morgoth knew by his arts and his spies that Húrin had the friendship of the King; and he sought to daunt him with his eyes. But Húrin could not yet be daunted, and he defied Morgoth. Therefore Morgoth had him chained and set in slow torment; but after a while he came to him, and offered him his choice to go free whither he would, or to receive power and rank as the greatest of Morgoth's captains, if he would but reveal where Turgon had his stronghold, and aught else that he knew of the King's counsels. But Húrin the Steadfast mocked him, saying: 'Blind you are, Morgoth Bauglir, and blind shall ever be, seeing only the dark. You know not what rules the hearts of Men, and if you knew you could not give it. But a fool is he who accepts what Morgoth offers. You will take first the price and then withhold the promise; and I should get only death, if I told you what you ask.'

Then Morgoth laughed, and he said: 'Death you may yet crave of me as a boon.' Then he took Húrin to the Haudh-en-Nirnaeth, and it was then new-built and the reek of death was upon it; and Morgoth set Húrin upon its top and bade him look west towards Hithlum, and think of his wife and his son and other kin. 'For they dwell now in my realm,' said Morgoth, 'and they are at my mercy.'

'You have none,' answered Húrin. 'But you will not come at Turgon through them; for they do not know his secrets.'

Then wrath mastered Morgoth, and he said: 'Yet I may come at you, and all your accursed house; and you shall be broken on my will, though you all were made of steel.' And he took up a long sword that lay there and broke it before the eyes of Húrin, and a splinter wounded his face; but Húrin did not blench. Then Morgoth stretching out his long arm towards Dor-lómin cursed Húrin and Morwen and their offspring, saying: 'Behold! The shadow of my thought shall lie upon them wherever they go, and my hate shall pursue them to the ends of the world.'

But Húrin said: 'You speak in vain. For you cannot see them, nor govern them from afar: not while you keep this shape, and desire still to be a King visible on earth.'

Then Morgoth turned upon Húrin, and he said: 'Fool, little among Men, and they are the least of all that speak! Have you seen the Valar, or measured the power of Manwë and Varda? Do you know the reach of their thought? Or do you think, perhaps, that their thought is upon you, and that they may shield you from afar?'

‘I know not,’ said Húrin. ‘Yet so it might be, if they willed. For the Elder King shall not be dethroned while Arda endures.’

‘You say it,’ said Morgoth. ‘I am the Elder King: Melkor, first and mightiest of all the Valar, who was before the world, and made it. The shadow of my purpose lies upon Arda, and all that is in it bends slowly and surely to my will. But upon all whom you love my thought shall weigh as a cloud of Doom, and it shall bring them down into darkness and despair. Wherever they go, evil shall arise. Whenever they speak, their words shall bring ill counsel. Whatsoever they do shall turn against them. They shall die without hope, cursing both life and death.’

But Húrin answered: ‘Do you forget to whom you speak? Such things you spoke long ago to our fathers; but we escaped from your shadow. And now we have knowledge of you, for we have looked on the faces that have seen the Light, and heard the voices that have spoken with Manwë. Before Arda you were, but others also; and you did not make it. Neither are you the most mighty; for you have spent your strength upon yourself and wasted it in your own emptiness. No more are you now than an escaped thrall of the Valar, and their chain still awaits you.’

‘You have learned the lessons of your masters by rote,’ said Morgoth. ‘But such childish lore will not help you, now they are all fled away.’

‘This last then I will say to you, thrall Morgoth,’ said Húrin, ‘and it comes not from the lore of the Eldar, but is put into my heart in this hour. You are not the Lord of Men, and shall not be, though all Arda and Menel fall in your dominion. Beyond the Circles of the World you shall not pursue those who refuse you.’

‘Beyond the Circles of the World I will not pursue them,’ said Morgoth. ‘For beyond the Circles of the World there is Nothing. But within them they shall not escape me, until they enter into Nothing.’

‘You lie,’ said Húrin.

‘You shall see and you shall confess that I do not lie,’ said Morgoth. And taking Húrin back to Angband he set him in a chair of stone upon a high place of Thangorodrim, from which he could see afar the land of Hithlum in the west and the lands of Beleriand in the south. There he was bound by the power of Morgoth; and Morgoth standing beside him cursed him again and set his power upon him, so that he could not move from that place, nor die, until Morgoth should release him.

‘Sit now there,’ said Morgoth, ‘and look out upon the lands where evil and despair shall come upon those whom you have delivered to me. For you have dared to mock me, and have questioned the power of Melkor, Master of the fates of Arda. Therefore with my eyes you shall see, and with my ears you shall hear, and nothing shall be hidden from you.’



## Chapter IV: The Departure Of Túrin

To Brethil three men only found their way back at last through Taur-nu-Fuin, an evil road; and when Glóredhel Hador's daughter learned of the fall of Haldir she grieved and died.

To Dor-lómin no tidings came. Rían wife of Huor fled into the wild distraught; but she was aided by the Grey-elves of Mithrim, and when her child, Tuor, was born they fostered him. But Rían went to the Haudh-en-Nirnaeth, and laid herself down there, and died.

Morwen Eledhwen remained in Hithlum, silent in grief. Her son Túrin was only in his ninth year, and she was again with child. Her days were evil. The Easterlings came into the land in great numbers and they dealt cruelly with the people of Hador, and robbed them of all that they possessed and enslaved them. All the people of Húrin's homelands that could work or serve any purpose they took away, even young girls and boys, and the old they killed or drove out to starve. But they dared not yet lay hands on the Lady of Dor-lómin, or thrust her from her house; for the word ran among them that she was perilous, and a witch who had dealings with the white-fiends: for so they named the Elves, hating them, but fearing them more. For this reason they also feared and avoided the mountains, in which many of the Eldar had taken refuge, especially in the south of the land; and after plundering and harrying the Easterlings drew back northwards. For Húrin's house stood in the south-east of Dor-lómin, and the mountains were near; Nen Lalaith indeed came down from a spring under the shadow of Amon Dathir, over whose shoulder there was a steep pass. By this the hardy could cross Ered Wethrin and come down by the wells of Glithui into Beleriand. But this was not known to the Easterlings, nor to Morgoth yet; for all that country, while the House of Fingolfin stood, was secure from him, and none of his servants had ever come there. He trusted that Ered Wethrin was a wall insurmountable, both against escape from the north and against assault from the south; and there was indeed no other pass, for the unwinged, between Serech and far westward where Dor-lómin marched with Nevrast.

Thus it came to pass that after the first inroads Morwen was let be, though there were men that lurked in the woods about and it was perilous to stir far abroad. There still remained under Morwen's shelter Sador the woodwright and a few old men and women, and Túrin, whom she kept close within the garth. But the homestead of Húrin soon fell into decay, and though Morwen laboured hard she was poor, and would have gone hungry but for the help that was sent to her secretly by Aerin, Húrin's kinswoman; for a certain Brodda, one of the Easterlings, had taken her by force to be his wife. Alms were bitter to Morwen; but she took this aid for the sake of Túrin and her unborn child, and because, as she said, it came of her own. For it was this Brodda who had seized the people, the goods, and the cattle of Húrin's homelands, and carried them off to his own dwellings. He was a bold man, but of small account among his own people before they came to Hithlum; and so, seeking wealth, he was ready to hold lands that others of his sort did not covet. Morwen he had seen once, when he rode to her house on a foray; but a great dread of her had seized him. He thought that he had looked in the fell eyes of a white-fiend, and he was filled with a mortal fear lest some evil should overtake him; and he did not ransack her house, nor discover Túrin, else the life of the heir of the true lord would have been short.

Brodda made thralls of the Strawheads, as he named the people of Hador, and set them to build him a wooden hall in the land to the northward of Húrin's house; and within a stockade his slaves were herded like cattle in a byre, but ill guarded. Among them some could still be found uncowed and ready to help the Lady of Dor-lómin, even at their peril; and from them came secretly tidings of the land to Morwen, though there was little hope in the news they brought. But Brodda took Aerin as a wife and not a slave, for there were few women amongst his own following, and none to compare with the daughters of the Edain; and he hoped to make himself a lordship in that country, and have an heir to hold it after him.

Of what had happened and of what might happen in the days to come Morwen said little to Túrin; and he feared to break her silence with questions. When the Easterlings first came into Dor-lómin he said to his mother: 'When will my father come back, to cast out these ugly thieves? Why does he not come?'

Morwen answered: 'I do not know. It may be that he was slain, or that he is held captive; or again it may be that he was driven far away, and cannot yet return through the foes that surround us.'

'Then I think that he is dead,' said Túrin, and before his mother he restrained his tears; 'for no-one could keep him from coming back to help us, if he were alive.'

'I do not think that either of those things are true, my son,' said Morwen.

As the time lengthened the heart of Morwen grew darker for her son Túrin, heir of Dor-lómin and Ladros; for she could see no hope for him better than to become a slave of the Easterling men, before he was much older. Therefore she remembered her words with Húrin, and her thought turned again to Doriath; and she resolved at last to send Túrin away in secret, if she could, and to beg King Thingol to harbour him. And as she sat and pondered how this might be done, she heard clearly in her thought the voice of Húrin saying to her: *Go swiftly! Do not wait for me!* But the birth of her child was drawing near, and the road would be hard and perilous; the more that went the less hope of escape. And her heart still cheated her with hope unadmitted; her inmost thought foreboded that Húrin was not dead, and she listened for his footfall in the sleepless watches of the night, or would wake thinking that she had heard in the courtyard the neigh of Arroch his horse. Moreover, though she was willing that her son should be fostered in the halls of another, after the manner of that time, she would not yet humble her pride to be an alms-guest, not even of a king. Therefore the voice of Húrin, or the memory of his voice, was denied, and the first strand of the fate of Túrin was woven.

Autumn of the Year of Lamentation was drawing on before Morwen came to this resolve, and then she was in haste; for the time for journeying was short, but she dreaded that Túrin would be taken, if she waited over winter. Easterlings were prowling round the garth and spying on the house. Therefore she said suddenly to Túrin: 'Your father does not come. So you must go, and soon. It is as he would wish.'

'Go?' cried Túrin. 'Whither shall we go? Over the Mountains?'

'Yes,' said Morwen, 'over the Mountains, away south. South—that way some hope may lie. But I did not say *we*, my son. You must go, but I must stay.'

'I cannot go alone!' said Túrin. 'I will not leave you. Why should we not go together?'

'I cannot go,' said Morwen. 'But you will not go alone. I shall send Gethron with you, and Grithnir too, perhaps.'

'Will you not send Labadal?' said Túrin.

'No, for Sador is lame,' said Morwen, 'and it will be a hard road. And since you are my son and the days are grim, I will not speak softly: you may die on that road. The year is getting late. But if you stay, you will come to a worse end: to be a thrall. If you wish to be a man, when you come to a man's age, you will do as I bid, bravely.'

'But I shall leave you only with Sador, and blind Ragnir, and the old women,' said Túrin. 'Did not my father say that I am the heir of Hador? The heir should stay in Hador's house to defend it. Now I wish that I still had my knife!'

'The heir should stay, but he cannot,' said Morwen. 'But he may return one day. Now take heart! I will follow you, if things grow worse; if I can.'

'But how will you find me, lost in the wild?' said Túrin; and suddenly his heart failed him, and he wept openly.

'If you wail, other things will find you first,' said Morwen. 'But I know whither you are going, and if you come there, and if you remain there, there I will find you, if I can. For I am sending you to King Thingol in Doriath. Would you not rather be a king's guest than a thrall?'

'I do not know,' said Túrin. 'I do not know what a thrall is.'

‘I am sending you away so that you need not learn it,’ Morwen answered. Then she set Túrin before her and looked into his eyes, as if she were trying to read some riddle there. ‘It is hard, Túrin, my son,’ she said at length. ‘Not hard for you only. It is heavy on me in evil days to judge what is best to do. But I do as I think right; for why else should I part with the thing most dear that is left to me?’

They spoke no more of this together, and Túrin was grieved and bewildered. In the morning he went to find Sador, who had been hewing sticks for firing, of which they had little, for they dared not stray out in the woods; and now he leant on his crutch and looked at the great chair of Húrin, which had been thrust unfinished in a corner. ‘It must go,’ he said, ‘for only bare needs can be served in these days.’

‘Do not break it yet,’ said Túrin. ‘Maybe he will come home, and then it will please him to see what you have done for him while he was away.’

‘False hopes are more dangerous than fears,’ said Sador, ‘and they will not keep us warm this winter.’ He fingered the carving on the chair, and sighed. ‘I wasted my time,’ he said, ‘though the hours seemed pleasant. But all such things are short-lived; and the joy in the making is their only true end, I guess. And now I might as well give you back your gift.’

Túrin put out his hand, and quickly withdrew it. ‘A man does not take back his gifts,’ he said.

‘But if it is my own, may I not give it as I will?’ said Sador. ‘Yes,’ said Túrin, ‘to any man but me. But why should you wish to give it?’

‘I have no hope of using it for worthy tasks,’ Sador said. ‘There will be no work for Labadal in days to come but thrall-work.’

‘What is a thrall?’ said Túrin.

‘A man who was a man but is treated as a beast,’ Sador answered. ‘Fed only to keep alive, kept alive only to toil, toiling only for fear of pain or death. And from these robbers he may get pain or death just for their sport. I hear that they pick some of the fleet-footed and hunt them with hounds. They have learned quicker from the Orcs than we learnt from the Fair Folk.’

‘Now I understand things better,’ said Túrin.

‘It is a shame that you should have to understand such things so soon,’ said Sador; then seeing the strange look on Túrin’s face: ‘What do you understand now?’

‘Why my mother is sending me away,’ said Túrin, and tears filled his eyes.

‘Ah!’ said Sador, and he muttered to himself: ‘But why so long delayed?’ Then turning to Túrin he said: ‘That does not seem news for tears to me. But you should not speak your mother’s counsels aloud to Labadal, or to anyone. All walls and fences have ears these days, ears that do not grow on fair heads.’

‘But I must speak with someone!’ said Túrin. ‘I have always told things to you. I do not want to leave you, Labadal. I do not want to leave this house or my mother.’

‘But if you do not,’ said Sador, ‘soon there will be an end of the House of Hador for ever, as you must understand now. Labadal does not want you to go; but Sador servant of Húrin will be happier when Húrin’s son is out of the reach of the Easterlings. Well, well, it cannot be helped: we must say farewell. Now will you not take my knife as a parting gift?’

‘No!’ said Túrin. ‘I am going to the Elves, to the King of Doriath, my mother says. There I may get other things like it. But I shall not be able to send you any gifts, Labadal. I shall be far away and all alone.’ Then Túrin wept; but Sador said to him: ‘Hey now! Where is Húrin’s son? For I heard him say, not long ago: *I shall go as a soldier with an Elf-king, as soon as I am able.*’

Then Túrin stayed his tears, and he said: ‘Very well: if those were the words of the son of Húrin, he must keep them, and go. But whenever I say that I will do this or that, it looks very different when the time comes. Now I am unwilling. I must take care not to say such things again.’

‘It would be best indeed,’ said Sador. ‘So most men teach, and few men learn. Let the unseen days be. Today is more than enough.’

Now Túrin was made ready for the journey, and he bade farewell to his mother, and departed in secret with his two companions. But when they bade Túrin turn and look back upon the house of his father, then the anguish of parting smote him like a sword, and he cried: ‘Morwen, Morwen, when shall I see you again?’ But Morwen standing on her threshold heard the echo of that cry in the wooded hills, and she clutched the post of the door so that her fingers were torn. This was the first of the sorrows of Túrin.

Early in the year after Túrin was gone Morwen gave birth to her child, and she named her Niënor, which is Mourning; but Túrin was already far away when she was born. Long and evil was his road, for the power of Morgoth was ranging far abroad; but he had as guides Gethron and Grithnir, who had been young in the days of Hador, and though they were now aged they were valiant, and they knew well the lands, for they had journeyed often through Beleriand in former times. Thus by fate and courage they passed over the Shadowy Mountains, and coming down into the Vale of Sirion they passed into the Forest of Brethil; and at last, weary and haggard, they reached the confines of Doriath. But there they became bewildered, and were enmeshed in the mazes of the Queen, and wandered lost amid the pathless trees, until all their food was spent. There they came near to death, for winter came cold from the North; but not so light was Túrin’s doom. Even as they lay in despair they heard a horn sounded. Beleg the Strongbow was hunting in that region, for he dwelt ever on the marches of Doriath, and he was the greatest woodsman of those days. He heard their cries and came to them, and when he had given them food and drink he learned their names and whence they came, and he was filled with wonder and pity. And he looked with liking upon Túrin, for he had the beauty of his mother and the eyes of his father, and he was sturdy and strong.

‘What boon would you have of King Thingol?’ said Beleg to the boy.

‘I would be one of his knights, to ride against Morgoth, and avenge my father,’ said Túrin.

‘That may well be, when the years have increased you,’ said Beleg. ‘For though you are yet small you have the makings of a valiant man, worthy to be a son of Húrin the Steadfast, if that were possible.’ For the name of Húrin was held in honour in all the lands of the Elves. Therefore Beleg gladly became the guide of the wanderers, and he led them to a lodge where he dwelt at that time with other hunters, and there they were housed while a messenger went to Menegroth. And when word came back that Thingol and Melian would receive the son of Húrin and his guardians, Beleg led them by secret ways into the Hidden Kingdom.

Thus Túrin came to the great bridge over the Esgalduin, and passed the gates of Thingol’s halls; and as a child he gazed upon the marvels of Menegroth, which no mortal Man before had seen, save Beren only. Then Gethron spoke the message of Morwen before Thingol and Melian; and Thingol received them kindly, and set Túrin upon his knee in honour of Húrin, mightiest of Men, and of Beren his kinsman. And those that saw this marvelled, for it was a sign that Thingol took Túrin as his foster-son; and that was not at that time done by kings, nor ever again by Elf-lord to a Man. Then Thingol said to him: ‘Here, son of Húrin, shall your home be; and in all your life you shall be held as my son, Man though you be. Wisdom shall be given you beyond the measure of mortal Men, and the weapons of the Elves shall be set in your hands. Perhaps the time may come when you shall regain the lands of your father in Hithlum; but dwell now here in love.’

Thus began the sojourn of Túrin in Doriath. With him remained for a while Gethron and Grithnir his guardians, though they yearned to return again to their lady in Dor-lómin. Then age and sickness came upon Grithnir, and he stayed beside Túrin until he died; but Gethron departed, and Thingol sent with him an escort to guide him and guard him, and they brought words from Thingol to Morwen. They came at last to Húrin’s house, and when Morwen learned that Túrin was received with honour in the halls of Thingol her grief was lightened; and the Elves brought also rich gifts from Melian, and a message bidding her return with Thingol’s folk to Doriath. For Melian was wise and foresighted, and she hoped thus to avert the evil that was prepared in the thought of Morgoth. But Morwen would not depart from her house, for her heart was yet unchanged and her pride still high; moreover Niënor was a babe in arms. Therefore she dismissed the Elves of Doriath with her thanks, and gave them in gift the last small things of gold that remained to her, concealing her poverty; and she bade them take back to Thingol the Helm of Hador. But Túrin watched ever for the return of Thingol’s messengers; and



when they came back alone he fled into the woods and wept, for he knew of Melian's bidding and he had hoped that Morwen would come. This was the second sorrow of Túrin. When the messengers spoke Morwen's answer, Melian was moved with pity, perceiving her mind; and she saw that the fate which she foreboded could not lightly be set aside.

The Helm of Hador was given into Thingol's hands. That helm was made of grey steel adorned with gold, and on it were graven runes of victory. A power was in it that guarded any who wore it from wound or death, for the sword that hewed it was broken, and the dart that smote it sprang aside. It was wrought by Telchar, the smith of Nogrod, whose works were renowned. It had a visor (after the manner of those that the Dwarves used in their forges for the shielding of their eyes), and the face of one that wore it struck fear into the hearts of all beholders, but was itself guarded from dart and fire. Upon its crest was set in defiance a gilded image of Glaurung the dragon; for it had been made soon after he first issued from the gates of Morgoth. Often Hador, and Galdor after him, had borne it in war; and the hearts of the host of Hithlum were uplifted when they saw it towering high amid the battle, and they cried: 'Of more worth is the Dragon of Dor-lómin than the gold-worm of Angband!' But Húrin did not wear the Dragon-helm with ease, and in any case he would not use it, for he said: 'I would rather look on my foes with my true face.' Nonetheless he accounted the helm among the greatest heirlooms of his house.

Now Thingol had in Menegroth deep armouries filled with great wealth of weapons: metal wrought like fishes' mail and shining like water in the moon; swords and axes, shields and helms, wrought by Telchar himself or by his master Gamil Zirak the old, or by elven-wrights more skilful still. For some things he had received in gift that came out of Valinor and were wrought by Fëanor in his mastery, than whom no craftsman was greater in all the days of the world. Yet Thingol handled the Helm of Hador as though his hoard were scanty, and he spoke courteous words, saying: 'Proud were the head that bore this helm, which the sires of Húrin bore.'

Then a thought came to him, and he summoned Túrin, and told him that Morwen had sent to her son a mighty thing, the heirloom of his fathers. 'Take now the Dragonhead of the North,' he said, 'and when the time comes wear it well.' But Túrin was yet too young to lift the helm, and he heeded it not because of the sorrow of his heart.



## Chapter V: Túrin In Doriath

In the years of his childhood in the kingdom of Doriath Túrin was watched over by Melian, though he saw her seldom. But there was a maiden named Nellas, who lived in the woods; and at Melian's bidding she would follow Túrin if he strayed in the forest, and often she met him there, as it were by chance. Then they played together, or walked hand in hand; for he grew swiftly, whereas she seemed no more than a maiden of his own age, and was so in heart for all her elven-years. From Nellas Túrin learned much concerning the ways and the wild things of Doriath, and she taught him to speak the Sindarin tongue after the manner of the ancient realm, older, and more courteous, and richer in beautiful words. Thus for a little while his mood was lightened, until he fell again under shadow, and that friendship passed like a morning of spring. For Nellas did not go to Menegroth, and was unwilling ever to walk under roofs of stone; so that as Túrin's boyhood passed and he turned his thoughts to deeds of men, he saw her less and less often, and at last called for her no more. But she watched over him still, though now she remained hidden.

Nine years Túrin dwelt in the halls of Menegroth. His heart and thought turned ever to his own kin, and at times he had tidings of them for his own comfort. For Thingol sent messengers to Morwen as often as he might, and she sent back words for her son; thus Túrin heard that Morwen's plight was eased, and that his sister Niënor grew in beauty, a flower in the grey North. And Túrin grew in stature until he became tall among Men and surpassed that of the Elves of Doriath, and his strength and hardihood were renowned in the realm of Thingol. In those years he learned much lore, hearing eagerly the histories of ancient days and great deeds of old, and he became thoughtful, and sparing in speech. Often Beleg Strongbow came to Menegroth to seek him, and led him far afield, teaching him woodcraft and archery and (which he liked more) the handling of swords; but in crafts of making he had less skill, for he was slow to learn his own strength, and often marred what he made with some sudden stroke. In other matters also it seemed that fortune was unfriendly to him, so that often what he designed went awry, and what he desired he did not gain; neither did he win friendship easily, for he was not merry, and laughed seldom, and a shadow lay on his youth. Nonetheless he was held in love and esteem by those who knew him well, and he had honour as the fosterling of the King.

Yet there was one in Doriath that begrudged him this, and ever the more as Túrin drew nearer to manhood: Saeros was his name. He was proud, dealing haughtily with those whom he deemed of lesser state and worth than himself. He became a friend of Daeron the minstrel, for he also was skilled in song; and he had no love for Men, and least of all for any kinsman of Beren One-hand. 'Is it not strange,' said he, 'that this land should be opened to yet another of this unhappy race? Did not the other do harm enough in Doriath?' Therefore he looked askance at Túrin and on all that he did, saying what ill he could of it; but his words were cunning and his malice veiled. If he met with Túrin alone, he spoke haughtily to him and showed plain his contempt; and Túrin grew weary of him, though for long he returned ill words with silence, for Saeros was great among the people of Doriath and a counsellor of the King. But the silence of Túrin displeased Saeros as much as his words.

In the year that Túrin was seventeen years old, his grief was renewed; for all tidings from his home ceased at that time. The power of Morgoth had grown yearly, and all Hithlum was now under his shadow. Doubtless he knew much of the doings of Húrin's people and kin, and had not molested them for a while, so that his design might be fulfilled; but now in pursuit of this purpose he set a close watch on all the passes of the Shadowy Mountains, so that none might come out of Hithlum nor enter it, save at great peril, and the Orcs swarmed about the sources of Narog and Teiglin and the upper waters of Sirion. Thus there came a time when the messengers of Thingol did not return, and he would send no more. He was ever loath to let any stray beyond the guarded borders, and in nothing had he shown greater good will to Húrin and his kin than in sending his people on the dangerous roads to Morwen in Dor-lómin.

Now Túrin grew heavy-hearted, not knowing what new evil was afoot, and fearing that an ill fate had befallen Morwen and Niënor; and for many days he sat silent, brooding on the downfall of the House of Hador and the Men of the North. Then he rose up and went to seek Thingol; and he found him sitting with Melian under Hírilorn, the great beech of Menegroth.

Thingol looked on Túrin in wonder, seeing suddenly before him in the place of his fosterling a Man and a stranger, tall, dark-haired, looking at him with deep eyes in a white face, stern and proud; but he did not speak.

‘What do you desire, foster-son?’ said Thingol, and guessed that he would ask for nothing small.

‘Mail, sword, and shield of my stature, lord,’ answered Túrin. ‘Also by your leave I will now reclaim the Dragon-helm of my sires.’

‘These you shall have,’ said Thingol. ‘But what need have you yet of such arms?’

‘The need of a man,’ said Túrin; ‘and of a son who has kin to remember. And I need also companions valiant in arms.’

‘I will appoint you a place among my knights of the sword, for the sword will ever be your weapon,’ said Thingol. ‘With them you may make trial of war upon the marches, if that is your desire.’

‘Beyond the marches of Doriath my heart urges me,’ said Túrin. ‘For onset against our foe I long, rather than defence.’

‘Then you must go alone,’ said Thingol. ‘The part of my people in the war with Angband I rule according to my wisdom, Túrin son of Húrin. No force of the arms of Doriath will I send out at this time; nor at any time that I can yet foresee.’

‘Yet you are free to go as you will, son of Morwen,’ said Melian. ‘The Girdle of Melian does not hinder the going of those that passed in with our leave.’

‘Unless wise counsel will restrain you,’ said Thingol. ‘What is your counsel, lord?’ said Túrin.

‘A Man you seem in stature, and indeed more than many already,’ Thingol answered; ‘but nonetheless you have not come to the fullness of your manhood that shall be. Until that is achieved, you should be patient, testing and training your strength. Then, maybe, you can remember your kin; but there is little hope that one Man alone can do more against the Dark Lord than to aid the Elf-lords in their defence, as long as that may last.’

Then Túrin said: ‘Beren my kinsman did more.’ ‘Beren, and Lúthien,’ said Melian. ‘But you are over-bold to speak so to the father of Lúthien. Not so high is your destiny, I think, Túrin son of Morwen, though greatness is in you, and your fate is twined with that of the Elven-folk, for good or for ill. Beware of yourself, lest it be ill.’ Then after a silence she spoke to him again, saying: ‘Go now, fosterson; and take the advice of the King. That will ever be wiser than your own counsel. Yet I do not think that you will long abide with us in Doriath beyond the coming of manhood. If in days to come you remember the words of Melian, it will be for your good: fear both the heat and the cold of your heart, and strive for patience, if you can.’

Then Túrin bowed before them, and took his leave. And soon after he put on the Dragon-helm, and took arms, and went away to the north-marches, and was joined to the elven-warriors who there waged unceasing war upon the Orcs and all servants and creatures of Morgoth. Thus while yet scarcely out of his boyhood his strength and courage were proved; and remembering the wrongs of his kin he was ever forward in deeds of daring, and he received many wounds by spear or arrow or the crooked blades of the Orcs.

But his doom delivered him from death; and word ran through the woods, and was heard far beyond Doriath, that the Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin was seen again. Then many wondered, saying: ‘Can the spirit of any man return from death; or has Húrin of Hithlum escaped indeed from the pits of Hell?’

One only was mightier in arms among the march-wardens of Thingol at that time than Túrin, and that was Beleg Strongbow; and Beleg and Túrin were companions in every peril, and walked far and wide in the wild woods together.

Thus three years passed, and in that time Túrin came seldom to Thingol's halls; and he cared no longer for his looks or his attire, but his hair was unkempt, and his mail covered with a grey cloak stained with the weather. But it chanced in the third summer after Túrin's departure, when he was twenty years old, that desiring rest and needing smithwork for the repair of his arms he came unlooked for to Menegroth, and went one evening into the hall. Thingol was not there, for he was abroad in the greenwood with Melian, as was his delight at times in the high summer. Túrin took a seat without heed, for he was wayworn, and filled with thought; and by ill-luck he set himself at a board among the elders of the realm, and in that place where Saeros was accustomed to sit. Saeros, entering late, was angered, believing that Túrin had done this in pride, and with intent to affront him; and his anger was not lessened to find that Túrin was not rebuked by those that sat there, but was welcomed as one worthy to sit among them.

For a while therefore Saeros feigned to be of like mind, and took another seat, facing Túrin across the board. 'Seldom does the march-warden favour us with his company,' he said; 'and I gladly yield my accustomed seat for the chance of speech with him.' But Túrin, who was in converse with Mablung the Hunter, did not rise, and said only a curt 'I thank you'.

Saeros then plied him with questions, concerning the news from the borders, and his deeds in the wild; but though his words seemed fair, the mockery in his voice could not be mistaken. Then Túrin became weary, and he looked about him, and knew the bitterness of exile; and for all the light and laughter of the Elven-halls his thought turned to Beleg and their life in the woods, and thence far away, to Morwen in Dor-lómin in the house of his father; and he frowned, because of the darkness of his thoughts, and made no answer to Saeros. At this, believing the frown aimed at himself, Saeros restrained his anger no longer; and he took out a golden comb, and cast it on the board before Túrin, crying: 'Doubtless, Man of Hithlum, you came in haste to this table, and may be excused your ragged cloak; but there is no need to leave your head untended as a thicket of brambles. And maybe if your ears were uncovered you would heed better what is said to you.'

Túrin said nothing, but turned his eyes upon Saeros, and there was a glint in their darkness. But Saeros did not heed the warning, and returned the gaze with scorn, saying for all to hear: 'If the Men of Hithlum are so wild and fell, of what sort are the women of that land? Do they run like the deer clad only in their hair?'

Then Túrin took up a drinking-vessel and cast it in Saeros' face, and he fell backward with great hurt; and Túrin drew his sword and would have run at him, but Mablung restrained him. Then Saeros rising spat blood upon the board, and spoke as best he could with a broken mouth: 'How long shall we harbour this woodwose? Who rules here tonight? The King's law is heavy upon those who hurt his lieges in the hall; and for those who draw blades there outlawry is the least doom. Outside the hall I could answer you, Woodwose!'

But when Túrin saw the blood upon the table his mood became cold; and with a shrug he released himself from Mablung and left the hall without a word.

Then Mablung said to Saeros: 'What ails you tonight? For this evil I hold you to blame; and maybe the King's law will judge a broken mouth a just return for your taunting.'

'If the cub has a grievance, let him bring it to the King's judgement,' answered Saeros. 'But the drawing of swords here is not to be excused for any such cause. Outside the hall, if the woodwose draws on me, I shall kill him.'

'It might well go otherwise,' said Mablung. 'But if either be slain it will be an evil deed, more fit for Angband than Doriath, and more evil will come of it. Indeed I feel that some shadow of the North has reached out to touch us tonight. Take heed, Saeros, lest you do the will of Morgoth in your pride, and remember that you are of the Eldar.'

'I do not forget it,' said Saeros; but he did not abate his wrath, and through the night his malice grew, nursing his injury.

In the morning he waylaid Túrin, as he set off early from Menegroth, intending to go back to the marches. Túrin had gone only a little way when Saeros ran out upon him from behind with drawn sword and shield on arm. But Túrin, trained in the wild to wariness, saw him from the corner of his eye, and leaping aside he drew swiftly and turned upon his foe. 'Morwen!' he cried, 'now your mocker shall pay for his scorn!' And he clove

Saeros' shield, and then they fought together with swift blades. But Túrin had been long in a hard school, and had grown as agile as any Elf, but stronger. He soon had the mastery, and wounding Saeros' sword-arm he had him at his mercy. Then he set his foot on the sword that Saeros had let fall. 'Saeros,' he said, 'there is a long race before you, and clothes will be a hindrance; hair must suffice.' And suddenly throwing him to the ground he stripped him, and Saeros felt Túrin's great strength, and was afraid. But Túrin let him up, and then 'Run, run, mocker of women!' he cried. 'Run! And unless you go swift as the deer I shall prick you on from behind.' Then he set the point of the sword in Saeros' buttock; and he fled into the wood, crying wildly for help in his terror; but Túrin came after him like a hound, and however he ran, or swerved, still the sword was behind him to egg him on.

The cries of Saeros brought many others to the chase, and they followed after, but only the swiftest could keep up with the runners. Mablung was in the forefront of these, and he was troubled in mind, for though the taunting had seemed evil to him, 'malice that wakes in the morning is the mirth of Morgoth ere night'; and it was held moreover a grievous thing to put any of the Elven-folk to shame, self-willed, without the matter being brought to judgement. None knew at that time that Túrin had been assailed first by Saeros, who would have slain him.

'Hold, hold, Túrin!' he cried. 'This is Orc-work in the woods!' 'Orc-work there was; this is only Orc-play,' Túrin called back. Before Mablung spoke he had been on the point of releasing Saeros, but now with a shout he sprang after him again; and Saeros, despairing at last of aid and thinking his death close behind, ran wildly on, until he came suddenly to a brink where a stream that fed Esgalduin flowed in a deep cleft through high rocks, and it was wide for a deer-leap. In his terror Saeros attempted the leap; but he failed of his footing on the far side and fell back with a cry, and was broken on a great stone in the water. So he ended his life in Doriath; and long would Mandos hold him.

Túrin looked down on his body lying in the stream, and he thought: 'Unhappy fool! From here I would have let him walk back to Menegroth. Now he has laid a guilt upon me undeserved.' And he turned and looked darkly on Mablung and his companions, who now came up and stood near him on the brink. Then after a silence Mablung said gravely: 'Alas! But come back now with us, Túrin, for the King must judge these deeds.'

But Túrin said: 'If the King were just, he would judge me guiltless. But was not this one of his counsellors? Why should a just king choose a heart of malice for his friend? I abjure his law and his judgement.'

'Your words are too proud,' said Mablung, though he pitied the young man. 'Learn wisdom! You shall not turn runagate. I bid you return with me, as a friend. And there are other witnesses. When the King learns the truth you may hope for his pardon.'

But Túrin was weary of the Elven-halls, and he feared lest he be held captive; and he said to Mablung: 'I refuse your bidding. I will not seek King Thingol's pardon for nothing; and I will go now where his doom cannot find me. You have but two choices: to let me go free, or to slay me, if that would fit your law. For you are too few to take me alive.'

They saw by the fire in his eyes that this was true, and they let him pass. 'One death is enough,' said Mablung.

'I did not will it, but I do not mourn it,' said Túrin. 'May Mandos judge him justly; and if ever he return to the lands of the living, may he prove wiser. Farewell!'

'Fare free!' said Mablung; 'for that is your wish. To say *well* would be vain, if you go in this way. A shadow is over you. When we meet again, may it be no darker.'

To that Túrin made no answer, but left them, and went swiftly away, alone, none knew whither.

It is told that when Túrin did not return to the north-marches of Doriath and no tidings could be heard of him, Beleg Strongbow came himself to Menegroth to seek him; and with heavy heart he gathered news of Túrin's deeds and flight. Soon afterwards Thingol and Melian came back to their halls, for the summer was waning; and when the King heard report of what had passed he said: 'This is a grievous matter, which I must hear in full. Though Saeros, my counsellor, is slain, and Túrin my foster-son has fled, tomorrow I will sit in the seat of judgement, and hear again all in due order, before I speak my doom.'

Next day the King sat upon his throne in his court, and about him were all the chiefs and elders of Doriath. Then many witnesses were heard, and of these Mablung spoke most and clearest. And as he told of the quarrel at table, it seemed to the King that Mablung's heart leaned to Túrin.

'You speak as a friend of Túrin son of Húrin?' said Thingol. 'I was, but I have loved truth more and longer,' Mablung answered. 'Hear me to the end, lord!'

When all was told, even to the parting words of Túrin, Thingol sighed; and he looked on those that sat before him, and he said: 'Alas! I see a shadow on your faces. How has it stolen into my realm? Malice is at work here. Saeros I accounted faithful and wise; but if he lived he would feel my anger, for his taunting was evil, and I hold him to blame for all that chanced in the hall. So far Túrin has my pardon. But I cannot pass over his later deeds, when wrath should have cooled. The shaming of Saeros and the hounding of him to his death were wrongs greater than the offence. They show a heart hard and proud.'

Then Thingol sat for a while in thought, and spoke sadly at last. 'This is an ungrateful foster-son, and in truth a man too proud for his state. How can I still harbour one who scorns me and my law, or pardon one who will not repent? This must be my doom. I will banish Túrin from Doriath. If he seeks entry he shall be brought to judgement before me; and until he sues for pardon at my feet he is my son no longer. If any here accounts this unjust, let him speak now!'

Then there was silence in the hall, and Thingol lifted up his hand to pronounce his doom. But at that moment Beleg entered in haste, and cried: 'Lord, may I yet speak?'

'You come late,' said Thingol. 'Were you not bidden with the others?'

'Truly, lord,' answered Beleg, 'but I was delayed; I sought for one whom I knew. Now I bring at last a witness who should be heard, ere your doom falls.'

'All were summoned who had aught to tell,' said the King. 'What can he tell now of more weight than those to whom I have listened?'

'You shall judge when you have heard,' said Beleg. 'Grant this to me, if I have ever deserved your grace.'

'To you I grant it,' said Thingol. Then Beleg went out, and led in by the hand the maiden Nellas, who dwelt in the woods, and came never into Menegroth; and she was afraid, as much of the great pillared hall and the roof of stone as of the company of many eyes that watched her. And when Thingol bade her speak, she said: 'Lord, I was sitting in a tree'; but then she faltered in awe of the King, and could say no more.

At that the King smiled, and said: 'Others have done this also, but have felt no need to tell me of it.'

'Others indeed,' said she, taking courage from his smile. 'Even Lúthien! And of her I was thinking that morning, and of Beren the Man.'

To that Thingol said nothing, and he smiled no longer, but waited until Nellas should speak again.

'For Túrin reminded me of Beren,' she said at last. 'They are akin, I am told, and their kinship can be seen by some: by some that look close.'

Then Thingol grew impatient. 'That may be,' he said. 'But Túrin son of Húrin is gone in scorn of me, and you will see him no more to read his kindred. For now I will speak my judgement.'

'Lord King!' she cried then. 'Bear with me, and let me speak first. I sat in a tree to look on Túrin as he went away; and I saw Saeros come out from the wood with sword and shield, and spring on Túrin at unawares.'

At that there was a murmur in the hall; and the King lifted his hand, saying: 'You bring graver news to my ear than seemed likely. Take heed now to all that you say; for this is a court of doom.'

'So Beleg has told me,' she answered, 'and only for that have I dared to come here, so that Túrin shall not be ill judged. He is valiant, but he is merciful. They fought, lord, these two, until Túrin had bereft Saeros of both shield and sword; but he did not slay him. Therefore I do not believe that he willed his death in the end. If Saeros were put to shame, it was shame that he had earned.'

‘Judgement is mine,’ said Thingol. ‘But what you have told shall govern it.’ Then he questioned Nellas closely; and at last he turned to Mablung, saying: ‘It is strange to me that Túrin said nothing of this to you.’

‘Yet he did not,’ said Mablung, ‘or I should have recounted it. And otherwise should I have spoken to him at our parting.’

‘And otherwise shall my doom now be,’ said Thingol. ‘Hear me! Such fault as can be found in Túrin I now pardon, holding him wronged and provoked. And since it was indeed, as he said, one of my council who so misused him, he shall not seek for this pardon, but I will send it to him, wherever he may be found; and I will recall him in honour to my halls.’

But when the doom was pronounced, suddenly Nellas wept. ‘Where can he be found?’ she said. ‘He has left our land, and the world is wide.’

‘He shall be sought,’ said Thingol. Then he rose, and Beleg led Nellas forth from Menegroth; and he said to her: ‘Do not weep; for if Túrin lives or walks still abroad, I shall find him, though all others fail.’

On the next day Beleg came before Thingol and Melian, and the King said to him: ‘Counsel me, Beleg; for I am grieved. I took Húrin’s son as my son, and so he shall remain, unless Húrin himself should return out of the shadows to claim his own. I would not have any say that Túrin was driven forth unjustly into the wild, and gladly would I welcome him back; for I loved him well.’

‘Give me leave, lord,’ said Beleg, ‘and on your behalf I will redress this evil, if I can. For such manhood as he promised should not run to nothing in the wild. Doriath has need of him, and the need will grow more. And I love him also.’

Then Thingol said to Beleg: ‘Now I have hope in the quest! Go with my good will, and if you find him, guard him and guide him as you may. Beleg Cúthalion, long have you been foremost in the defence of Doriath, and for many deeds of valour and wisdom have earned my thanks. Greatest of all I shall hold the finding of Túrin. At this parting ask for any gift, and I will not deny it to you.’

‘I ask then for a sword of worth,’ said Beleg; ‘for the Orcs come now too thick and close for a bow only, and such blade as I have is no match for their armour.’

‘Choose from all that I have,’ said Thingol, ‘save only Aranrúth, my own.’

Then Beleg chose Anglachel; and that was a sword of great fame, and it was so named because it was made of iron that fell from heaven as a blazing star; it would cleave all earth-dolven iron. One other sword only in Middle-earth was like to it. That sword does not enter into this tale, though it was made of the same ore by the same smith; and that smith was Eöl the Dark Elf, who took Aredhel Turgon’s sister to wife. He gave Anglachel to Thingol as fee, which he begrudged, for leave to dwell in Nan Elmoth; but the other sword, Anguirel, its mate, he kept, until it was stolen from him by Maeglin, his son.

But as Thingol turned the hilt of Anglachel towards Beleg, Melian looked at the blade; and she said: ‘There is malice in this sword. The heart of the smith still dwells in it, and that heart was dark. It will not love the hand that it serves; neither will it abide with you long.’

‘Nonetheless I will wield it while I may,’ said Beleg; and thanking the king he took the sword and departed. Far across Beleriand he sought in vain for tidings of Túrin, through many perils; and that winter passed away, and the spring after.



## Chapter VI: Túrin Among The Outlaws

Now the tale turns again to Túrin. He, believing himself an outlaw whom the King would pursue, did not return to Beleg on the north-marches of Doriath, but went away westward, and passing secretly out of the Guarded Realm came into the woodlands south of Teiglin. There before the Nirnaeth many men had dwelt in scattered homesteads; they were of Haleth's folk for the most part, but owned no lord, and they lived both by hunting and husbandry, keeping swine in the mast-lands, and tilling clearings in the forest which were fenced from the wild. But most were now destroyed, or had fled into Brethil, and all that region lay under the fear of Orcs, and of outlaws. For in that time of ruin houseless and desperate men went astray: remnants of battle and defeat, and lands laid waste; and some were men driven into the wild for evil deeds. They hunted and gathered such food as they could; but many took to robbery and became cruel, when hunger or other need drove them. In winter they were most to be feared, like wolves; and Gaurwaith, wolf-men, they were called by those who still defended their homes. Some sixty of these men had joined in one band, wandering in the woods beyond the western marches of Doriath; and they were hated scarcely less than Orcs, for there were among them outcasts hard of heart, bearing a grudge against their own kind.

The hardest of heart was one named Andróg, who had been hunted from Dor-lómin for the slaying of a woman; and others also came from that land: old Algund, the oldest of the fellowship, who had fled from the Nirnaeth, and Forweg, as he named himself, a man with fair hair and unsteady glittering eyes, big and bold, but far fallen from the ways of the Edain of the people of Hador. Yet he could still be wise and generous at times; and he was the captain of the fellowship. They had dwindled now to some fifty men, by deaths in hardship or affrays; and they were become wary, and set scouts or a watch about them, whether moving or at rest. Thus they were soon aware of Túrin when he strayed into their haunts. They trailed him, and they drew a ring about him, so that suddenly, as he came out into a glade beside a stream, he found himself within a circle of men with bent bows and drawn swords.

Then Túrin halted, but he showed no fear. 'Who are you?' he said. 'I thought that only Orcs waylaid men; but I see that I am mistaken.'

'You may rue the mistake,' said Forweg, 'for these are our haunts, and my men do not allow other men to walk in them. We take their lives as forfeit, unless they can ransom them.'

Then Túrin laughed grimly: 'You will get no ransom from me, an outcast and an outlaw. You may search me when I am dead, but it may cost you dearly to prove my words true. Many of you are likely to die first.'

Nonetheless his death seemed near, for many arrows were notched to the string, waiting for the word of the captain, and though Túrin wore elven-mail under his grey tunic and cloak, some would find a deadly mark. None of his enemies stood within reach of a leap with drawn sword. But suddenly Túrin stooped, for he had espied some stones at the stream's edge before his feet. At that moment an outlaw, angered by his proud words, let fly a shaft aimed at his face; but it passed over him, and he sprang up again like a bowstring released and cast a stone at the Bowman with great force and true aim; and he fell to the ground with broken skull.

'I might be of more service to you alive, in the place of that luckless man,' said Túrin; and turning to Forweg he said: 'If you are the captain here, you should not allow your men to shoot without command.'

'I do not,' said Forweg; 'but he has been rebuked swiftly enough. I will take you in his stead, if you will heed my words better.'

'I will,' said Túrin, 'as long as you are captain, and in all that belongs to a captain. But the choice of a new man to a fellowship is not his alone, I judge. All voices should be heard. Are there any here who do not welcome me?'



Then two of the outlaws cried out against him; and one was a friend of the fallen man. Ulrad was his name. 'A strange way to gain entry to a fellowship,' he said, 'the slaying of one of our best men!'

'Not unchallenged,' said Túrin. 'But come then! I will endure you both together, with weapons or with strength alone. Then you shall see if I am fit to replace one of your best men. But if there are bows in this test, I must have one too.' Then he strode towards them; but Ulrad gave back and would not fight. The other threw down his bow and walked up to meet Túrin. This man was Andróg of Dor-lómin. He stood before Túrin and looked him up and down.

'Nay,' he said at length, shaking his head. 'I am not a chicken-heart, as men know; but I am not your match. There is none here, I think. You may join us, for my part. But there is a strange light in your eyes; you are a dangerous man. What is your name?'

'Neithan, the Wronged, I call myself,' said Túrin, and Neithan he was afterwards called by the outlaws; but though he claimed to have suffered injustice (and to any who claimed the like he ever lent too ready an ear), no more would he reveal concerning his life or his home. Yet they saw that he had fallen from high state, and that though he had nothing but his arms, those were made by elven-smiths. He soon won their praise, for he was strong and valiant, and had more skill in the woods than they, and they trusted him, for he was not greedy, and took little thought for himself; but they feared him, because of his sudden angers, which they seldom understood.

To Doriath Túrin could not, or in pride would not, return; to Nargothrond since the fall of Felagund none were admitted. To the lesser folk of Haleth in Brethil he did not deign to go; and to Dor-lómin he did not dare, for it was closely beset, and one man alone could not hope at that time, as he thought, to come through the passes of the Mountains of Shadow. Therefore Túrin abode with the outlaws, since the company of any men made the hardship of the wild more easy to endure; and because he wished to live and could not be ever at strife with them, he did little to restrain their evil deeds. Thus he soon became hardened to a mean and often cruel life, and yet at times pity and disgust would wake in him, and then he was perilous in his anger. In this evil and dangerous way Túrin lived to that year's end and through the need and hunger of winter, until stirring came and then a fair spring.

Now in the woods of Teiglin, as has been told, there were still some homesteads of Men, hardy and wary, though now few in number. Though they loved them not at all and pitied them little, they would in bitter winter put out such food as they could well spare where the Gaurwaith might find it; and so they hoped to avoid the banded attack of the famished. But they earned less gratitude so from the outlaws than from beasts and birds, and they were saved rather by their dogs and their fences. For each homestead had great hedges about its cleared land, and about the houses was a ditch and a stockade; and there were paths from stead to stead, and men could summon help at need by horn-calls.

But when spring was come it was perilous for the Gaurwaith to linger so near to the houses of the woodmen, who might gather and hunt them down; and Túrin wondered therefore that Forweg did not lead them away. There was more food and game, and less peril, away south where no Men remained. Then one day Túrin missed Forweg, and also Andróg his friend; and he asked where they were, but his companions laughed.

'Away on business of their own, I guess,' said Ulrad. 'They will be back before long, and then we shall move. In haste, maybe; for we shall be lucky if they do not bring the hive-bees after them.'

The sun shone and the young leaves were green, and Túrin was irked by the squalid camp of the outlaws, and he wandered away alone far into the forest. Against his will he remembered the Hidden Kingdom, and he seemed to hear the names of the flowers of Doriath as echoes of an old tongue almost forgotten. But on a sudden he heard cries, and from a hazel-thicket a young woman ran out; her clothes were rent by thorns, and she was in great fear, and stumbling she fell gasping to the ground. Then Túrin springing towards the thicket with drawn sword hewed down a man that burst from the hazels in pursuit; and he saw only in the very stroke that it was Forweg.

But as he stood looking down in amaze at the blood upon the grass, Andróg came out, and halted also astounded. 'Evil work, Neithan!' he cried, and drew his sword; but Túrin's mood ran cold, and he said to Andróg: 'Where are the Orcs, then? Have you outrun them to help her?'

'Orcs?' said Andróg. 'Fool! You call yourself an outlaw. Outlaws know no law but their needs. Look to your own, Neithan, and leave us to mind ours.'

'I will do so,' said Túrin. 'But today our paths have crossed. You will leave the woman to me, or you will join Forweg.'

Andróg laughed. 'If that is the way of it, have your will,' he said. 'I make no claim to match you, alone; but our fellows may take this slaying ill.'

Then the woman rose to her feet and laid her hand on Túrin's arm. She looked at the blood and she looked at Túrin, and there was delight in her eyes. 'Kill him, lord!' she said. 'Kill him too! And then come with me. If you bring their heads, Larnach my father will not be displeased. For two "wolf-heads" he has rewarded men well.'

But Túrin said to Andróg: 'Is it far to her home?'

'A mile or so,' he answered, 'in a fenced homestead yonder. She was straying outside.' 'Go then quickly,' said Túrin, turning back to the woman. 'Tell your father to keep you better. But I will not cut off the heads of my fellows to buy his favour, or aught else.'

Then he put up his sword. 'Come!' he said to Andróg. 'We will return. But if you wish to bury your captain, you must do so yourself. Make haste, for a hue and cry may be raised. Bring his weapons!'

The woman went off through the woods, and she looked back many times before the trees hid her. Then Túrin went on his way without more words, and Andróg watched him go, and he frowned as one pondering a riddle.

When Túrin came back to the camp of the outlaws he found them restless and ill at ease; for they had stayed too long already in one place, near to homesteads well-guarded, and they murmured against Forweg. 'He runs hazards to our cost', they said; 'and others may have to pay for his pleasures.'

'Then choose a new captain!' said Túrin, standing before them. 'Forweg can lead you no longer; for he is dead.'

'How do you know that?' said Ulrad. 'Did you seek honey from the same hive? Did the bees sting him?'

'No,' said Túrin. 'One sting was enough. I slew him. But I spared Andróg, and he will soon return.' Then he told all that was done, rebuking those that did such deeds; and while he yet spoke Andróg returned bearing Forweg's weapons. 'See, Neithan!' he cried. 'No alarm has been raised. Maybe she hopes to meet with you again.'

'If you jest with me,' said Túrin, 'I shall regret that I grudged her your head. Now tell your tale, and be brief.'

Then Andróg told truly enough all that had befallen. 'What business Neithan had there I now wonder,' he said. 'Not ours, it seems. For when I came up, he had already slain Forweg. The woman liked that well, and offered to go with him, begging our heads as a bride-price. But he did not want her, and sped her off; so what grudge he had against the captain I cannot guess. He left my head on my shoulders, for which I am grateful, though much puzzled.'

'Then I deny your claim to come of the People of Hador,' said Túrin. 'To Uldor the Accursed you belong rather, and should seek service with Angband. But hear me now!' he cried to them all. 'These choices I give you. You must take me as your captain in Forweg's place, or else let me go. I will govern this fellowship now, or leave it. But if you wish to kill me, set to! I will fight you all until I am dead—or you.'

Then many men seized their weapons, but Andróg cried out: 'Nay! The head that he spared is not witless. If we fight, more than one will die needlessly, before we kill the best man among us.' Then he laughed. 'As it was when he joined us, so it is again. He kills to make room. If it proved well before, so may it again; and he may lead us to better fortune than prowling about other men's middens.'

And old Algund said: 'The best man among us. Time was when we would have done the same, if we dared; but we have forgotten much. He may bring us home in the end.'

At that the thought came to Túrin that from this small band he might rise to build himself a free lordship of his own. But he looked at Algund and Andróg, and he said: 'Home, do you say? Tall and cold stand the Mountains of Shadow between. Behind them are the people of Uldor, and about them the legions of Angband. If such things do not daunt you, seven times seven men, then I may lead you homewards. But how far, before we die?'

All were silent. Then Túrin spoke again. 'Do you take me to be your captain? Then I will lead you first away into the wild, far from the homes of Men. There we may find better fortune, or not; but at the least we shall earn less hatred of our own kind.'

Then all those that were of the People of Hador gathered to him, and took him as their captain; and the others with less good will agreed. And at once he led them away out of that country.

Many messengers had been sent out by Thingol to seek Túrin within Doriath and in the lands near its borders; but in the year of his flight they searched for him in vain, for none knew or could guess that he was with the outlaws and enemies of Men. When winter came on they returned to the King, save Beleg only. After all others had departed still he went on alone.

But in Dimbar and along the north-marches of Doriath things had gone ill. The Dragon-helm was seen there in battle no longer, and the Strongbow also was missed; and the servants of Morgoth were heartened and increased ever in numbers and in daring. Winter came and passed, and with Spring their assault was renewed: Dimbar was overrun, and the Men of Brethil were afraid, for evil roamed now upon all their borders, save in the south.

It was now almost a year since Túrin had fled, and still Beleg sought for him, with ever lessening hope. He passed northwards in his wanderings to the Crossings of Teiglin, and there, hearing ill news of a new inroad of Orcs out of Taur-nu-Fuin, he turned back, and came as it chanced to the homes of the Woodmen soon after Túrin had left that region. There he heard a strange tale that went among them. A tall and lordly Man, or an Elf-warrior, some said, had appeared in the woods, and had slain one of the Gaurwaith, and rescued the daughter of Larnach whom they were pursuing. 'Very proud he was,' said Larnach's daughter to Beleg, 'with bright eyes that scarcely deigned to look at me. Yet he called the Wolf-men his fellows, and would not slay another that stood by, and knew his name. Neithan, he called him.'

'Can you read this riddle?' asked Larnach of the Elf. 'I can, alas,' said Beleg. 'The Man that you tell of is one whom I seek.' No more of Túrin did he tell the Woodmen; but he warned them of evil gathering northward. 'Soon the Orcs will come ravaging in this country in strength too great for you to withstand,' he said. 'This year at last you must give up your freedom or your lives. Go to Brethil while there is time!'

Then Beleg went on his way in haste, and sought for the lairs of the outlaws, and such signs as might show him whither they had gone. These he soon found; but Túrin was now several days ahead, and moved swiftly, fearing the pursuit of the Woodmen, and he had used all the arts that he knew to defeat or mislead any that tried to follow him. He led his men westward, away from the Woodmen and from the borders of Doriath, until they came to the northern end of the great highlands that rose between the Vales of Sirion and Narog. There the land was drier, and the forest ceased suddenly on the brink of a ridge. Below it could be seen the ancient South Road, climbing up from the Crossings of Teiglin to pass along the western feet of the moorlands on its way to Nargothrond. There for a time the outlaws lived warily, remaining seldom two nights in one camp, and leaving little trace of their going or staying. So it was that even Beleg hunted them in vain. Led by signs that he could read, or by the rumour of the passing of Men among the wild things with whom he could speak, he came often near, but always their lair was deserted when he came to it; for they kept a watch about them by day and night, and at any rumour of approach they were swiftly up and away. 'Alas!' he cried. 'Too well did I teach this child of Men craft in wood and field! An Elvish band almost one might think this to be.' But they for their part became aware that they were trailed by some tireless pursuer, whom they could not see, and yet could not shake off; and they grew uneasy.

Not long afterwards, as Beleg had feared, the Orcs came across the Brithiach, and being resisted with all the force that he could muster by Handir of Brethil, they passed south over the Crossings of Teiglin in search of

plunder. Many of the Woodmen had taken Beleg's counsel and sent their women and children to ask for refuge in Brethil. These and their escort escaped, passing over the Crossings in time; but the armed men that came behind were met by the Orcs, and the men were worsted. A few fought their way through and came to Brethil, but many were slain or captured; and the Orcs passed on to the homesteads, and sacked them and burned them. Then at once they turned back westwards, seeking the Road, for they wished now to return back north as swiftly as they could with their booty and their captives.

But the scouts of the outlaws were soon aware of them; and though they cared little enough for the captives, the plunder of the Woodmen aroused their greed. To Túrin it seemed perilous to reveal themselves to the Orcs, until their numbers were known; but the outlaws would not heed him, for they had need of many things in the wild, and already some began to regret his leading. Therefore taking one Orleg as his only companion Túrin went forth to spy upon the Orcs; and giving command of the band to Andróg he charged him to lie close and well hid while they were gone.

Now the Orc-host was far greater than the band of outlaws, but they were in lands to which Orcs had seldom dared to come, and they knew also that beyond the Road lay the Talath Dirnen, the Guarded Plain, upon which the scouts and spies of Nargothrond kept watch; and fearing danger they were wary, and their scouts went creeping through the trees on either side of the marching lines. Thus it was that Túrin and Orleg were discovered, for three scouts stumbled upon them as they lay hid; and though they slew two the third escaped, crying as he ran *Golug! Golug!* Now that was a name which they had for the Noldor. At once the forest was filled with Orcs, scattering silently and hunting far and wide. Then Túrin, seeing that there was small hope of escape, thought at least to deceive them and to lead them away from the hiding-place of his men; and perceiving from the cry of *Golug!* that they feared the spies of Nargothrond, he fled with Orleg westward. The pursuit came swiftly after them, until turn and dodge as they would they were driven at last out of the forest; and then they were espied, and as they sought to cross the Road Orleg was shot down by many arrows. But Túrin was saved by his elven-mail, and escaped alone into the wilds beyond; and by speed and craft he eluded his enemies, fleeing far into lands that were strange to him. Then the Orcs, fearing that the Elves of Nargothrond might be aroused, slew their captives and made haste away into the North.

Now when three days had passed, and yet Túrin and Orleg did not return, some of the outlaws wished to depart from the cave where they lay hid; but Andróg spoke against it. And while they were in the midst of this debate, suddenly a grey figure stood before them. Beleg had found them at last. He came forward with no weapon in his hands, and held the palms turned towards them; but they leapt up in fear and Andróg coming behind cast a noose over him, and drew it so that it pinioned his arms.

'If you do not wish for guests, you should keep better watch,' said Beleg. 'Why do you welcome me thus? I come as a friend, and seek only a friend. Neithan, I hear that you call him.'

'He is not here,' said Ulrad. 'But unless you have long spied on us, how know you that name?'

'He has long spied on us,' said Andróg. 'This is the shadow that has dogged us. Now perhaps we shall learn his true purpose.' Then he bade them tie Beleg to a tree beside the cave; and when he was hard bound hand and foot they questioned him. But to all their questions Beleg would give one answer only: 'A friend I have been to this Neithan since I first met him in the woods, and he was then but a child. I seek him only in love, and to bring him good tidings.'

'Let us slay him, and be rid of his spying,' said Andróg in wrath; and he looked on the great bow of Beleg and coveted it, for he was an archer. But some of better heart spoke against him, and Algund said to him: 'The captain may return yet; and then you will rue it, if he learns that he has been robbed at once of a friend and of good tidings.'

'I do not believe the tale of this Elf,' said Andróg. 'He is a spy of the King of Doriath. But if he has indeed any tidings, he shall tell them to us; and we shall judge if they give us reason to let him live.'

'I shall wait for your captain,' said Beleg.

'You shall stand there until you speak,' said Andróg. Then at the egging of Andróg they left Beleg tied to the tree without food or water, and they sat near eating and drinking; but he said no more to them. When two days

and nights had passed in this way they became angry and fearful, and were eager to be gone; and most were now ready to slay the Elf. As night drew down they were all gathered about him, and Ulrad brought a brand from the little fire that was lit in the cave-mouth. But at that moment Túrin returned. Coming silently, as was his custom, he stood in the shadows beyond the ring of men, and he saw the haggard face of Beleg in the light of the brand.

Then he was stricken as with a shaft, and as if at the sudden melting of a frost tears long unshed filled his eyes. He sprang out and ran to the tree. 'Beleg! Beleg!' he cried. 'How have you come hither? And why do you stand so?' At once he cut the bonds from his friend, and Beleg fell forward into his arms.

When Túrin heard all that the men would tell, he was angry and grieved; but at first he gave heed only to Beleg. While he tended him with what skill he had, he thought of his life in the woods, and his anger turned upon himself. For often strangers had been slain, when caught near the lairs of the outlaws, or waylaid by them, and he had not hindered it; and often he himself had spoken ill of King Thingol and of the Grey-elves, so that he must share the blame, if they were treated as foes. Then with bitterness he turned to the men. 'You were cruel,' he said, 'and cruel without need. Never until now have we tormented a prisoner; but to this Orc-work such a life as we lead has brought us. Lawless and fruitless all our deeds have been, serving only ourselves, and feeding hate in our hearts.'

But Andróg said: 'But whom shall we serve, if not ourselves? Whom shall we love, when all hate us?'

'At least my hands shall not again be raised against Elves or Men,' said Túrin. 'Angband has servants enough. If others will not take this vow with me, I will walk alone.'

Then Beleg opened his eyes and raised his head. 'Not alone!' he said. 'Now at last I can tell my tidings. You are no outlaw, and Neithan is a name unfit. Such fault as was found in you is pardoned. For a year you have been sought, to recall you to honour and to the service of the King. The Dragon-helm has been missed too long.'

But Túrin showed no joy in this news, and sat long in silence; for at Beleg's words a shadow fell upon him again. 'Let this night pass,' he said at length. 'Then I will choose. However it goes, we must leave this lair tomorrow; for not all who seek us wish us well.'

'Nay, none,' said Andróg, and he cast an evil look at Beleg.

In the morning Beleg, being swiftly healed of his pains, after the manner of the Elven-folk of old, spoke to Túrin apart.

'I looked for more joy at my tidings,' he said. 'Surely you will return now to Doriath?' And he begged Túrin to do this in all ways that he could; but the more he urged it, the more Túrin hung back. Nonetheless he questioned Beleg closely concerning the judgement of Thingol. Then Beleg told him all that he knew, and at the last Túrin said: 'Then Mablung proved my friend, as he once seemed?'

'The friend of truth, rather,' said Beleg, 'and that was best, in the end; though the doom would have been less just, were it not for the witness of Nellas. Why, why, Túrin, did you not speak of Saeros' assault to Mablung? All otherwise might things have gone. And,' he said, looking at the men sprawled near the mouth of the cave, 'you might have held your helm still high, and not fallen to this.'

'That may be, if fall you call it,' said Túrin. 'That may be. But so it went; and words stuck in my throat. There was reproof in his eyes, without question asked of me, for a deed I had not done. My Man's heart was proud, as the Elf-king said. And so it still is, Beleg Cúthalion. Not yet will it suffer me to go back to Menegroth and bear looks of pity and pardon, as for a wayward boy amended. I should give pardon, not receive it. And I am a boy no longer, but a man, according to my kind; and a hard man by my fate.'

Then Beleg was troubled. 'What will you do, then?' he asked.

'Fare free,' said Túrin. 'That wish Mablung gave me at our parting. The grace of Thingol will not stretch to receive these companions of my fall, I think; but I will not part with them now, if they do not wish to part with me. I love them in my way, even the worst a little. They are of my own kind, and there is some good in each that might grow. I think that they will stand by me.'

‘You see with other eyes than mine,’ said Beleg. ‘If you try to wean them from evil, they will fail you. I doubt them, and one most of all.’

‘How shall an Elf judge of Men?’ said Túrin.

‘As he judges of all deeds, by whomsoever done,’ answered Beleg, but he said no more, and did not speak of Andróg’s malice, to which his evil handling had been chiefly due; for perceiving Túrin’s mood he feared to be disbelieved and to hurt their old friendship, driving Túrin back to his evil ways.

‘Fare free, you say, Túrin, my friend,’ he said. ‘What is your meaning?’

‘I would lead my own men, and make war in my own way,’ Túrin answered. ‘But in this at least my heart is changed: I repent every stroke save those dealt against the Enemy of Men and Elves. And above all else I would have you beside me. Stay with me!’

‘If I stayed beside you, love would lead me, not wisdom,’ said Beleg. ‘My heart warns me that we should return to Doriath. Elsewhere a shadow lies before us.’

‘Nonetheless, I will not go there,’ said Túrin.

‘Alas!’ said Beleg. ‘But as a fond father who grants his son’s desire against his own foresight, I yield to your will. At your asking, I will stay.’

‘That is well indeed!’ said Túrin. Then all at once he fell silent, as if he himself were aware of the shadow, and strove with his pride, which would not let him turn back. For a long while he sat, brooding on the years that lay behind.

Coming suddenly out of thought he looked at Beleg, and said: ‘The elf-maiden that you named, though I forget how: I owe her well for her timely witness; yet I cannot recall her. Why did she watch my ways?’ Then Beleg looked strangely at him. ‘Why indeed?’ he said. ‘Túrin, have you lived always with your heart and half your mind far away? As a boy you used to walk with Nellas in the woods.’

‘That must have been long ago,’ said Túrin. ‘Or so my childhood now seems, and a mist is over it—save only the memory of my father’s house in Dor-lómin. Why would I walk with an elf-maiden?’

‘To learn what she could teach, maybe,’ said Beleg, ‘if no more than a few elven-words of the names of woodland flowers. Their names at least you have not forgotten. Alas! child of Men, there are other griefs in Middle-earth than yours, and wounds made by no weapon. Indeed I begin to think that Elves and Men should not meet or meddle.’

Túrin said nothing, but looked long in Beleg’s face, as if he would read in it the riddle of his words. Nellas of Doriath never saw him again, and his shadow passed from her. Now Beleg and Túrin turned to other matters, debating where they should dwell. ‘Let us return to Dimbar, on the north-marches, where once we walked together!’ said Beleg eagerly. ‘We are needed there. For of late the Orcs have found a way down out of Taur-nu-Fuin, making a road through the Pass of Anach.’

‘I do not remember it,’ said Túrin.

‘No, we never went so far from the borders,’ said Beleg. ‘But you have seen the peaks of the Crissaegrim far off, and to their east the dark walls of the Gorgoroth. Anach lies between them, above the high springs of Mindeb. A hard and dangerous way; and yet many come by it now, and Dimbar which used to lie in peace is falling under the Dark Hand, and the Men of Brethil are troubled. To Dimbar I call you!’

‘Nay, I will not walk backward in life,’ said Túrin. ‘Nor can I come easily to Dimbar now. Sirion lies between, unbridged and unforded below the Brithiach far northward; it is perilous to cross. Save in Doriath. But I will not pass into Doriath, and make use of Thingol’s leave and pardon.’

‘A hard man you have called yourself, Túrin. Truly, if by that you meant stubborn. Now the turn is mine. I will go, by your leave, as soon as I may, and bid you farewell. If you wish indeed to have the Strongbow beside you, look for me in Dimbar.’ At that time Túrin said no more.

The next day Beleg set out, and Túrin went with him a bowshot from the camp, but said nothing. 'Is it farewell, then, son of Húrin?' said Beleg.

'If you wish indeed to keep your word and stay beside me,' answered Túrin, 'then look for me on Amon Rûdh!' Thus he spoke, being fey and unwitting of what lay before him. 'Else, this is our last farewell.'

'Maybe that is best,' said Beleg, and went his way.

It is said that Beleg went back to Menegroth, and came before Thingol and Melian and told them of all that had happened, save only his evil handling by Túrin's companions. Then Thingol sighed, and he said: 'I took up the fathering of the son of Húrin, and that cannot be laid down for love or hate, unless Húrin the Valiant himself should return. What more would he have me do?'

But Melian said: 'A gift you shall now have of me, Cúthalion, for your help, and your honour, for I have none worthier to give.' And she gave him a store of *lembas*, the waybread of the Elves, wrapped in leaves of silver; and the threads that bound it were sealed at the knots with the seal of the Queen, a wafer of white wax shaped as a single flower of Telperion. For according to the customs of the Eldalië the keeping and the giving of this food belonged to the Queen alone. 'This waybread, Beleg,' she said, 'shall be your help in the wild and the winter, and the help also of those whom you choose. For I commit this now to you, to apportion as you will in my stead.' In nothing did Melian show greater favour to Túrin than in this gift; for the Eldar had never before allowed Men to use this waybread, and seldom did so again.

Then Beleg departed from Menegroth and went back to the north-marches, where he had his lodges, and many friends; but when winter came, and war was stilled, suddenly his companions missed Beleg, and he returned to them no more.



## Chapter VII: Of Mîm The Dwarf

Now the tale turns to Mîm the Petty-dwarf. The Petty-dwarves are long out of mind, for Mîm was the last. Little was known of them even in days of old. The Nibin-nogrim the Elves of Beleriand called them long ago, but they did not love them; and the Petty-dwarves loved none but themselves. If they hated and feared the Orcs, they hated also the Eldar, and the Exiles most of all; for the Noldor, they said, had stolen their lands and their homes. Nargothrond was first found and its delving begun by the Petty-dwarves, long before Finrod Felagund came over the Sea.

They came, some said, of Dwarves that had been banished from the Dwarf-cities of the east in ancient days. Long before the return of Morgoth they had wandered westward. Being masterless and few in number, they found it hard to come by the ore of metals, and their smith-craft and store of weapons dwindled; and they took to lives of stealth, and became somewhat smaller in stature than their eastern kin, walking with bent shoulders and quick, furtive steps. Nonetheless, as all the Dwarf-kind, they were far stronger than their stature promised, and they could cling to life in great hardship. But now at last they had dwindled and died out of Middle-earth, all save Mîm and his two sons; and Mîm was old even in the reckoning of Dwarves, old and forgotten.

After the departure of Beleg (and that was in the second summer after the flight of Túrin from Doriath) things went ill for the outlaws. There were rains out of season, and Orcs in greater numbers than before came down from the North and along the old South Road over Teiglin, troubling all the woods on the west borders of Doriath. There was little safety or rest, and the company were more often hunted than hunters.

One night as they lay lurking in the fireless dark, Túrin looked on his life, and it seemed to him that it might well be bettered. 'I must find some secure refuge,' he thought, 'and make provision against winter and hunger.' But he did not know whither to turn.

Next day he led his men away southward, further than they had yet come from the Teiglin and the marches of Doriath; and after three days' journeying they halted at the western edge of the woods of Sirion's Vale. There the land was drier and barer, as it began to climb up into the moorlands.

Soon after, it chanced that as the grey light of a day of rain was failing Túrin and his men were sheltering in a holly-thicket; and beyond it was a treeless space, in which there were many great stones, leaning or tumbled together. All was still, save for the drip of rain from the leaves.

Suddenly a watchman gave a call, and leaping up they saw three hooded shapes, grey-clad, going stealthily among the stones. They were burdened each with a great sack, but they went swiftly for all that. Túrin cried to them to halt, and the men ran out on them like hounds; but they held on their way, and though Andróg shot at them two vanished in the dusk. One lagged behind, being slower or more heavily burdened; and he was soon seized and thrown down, and held by many hard hands, though he struggled and bit like a beast. But Túrin came up, and rebuked his men. 'What have you there?' he said. 'What need to be so fierce? It is old and small. What harm is in it?'

'It bites,' said Andróg, nursing a bleeding hand. 'It is an Orc, or of Orc-kin. Kill it!'

'It deserves no less, for cheating our hope,' said another, who had taken the sack. 'There is nothing here but roots and small stones.'

'Nay,' said Túrin, 'it is bearded. It is only a Dwarf, I guess. Let him up, and speak.'

So it was that Mîm came into the Tale of the Children of Húrin. For he stumbled up on his knees before Túrin's feet and begged for his life. 'I am old,' he said, 'and poor. Only a Dwarf, as you say, not an Orc. Mîm is my name. Do not let them slay me, master, for no cause, as Orcs would.'



Then Túrin pitied him in his heart, but he said: 'Poor you seem, Mîm, though that would be strange in a Dwarf; but we are poorer, I think: houseless and friendless Men. If I said that we do not spare for pity's sake only, being in great need, what would you offer for ransom?'

'I do not know what you desire, lord,' said Mîm warily. 'At this time, little enough!' said Túrin, looking about him bitterly with rain in his eyes. 'A safe place to sleep in out of the damp woods. Doubtless you have such for yourself.'

'I have,' said Mîm; 'but I cannot give it in ransom. I am too old to live under the sky.'

'You need grow no older,' said Andróg, stepping up with a knife in his unharmed hand. 'I can spare you that.'

'Lord!' cried Mîm in great fear, clinging to Túrin's knees. 'If I lose my life, you lose the dwelling; for you will not find it without Mîm. I cannot give it, but I will share it. There is more room in it than once there was, so many have gone for ever,' and he began to weep.

'Your life is spared, Mîm,' said Túrin.

'Till we come to his lair, at least,' said Andróg.

But Túrin turned upon him, and said: 'If Mîm brings us to his home without trickery, and it is good, then his life is ransomed; and he shall not be slain by any man who follows me. So I swear.'

Then Mîm kissed Túrin's knees and said: 'Mîm will be your friend, lord. At first he thought you were an Elf, by your speech and your voice. But if you are a Man, that is better. Mîm does not love Elves.'

'Where is this house of yours?' said Andróg. 'It must be good indeed to share it with a Dwarf. For Andróg does not like Dwarves. His people brought few good tales of that race out of the East.'

'They left worse tales of themselves behind them,' said Mîm. 'Judge my home when you see it. But you will need light on your way, you stumbling Men. I will return in good time and lead you.' Then he rose and picked up his sack.

'No, no!' said Andróg. 'You will not allow this, surely, captain? You would never see the old rascal again.'

'It is growing dark,' said Túrin. 'Let him leave us some pledge. Shall we keep your sack and its load, Mîm?'

But at this the Dwarf fell on his knees again in great trouble. 'If Mîm did not mean to return, he would not return for an old sack of roots,' he said. 'I will come back. Let me go!'

'I will not,' said Túrin. 'If you will not part with your sack, you must stay with it. A night under the leaves will make you pity us in your turn, maybe.' But he marked, and others also, that Mîm set more store by the sack and his load than it seemed worth to the eye.

They led the old Dwarf away to their dismal camp, and as he went he muttered in a strange tongue that seemed harsh with ancient hatred; but when they put bonds on his legs he went suddenly quiet. And those who were on the watch saw him sitting on through the night silent and still as a stone, save for his sleepless eyes that glinted as they roved in the dark.

Before morning the rain ceased, and a wind stirred in the trees. Dawn came more brightly than for many days, and light airs from the South opened the sky, pale and clear about the rising of the sun. Mîm sat on without moving, and he seemed as if dead; for now the heavy lids of his eyes were closed, and the morning-light showed him withered and shrunken with age. Túrin stood and looked down on him. 'There is light enough now,' he said.

Then Mîm opened his eyes and pointed to his bonds; and when he was released he spoke fiercely. 'Learn this, fools!' he said. 'Do not put bonds on a Dwarf! He will not forgive it. I do not wish to die, but for what you have done my heart is hot. I repent my promise.'

'But I do not,' said Túrin. 'You will lead me to your home. Till then we will not speak of death. That is *my* will.' He looked steadfastly in the eyes of the Dwarf, and Mîm could not endure it; few indeed could challenge the eyes of Túrin in set will or in wrath. Soon he turned away his head, and rose. 'Follow me, lord!' he said.

‘Good!’ said Túrin. ‘But now I will add this: I understand your pride. You may die, but you shall not be set in bonds again.’

‘I will not,’ said Mîm. ‘But come now!’ And with that he led them back to the place where he had been captured, and he pointed westward. ‘There is my home!’ he said. ‘You have often seen it, I guess, for it is tall. Sharbhund we called it, before the Elves changed all the names.’ Then they saw that he was pointing to Amon Rûdh, the Bald Hill, whose bare head watched over many leagues of the wild.

‘We have seen it, but never nearer,’ said Andróg. ‘For what safe lair can be there, or water, or any other thing that we need? I guessed that there was some trick. Do men hide on a hill-top?’

‘Long sight may be safer than lurking,’ said Túrin. ‘Amon Rûdh gazes far and wide. Well, Mîm, I will come and see what you have to show. How long will it take us, stumbling Men, to come thither?’

‘All this day until dusk, if we start now,’ answered Mîm.

Soon the company set out westward, and Túrin went at the head with Mîm at his side. They walked warily when they left the woods, but all the land seemed empty and quiet. They passed over the tumbled stones, and began to climb; for Amon Rûdh stood upon the eastern edge of the high moorlands that rose between the vales of Sirion and Narog, and even above the stony heath at its base its crown was reared up a thousand feet and more. Upon the eastern side a broken land climbed slowly up to the high ridges among knots of birch and rowan, and ancient thorn-trees rooted in rock. Beyond, upon the moors and about the lower slopes of Amon Rûdh, there grew thickets of *aeglos*; but its steep grey head was bare, save for the red *seregon* that mantled the stone.

As the afternoon was waning the outlaws drew near to the roots of the hill. They came now from the north, for so Mîm had led them, and the light of the westering sun fell upon the crown of Amon Rûdh, and the *seregon* was all in flower.

‘See! There is blood on the hill-top,’ said Andróg. ‘Not yet,’ said Túrin.

The sun was sinking and light was failing in the hollows. The hill now loomed up before them and above them, and they wondered what need there could be of a guide to so plain a mark. But as Mîm led them on, and they began to climb the last steep slopes, they perceived that he was following some path by secret signs or old custom. Now his course wound to and fro, and if they looked aside they saw that at either hand dark dells and chines opened, or the land ran down into wastes of great stones with falls and holes masked by bramble and thorn. There without a guide they might have laboured and clambered for days to find a way.

At length they came to steeper but smoother ground. They passed under the shadows of ancient rowan-trees, into aisles of long-legged *aeglos*: a gloom filled with a sweet scent. Then suddenly there was a rock-wall before them, flat-faced and sheer, forty feet high, maybe, but dusk dimmed the sky above them and guess was uncertain.

‘Is this the door of your house?’ said Túrin. ‘Dwarves love stone, it is said.’ He drew close to Mîm, lest he should play them some trick at the last.

‘Not the door of the house, but the gate of the garth,’ said Mîm. Then he turned to the right along the cliff-foot, and after twenty paces he halted suddenly; and Túrin saw that by the work of hands or of weather there was a cleft so shaped that two faces of the wall overlapped, and an opening ran back to the left between them. Its entrance was shrouded by long trailing plants rooted in crevices above, but within there was a steep stony path going upward in the dark. Water trickled down it, and it was dank.

One by one they filed up. At the top the path turned right and south again, and brought them through a thicket of thorns out upon a green flat, through which it ran on into the shadows. They had come to Mîm’s house, Bar-en-Nibin-noeg, which only ancient tales in Doriath and Nargothrond remembered, and no Men had seen. But night was falling, and the east was starlit, and they could not yet see how this strange place was shaped.

Amon Rûdh had a crown: a great mass like a steep cap of stone with a bare flattened top. Upon its north side there stood out from it a shelf, level and almost square, which could not be seen from below; for behind it stood the hill-crown like a wall, and west and east from its brink sheer cliffs fell. Only from the north, as they had

come, could it be reached with ease by those who knew the way. From the 'gate' a path led, and passed soon into a little grove of dwarfed birches growing about a clear pool in a rock-hewn basin. This was fed by a spring at the foot of the wall behind, and through a runnel it spilled like a white thread over the western brink of the shelf. Behind the screen of the trees, near the spring between two tall buttresses of rock, there was a cave. No more than a shallow grot it looked, with a low broken arch; but further in it had been deepened and bored far under the hill by the slow hands of the Petty-dwarves, in the long years that they had dwelt there, untroubled by the Grey-elves of the woods.

Through the deep dusk Mîm led them past the pool, where now the faint stars were mirrored among the shadows of the birch-boughs. At the mouth of the cave he turned and bowed to Túrin. 'Enter, lord!' he said: 'Bar-en-Danwedh, the House of Ransom. For so it shall be called.'

'That may be,' said Túrin. 'I will look at it first.' Then he went in with Mîm, and the others, seeing him unafraid, followed behind, even Andróg, who most misdoubted the Dwarf. They were soon in a black dark; but Mîm clapped his hands, and a little light appeared, coming round a corner: from a passage at the back of the outer grot there stepped another Dwarf bearing a small torch.

'Ha! I missed him, as I feared!' said Andróg. But Mîm spoke quickly with the other in their own harsh tongue, and seeming troubled or angered by what he heard, he darted into the passage and disappeared. Now Andróg was all for going forward. 'Attack first!' he cried. 'There may be a hive of them; but they are small.'

'Three only, I guess,' said Túrin; and he led the way, while behind him the outlaws groped along the passage by the feel of the rough walls. Many times it bent this way and that at sharp angles; but at last a faint light gleamed ahead, and they came into a small but lofty hall, dim-lit by lamps hanging down out of the roof-shadow upon fine chains. Mîm was not there, but his voice could be heard, and led by it Túrin came to the door of a chamber opening at the back of the hall. Looking in, he saw Mîm kneeling on the floor. Beside him stood silent the Dwarf with the torch; but on a stone couch by the far wall lay another. 'Khîm, Khîm, Khîm!' the old Dwarf wailed, tearing at his beard.

'Not all your shots went wild,' said Túrin to Andróg. 'But this may prove an ill hit. You loose shaft too lightly; but you may not live long enough to learn wisdom.'

Leaving the others, Túrin entered softly and stood behind Mîm, and spoke to him. 'What is the trouble, master?' he said. 'I have some healing arts. May I help you?'

Mîm turned his head, and his eyes had a red light. 'Not unless you can turn back time and cut off the cruel hands of your men,' he answered. 'This is my son. An arrow was in his breast. Now he is beyond speech. He died at sunset. Your bonds held me from healing him.'

Again pity long hardened welled in Túrin's heart as water from rock. 'Alas!' he said. 'I would recall that shaft, if I could. Now Bar-en-Danwedh, House of Ransom, shall this be called in truth. For whether we dwell here or no, I will hold myself in your debt; and if ever I come to any wealth, I will pay you a *danwedh* of heavy gold for your son, in token of sorrow, even if it gladdens your heart no more.'

Then Mîm rose and looked long at Túrin. 'I hear you,' he said. 'You speak like a dwarf-lord of old; and at that I marvel. Now my heart is cooled, though it is not glad. My own ransom I will pay, therefore: you may dwell here, if you will. But this I will add: he that loosed the shaft shall break his bow and his arrows and lay them at my son's feet; and he shall never take an arrow nor bear bow again. If he does, he shall die by it. That curse I lay on him.'

Andróg was afraid when he heard of this curse; and though he did so with great grudge, he broke his bow and his arrows and laid them at the dead Dwarf's feet. But as he came out from the chamber, he glanced evilly at Mîm, and muttered: 'The curse of a dwarf never dies, they say; but a Man's too may come home. May he die with a dart in his throat!'

That night they lay in the hall and slept uneasily for the wailing of Mîm and of Ibun, his other son. When that ceased they could not tell; but when they woke at last the Dwarves were gone and the chamber was closed by a stone. The day was fair again, and in the morning sunshine the outlaws washed in the pool and prepared such food as they had; and as they ate Mîm stood before them.

He bowed to Túrin. 'He is gone and all is done,' he said. 'He lies with his fathers. Now we turn to such life as is left, though the days before us may be short. Does Mîm's home please you? Is the ransom paid and accepted?'

'It is,' said Túrin.

'Then all is yours, to order your dwelling here as you will, save this: the chamber that is closed, none shall open it but me.'

'We hear you,' said Túrin. 'But as for our life here, we are secure, or so it seems; but still we must have food, and other things. How shall we go out; or still more, how shall we return?'

To their disquiet Mîm laughed in his throat. 'Do you fear that you have followed a spider to the heart of his web?' he said. 'Nay, Mîm does not eat Men. And a spider could ill deal with thirty wasps at a time. See, you are armed, and I stand here bare. No, we must share, you and I: house, food, and fire, and maybe other winnings. The house, I guess, you will guard and keep secret for your own good, even when you know the ways in and out. You will learn them in time. But in the meantime Mîm must guide you, or Ibun his son, when you go out; and one will go where you go and return when you return—or await you at some point that you know and can find unguided. Ever nearer and nearer home will that be, I guess.'

To this Túrin agreed, and he thanked Mîm, and most of his men were glad; for under the sun of morning, while summer was yet high, it seemed a fair place to dwell in. Andróg alone was ill-content. 'The sooner we are masters of our own goings and comings the better,' he said. 'Never before have we taken a prisoner with a grievance to and fro on our ventures.'

That day they rested, and cleaned their arms and mended their gear; for they had food to last a day or two yet, and Mîm added to what they had. Three great cooking-pots he lent to them, and firing; and he brought out a sack. 'Rubbish,' he said. 'Not worth the stealing. Only wild roots.'

But when they were washed the roots proved white and fleshy with their skins, and when boiled they were good to eat, somewhat like bread; and the outlaws were glad of them, for they had long lacked bread save when they could steal it. 'Wild Elves know them not; Grey-elves have not found them; the proud ones from over the Sea are too proud to delve,' said Mîm.

'What is their name?' said Túrin.

Mîm looked at him sidelong. 'They have no name, save in the dwarf-tongue, which we do not teach,' he said. 'And we do not teach Men to find them, for Men are greedy and thriftless, and would not spare till all the plants had perished; whereas now they pass them by as they go blundering in the wild. No more will you learn of me; but you may have enough of my bounty, as long as you speak fair and do not spy or steal.' Then again he laughed in his throat. 'They are of great worth,' he said. 'More than gold in the hungry winter, for they may be hoarded like the nuts of a squirrel, and already we were building our store from the first that are ripe. But you are fools, if you think that I would not be parted from one small load even for the saving of my life.'

'I hear you,' said Ulrad, who had looked in the sack when Mîm was taken. 'Yet you would not be parted, and your words only make me wonder the more.'

Mîm turned and looked at him darkly. 'You are one of the fools that spring would not mourn if you perished in winter,' he said to him. 'I had spoken my word, and so must have returned, willing or not, with sack or without, let a lawless and faithless man think what he will! But I love not to be parted from my own by force of the wicked, be it no more than a shoe-thong. Do I not remember that your hands were among those that put bonds upon me, and so held me that I did not speak again with my son? Ever when I deal out the earth-bread from my store you will be counted out, and if you eat it, you shall eat by the bounty of your fellows, not of me.'

Then Mîm went away; but Ulrad, who had quailed under his anger, spoke to his back: 'High words! Nonetheless the old rogue had other things in his sack, of like shape but harder and heavier. Maybe there are other things beside earth-bread in the wild which Elves have not found and Men must not know!'

'That may be,' said Túrin. 'Nonetheless the Dwarf spoke the truth in one point at least, calling you a fool. Why must you speak your thoughts? Silence, if fair words stick in your throat, would serve all our ends better.'

The day passed in peace, and none of the outlaws desired to go abroad. Túrin paced much upon the green sward of the shelf, from brink to brink; and he looked out east, and west, and north, and wondered to find how far were the views in the clear air. Northward, and seeming strangely near, he could descry the forest of Brethil climbing green about the Amon Obel. Thither he found that his eyes would stray more often than he wished, though he knew not why; for his heart was set rather to the northwest, where league upon league away on the skirts of the sky it seemed to him that he could glimpse the Mountains of Shadow and the borders of his home. But at evening Túrin looked west into the sunset, as the sun rode down red into the hazes above the far distant coasts, and the Vale of Narog lay deep in the shadows between.

So began the abiding of Túrin son of Húrin in the halls of Mîm, in Bar-en-Danwedh, the House of Ransom.

For a long while the life of the outlaws went well to their liking. Food was not scarce, and they had good shelter, warm and dry, with room enough and to spare; for they found that the caves could have housed a hundred or more at need. There was another smaller hall further in. It had a hearth at one side, above which a smoke-shaft ran up through the rock to a vent cunningly hidden in a crevice on the hillside. There were also many other chambers, opening out of the halls or the passage between them, some for dwelling, some for works or for stores. In storage Mîm had more arts than they, and he had many vessels and chests of stone and wood that looked to be of great age. But most of the chambers were now empty: in the armouries hung axes and other gear rusted and dusty, shelves and aumbries were bare; and the smithies were idle. Save one: a small room that led out of the inner hall and had a hearth which shared the smoke-vent of the hearth in the hall. There Mîm would work at times, but would not allow others to be with him; and he did not tell of a secret hidden stair that led from his house to the flat summit of Amon Rûdh. This Andróg came upon when seeking in hunger to find Mîm's stores of food he became lost in the caves; but he kept this discovery to himself.

During the rest of that year they went on no more raids, and if they stirred abroad for hunting or gathering of food they went for the most part in small parties. But for a long while they found it hard to retrace their road, and beside Túrin not more than six of his men became ever sure of the way. Nonetheless, seeing that those skilled in such things could come to their lair without Mîm's help, they set a watch by day and night near to the cleft in the north-wall. From the south they expected no enemies, nor was there fear of any climbing Amon Rûdh from that quarter; but by day there was at most times a watchman set on the top of the crown, who could look far all about. Steep as were the sides of the crown, the summit could be reached, for to the east of the cave-mouth rough steps had been hewn leading up to slopes where men could clamber unaided.

So the year wore on without hurt or alarm. But as the days drew in, and the pool became grey and cold and the birches bare, and great rains returned, they had to pass more time in shelter. Then they soon grew weary of the dark under hill, or the dim half-light of the halls; and to most it seemed that life would be better if it were not shared with Mîm. Too often he would appear out of some shadowy corner or doorway when they thought him elsewhere; and when Mîm was near unease fell on their talk. They took to speaking ever to one another in whispers.

Yet, and strange it seemed to them, with Túrin it went otherwise; and he became ever more friendly with the old Dwarf, and listened more and more to his counsels. In the winter that followed he would sit for long hours with Mîm, listening to his lore and the tales of his life; nor did Túrin rebuke him if he spoke ill of the Eldar. Mîm seemed well pleased, and showed much favour to Túrin in return; him only would he admit to his smithy at times, and there they would talk softly together.

But when autumn was passed the winter pressed them hard. Before Yule snow came down from the North heavier than they had known it in the river-vales; at that time, and ever the more as the power of Angband grew, the winters worsened in Beleriand. Amon Rûdh was covered deep, and only the hardiest dared stir abroad. Some fell sick, and all were pinched with hunger.

In the dim dusk of a day in midwinter there appeared suddenly among them a Man, as it seemed, of great bulk and girth, cloaked and hooded in white. He had eluded their watchmen, and he walked up to their fire without a word. When men sprang up he laughed and threw back his hood, and they saw that it was Beleg Strongbow. Under his wide cloak he bore a great pack in which he had brought many things for the help of men.

In this way Beleg came back to Túrin, yielding to his love against his wisdom. Túrin was glad indeed, for he had often regretted his stubbornness; and now the desire of his heart was granted without the need to humble himself or to yield his own will. But if Túrin was glad, not so was Andróg, nor some others of his company. It seemed to them that there had been a tryst between Beleg and their captain, which he had kept secret from them; and Andróg watched them jealously as the two sat apart in speech together.

Beleg had brought with him the Helm of Hador; for he hoped that it might lift Túrin's thought again above his life in the wild as the leader of a petty company. 'This is your own which I bring back to you,' he said to Túrin as he took out the helm. 'It was left in my keeping on the north-marches; but was not forgotten, I think.'

'Almost,' said Túrin; 'but it shall not be so again'; and he fell silent, looking far away with the eyes of his thought, until suddenly he caught the gleam of another thing that Beleg held in his hand. It was the gift of Melian; but the silver leaves were red in the firelight, and when Túrin saw the seal his eyes darkened. 'What have you there?' he said.

'The greatest gift that one who loves you still has to give,' answered Beleg. 'Here is *lembas in-Elidh*, the waybread of the Eldar that no man has yet tasted.'

'The helm of my fathers I take, with good will for your keeping,' said Túrin. 'But I will not receive gifts out of Doriath.'

'Then send back your sword and your arms,' said Beleg. 'Send back also the teaching and fostering of your youth. And let your men, who (you say) have been faithful, die in the desert to please your mood! Nonetheless this waybread was a gift not to you but to me, and I may do with it as I will. Eat it not, if it sticks in your throat; but others may be more hungry and less proud.'

Túrin's eyes glinted, but as he looked in Beleg's face the fire in them died, and they went grey, and he said in a voice hardly to be heard: 'I wonder, friend, that you deign to come back to such a churl. From you I will take whatever you give, even rebuke. Henceforward you shall counsel me in all ways, save the road to Doriath only.'



## Chapter VIII: The Land Of Bow And Helm

In the days that followed Beleg laboured much for the good of the Company. Those that were hurt or sick he tended, and they were quickly healed. For in those days the Grey-elves were still a high people, possessing great power, and they were wise in the ways of life and of all living things; and though they were less in crafts and lore than the Exiles from Valinor they had many arts beyond the reach of Men. Moreover Beleg the Archer was great among the people of Doriath; he was strong, and enduring, and far-sighted in mind as well as eye, and at need he was valiant in battle, relying not only upon the swift arrows of his long bow, but also upon his great sword Anglachel. And ever the more did hatred grow in the heart of Mîm, who hated all Elves, as has been told, and who looked with a jealous eye on the love that Túrin bore to Beleg.

When winter passed, and the stirring came, and the spring, the outlaws soon had sterner work to do. Morgoth's might was moved; and as the long fingers of a groping hand the forerunners of his armies probed the ways into Beleriand.

Who knows now the counsels of Morgoth? Who can measure the reach of his thought, who had been Melkor, mighty among the Ainur of the Great Song, and sat now, the dark lord upon a dark throne in the North, weighing in his malice all the tidings that came to him, whether by spy or by traitor, seeing in the eyes of his mind and understanding far more of the deeds and purposes of his enemies than even the wisest of them feared, save Melian the Queen. To her often his thought reached out, and there was foiled.

In this year, therefore, he turned his malice towards the lands west of Sirion, where there was still power to oppose him. Gondolin still stood, but it was hidden. Doriath he knew, but could not enter yet. Further still lay Nargothrond, to which none of his servants had yet found the way, a name of fear to them; there the people of Finrod dwelt in hidden strength. And far away from the South, beyond the white woods of the birches of Nimbrethil, from the coast of Arvernien and the mouths of Sirion, came rumour of the Havens of the Ships. Thither he could not reach until all else had fallen.

So now the Orcs came down out of the North in ever greater numbers. Through Anach they came, and Dimbar was taken, and all the north-marches of Doriath were infested. Down the ancient road they came that led through the long defile of Sirion, past the isle where Minas Tirith of Finrod had stood, and so through the land between Malduin and Sirion and then on through the eaves of Brethil to the Crossings of Teiglin. Thence of old the road passed on into the Guarded Plain, and then, along the feet of the highlands watched over by Amon Rûdh, it ran down into the vale of Narog and came at last to Nargothrond. But the Orcs did not go far upon that road as yet; for there dwelt now in the wild a terror that was hidden, and upon the red hill were watchful eyes of which they had not been warned.

In that spring Túrin put on again the Helm of Hador, and Beleg was glad. At first their company had less than fifty men, but the woodcraft of Beleg and the valour of Túrin made them seem to their enemies as a host. The scouts of the Orcs were hunted, their camps were espied, and if they gathered to march in force in some narrow place, out of the rocks or from the shadow of the trees there leaped the Dragon-helm and his men, tall and fierce. Soon at the very sound of his horn in the hills their captains would quail and the Orcs would turn to flight before any arrow whined or sword was drawn.

It has been told that when Mîm surrendered his hidden dwelling on Amon Rûdh to Túrin and his company, he demanded that he who had loosed the arrow that slew his son should break his bow and his arrows and lay them at the feet of Khîm; and that man was Andróg. Then with great ill-will Andróg did as Mîm bade. Moreover Mîm declared that Andróg must never again bear bow and arrow, and he laid a curse on him, that if nevertheless he should do so, then would he meet his own death by that means.

Now in the spring of that year Andróg defied the curse of Mîm and took up a bow again in a foray from Bar-en-Danwedh; and in that foray he was struck by a poisoned orc-arrow, and was brought back dying in pain. But Beleg healed him of his wound. And now the hatred that Mîm bore to Beleg was increased still more, for he had thus undone his curse; but 'it will bite again,' he said.

In that year far and wide in Beleriand the whisper went, under wood and over stream and through the passes of the hills, saying that the Bow and Helm that had fallen in Dimbar (as was thought) had arisen again beyond hope. Then many, both Elves and Men, who went leaderless, dispossessed but undaunted, remnants of battle and defeat and lands laid waste, took heart again, and came to seek the Two Captains, though where they had their stronghold none yet knew. Túrin received gladly all who came to him, but by the counsel of Beleg he admitted no newcomer to his refuge upon Amon Rûdh (and that was now named Echad i Sedryn, Camp of the Faithful); the way thither only those of the Old Company knew and no others were admitted. But other guarded camps and forts were established round about: in the forest eastward, or in the highlands, or in the southward fens, from Methed-en-glad ('the End of the Wood') south of the Crossings of Teiglin to Bar-erib some leagues south of Amon Rûdh in the once fertile land between Narog and the Meres of Sirion. From all these places men could see the summit of Amon Rûdh, and by signals receive tidings and commands.

In this way, before the summer had passed, the following of Túrin had swelled to a great force, and the power of Angband was thrown back. Word of this came even to Nargothrond, and many there grew restless, saying that if an outlaw could do such hurt to the Enemy, what might not the Lord of Narog do. But Orodreth King of Nargothrond would not change his counsels. In all things he followed Thingol, with whom he exchanged messengers by secret ways; and he was a wise lord, according to the wisdom of those who considered first their own people, and how long they might preserve their life and wealth against the lust of the North. Therefore he allowed none of his people to go to Túrin, and he sent messengers to say to him that in all that he might do or devise in his war he should not set foot in the land of Nargothrond, nor drive Orcs thither. But help other than in arms he offered to the Two Captains, should they have need (and in this, it is thought, he was moved by Thingol and Melian).

Then Morgoth withheld his hand; though he made frequent feint of attack, so that by easy victory the confidence of these rebels might become overweening. As it proved indeed. For Túrin now gave the name of Dor-Cúarthol to all the land between Teiglin and the west march of Doriath; and claiming the lordship of it he named himself anew, Gorthol, the Dread Helm; and his heart was high. But to Beleg it seemed now that the Helm had wrought otherwise with Túrin than he had hoped; and looking into the days to come he was troubled in mind.

One day as summer was wearing on he and Túrin were sitting in the Echad resting after a long affray and march. Túrin said then to Beleg: 'Why are you sad, and thoughtful? Does not all go well, since you returned to me? Has not my purpose proved good?'

'All is well now,' said Beleg. 'Our enemies are still surprised and afraid. And still good days lie before us—for a while.'

'And what then?' said Túrin.

'Winter,' said Beleg. 'And after that another year, for those who live to see it.'

'And what then?'

'The wrath of Angband. We have burned the fingertips of the Black Hand—no more. It will not withdraw.'

'But is not the wrath of Angband our purpose and delight?' said Túrin. 'What else would you have me do?'

'You know full well,' said Beleg. 'But of that road you have forbidden me to speak. But hear me now. A king or the lord of a great host has many needs. He must have a secure refuge; and he must have wealth, and many whose work is not in war. With numbers comes the need of food, more than the wild will furnish to hunters. And there comes the passing of secrecy. Amon Rûdh is a good place for a few—it has eyes and ears. But it stands alone, and is seen far off; and no great force is needed to surround it—unless a host defends it, greater far than ours is yet or than it is likely ever to be.'



‘Nonetheless, I will be the captain of my own host,’ said Túrin; ‘and if I fall, then I fall. Here I stand in the path of Morgoth, and while I so stand he cannot use the southward road.’

Report of the Dragon-helm in the land west of Sirion came swiftly to the ear of Morgoth, and he laughed, for now Túrin was revealed to him again, who had long been lost in the shadows and under the veils of Melian. Yet he began to fear that Túrin would grow to such a power that the curse that he had laid upon him would become void, and he would escape the doom that had been designed for him, or else that he might retreat to Doriath and be lost to his sight again. Now therefore he had a mind to seize Túrin and afflict him even as his father, to torment him and enslave him.

Beleg had spoken truly when he said to Túrin that they had but scorched the fingers of the Black Hand, and that it would not withdraw. But Morgoth concealed his designs, and for that time contented himself with the sending out of his most skilled scouts; and ere long Amon Rûdh was surrounded by spies, lurking unobserved in the wilderness and making no move against the parties of men that went in and out.

But Mîm was aware of the presence of Orcs in the lands about Amon Rûdh, and the hatred that he bore to Beleg led him now in his darkened heart to an evil resolve. One day in the waning of the year he told the men in Baren-Danwedh that he was going with his son Ibun to search for roots for their winter store; but his true purpose was to seek out the servants of Morgoth, and to lead them to Túrin’s hiding-place.<sup>358</sup>

Nevertheless he attempted to impose certain conditions on the Orcs, who laughed at him, but Mîm said that they knew little if they believed that they could gain anything from a Petty-dwarf by torture. Then they asked him what these conditions might be, and Mîm declared his demands: that they pay him the weight in iron of each man whom they caught or slew, but of Túrin and Beleg in gold; that Mîm’s house, when rid of Túrin and his company, be left to him, and himself unmolested; that Beleg be left behind, bound, for Mîm to deal with; and that Túrin be let go free.

To these conditions the emissaries of Morgoth readily agreed, with no intention of fulfilling either the first or the second. The Orc-captain thought that the fate of Beleg might well be left to Mîm; but as to letting Túrin go free, ‘alive to Angband’ were his orders. While agreeing to the conditions he insisted that they keep Ibun as hostage; and then Mîm became afraid, and tried to back out of his undertaking, or else to escape. But the Orcs had his son, and so Mîm was obliged to guide them to Bar-en-Danwedh. Thus was the House of Ransom betrayed.

It has been told that the stony mass that was the crown or cap of Amon Rûdh had a bare or flattened top, but that steep as were its sides men could reach the summit by climbing a stair cut into the rock, leading up from the shelf or terrace before the entrance to Mîm’s house. On the summit watchmen were set, and they gave warning of the approach of the enemies. But these, guided by Mîm, came onto the level shelf before the doors, and Túrin and Beleg were driven back to the entrance of Bar-en-Danwedh. Some of the men who tried to climb up the steps cut in the rock were shot down by the arrows of the Orcs.

Túrin and Beleg retreated into the cave, and rolled a great stone across the passage. In these straits Andróg revealed to them the hidden stair leading to the flat summit of Amon Rûdh which he had found when lost in the caves, as has been told. Then Túrin and Beleg with many of their men went up by this stair and came out on the summit, surprising those few of the Orcs who had already come there by the outer path, and driving them over the edge. For a little while they held off the Orcs climbing up the rock, but they had no shelter on the bare summit, and many were shot from below. Most valiant of these was Andróg, who fell mortally wounded by an arrow at the head of the outside stair.

Then Túrin and Beleg with the ten men left to them drew back to the centre of the summit, where there was a standing stone, and making a ring about it they defended themselves until all were slain save Beleg and Túrin,

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<sup>358</sup> But another tale is told, which has it that Mîm did not encounter the Orcs with deliberate intent. It was the capture of his son and their threat to torture him that led Mîm to his treachery.

for over them the Orcs cast nets. Túrin was bound and carried off; Beleg who was wounded was bound likewise, but he was laid on the ground with wrists and ankles tied to iron pins driven in to the rock.

Now the Orcs, finding the issue of the secret stair, left the summit and entered Bar-en-Danwedh, which they defiled and ravaged. They did not find Mîm, lurking in his caves, and when they had departed from Amon Rûdh Mîm appeared on the summit, and going to where Beleg lay prostrate and unmoving he gloated over him while he sharpened a knife.

But Mîm and Beleg were not the only living beings on that stony height. Andróg, though himself wounded to the death, crawled among the dead bodies towards them, and seizing a sword he thrust it at the Dwarf. Shrieking in fear Mîm ran to the brink of the cliff and disappeared: he fled down a steep and difficult goat's path that was known to him. But Andróg putting forth his last strength cut through the wristbands and fetters that bound Beleg, and so released him; but dying he said: 'My hurts are too deep even for your healing.'



## Chapter IX: The Death Of Beleg

Beleg sought among the dead for Túrin, to bury him; but he could not discover his body. He knew then that Húrin's son was still alive, and taken to Angband; but he remained perforce in Bar-en-Danwedh until his wounds were healed. He set out then with little hope to try to find the trail of the Orcs, and he came upon their tracks near the Crossings of Teiglin. There they divided, some passing along the eaves of the Forest of Brethil towards the Ford of Brithiach, while others turned away westwards; and it seemed plain to Beleg that he must follow those that went direct with greatest speed to Angband, making for the Pass of Anach. Therefore he journeyed on through Dimbar, and up to the Pass of Anach in Ered Gorgoroth, the Mountains of Terror, and so to the highlands of Taur-nu-Fuin, the Forest under Night, a region of dread and dark enchantment, of wandering and despair.

Benighted in that evil land, it chanced that Beleg saw a small light among the trees, and going towards it he found an Elf, lying asleep beneath a great dead tree: beside his head was a lamp, from which the covering had slipped off. Then Beleg woke the sleeper, and gave him *lembas*, and asked him what fate had brought him to this terrible place; and he named himself Gwindor, son of Guilin.

Grieving Beleg looked at him, for Gwindor was but a bent and timid shadow of his former shape and mood, when in the Battle of Unnumbered Tears that lord of Nargothrond rode to the very doors of Angband, and there was taken. For few of the Noldor whom Morgoth took captive were put to death, because of their skill in mining for metals and gems; and Gwindor was not slain, but put to labour in the mines of the North. These Noldor possessed many of the Fëanorian lamps, which were crystals hung in a fine chain net, the crystals being ever-shining with an inner blue radiance marvellous for finding the way in the darkness of night or in tunnels; of these lamps they themselves did not know the secret. Many of the mining Elves thus escaped from the darkness of the mines, for they were able to bore their way out; but Gwindor received a small sword from one who worked in the forges, and when working in a stone-gang turned suddenly on the guards. He escaped, but with one hand cut off; and now he lay exhausted under the great pines of Taur-nu-Fuin.

From Gwindor Beleg learned that the small company of Orcs ahead of them, from whom he had hidden, had no captives, and were going with speed: an advance guard, perhaps, bearing report to Angband. At this news Beleg despaired: for he guessed that the tracks that he had seen turning away westwards after the Crossings of Teiglin were those of a greater host, who had in orc-fashion gone marauding in the lands seeking food and plunder, and might now be returning to Angband by way of 'the Narrow Land', the long defile of Sirion, much further to the west. If this were so, his sole hope lay in returning to the Ford of Brithiach, and then going north to Tol Sirion. But scarcely had he determined on this than they heard the noise of a great host approaching through the forest from the south; and hiding in the boughs of a tree they watched the servants of Morgoth pass, moving slowly, laden with booty and captives, surrounded by wolves. And they saw Túrin with chained hands being driven on with whips.

Then Beleg told him of his own errand in Taur-nu-Fuin; and Gwindor sought to dissuade him from his quest, saying that he would but join Túrin in the anguish that awaited him. But Beleg would not abandon Túrin, and despairing himself he aroused hope again in Gwindor's heart; and together they went on, following the Orcs until they came out of the forest on the high slopes that ran down to the barren dunes of the Anfauglith. There within sight of the peaks of Thangorodrim the Orcs made their encampment in a bare dale, and set wolf-sentinels all about its rim. There they fell to carousing and feasting on their booty; and after tormenting their prisoners most fell drunkenly asleep. By that time day was failing and it became very dark. A great storm rode up out of the West, and thunder rumbled far off as Beleg and Gwindor crept towards the camp.

When all in the camp were sleeping Beleg took up his bow and in the darkness shot four of the wolf-sentinels on the south side, one by one and silently. Then in great peril they entered in, and they found Túrin fettered hand and foot and tied to a tree. All about knives that had been cast at him by his tormentors were embedded in the trunk, but he was not hurt; and he was senseless in a drugged stupor or swooned in a sleep of utter weariness. Then Beleg and Gwindor cut the bonds from the tree, and bore Túrin out of the camp. But he was too heavy to carry far, and they could go no further than to a thicket of thorn trees high on the slopes above the camp. There they laid him down; and now the storm drew nearer, and lightning flashed on Thangorodrim. Beleg drew his sword Anglachel, and with it he cut the fetters that bound Túrin; but fate was that day more strong, for the blade of Eöl the Dark Elf slipped in his hand, and pricked Túrin's foot.

Then Túrin was roused into a sudden wakefulness of rage and fear, and seeing a form bending over him in the gloom with a naked blade in hand he leapt up with a great cry, believing that Orcs were come again to torment him; and grappling with him in the darkness he seized Anglachel, and slew Beleg Cúthalion thinking him a foe.

But as he stood, finding himself free, and ready to sell his life dearly against imagined foes, there came a great flash of lightning above them, and in its light he looked down on Beleg's face. Then Túrin stood stonestill and silent, staring on that dreadful death, knowing what he had done; and so terrible was his face, lit by the lightning that flickered all about them, that Gwindor cowered down upon the ground and dared not raise his eyes.

But now in the camp beneath the Orcs were roused, both by the storm and by Túrin's cry, and discovered that Túrin was gone; but no search was made for him, for they were filled with terror by the thunder that came out of the West, believing that it was sent against them by the great Enemies beyond the Sea. Then a wind arose, and great rains fell, and torrents swept down from the heights of Taur-nu-Fuin; and though Gwindor cried out to Túrin, warning him of their utmost peril, he made no answer, but sat unmoving and unweeping beside the body of Beleg Cúthalion, lying in the dark forest slain by his hand even as he cut the bonds of thralldom from him.

When morning came the storm was passed away eastward over Lothlann, and the sun of autumn rose hot and bright; but the Orcs hating this almost as much as the thunder, and believing that Túrin would have fled far from that place and all trace of his flight be washed away, they departed in haste, eager to return to Angband. Far off Gwindor saw them marching northward over the steaming sands of Anfauglith. Thus it came to pass that they returned to Morgoth empty-handed, and left behind them the son of Húrin, who sat crazed and unwitting on the slopes of Taur-nu-Fuin, bearing a burden heavier than their bonds.

Then Gwindor roused Túrin to aid him in the burial of Beleg, and he rose as one that walked in sleep; and together they laid Beleg in a shallow grave, and placed beside him Belthroning his great bow, that was made of black yew-wood. But the dread sword Anglachel Gwindor took, saying that it were better that it should take vengeance on the servants of Morgoth than lie useless in the earth; and he took also the *lembas* of Melian to strengthen them in the wild.

Thus ended Beleg Strongbow, truest of friends, greatest in skill of all that harboured in the woods of Beleriand in the Elder Days, at the hand of him whom he most loved; and that grief was graven on the face of Túrin and never faded.

But courage and strength were renewed in the Elf of Nargothrond, and departing from Taur-nu-Fuin he led Túrin far away. Never once as they wandered together on long and grievous paths did Túrin speak, and he walked as one without wish or purpose, while the year waned and winter drew on over the northern lands. But Gwindor was ever beside him to guard him and guide him; and thus they passed westward over Sirion and came at length to the Beautiful Mere and Eithel Ivrin, the springs whence Narog rose beneath the Mountains of Shadow. There Gwindor spoke to Túrin, saying: 'Awake, Túrin son of Húrin! On Ivrin's lake is endless laughter. She is fed from crystal fountains unfailing, and guarded from defilement by Ulmo, Lord of Waters, who wrought her beauty in ancient days.' Then Túrin knelt and drank from that water; and suddenly he cast himself down, and his tears were unloosed at last, and he was healed of his madness.

There he made a song for Beleg, and he named it *Laer Cú Beleg*, the Song of the Great Bow, singing it aloud heedless of peril. And Gwindor gave the sword Anglachel into his hands, and Túrin knew that it was heavy and

strong and had great power; but its blade was black and dull and its edges blunt. Then Gwindor said: 'This is a strange blade, and unlike any that I have seen in Middle-earth. It mourns for Beleg even as you do. But be comforted; for I return to Nargothrond of the House of Finarfin, where I was born and dwelt before my grief. You shall come with me, and be healed and renewed.'

'Who are you?' said Túrin.

'A wandering Elf, a thrall escaped, whom Beleg met and comforted,' said Gwindor. 'Yet once I was Gwindor son of Guilin, a lord of Nargothrond, until I went to the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, and was enslaved in Angband.'

'Then have you seen Húrin son of Galdor, the warrior of Dor-lómin?' said Túrin.

'I have not seen him,' said Gwindor. 'But the rumour runs through Angband that he still defies Morgoth; and Morgoth has laid a curse upon him and all his kin.'

'That I do believe,' said Túrin.

And now they arose, and departing from Eithel Ivrin they journeyed southward along the banks of Narog, until they were taken by scouts of the Elves and brought as prisoners to the hidden stronghold.

Thus did Túrin come to Nargothrond.



## Chapter X: Túrin In Nargothrond

At first his own people did not know Gwindor, who went out young and strong, and returned now seeming as one of the aged among mortal Men, because of his torments and his labours; and now also he was maimed. But Finduilas daughter of Orodreth the King knew him and welcomed him, for she had loved him, and indeed they were betrothed, before the Nirnaeth, and so greatly did Gwindor love her beauty that he named her Faelivrin, which is the sheen of the sun upon the pools of Ivrin.

Thus Gwindor came home, and for his sake Túrin was admitted with him; for Gwindor said that he was a valiant man, dear friend of Beleg Cúthalion of Doriath. But when Gwindor would tell his name Túrin checked him, saying: 'I am Agarwaen, the son of Úmarth (which is the Bloodstained, son of Ill-fate), a hunter in the woods.' But though the Elves guessed that he took these names because of the slaying of his friend (not knowing other reasons), they questioned him no more.

The sword Anglachel was forged anew for him by the cunning smiths of Nargothrond, and though ever black its edges shone with pale fire. Then Túrin himself became known in Nargothrond as Mormegil, the Black Sword, for the rumour of his deeds with that weapon; but he named the sword Gurthang, Iron of Death.

Because of his prowess and his skill in warfare with Orcs Túrin found favour with Orodreth, and was admitted to his council. Now Túrin had no liking for the manner of fighting of the Elves of Nargothrond, of ambush and stealth and secret arrow, and he urged that it be abandoned, and that they should use their strength to attack the servants of the Enemy, to open battle and pursuit. But Gwindor spoke ever against Túrin in this matter in the council of the King, saying that he had been in Angband and had had a glimpse of the power of Morgoth, and had some inkling of his designs. 'Petty victories will prove profitless at the last,' he said; 'for thus Morgoth learns where the boldest of his enemies are to be found, and gathers strength great enough to destroy them. All the might of the Elves and Edain united sufficed only to contain him, and to gain the peace of a siege; long indeed, but only so long as Morgoth bided his time before he broke the leaguer; and never again can such a union be made. Only in secrecy lies hope of survival. Until the Valar come.'

'The Valar!' said Túrin. 'They have forsaken you, and they hold Men in scorn. What use to look westward across the endless Sea to a dying sunset in the West? There is but one Vala with whom we have to do, and that is Morgoth; and if in the end we cannot overcome him, at least we can hurt him and hinder him. For victory is victory, however small, nor is its worth only from what follows from it. But it is expedient also. Secrecy is not finally possible: arms are the only wall against Morgoth. If you do nothing to halt him, all Beleriand will fall under his shadow before many years are passed, and then one by one he will smoke you out of your earths. And what then? A pitiable remnant will fly south and west, to cower on the shores of the Sea, caught between Morgoth and Ossë. Better then to win a time of glory, though it be shortlived; for the end will be no worse. You speak of secrecy, and say that therein lies the only hope; but could you ambush and waylay every scout and spy of Morgoth to the last and least, so that none came ever back with tidings to Angband, yet from that he would learn that you lived and guess where. And this also I say: though mortal Men have little life beside the span of the Elves, they would rather spend it in battle than fly or submit. The defiance of Húrin Thalion is a great deed; and though Morgoth slay the doer he cannot make the deed not to have been. Even the Lords of the West will honour it; and is it not written into the history of Arda, which neither Morgoth nor Manwë can unwrite?'

'You speak of high things,' Gwindor answered, 'and plain it is that you have lived among the Eldar. But a darkness is on you if you set Morgoth and Manwë together, or speak of the Valar as the foes of Elves and Men; for the Valar scorn nothing, and least of all the Children of Ilúvatar. Nor do you know all the hopes of the Eldar. It is a prophecy among us that one day a messenger from Middle-earth will come through the shadows to Valinor, and Manwë will hear, and Mandos relent. For that time shall we not attempt to preserve the seed of the

Noldor, and of the Edain also? And Círdan dwells now in the South, and there is building of ships; but what know you of ships, or of the Sea? You think of yourself and of your own glory, and bid us each do likewise; but we must think of others beside ourselves, for not all can fight and fall, and those we must keep from war and ruin, while we can.'

'Then send them to your ships, while there is yet time,' said Túrin.

'They will not be parted from us,' said Gwindor, 'even could Círdan sustain them. We must abide together as long as we may, and not court death.'

'All this I have answered,' said Túrin. 'Valiant defence of the borders and hard blows ere the enemy gathers; in that course lies the best hope of your long abiding together. And do those that you speak of love such skulkers in the woods, hunting strays like a wolf, better than one who puts on his helm and figured shield, and drives away the foe, be they far greater than all his host? At least the women of the Edain do not. They did not hold back the men from the Nirnaeth Arnoediad.'

'But they suffered greater woe than if that field had not been fought,' said Gwindor.

But Túrin advanced greatly in the favour of Orodreth, and he became the chief counsellor of the King, who submitted all things to his advice. In that time the Elves of Nargothrond forsook their secrecy, and great store of weapons were made; and by the counsel of Túrin the Noldor built a mighty bridge over the Narog from the Doors of Felagund for the swifter passage of their arms, since war was now chiefly east of Narog in the Guarded Plain. As its north-march Nargothrond now held the 'Debatable Land' about the sources of Ginglith, Narog, and the fringes of the Woods of Núath. Between Nenning and Narog no Orc came; and east of Narog their realm went to the Teiglin and the borders of the Moors of the Nibin-noeg.

Gwindor fell into dishonour, for he was no longer forward in arms, and his strength was small; and the pain of his maimed left arm was often upon him. But Túrin was young, and only now reached his full manhood; and he was in truth the son of Morwen Eledhwen to look upon: tall, dark-haired and pale-skinned, with grey eyes, and his face more beautiful than any other among mortal men, in the Elder Days. His speech and bearing were those of the ancient kingdom of Doriath, and even among the Elves he might be taken at first meeting for one from the great houses of the Noldor. So valiant was Túrin, and so exceedingly skilled in arms, especially with sword and shield, that the Elves said that he could not be slain, save by mischance, or an evil arrow from afar. Therefore they gave him dwarf-mail, to guard him; and in a grim mood he found in the armouries a dwarf-mask all gilded, and he put it on before battle, and his enemies fled before his face.

Now that he had his way, and all went well, and he had work to do after his heart, and had honour in it, he was courteous to all, and less grim than of old, so that well nigh all hearts were turned to him; and many called him Adanedhel, the Elf-man. But most of all Finduilas the daughter of Orodreth found her heart moved whenever he came near, or was in hall. She was golden-haired after the manner of the house of Finarfin, and Túrin began to take pleasure in the sight of her and in her company; for she reminded him of his kindred and the women of Dor-lómin in his father's house.

At first he met her only when Gwindor was by; but after a while she sought him out, so that they met at times alone, though it seemed to be by chance. Then she would question him about the Edain, of whom she had seen few and seldom, and about his country and his kin.

Then Túrin spoke freely to her concerning these things, though he did not name the land of his birth, nor any of his kindred; and on a time he said to her: 'I had a sister, Lalaith, or so I named her; and of her you put me in mind. But Lalaith was a child, a yellow flower in the green grass of spring; and had she lived she would now, maybe, have become dimmed with grief. But you are queenly, and as a golden tree; I would I had a sister so fair.'

'But you are kingly,' said she, 'even as the lords of the people of Fingolfin; I would I had a brother so valiant. And I do not think that Agarwaen is your name, nor is it fit for you, Adanedhel. I call you Thurin, the Secret.'

At this Túrin started, but he said: 'That is not my name; and I am not a king, for our kings are of the Eldar, as I am not.'

Now Túrin marked that Gwindor's friendship grew cooler towards him; and he wondered also that whereas at first the woe and horror of Angband had begun to be lifted from him, now he seemed to slip back into care and sorrow. And he thought, it may be that he is grieved that I oppose his counsels, and have overcome him; I would it were not so. For he loved Gwindor as his guide and healer, and was filled with pity for him. But in those days the radiance of Finduilas also became dimmed, her footsteps slow and her face grave, and she grew wan and thin; and Túrin perceiving this surmised that the words of Gwindor had set fear in her heart of what might come to pass.

In truth Finduilas was torn in mind. For she honoured Gwindor and pitied him, and wished not to add one tear to his suffering; but against her will her love for Túrin grew day by day, and she thought of Beren and Lúthien. But Túrin was not like Beren! He did not scorn her, and was glad in her company; yet she knew that he had no love of the kind she wished. His mind and heart were elsewhere, by rivers in springs long past.

Then Túrin spoke to Finduilas, and said: 'Do not let the words of Gwindor affright you. He has suffered in the darkness of Angband; and it is hard for one so valiant to be thus crippled and backward perforce. He needs all solace, and a longer time for healing.'

'I know it well,' she said.

'But we will win that time for him!' said Túrin. 'Nargothrond shall stand! Never again will Morgoth the Craven come forth from Angband, and all his reliance must be on his servants; thus says Melian of Doriath. They are the fingers of his hands; and we will smite them, and cut them off, till he draws back his claws. Nargothrond shall stand!'

'Perhaps,' said she. 'It shall stand, if you can achieve it. But have a care, Thurin; my heart is heavy when you go out to battle, lest Nargothrond be bereaved.'

Afterwards Túrin sought out Gwindor, and said to him: 'Gwindor, dear friend, you are falling back into sadness; do not so! For your healing will come in the houses of your kin, and in the light of Finduilas.'

Then Gwindor stared at Túrin, but he said nothing, and his face was clouded.

'Why do you look upon me so?' said Túrin. 'Often your eyes have gazed at me strangely of late. How have I grieved you? I have opposed your counsels; but a man must speak as he sees, nor hide the truth that he believes, for any private cause. I would that we were one in mind; for to you I owe a great debt, and I shall not forget it.'

'Will you not?' said Gwindor. 'Nonetheless your deeds and your counsels have changed my home and my kin. Your shadow lies upon them. Why should I be glad, who have lost all to you?'

Túrin did not understand these words, and did but guess that Gwindor begrudged him his place in the heart and counsels of the King.

But Gwindor, when Túrin had gone, sat alone in dark thought, and he cursed Morgoth who could thus pursue his enemies with woe, whithersoever they might run. 'And now at last,' he said, 'I believe the rumour of Angband that Morgoth has cursed Húrin and all his kin.' And going to find Finduilas he said to her: 'A sadness and doubt is upon you; and too often now I miss you, and begin to guess that you are avoiding me. Since you tell me not the cause, I must guess. Daughter of the house of Finarfin, let no grief lie between us; for though Morgoth has laid my life in ruin, you still I love. But go whither love leads you; for I am become unfit to wed you; and neither my prowess nor my counsel have any honour more.'

Then Finduilas wept. 'Weep not yet!' said Gwindor. 'But beware lest you have cause. Not fitting is it that the Elder Children of Ilúvatar should wed the Younger; nor is it wise, for they are brief, and soon pass, to leave us in widowhood while the world lasts. Neither will fate suffer it, unless it be once or twice only, for some high cause of doom that we do not perceive.'

'But this man is not Beren, even if he be both as fair and as brave. A doom lies on him; a dark doom. Enter not into it! And if you will, your love shall betray you to bitterness and death. For hearken to me! Though he be indeed *agarwaen* son of *úmarth*, his right name is Túrin son of Húrin, whom Morgoth holds in Angband, and has cursed all his kin. Doubt not the power of Morgoth Bauglir! Is it not written in me?'



Then Finduilas rose, and queenly indeed she looked. ‘Your eyes are dimmed, Gwindor,’ she said. ‘You do not see or understand what has here come to pass. Must I now be put to double shame to reveal the truth to you? For I love you, Gwindor, and I am ashamed that I love you not more, but have taken a love even greater, from which I cannot escape. I did not seek it, and long I put it aside. But if I have pity for your hurts, have pity on mine. Túrin loves me not, nor will.’

‘You say this,’ said Gwindor, ‘to take the blame from him whom you love. Why does he seek you out, and sit long with you, and come ever more glad away?’

‘Because he also needs solace,’ said Finduilas, ‘and is bereaved of his kin. You both have your needs. But what of Finduilas? Now is it not enough that I must confess myself to you unloved, but that you should say that I speak so to deceive?’

‘Nay, a woman is not easily deceived in such a case,’ said Gwindor. ‘Nor will you find many who will deny that they are loved, if that is true.’

‘If any of us three be faithless, it is I: but not in will. But what of your doom and rumours of Angband? What of death and destruction? The Adanedhel is mighty in the tale of the World, and his stature shall reach yet to Morgoth in some far day to come.’

‘He is proud,’ said Gwindor.

‘But also he is merciful,’ said Finduilas. ‘He is not yet awake, but still pity can ever pierce his heart, and he will never deny it. Pity maybe shall be ever the only entry. But he does not pity me. He holds me in awe, as were I both his mother and a queen.’

Maybe Finduilas spoke truly, seeing with the keen eyes of the Eldar. And now Túrin, not knowing what had passed between Gwindor and Finduilas, was ever gentler towards her as she seemed more sad. But on a time Finduilas said to him: ‘Thurin Adanedhel, why did you hide your name from me? Had I known who you were I should not have honoured you less, but I should better have understood your grief.’

‘What do you mean?’ he said. ‘Whom do you make me?’

‘Túrin son of Húrin Thalion, captain of the North.’

Now when Túrin learned from Finduilas of what had passed, he was wrathful, and he said to Gwindor: ‘In love I hold you for rescue and safe-keeping. But now you have done ill to me, friend, to betray my right name, and call down my doom upon me, from which I would lie hid.’

But Gwindor answered: ‘The doom lies in yourself, not in your name.’

In that time of respite and hope, when because of the deeds of the Mormegil the power of Morgoth was stemmed west of Sirion, and all the woods had peace, Morwen fled at last from Dor-lómin with Niënor her daughter, and adventured the long journey to Thingol’s halls. There new grief awaited her, for she found Túrin gone, and to Doriath there had come no tidings since the Dragon-helm had vanished from the lands west of Sirion; but Morwen remained in Doriath with Niënor as guests of Thingol and Melian, and were treated with honour.



## Chapter XI: The Fall Of Nargothrond

When five years had passed since Túrin came to Nargothrond, in the spring of the year, there came two Elves, and they named themselves Gelmir and Arminas, of the people of Finarfin; and they said that they had an errand to the Lord of Nargothrond. Túrin now commanded all the forces of Nargothrond, and ruled all matters of war; indeed he was become stern and proud, and would order all things as he wished or thought good. They were brought therefore before Túrin; but Gelmir said: ‘It is to Orodreth, Finarfin’s son, that we would speak.’

And when Orodreth came, Gelmir said to him: ‘Lord, we were of Angrod’s people, and we have wandered far since the Nirnaeth; but of late we have dwelt among Círdan’s following by the Mouths of Sirion. And on a day he called us, and bade us go to you; for Ulmo himself, the Lord of Waters, had appeared to him and warned him of great peril that draws near to Nargothrond.’

But Orodreth was wary, and he answered: ‘Why then do you come hither out of the North? Or perhaps you had other errands also?’

Then Arminas said: ‘Yes, lord. Ever since the Nirnaeth I have sought for the hidden kingdom of Turgon, and I have found it not; and in this search I fear now that I have delayed our errand hither over long. For Círdan sent us along the coast by ship, for secrecy and speed, and we were put ashore in Drengist. But among the sea-folk were some that came south in past years as messengers from Turgon, and it seemed to me from their guarded speech that maybe Turgon dwells still in the North, and not in the South as most believe. But we have found neither sign nor rumour of what we sought.’

‘Why do you seek Turgon?’ said Orodreth.

‘Because it is said that his kingdom shall stand longest against Morgoth,’ answered Arminas. And these words seemed to Orodreth ill-omened, and he was displeased.

‘Then tarry not in Nargothrond,’ said he; ‘for here you will hear no news of Turgon. And I need none to teach me that Nargothrond stands in peril.’

‘Be not angered, lord,’ said Gelmir, ‘if we answer your questions with truth. And our wandering from the straight path hither has not been fruitless, for we have passed beyond the reach of your furthest scouts; we have traversed Dor-lómin and all the lands under the eaves of Ered Wethrin, and we have explored the Pass of Sirion spying out the ways of the Enemy. There is a great gathering of Orcs and evil creatures in those regions, and a host is mustering about Sauron’s Isle.’

‘I know it,’ said Túrin. ‘Your news is stale. If the message of Círdan was to any purpose, it should have come sooner.’

‘At least, lord, you shall hear the message now,’ said Gelmir to Orodreth. ‘Hear then the words of the Lord of Waters! Thus he spoke to Círdan: “The Evil of the North has defiled the springs of Sirion, and my power withdraws from the fingers of the flowing waters. But a worse thing is yet to come forth. Say therefore to the Lord of Nargothrond: Shut the doors of the fortress, and go not abroad. Cast the stones of your pride into the loud river, that the creeping evil may not find the gate.”’

These words seemed dark to Orodreth, and he turned as ever to Túrin for counsel. But Túrin mistrusted the messengers, and he said in scorn: ‘What does Círdan know of our wars, who dwell nigh to the Enemy? Let the mariner look to his ships! But if in truth the Lord of Waters would send us counsel, let him speak more plainly. Otherwise to one trained in war it will still seem better in our case to muster our strength, and go boldly to meet our foes, ere they come too nigh.’

Then Gelmir bowed before Orodreth, and said: 'I have spoken as I was bidden, lord'; and he turned away. But Arminas said to Túrin: 'Are you indeed of the House of Hador, as I have heard said?'

'Here I am named Agarwaen, the Black Sword of Nargothrond,' answered Túrin. 'You deal much, it seems, in guarded speech, friend Arminas. It is well that Turgon's secret is hid from you, or soon it would be heard in Angband. A man's name is his own, and should the son of Húrin learn that you have betrayed him when he would be hid, then may Morgoth take you and burn out your tongue!'

Arminas was dismayed by the black wrath of Túrin; but Gelmir said: 'He shall not be betrayed by us, Agarwaen. Are we not in council behind closed doors, where speech may be plainer? And Arminas, I deem, questioned you, since it is known to all that dwell by the Sea that Ulmo has great love for the House of Hador, and some say that Húrin and Huor his brother came once into the Hidden Realm.'

'If that were so, then he would speak of it to none, neither the great nor the less, and least of all to his son in childhood,' answered Túrin. 'Therefore I do not believe that Arminas asked this of me in order to learn aught of Turgon. I mistrust such messengers of mischief.'

'Save your mistrust!' said Arminas in anger. 'Gelmir mistakes me. I asked because I doubted what here seems believed; for little indeed do you resemble the kin of Hador, whatever your name.'

'And what do you know of them?' said Túrin. 'Húrin I have seen,' answered Arminas, 'and his fathers before him. And in the wastes of Dor-lómin I met with Tuor, son of Huor, Húrin's brother; and he is like his fathers, as you are not.'

'That may be,' said Túrin, 'though of Tuor I have heard no word ere now. But if my head be dark and not golden, of that I am not ashamed. For I am not the first of sons in the likeness of his mother; and I come through Morwen Eledhwen of the House of Bëor and the kindred of Beren Camlost.'

'I spoke not of the difference between the black and the gold,' said Arminas. 'But others of the House of Hador bear themselves otherwise, and Tuor among them. For they use courtesy, and they listen to good counsel, holding the Lords of the West in awe. But you, it seems, will take counsel with your own wisdom, or with your sword only; and you speak haughtily. And I say to you, Agarwaen Mormegil, that if you do so, other shall be your doom than one of the Houses of Hador and Bëor might look for.'

'Other it has ever been,' answered Túrin. 'And if, as it seems, I must bear the hate of Morgoth because of the valour of my father, shall I also endure the taunts and ill-boding of a runagate from war, though he claim the kinship of kings? Get you back to the safe shores of the Sea!'

Then Gelmir and Arminas departed, and went back to the South; but despite Túrin's taunts they would gladly have awaited battle beside their kin, and they went only because Círdan had bidden them under the command of Ulmo to bring back word to him of Nargothrond and of the speeding of their errand there. And Orodreth was much troubled by the words of the messengers; but all the more fell became the mood of Túrin, and he would by no means listen to their counsels, and least of all would he suffer the great bridge to be cast down. For so much at least of the words of Ulmo were read aright.

Soon after the departure of the messengers Handir Lord of Brethil was slain; for the Orcs invaded his land, seeking to secure the Crossings of Teiglin for their further advance. Handir gave them battle, but the Men of Brethil were worsted and driven back into their woods. The Orcs did not pursue them, for they had achieved their purpose for that time; and they continued to muster their strength in the Pass of Sirion.

In the autumn of the year, biding his hour, Morgoth loosed upon the people of Narog the great host that he had long prepared; and Glaurung the Father of Dragons passed over Anfauglith, and came thence into the north vales of Sirion and there did great evil. Under the shadows of Ered Wethrin, leading a great army of Orcs in his train, he defiled the Eithel Ivrin, and thence he passed into the realm of Nargothrond, burning the Talath Dirnen, the Guarded Plain, between Narog and Teiglin.

Then the warriors of Nargothrond went forth, and tall and terrible on that day looked Túrin, and the heart of the host was uplifted as he rode on the right hand of Orodreth. But greater far was the host of Morgoth than any scouts had told, and none but Túrin defended by his dwarf-mask could withstand the approach of Glaurung.

The Elves were driven back and defeated on the field of Tumhalad; and there all the pride and host of Nargothrond withered away. Orodreth the King was slain in the forefront of the battle, and Gwindor son of Guilin was wounded to the death. But Túrin came to his aid, and all fled before him; and he bore Gwindor out of the rout, and escaping to a wood there laid him on the grass.

Then Gwindor said to Túrin: 'Let bearing pay for bearing! But ill-fated was mine, and vain is yours; for my body is marred beyond healing, and I must leave Middle-earth. And though I love you, son of Húrin, yet I rue the day that I took you from the Orcs. But for your prowess and your pride, still I should have love and life, and Nargothrond should yet stand a while. Now if you love me, leave me! Haste you to Nargothrond, and save Finduilas. And this last I say to you: she alone stands between you and your doom. If you fail her, it shall not fail to find you. Farewell!'

Then Túrin sped back to Nargothrond, mustering such of the rout as he met with on the way; and the leaves fell from the trees in a great wind as they went, for the autumn was passing to a dire winter. But Glaurung and his host of Orcs were there before him, because of his rescue of Gwindor, and they came suddenly, ere those that were left on guard were aware of what had befallen on the field of Tumhalad. In that day the bridge that Túrin had caused to be built over Narog proved an evil; for it was great and mightily made and could not swiftly be destroyed, and thus the enemy came readily over the deep river, and Glaurung came in full fire against the Doors of Felagund, and overthrew them, and passed within.

And even as Túrin came up the ghastly sack of Nargothrond was well-nigh achieved. The Orcs had slain or driven off all that remained in arms, and they were even then ransacking the great halls and chambers, plundering and destroying; but those of the women and maidens that were not burned or slain they had herded on the terrace before the doors, as slaves to be taken to Angband. Upon this ruin and woe Túrin came, and none could withstand him; or would not, though he struck down all before him, and passed over the bridge, and hewed his way towards the captives.

And now he stood alone, for the few that had followed him had fled into hiding. But in that moment Glaurung the fell issued from the gaping Doors of Felagund, and lay behind, between Túrin and the bridge. Then suddenly he spoke by the evil spirit that was in him, saying: 'Hail, son of Húrin. Well met!'

Then Túrin sprang about, and strode against him, and fire was in his eyes, and the edges of Gurthang shone as with flame. But Glaurung withheld his blast, and opened wide his serpent-eyes and gazed upon Túrin. Without fear Túrin looked in those eyes as he raised up his sword; and straightway he fell under the dreadful spell of the dragon, and was as one turned to stone. Thus long they stood unmoving, silent before the great Doors of Felagund. Then Glaurung spoke again, taunting Túrin. 'Evil have been all your ways, son of Húrin,' said he. 'Thankless fosterling, outlaw, slayer of your friend, thief of love, usurper of Nargothrond, captain foolhardy, and deserter of your kin. As thralls your mother and your sister live in Dor-lómin, in misery and want. You are arrayed as a prince, but they go in rags. For you they yearn, but you care not for that. Glad may your father be to learn that he has such a son: as learn he shall.' And Túrin being under the spell of Glaurung hearkened to his words, and he saw himself as in a mirror misshapen by malice, and he loathed what he saw.

And while he was yet held by the eyes of Glaurung in torment of mind, and could not stir, at a sign from the Dragon the Orcs drove away the herded captives, and they passed nigh to Túrin and went over the bridge. And among them was Finduilas, and she held out her arms to Túrin, and called him by name. But not until her cries and the wailing of the captives was lost upon the northward road did Glaurung release Túrin, and he might not stop his ears against that voice that haunted him after.

Then suddenly Glaurung withdrew his glance, and waited; and Túrin stirred slowly as one waking from a hideous dream. Then coming to himself with a loud cry he sprang upon the Dragon. But Glaurung laughed, saying: 'If you wish to be slain, I will slay you gladly. But small help will that be to Morwen and Niënor. No heed did you give to the cries of the Elf-woman. Will you deny also the bond of your blood?'

But Túrin drawing back his sword stabbed at his eyes; and Glaurung coiling back swiftly towered above him, and said: 'Nay! At least you are valiant. Beyond all whom I have met. And they lie who say that we of our part do not honour the valour of foes. See now! I offer you freedom. Go to your kin, if you can. Get you gone! And if Elf or Man be left to make tale of these days, then surely in scorn they will name you, if you spurn this gift.'

Then Túrin, being yet bemused by the eyes of the dragon, as if he were treating with a foe that could know pity, believed the words of Glaurung, and turning away he sped over the bridge. But as he went, Glaurung spoke behind him, saying in a fell voice: 'Haste you now, son of Húrin, to Dor-lómin! Or perhaps the Orcs shall come before you, once again. And if you tarry for Finduilas, then never shall you see Morwen or Niënor again; and they will curse you.'

But Túrin passed away on the northward road, and Glaurung laughed once more, for he had accomplished the errand of his Master. Then he turned to his own pleasure, and sent forth his blast, and burned all about him. But all the Orcs that were busy in the sack he routed forth, and drove them away, and denied them their plunder even to the last thing of worth. The bridge then he broke down and cast into the foam of Narog; and being thus secure he gathered all the hoard and riches of Felagund and heaped them, and lay upon them in the innermost hall, and rested a while.

And Túrin hastened along the ways to the North, through the lands now desolate between Narog and Teiglin, and the Fell Winter came down to meet him; for that year snow fell ere autumn was passed, and spring came late and cold. Ever it seemed to him as he went that he heard the cries of Finduilas, calling his name by wood and hill, and great was his anguish; but his heart being hot with the lies of Glaurung, and seeing ever in his mind the Orcs burning the house of Húrin or putting Morwen and Niënor to torment, he held on his way, turning never aside.



## Chapter XII: The Return Of Túrin To Dor-lómin

At last worn by haste and the long road (for forty leagues and more had he journeyed without rest) he came with the first ice of winter to the pools of Ivrin, where before he had been healed. But they were now only a frozen mire, and he could drink there no more.

Thence he came to the passes into Dor-lómin, and snow came bitterly from the North, and the ways were perilous and cold. Though three and twenty years were gone since he had trodden that path, it was graven in his heart, so great was the sorrow of each step at the parting from Morwen. Thus at last he came back to the land of his childhood. It was bleak and bare; and the people there were few and churlish, and they spoke the harsh tongue of the Easterlings, and the old tongue was become the language of serfs, or of foes. Therefore Túrin walked warily, hooded and silent, and he came at last to the house that he sought. It stood empty and dark, and no living thing dwelt near it; for Morwen was gone, and Brodda the Incomer (he that took by force Aerin, Húrin's kinswoman, to wife) had plundered her house, and taken all that was left to her of goods or of servants. Brodda's house stood nearest to the old house of Húrin, and thither Túrin came, spent with wandering and grief, begging for shelter; and it was granted to him, for some of the kindlier manners of old were still kept there by Aerin. He was given a seat by the fire by the servants, and a few vagabonds as grim and wayworn as he; and he asked news of the land.

At that the company fell silent, and some drew away, looking askance at the stranger. But one old vagabond man, with a crutch, said: 'If you must speak the old tongue, master, speak it softer, and ask for no tidings. Would you be beaten for a rogue, or hung for a spy? For both you may well be by the looks of you. Which is but to say,' he said, coming near and speaking low in Túrin's ear, 'one of the kindly folk of old that came with Hador in the days of gold, before heads wore wolf-hair. Some here are of like sort, though now made beggars and slaves, and but for the Lady Aerin would get neither this fire nor this broth. Whence are you, and what news would you have?'

'There was a lady called Morwen,' answered Túrin, 'and long ago I lived in her house. Thither after far wandering I came to seek welcome, but neither fire nor folk are there now.'

'Nor have been this long year and more,' answered the old man. 'But scant were both fire and folk in that house since the deadly war; for she was of the old people—as doubtless you know, the widow of our lord, Húrin Galdor's son. They dared not touch her, though, for they feared her; proud and fair as a queen, before sorrow marred her. Witchwife they called her, and shunned her. Witchwife: it is but "elf-friend" in the new language. Yet they robbed her. Often would she and her daughter have gone hungry, but for the Lady Aerin. She aided them in secret, it is said, and was often beaten for it by the churl Brodda, her husband by need.'

'And this long year and more?' said Túrin. 'Are they dead, or made thralls? Or have the Orcs assailed her?'

'It is not known for sure,' said the old man. 'But she is gone with her daughter; and this Brodda has plundered her and stripped what remained. Not a dog is left, and her few folk made his slaves; save some that have gone begging, as have I. I served her many a year, and the great master before, Sador Onefoot: a cursed axe in the woods long ago, or I would be lying in the Great Mound now. Well I remember the day when Húrin's boy was sent away, and how he wept; and she, when he was gone. To the Hidden Kingdom he went, it was said.'

With that the old man stayed his tongue, and eyed Túrin doubtfully. 'I am old and I babble, master,' he said. 'Mind me not! But though it be pleasant to speak the old tongue with one that speaks it fair as in time past, the days are ill, and one must be wary. Not all that speak the fair tongue are fair at heart.'

'Truly,' said Túrin. 'My heart is grim. But if you fear that I am a spy of the North or the East, then you have learned little more wisdom than you had long ago, Sador Labadal.'

The old man eyed him agape; then trembling he spoke. 'Come outside! It is colder, but safer. You speak too loud, and I too much, for an Easterling's hall.'

When they were come into the court he clutched at Túrin's cloak. 'Long ago you dwelt in that house, you say. Lord Túrin, why have you come back? My eyes are opened, and my ears at last: you have the voice of your father. But young Túrin alone ever gave me that name, Labadal. He meant no ill: we were merry friends in those days. What does he seek here now? Few are we left; and we are old and weaponless. Happier are those in the Great Mound.'

'I did not come with thought of battle,' said Túrin, 'though your words have waked the thought in me now, Labadal. But it must wait. I came seeking the Lady Morwen and Niënor. What can you tell me, and swiftly?'

'Little, lord,' said Sador. 'They went away secretly. It was whispered among us that they were summoned by the Lord Túrin; for we did not doubt that he had grown great in the years, a king or a lord in some south country. But it seems this is not so.'

'It is not,' answered Túrin. 'A lord I was in a south country, though now I am a vagabond. But I did not summon them.'

'Then I know not what to tell you,' said Sador. 'But the Lady Aerin will know, I doubt not. She knew all the counsel of your mother.'

'How can I come to her?'

'That I know not. It would cost her much pain were she caught whispering at a door with a wandering wretch of the downtrod people, even could any message call her forth. And such a beggarman as you are will not walk far up the hall towards the high board before the Easterlings seize him and beat him, or worse.'

Then in anger Túrin cried: 'May I not walk up Brodda's hall, and will they beat me? Come, and see!'

Thereupon he went into the hall, and cast back his hood, and thrusting aside all in his path he strode towards the board where sat the master of the house and his wife, and other Easterling lords. Then some rose to seize him, but he flung them to the ground, and cried: 'Does no-one rule this house, or is it an Orc-hold rather? Where is the master?'

Then Brodda rose in wrath. 'I rule this house,' said he. But before he could say more, Túrin said: 'Then you have not yet learned the courtesy that was in this land before you. Is it now the manner of men to let lackeys mishandle the kinsmen of their wives? Such am I, and I have an errand to the Lady Aerin. Shall I come freely, or shall I come as I will?'

'Come,' said Brodda, scowling; but Aerin turned pale. Then Túrin strode to the high board and stood before it, and bowed. 'Your pardon, Lady Aerin,' he said, 'that I break in upon you thus; but my errand is urgent and has brought me far. I seek Morwen, Lady of Dor-lómin, and Niënor her daughter. But her house is empty and plundered. What can you tell me?'

'Nothing,' said Aerin in great fear, for Brodda watched her narrowly.

'That I do not believe,' said Túrin.

Then Brodda sprang forth, and he was red with drunken rage. 'No more!' he cried. 'Shall my wife be gainsaid before me, by a beggar that speaks the serf-tongue? There is no Lady of Dor-lómin. But as for Morwen, she was of the thrall-folk, and has fled as thralls will. Do you likewise, and swiftly, or I will have you hung on a tree!'

Then Túrin leapt at him, and drew his black sword, and seized Brodda by the hair and laid back his head. 'Let no-one stir,' said he, 'or this head will leave its shoulders! Lady Aerin, I would beg your pardon once more, if I thought that this churl had ever done you anything but wrong. But speak now, and do not deny me! Am I not Túrin, Lord of Dor-lómin? Shall I command you?'

'Command me,' she said.

'Who plundered the house of Morwen?'

‘Brodda,’ she answered.

‘When did she flee, and whither?’

‘A year and three months gone,’ said Aerin. ‘Master Brodda and others of the Incomers of the East hereabout oppressed her sorely. Long ago she was bidden to the Hidden Kingdom; and she went forth at last. For the lands between were then free of evil for a while, because of the prowess of the Blacksword of the south country, it is said; but that is now ended. She looked to find her son there awaiting her. But if you are he, then I fear that all has gone awry.’

Then Túrin laughed bitterly. ‘Awry, awry?’ he cried. ‘Yes, ever awry: as crooked as Morgoth!’ And suddenly a black wrath shook him; for his eyes were opened, and the spell of Glaurung loosed its last threads, and he knew the lies with which he had been cheated. ‘Have I been cozened, that I might come and die here dishonoured, who might at least have ended valiantly before the Doors of Nargothrond?’ And out of the night about the hall it seemed to him that he heard the cries of Finduilas.

‘Not first will I die here!’ he cried. And he seized Brodda, and with the strength of his great anguish and wrath he lifted him on high and shook him, as if he were a dog. ‘Morwen of the thrall-folk, did you say? You son of dastards, thief, slave of slaves!’ Thereupon he flung Brodda head foremost across his own table, full in the face of an Easterling that rose to assail Túrin. In that fall Brodda’s neck was broken; and Túrin leapt after his cast and slew three more that cowered there, for they were caught weaponless. There was tumult in the hall. The Easterlings that sat there would have come against Túrin, but many others were gathered there who were of the elder people of Dor-lómin: long had they been tame servants, but now they rose with shouts of rebellion. Soon there was great fighting in the hall, and though the thralls had but meat-knives and such things as they could snatch up against daggers and swords, many were quickly slain on either hand, before Túrin leapt down among them and slew the last of the Easterlings that remained in the hall.

Then he rested, leaning against a pillar, and the fire of his rage was as ashes. But old Sador crept up to him and clutched him about the knees, for he was wounded to the death. ‘Thrice seven years and more, it was long to wait for this hour,’ he said. ‘But now go, go, lord! Go, and do not come back, unless with greater strength. They will raise the land against you. Many have run from the hall. Go, or you will end here. Farewell!’ Then he slipped down and died.

‘He speaks with the truth of death,’ said Aerin. ‘You have learned what you would. Now go swiftly! But go first to Morwen and comfort her, or I will hold all the wrack you have wrought here hard to forgive. For ill though my life was, you have brought death to me with your violence. The Incomers will avenge this night on all that were here. Rash are your deeds, son of Húrin, as if you were still but the child that I knew.’

‘And faint heart is yours, Aerin Indor’s daughter, as it was when I called you aunt, and a rough dog frightened you,’ said Túrin. ‘You were made for a kinder world. But come away! I will bring you to Morwen.’

‘The snow lies on the land, but deeper upon my head,’ she answered. ‘I should die as soon in the wild with you, as with the brute Easterlings. You cannot mend what you have done. Go! To stay will make all the worse, and rob Morwen to no purpose. Go, I beg you!’

Then Túrin bowed low to her, and turned, and left the hall of Brodda; but all the rebels that had the strength followed him. They fled towards the mountains, for some among them knew well the ways of the wild, and they blessed the snow that fell behind them and covered their trail. Thus though soon the hunt was up, with many men and dogs and braying of horses, they escaped south into the hills. Then looking back they saw a red light far off in the land they had left.

‘They have fired the hall,’ said Túrin. ‘To what purpose is that?’

‘They? No, lord: she, I guess,’ said one, Asgon by name. ‘Many a man of arms misreads patience and quiet. She did much good among us at much cost. Her heart was not faint, and patience will break at the last.’

Now some of the hardiest that could endure the winter stayed with Túrin and led him by strange paths to a refuge in the mountains, a cave known to outlaws and runagates; and some store of food was hidden there.



There they waited until the snow ceased, and they gave him food and took him to a pass little used that led south to Sirion's Vale, where the snow had not come. On the downward path they parted.

'Farewell now, Lord of Dor-lómin,' said Asgon. 'But do not forget us. We shall be hunted men now; and the Wolf-folk will be crueller because of your coming. Therefore go, and do not return, unless you come with strength to deliver us. Farewell!'



## Chapter XIII: The Coming Of Túrin Into Brethil

Now Túrin went down towards Sirion, and he was torn in mind. For it seemed to him that whereas before he had two bitter choices, now there were three, and his oppressed people called him, upon whom he had brought only increase of woe. This comfort only he had: that beyond doubt Morwen and Niënor had come long since to Doriath, and only by the prowess of the Blacksword of Nargothrond had their road been made safe. And he said in his thought: 'Where else better might I have bestowed them, had I come indeed sooner? If the Girdle of Melian be broken, then all is ended. Nay, it is better as things be; for by my wrath and rash deeds I cast a shadow wherever I dwell. Let Melian keep them! And I will leave them in peace unshadowed for a while.'

But too late now Túrin sought for Finduilas, roaming the woods under the eaves of Ered Wethrin, wild and wary as a beast; and he waylaid all the roads that went north to the Pass of Sirion. Too late. For all trails had been washed away by the rains and the snows. But thus it was that Túrin passing down Teiglin came upon some of the People of Haleth from the Forest of Brethil. They were dwindled now by war to a small people, and dwelt for the most part secretly within a stockade upon Amon Obel deep in the forest. Ephel Brandir that place was named; for Brandir son of Handir was now their lord, since his father was slain. And Brandir was no man of war, being lamed by a leg broken in a misadventure in childhood; and he was moreover gentle in mood, loving wood rather than metal, and the knowledge of things that grow in the earth rather than other lore.

But some of the woodmen still hunted the Orcs on their borders; and thus it was that as Túrin came thither he heard the sound of an affray. He hastened towards it, and coming warily through the trees he saw a small band of men surrounded by Orcs. They defended themselves desperately, with their backs to a knot of trees that grew apart in a glade; but the Orcs were in great number, and they had little hope of escape, unless help came. Therefore, out of sight in the underwood, Túrin made a great noise of stamping and crashing, and then he cried in a loud voice, as if leading many men: 'Ha! Here we find them! Follow me all! Out now, and slay!'

At that many of the Orcs looked back in dismay, and then out came Túrin leaping, waving as if to men behind, and the edges of Gurthang flickered like flame in his hand. Too well was that blade known to the Orcs, and even before he sprang among them many scattered and fled. Then the woodmen ran to join him, and together they hunted their foes into the river: few came across. At last they halted on the bank, and Dorlas, leader of the woodmen, said: 'You are swift in the hunt, lord; but your men are slow to follow.'

'Nay,' said Túrin, 'we all run together as one man, and will not be parted.'

Then the Men of Brethil laughed, and said: 'Well, one such is worth many. And we owe you great thanks. But who are you, and what do you here?'

'I do but follow my trade, which is Orc-slaying,' said Túrin. 'And I dwell where my trade is. I am Wildman of the Woods.'

'Then come and dwell with us,' said they. 'For we dwell in the woods, and we have need of such craftsmen. You would be welcome!'

Then Túrin looked at them strangely, and said: 'Are there then any left who will suffer me to darken their doors? But, friends, I have still a grievous errand: to find Finduilas, daughter of Orodreth of Nargothrond, or at least to learn news of her. Alas! Many weeks is it since she was taken from Nargothrond, but still I must go seeking.'

Then they looked on him with pity, and Dorlas said: 'Seek no more. For an Orc-host came up from Nargothrond towards the Crossings of Teiglin, and we had long warning of it: it marched very slow, because of the number of captives that were led. Then we thought to deal our small stroke in the war, and we ambushed the

Orcs with all the bowmen we could muster, and hoped to save some of the prisoners. But alas! as soon as they were assailed the foul Orcs slew first the women among their captives; and the daughter of Orodreth they fastened to a tree with a spear.'

Túrin stood as one mortally stricken. 'How do you know this?' he said.

'Because she spoke to me, before she died,' said Dorlas. 'She looked upon us as though seeking one whom she had expected, and she said: "Mormegil. Tell the Mormegil that Finduilas is here." She said no more. But because of her latest words we laid her where she died. She lies in a mound beside Teiglin. Yes, it is a month now ago.'

'Bring me there,' said Túrin; and they led him to a hillock by the Crossings of Teiglin. There he laid himself down, and a darkness fell on him, so that they thought he was dead. But Dorlas looked down at him as he lay, and then he turned to his men and said: 'Too late! This is a piteous chance. But see: here lies the Mormegil himself, the great captain of Nargothrond. By his sword we should have known him, as did the Orcs.' For the fame of the Black Sword of the South had gone far and wide, even into the deeps of the wood.

Now therefore they lifted him with reverence and bore him to Ephel Brandir; and Brandir coming to meet them wondered at the bier that they bore. Then drawing back the coverlet he looked on the face of Túrin son of Húrin; and a dark shadow fell on his heart. 'O cruel Men of Haleth!' he cried. 'Why did you hold back death from this man? With great labour you have brought hither the last bane of our people.'

But the woodmen said: 'Nay, it is the Mormegil of Nargothrond, a mighty Orc-slayer, and he shall be a great help to us, if he lives. And were it not so, should we leave a man woe-stricken to lie as carrion by the way?'

'You should not indeed,' said Brandir. 'Doom willed it not so.' And he took Túrin into his house and tended him with care.

But when at last Túrin shook off the darkness, spring was returning; and he awoke and saw sun on the green buds. Then the courage of the House of Hador awoke in him also, and he arose and said in his heart: 'All my deeds and past days were dark and full of evil. But a new day is come. Here I will stay at peace, and renounce name and kin; and so I will put my shadow behind me, or at the least not lay it upon those that I love.'

Therefore he took a new name, calling himself Turambar, which in the High-elven speech signified Master of Doom; and he dwelt among the woodmen, and was loved by them, and he charged them to forget his name of old, and to count him as one born in Brethil. Yet with the change of a name he could not change wholly his temper, nor forget his old griefs against the servants of Morgoth; and he would go hunting the Orcs with a few of the same mind, though this was displeasing to Brandir. For he hoped rather to preserve his people by silence and secrecy.

'The Mormegil is no more,' said he, 'yet have a care lest the valour of Turambar bring a like vengeance on Brethil!'

Therefore Turambar laid his black sword by, and took it no more to battle, and wielded rather the bow and the spear. But he would not suffer the Orcs to use the Crossings of Teiglin or draw near the mound where Finduilas was laid. Haudh-en-Elleth it was named, the Mound of the Elf-maid, and soon the Orcs learned to dread that place, and shunned it. And Dorlas said to Turambar: 'You have renounced the name, but the Blacksword you are still; and does not rumour say truly that he was the son of Húrin of Dor-lómin, lord of the House of Hador?'

And Turambar answered: 'So I have heard. But publish it not, I beg you, as you are my friend.'



## Chapter XIV: The Journey Of Morwen And Niënor To Nargothrond

When the Fell Winter withdrew new tidings of Nargothrond came to Doriath. For some that escaped from the sack, and had survived the winter in the wild, came at last seeking refuge with Thingol, and the march-wards brought them to the King. And some said that all the enemy had withdrawn northwards, and others that Glaurung abode still in the halls of Felagund; and some said that the Mormegil was slain, and others that he was cast under a spell by the Dragon and dwelt there yet, as one changed to stone. But all declared that it was known in Nargothrond ere the end that the Blacksword was none other than Túrin son of Húrin of Dor-lómin.

Then great was the fear and sorrow of Morwen and of Niënor; and Morwen said: 'Such doubt is the very work of Morgoth! May we not learn the truth, and know surely the worst that we must endure?'

Now Thingol himself desired greatly to know more of the fate of Nargothrond, and had in mind already the sending out of some that might go warily thither, but he believed that Túrin was indeed slain or beyond rescue, and he was loath to see the hour when Morwen should know this clearly. Therefore he said to her: 'This is a perilous matter, Lady of Dor-lómin, and must be pondered. Such doubt may in truth be the work of Morgoth, to draw us on to some rashness.'

But Morwen being distraught cried: 'Rashness, lord! If my son lurks in the woods hungry, if he lingers in bonds, if his body lies unburied, then I would be rash. I would lose no hour to go to seek him.'

'Lady of Dor-lómin,' said Thingol, 'that surely the son of Húrin would not desire. Here would he think you better bestowed than in any other land that remains: in the keeping of Melian. For Húrin's sake and Túrin's I would not have you wander abroad in the black peril of these days.'

'You did not hold Túrin from peril, but me you will hold from him,' cried Morwen. 'In the keeping of Melian! Yes, a prisoner of the Girdle! Long did I hold back before I entered it, and now I rue it.'

'Nay, if you speak so, Lady of Dor-lómin,' said Thingol, 'know this: the Girdle is open. Free you came hither: free you shall stay—or go.'

Then Melian, who had remained silent, spoke: 'Go not hence, Morwen. A true word you said: this doubt is of Morgoth. If you go, you go at his will.'

'Fear of Morgoth will not withhold me from the call of my kin,' Morwen answered. 'But if you fear for me, lord, then lend me some of your people.'

'I command you not,' said Thingol. 'But my people are my own to command. I will send them at my own advice.'

Then Morwen said no more, but wept; and she left the presence of the King. Thingol was heavy-hearted, for it seemed to him that the mood of Morwen was fey; and he asked Melian whether she would not restrain her by her power. 'Against the coming in of evil I may do much,' she answered. 'But against the going out of those who will go, nothing. That is your part. If she is to be held here, you must hold her with strength. Yet maybe thus you will overthrow her mind.'

Now Morwen went to Niënor, and said: 'Farewell, daughter of Húrin. I go to seek my son, or true tidings of him, since none here will do aught, but tarry till too late. Await me here until haply I return.' Then Niënor in dread and distress would restrain her, but Morwen answered nothing, and went to her chamber; and when morning came she had taken horse and gone.

Now Thingol had commanded that none should stay her, or seem to waylay her. But as soon as she went forth, he gathered a company of the hardiest and most skilled of his march-wards, and he set Mablung in charge.

‘Follow now speedily,’ he said, ‘yet let her not be aware of you. But when she is come into the wild, if danger threatens, then show yourselves; and if she will not return, then guard her as you may. But some of you I would have go forward as far as you can, and learn all that you may.’

Thus it was that Thingol sent out a larger company than he had at first intended, and there were ten riders among them with spare horses. They followed after Morwen; and she went south through Region, and so came to the shores of Sirion above the Twilit Meres; and there she halted, for Sirion was wide and swift, and she did not know the way. Therefore now the guards must needs reveal themselves; and Morwen said: ‘Will Thingol stay me? Or late does he send me the help he denied?’

‘Both,’ answered Mablung. ‘Will you not return?’

‘No,’ she said.

‘Then I must help you,’ said Mablung, ‘though it is against my own will. Wide and deep here is Sirion, and perilous to swim for beast or man.’

‘Then bring me over by whatever way the Elven-folk are used to cross,’ said Morwen; ‘or else I will try the swimming.’

Therefore Mablung led her to the Twilit Meres. There amid creeks and reeds ferries were kept hidden and guarded on the east shore; for by that way messengers would pass to and fro between Thingol and his kin in Nargothrond. Now they waited until the starlit night was late, and they passed over in the white mists before the dawn. And even as the sun rose red beyond the Blue Mountains, and a strong morning-wind blew and scattered the mists, the guards went up onto the west shore, and left the Girdle of Melian. Tall Elves of Doriath they were, grey-clad, and cloaked over their mail. Morwen from the ferry watched them as they passed silently, and then suddenly she gave a cry, and pointed to the last of the company that went by.

‘Whence came he?’ she said. ‘Thrice ten you came to me. Thrice ten and one you go ashore!’

Then the others turned, and saw that the sun shone upon a head of gold: for it was Niënor, and her hood was blown back by the wind. Thus it was revealed that she had followed the company, and joined them in the dark before they crossed the river. They were dismayed, and none more than Morwen. ‘Go back! Go back! I command you!’ she cried.

‘If the wife of Húrin can go forth against all counsel at the call of kindred,’ said Niënor, ‘then so also can Húrin’s daughter. Mourning you named me, but I will not mourn alone, for father, brother, and mother. But of these you only have I known, and above all do I love. And nothing that you fear not do I fear.’

In truth little fear was seen in her face or her bearing. Tall and strong she seemed; for of great stature were those of Hador’s house, and thus clad in Elvish raiment she matched well with the guards, being smaller only than the greatest among them.

‘What would you do?’ said Morwen.

‘Go where you go,’ said Niënor. ‘This choice indeed I bring. To lead me back and bestow me safely in the keeping of Melian; for it is not wise to refuse her counsel. Or to know that I shall go into peril, if you go.’ For in truth Niënor had come most in hope that for fear and love of her her mother would turn back; and Morwen was indeed torn in mind.

‘It is one thing to refuse counsel,’ said she. ‘It is another to refuse the command of your mother. Go now back!’

‘No,’ said Niënor. ‘It is long since I was a child. I have a will and wisdom of my own, though until now it has not crossed yours. I go with you. Rather to Doriath, for reverence of those that rule it; but if not, then westward. Indeed, if either of us should go on, it is I rather, in the fullness of strength.’

Then Morwen saw in the grey eyes of Niënor the steadfastness of Húrin; and she wavered, but she could not overcome her pride, and would not (save the fair words) seem thus to be led back by her daughter, as one old and doting. ‘I go on, as I have purposed,’ she said. ‘Come you also, but against my will.’

‘Let it be so,’ said Niënor.

Then Mablung said to his company: 'Truly, it is by lack of counsel not of courage that Húrin's kin bring woe to others! Even so with Túrin; yet not so with his fathers. But now they are all fey, and I like it not. More do I dread this errand of the King than the hunting of the Wolf. What is to be done?'

But Morwen, who had come ashore and now drew near, heard the last of his words. 'Do as you are bidden by the King,' said she. 'Seek for tidings of Nargothrond, and of Túrin. For this end are we all come together.'

'It is yet a long way and dangerous,' said Mablung. 'If you go further, you shall both be horsed and go among the riders, and stray no foot from them.'

Thus it was that with the full day they set forth, and passed slowly and warily out of the country of reeds and low willows, and came to the grey woods that covered much of the southern plain before Nargothrond. All day they went due west, and saw nothing but desolation, and heard nothing; for the lands were silent, and it seemed to Mablung that a present fear lay upon them. That same way had Beren trodden years before, and then the woods were filled with the hidden eyes of the hunters; but now all the people of Narog were gone, and the Orcs, it seemed, were not yet roaming so far southward. That night they encamped in the grey wood without fire or light.

The next two days they went on, and by evening of the third day from Sirion they were come across the plain and were drawing near to the east shores of Narog. Then so great an unease came upon Mablung that he begged Morwen to go no further. But she laughed, and said: 'You will be glad soon to be rid of us, as is likely enough. But you must endure us a little longer. We are come too near now to turn back in fear.'

Then Mablung cried: 'Fey are you both, and foolhardy. You help not but hinder any gathering of news. Now hear me! I was bidden not to stay you with strength; but I was bidden also to guard you, as I might. In this pass, one only can I do. And I will guard you. Tomorrow I will lead you to Amon Ethir, the Spyhill, which is near; and there you shall sit under guard, and go no further while I command here.' Now Amon Ethir was a mound as great as a hill that long ago Felagund had caused to be raised with great labour in the plain before his Doors, a league east of Narog. It was tree-grown, save on the summit, whence a wide view might be had all ways of the roads that led to the great bridge of Nargothrond and of the lands round about. To this hill they came late in the morning and climbed up from the east. Then looking out towards the High Faroth, brown and bare beyond the river, Mablung saw with elven-sight the terraces of Nargothrond on the steep west bank, and as a small black hole in the hill-wall the gaping Doors of Felagund. But he could hear no sound, and he could see no sign of any foe, nor any token of the Dragon, save the burning about the Doors that he had wrought in the day of the sack. All lay quiet under a pale sun.

Now therefore Mablung, as he had said, commanded his ten riders to keep Morwen and Niënor on the hill-top, and not to stir thence until he returned, unless some great peril arose: and if that befell, the riders should set Morwen and Niënor in their midst and flee as swiftly as they might, east-away towards Doriath, sending one ahead to bring news and seek aid.

Then Mablung took the other score of his company, and they crept down from the hill; and then passing into the fields westward, where trees were few, they scattered and made each his way, daring but stealthy, to the banks of Narog. Mablung himself took the middle way, going towards the bridge, and so came to its hither end and found it all broken down; and the deep-cloven river, running wild after rains far away northward, was foaming and roaring among the fallen stones.

But Glaurung lay there, just within the shadow of the great passage that led inward from the ruined Doors, and he had long been aware of the spies, though few other eyes in Middle-earth would have discerned them. But the glance of his fell eyes was keener than that of the eagles, and outreached the far sight of the Elves; and indeed he knew also that some remained behind and sat upon the bare top of Amon Ethir.

Thus, even as Mablung crept among the rocks, seeking whether he could ford the wild river upon the fallen stones of the bridge, suddenly Glaurung came forth with a great blast of fire, and crawled down into the stream. Then straightway there was a vast hissing and huge vapours arose, and Mablung and his followers that lurked near were engulfed in a blinding steam and foul stench; and the most fled as best they could guess towards the Spyhill. But as Glaurung was passing over Narog, Mablung drew aside and lay under a rock, and remained; for

it seemed to him that he had an errand yet to do. He knew now indeed that Glaurung abode in Nargothrond, but he was bidden also to learn the truth concerning Húrin's son, if he might; and in the stoutness of his heart, therefore, he purposed to cross the river, as soon as Glaurung was gone, and search the halls of Felagund. For he thought that all had been done that could be for the keeping of Morwen and Niënor: the coming of Glaurung would be marked, and even now the riders should be speeding towards Doriath.

Glaurung therefore passed Mablung by, a vast shape in the mist; and he went swiftly, for he was a mighty Worm, and yet lithe. Then Mablung behind him forded Narog in great peril; but the watchers upon Amon Ethir beheld the issuing of the Dragon, and were dismayed. At once they bade Morwen and Niënor mount, without debate, and prepared to flee eastward as they were bidden. But even as they came down from the hill into the plain, an ill wind blew the great vapours upon them, bringing a stench that no horses would endure. Then, blinded by the fog and in mad terror of the dragon-reek, the horses soon became ungovernable, and went wildly this way and that; and the guards were dispersed, and were dashed against trees to great hurt, or sought vainly one for another. The neighing of the horses and the cries of the riders came to the ears of Glaurung; and he was well pleased.

One of the Elf-riders, striving with his horse in the fog, saw suddenly the Lady Morwen passing near, a grey wraith upon a mad steed, but she vanished in the mist, crying *Niënor*, and they saw her no more.

But when the blind terror came upon the riders, Niënor's horse, running wild, stumbled, and she was thrown. Falling softly into grass she was unhurt; but when she got to her feet she was alone: lost in the mist without horse or companion. Her heart did not fail her, and she took thought; and it seemed to her vain to go towards this cry or that, for cries were all about her, but growing ever fainter. Better it seemed to her in such case to seek again for the hill: thither doubtless Mablung would come before he went away, if only to be sure that none of his company had remained there.

Therefore walking at guess she found the hill, which was indeed close at hand, by the rising of the ground before her feet; and slowly she climbed the path that led up from the east. And as she climbed so the fog grew thinner, until she came at last out into the sunlight on the bare summit. Then she stepped forward and looked westward. And there right before her was the great head of Glaurung, who had even then crept up from the other side; and before she was aware her eyes had looked in the fell spirit of his eyes, and they were terrible, being filled with the fell spirit of Morgoth, his master.

Strong was the will and heart of Niënor, and she strove against Glaurung; but he put forth his power against her. 'What seek you here?' he said.

And constrained to answer she said: 'I do but seek one Túrin that dwelt here a while. But he is dead, maybe.'

'I know not,' said Glaurung. 'He was left here to defend the women and weaklings; but when I came he deserted them and fled. A boaster but a craven, it seems. Why seek you such a one?'

'You lie,' said Niënor. 'The children of Húrin at least are not craven. We fear you not.'

Then Glaurung laughed, for so was Húrin's daughter revealed to his malice. 'Then you are fools, both you and your brother,' said he. 'And your boast shall be made vain. For I am Glaurung!'

Then he drew her eyes into his, and her will swooned. And it seemed to her that the sun sickened and all became dim about her; and slowly a great darkness drew down on her and in that darkness there was emptiness; she knew nothing, and heard nothing, and remembered nothing.

Long Mablung explored the halls of Nargothrond, as well he might for the darkness and the stench; but he found no living thing there: nothing stirred among the bones, and none answered his cries. At last, being oppressed by the horror of the place, and fearing the return of Glaurung, he came back to the Doors. The sun was sinking west, and the shadows of the Faroth behind lay dark on the terraces and the wild river below; but away beneath Amon Ethir he descried, as it seemed, the evil shape of the Dragon. Harder and more perilous was the return over Narog in such haste and fear; and scarcely had he reached the east shore and crept aside under the bank when Glaurung drew nigh. But he was slow now and stealthy; for all the fires in him were burned low: great power had gone out of him, and he would rest and sleep in the dark. Thus he writhed through the water and slunk up to the Doors like a huge snake, ashen-grey, sliming the ground with his belly.

But he turned before he went in and looked back eastward, and there came from him the laughter of Morgoth, dim but horrible, as an echo of malice out of the black depths far away. And this voice, cold and low, came after: 'There you lie like a vole under the bank, Mablung the mighty! Ill do you run the errands of Thingol. Haste you now to the hill and see what is become of your charge!'

Then Glaurung passed into his lair, and the sun went down and grey evening came chill over the land. But Mablung hastened back to Amon Ethir, and as he climbed to the top the stars came out in the east. Against them he saw there standing, dark and still, a figure as it were an image of stone. Thus Niënor stood, and heard nothing that he said, and made him no answer. But when at last he took her hand, she stirred, and suffered him to lead her away; and while he held her she followed, but if he loosed her, she stood still.

Then great was Mablung's grief and bewilderment; but no other choice had he but to lead Niënor so upon the long eastward way, without help or company. Thus they passed away, walking like dreamers, out into the night-shadowed plain. And when morning returned Niënor stumbled and fell, and lay still; and Mablung sat beside her in despair.

'Not for nothing did I dread this errand,' he said. 'For it will be my last, it seems. With this unlucky child of Men I shall perish in the wilderness, and my name shall be held in scorn in Doriath: if any tidings indeed are ever heard of our fate. All else doubtless are slain, and she alone spared, but not in mercy.'

Thus they were found by three of the company that had fled from Narog at the coming of Glaurung, and after much wandering, when the mist had passed, went back to the hill; and finding it empty they had begun to seek their way home. Hope then returned to Mablung; and they went on now together steering northward and eastward, for there was no road back into Doriath in the south, and since the fall of Nargothrond the ferry-wards were forbidden to set any across save those that came from within.

Slow was their journey, as for those that lead a weary child. But ever as they passed further from Nargothrond and drew nearer to Doriath, so little by little strength returned to Niënor, and she would walk hour by hour obediently, led by the hand. Yet her wide eyes saw nothing, and her ears heard no words, and her lips spoke no words.

And now at length after many days they came nigh to the west border of Doriath, somewhat south of the Teiglin; for they intended to pass the fences of the little land of Thingol beyond Sirion and so come to the guarded bridge near the inflowing of Esgalduin. There a while they halted; and they laid Niënor on a couch of grass, and she closed her eyes, as she had not yet done, and it seemed that she slept. Then the Elves rested also, and for very weariness were unheeding. Thus they were assailed at unawares by a band of orc-hunters, such as now roamed much in that region, as nigh to the fences of Doriath as they dared to go. In the midst of the affray suddenly Niënor leapt up from her couch, as one waking out of sleep to an alarm by night, and with a cry she sped away into the forest. Then the Orcs turned and gave chase, and the Elves after them. But a strange change had come upon Niënor and now she outran them all, flying like a deer among the trees with her hair streaming in the wind of her speed. The Orcs indeed Mablung and his companions swiftly overtook, and they slew them one and all, and hastened on. But by then Niënor had passed away like a wraith; and neither sight nor slot of her could they find, though they hunted far northward and searched for many days.

Then at last Mablung returned to Doriath bowed with grief and with shame. 'Choose you a new master of your hunters, lord,' he said to the King. 'For I am dishonoured.'

But Melian said: 'It is not so, Mablung. You did all that you could, and none other among the King's servants would have done so much. But by ill chance you were matched against a power too great for you, too great indeed for all that now dwell in Middle-earth.'

'I sent you to win tidings, and that you have done,' said Thingol. 'It is no fault of yours that those whom your tidings touch nearest are now beyond hearing. Grievous indeed is this end of all Húrin's kin, but it lies not at your door.'

For not only was Niënor now run witless into the wild, but Morwen also was lost. Neither then nor after did any certain news of her fate come to Doriath or to Dor-lómin. Nonetheless Mablung would not rest, and with a



small company he went into the wild and for three years wandered far, from Ered Wethrin even to the Mouths of Sirion, seeking for sign or tidings of the lost.



## Chapter XV: Niënor In Brethil

But as for Niënor, she ran on into the wood, hearing the shouts of pursuit come behind; and her clothing she tore off, casting away her garments one by one as she fled, until she went naked; and all that day still she ran, as a beast that is hunted to heart-bursting, and dare not stay or draw breath. But at evening suddenly her madness passed. She stood still a moment as in wonder, and then, in a swoon of utter weariness, she fell as one stricken down into a deep brake of fern. And there amid the old bracken and the swift fronds of spring she lay and slept, heedless of all.

In the morning she woke, and rejoiced in the light as one first called to life; and all things that she saw seemed to her new and strange, and she had no names for them. For behind her lay only an empty darkness, through which came no memory of anything she had ever known, nor any echo of any word. A shadow of fear only she remembered, and so she was wary, and sought ever for hidings: she would climb into trees or slip into thickets, swift as a squirrel or fox, if any sound or shadow frightened her; and thence she would peer long through the leaves with shy eyes, before she went on again.

Thus going forward in the way she first ran, she came to the river Teiglin, and stayed her thirst; but no food she found, nor knew how to seek it, and she was famished and cold. And since the trees across the water seemed closer and darker (as indeed they were, being the eaves of Brethil forest) she crossed over at last, and came to a green mound and there cast herself down: for she was spent, and it seemed to her that the darkness that lay behind her was overtaking her again, and the sun going dark.

But indeed it was a black storm that came up out of the South, laden with lightning and great rain; and she lay there cowering in terror of the thunder, and the dark rain smote her nakedness, and she watched without words as a wild thing that is trapped.

Now it chanced that some of the woodmen of Brethil came by in that hour from a foray against Orcs, hastening over the Crossings of Teiglin to a shelter that was near; and there came a great flash of lightning, so that the Haudh-en-Elleth was lit as with a white flame. Then Turambar who led the men started back and covered his eyes, and trembled; for it seemed that he saw the wraith of a slain maiden that lay on the grave of Finduilas.

But one of the men ran to the mound, and called to him: 'Hither, lord! Here is a young woman lying, and she lives!' and Turambar coming lifted her, and the water dripped from her drenched hair, but she closed her eyes and quivered and strove no more. Then marvelling that she lay thus naked Turambar cast his cloak about her and bore her away to the hunters' lodge in the woods. There they lit a fire and wrapped coverlets about her, and she opened her eyes and looked upon them; and when her glance fell on Turambar a light came in her face and she put out a hand towards him, for it seemed to her that she had found at last something that she had sought in the darkness, and she was comforted. But Turambar took her hand, and smiled, and said: 'Now, lady, will you not tell us your name and your kin, and what evil has befallen you?'

Then she shook her head, and said nothing, but began to weep; and they troubled her no more, until she had eaten hungrily of what food they could give her. And when she had eaten she sighed, and laid her hand again in Turambar's; and he said: 'With us you are safe. Here you may rest this night, and in the morning we will lead you to our homes up in the high forest. But we would know your name and your kin, so that we may find them, maybe, and bring them news of you. Will you not tell us?' But again she made no answer, and wept.

'Do not be troubled!' said Turambar. 'Maybe the tale is too sad yet to tell. But I will give you a name, and call you Níniel, Maid of Tears.' And at that name she looked up, and she shook her head, but said: 'Níniel.' And that was the first word that she spoke after her darkness, and it was her name among the woodmen ever after.

In the morning they bore Níniel towards Ephel Brandir, and the road went steeply up until it came to a place where it must cross the tumbling stream of Celebros. There a bridge of wood had been built, and below it the stream went over a lip of worn stone, and fell down by many foaming steps into a rocky bowl far below; and all the air was filled with spray like rain. There was a wide green sward at the head of the falls, and birches grew about it, but over the bridge there was a wide view towards the ravines of Teiglin some two miles to the west. There the air was ever cool, and there wayfarers in summer would rest and drink of the cold water. Dimrost, the Rainy Stair, those falls were called, but after that day Nen Girith, the Shuddering Water; for Turambar and his men halted there, but as soon as Níniel came to that place she grew cold and shivered, and they could not warm her or comfort her. Therefore they hastened on their way; but before they came to Ephel Brandir Níniel was wandering in a fever.

Long she lay in her sickness, and Brandir used all his skill in her healing, and the wives of the woodmen watched over her by night and by day. But only when Turambar stayed near her would she lie at peace, or sleep without moaning; and this thing all marked that watched her: throughout all her fever, though often she was much troubled, she murmured never a word in any tongue of Elves or of Men. And when health slowly returned to her, and she waked, and began to eat again, then as with a child the women of Brethil must teach her to speak, word by word. But in this learning she was quick and took great delight, as one that finds again treasures, great and small, that were mislaid; and when at length she had learned enough to speak with her friends she would say: 'What is the name of this thing? For in my darkness I lost it.' And when she was able to go about again, she would seek the house of Brandir; for she was most eager to learn the names of all living things, and he knew much of such matters; and they would walk together in the gardens and the glades.

Then Brandir grew to love her; and when she grew strong she would lend him her arm for his lameness, and she called him her brother. But to Turambar her heart was given, and only at his coming would she smile, and only when he spoke gaily would she laugh.

One evening of the golden autumn they sat together, and the sun set the hillside and the houses of Ephel Brandir aglow, and there was a deep quiet. Then Níniel said to him: 'Of all things I have now asked the name, save you. What are you called?'

'Turambar,' he answered.

Then she paused as if listening for some echo; but she said: 'And what does that say, or is it just the name for you alone?'

'It means,' said he, 'Master of the Dark Shadow. For I also, Níniel, had my darkness, in which dear things were lost; but now I have overcome it, I deem.'

'And did you also flee from it, running, until you came to these fair woods?' she said. 'And when did you escape, Turambar?'

'Yes,' he answered. 'I fled for many years. And I escaped when you did so. For it was dark when you came, Níniel, but ever since it has been light. And it seems to me that what I long sought in vain has come to me.' And as he went back to his house in the twilight, he said to himself: 'Haudh-en-Elleth! From the green mound she came. Is that a sign, and how shall I read it?'

Now that golden year waned and passed to a gentle winter, and there came another bright year. There was peace in Brethil, and the woodmen held themselves quiet and went not abroad, and they heard no tidings of the lands that lay about them. For the Orcs that at that time came southward to the dark reign of Glaurung, or were sent to spy on the borders of Doriath, shunned the Crossings of Teiglin, and passed westward far beyond the river.

And now Níniel was fully healed, and was grown fair and strong, and Turambar restrained himself no longer, but asked her in marriage. Then Níniel was glad; but when Brandir heard of it his heart was sick within him, and he said to her: 'Be not in haste! Think me not unkindly, if I counsel you to wait.'

'Nothing that you do is done unkindly,' she said. 'But why then do you give me such counsel, wise brother?'

‘Wise brother?’ he answered. ‘Lame brother, rather, unloved and unlovely. And I scarce know why. Yet there lies a shadow on this man, and I am afraid.’

‘There was a shadow,’ said Níniel, ‘for so he told me. But he has escaped from it, even as I. And is he not worthy of love? Though he now holds himself at peace, was he not once the greatest captain, from whom all our enemies would flee, if they saw him?’

‘Who told you this?’ said Brandir.

‘It was Dorlas,’ she said. ‘Does he not speak truth?’ ‘Truth indeed,’ said Brandir, but he was ill pleased, for Dorlas was chief of that party that wished for war on the Orcs. And yet he sought still for reasons to delay Níniel; and he said therefore: ‘The truth, but not the whole truth; for he was the Captain of Nargothrond, and came before out of the North, and was (it is said) son of Húrin of Dor-lómin of the warlike House of Hador.’ And Brandir, seeing the shadow that passed over her face at that name, misread her, and said more: ‘Indeed, Níniel, well may you think that such a one is likely ere long to go back to war, far from this land, maybe. And if so, how long will you endure it? Have a care, for I forebode that if Turambar goes again to battle, then not he but the Shadow shall have the mastery.’

‘Ill would I endure it,’ she answered; ‘but unwedded no better than wedded. And a wife, maybe, would better restrain him, and hold off the shadow.’ Nonetheless she was troubled by the words of Brandir, and she bade Turambar wait yet a while. And he wondered and was downcast; but when he learned from Níniel that Brandir had counselled her to wait he was ill pleased.

But when the next spring came he said to Níniel: ‘Time passes. We have waited, and now I will wait no longer. Do as your heart bids you, Níniel most dear, but see: this is the choice before me. I will go back now to war in the wild; or I will wed you, and go never to war again—save only to defend you, if some evil assails our home.’

Then she was glad indeed, and she plighted her troth, and at the mid-summer they were wedded; and the woodmen made a great feast, and they gave them a fair house which they had built for them upon Amon Obel. There they dwelt in happiness, but Brandir was troubled, and the shadow on his heart grew deeper.



## Chapter XVI: The Coming Of Glaurung

Now the power and malice of Glaurung grew apace, and he waxed fat, and he gathered Orcs to him, and ruled as a dragon-king, and all the realm of Nargothrond that had been was laid under him. And before this year ended, the third of Turambar's dwelling among the woodmen, he began to assail their land, which for a while had had peace; for indeed it was well known to Glaurung and to his Master that in Brethil there abode a remnant of free men, the last of the Three Houses to defy the power of the North. And this they would not brook; for it was the purpose of Morgoth to subdue all Beleriand and to search out its every corner, so that none in any hole or hiding might live that were not thrall to him. Thus, whether Glaurung guessed where Túrin was hidden, or whether (as some hold) he had indeed for that time escaped from the eye of Evil that pursued him, is of little matter. For in the end the counsels of Brandir must prove vain, and at the last two choices only could there be for Turambar: to sit deedless until he was found, driven forth like a rat; or to go forth soon to battle, and be revealed.

But when tidings of the coming of the Orcs were first brought to Ephel Brandir, he did not go forth and yielded to the prayers of Níniel. For she said: 'Our homes are not yet assailed, as your word was. It is said that the Orcs are not many. And Dorlas told me that before you came such affrays were not seldom, and the woodmen held them off.'

But the woodmen were worsted, for these Orcs were of a fell breed, fierce and cunning; and indeed they came with a purpose to invade the Forest of Brethil, not as before passing through its eaves on other errands, or hunting in small bands. Therefore Dorlas and his men were driven back with loss, and the Orcs came over Teiglin and roamed far into the woods. And Dorlas came to Turambar and showed his wounds, and he said: 'See, lord, now is the time of our need come upon us, after a false peace, even as I foreboded. Did you not ask to be counted one of our people, and no stranger? Is this peril not yours also? For our homes will not remain hidden, if the Orcs come further into our land.'

Therefore Turambar arose, and took up again his sword Gurthang, and he went to battle; and when the woodmen learned this they were greatly heartened, and they gathered to him, till he had a force of many hundreds. Then they hunted through the forest and slew all the Orcs that crept there, and hung them on the trees near the Crossings of Teiglin. And when a new host came against them, they trapped it, and being surprised both by the numbers of the woodmen and by the terror of the Black Sword that had returned, the Orcs were routed and slain in great number. Then the woodmen made great pyres and burned the bodies of the soldiers of Morgoth in heaps, and the smoke of their vengeance rose black into heaven, and the wind bore it away westward. But few living went back to Nargothrond with these tidings.

Then Glaurung was wrathful indeed; but for a while he lay still and pondered what he had heard. Thus the winter passed in peace, and men said: 'Great is the Black Sword of Brethil, for all our enemies are overcome.' And Níniel was comforted, and she rejoiced in the renown of Turambar; but he sat in thought, and he said in his heart: 'The die is cast. Now comes the test, in which my boast shall be made good, or fail utterly. I will flee no more. Turambar indeed I will be, and by my own will and prowess I will surmount my doom—or fall. But falling or riding, Glaurung at least I will slay.'

Nonetheless he was unquiet, and he sent out men of daring as scouts far afield. For indeed, though no word was said, he now ordered things as he would, as if he were lord of Brethil, and no man heeded Brandir.

Spring came hopefully, and men sang at their work. But in that spring Níniel conceived, and she became pale and wan, and all her happiness was dimmed. And soon after there came strange tidings, from the men that had gone abroad beyond Teiglin, that there was a great burning far out in the woods of the plain towards Nargothrond, and men wondered what it might be.

But before long there came more reports: that the fires drew ever northward, and that indeed Glaurung himself made them. For he had left Nargothrond, and was abroad again on some errand. Then the more foolish or more hopeful said: 'His army is destroyed, and now at last he sees wisdom, and is going back whence he came.' And others said: 'Let us hope that he will pass us by.' But Turambar had no such hope, and knew that Glaurung was coming to seek him. Therefore though he masked his mind because of Níniel, he pondered ever by day and by night what counsel he should take; and spring turned towards summer.

A day came when two men returned to Ephel Brandir in terror, for they had seen the Great Worm himself. 'In truth, lord,' they said, 'he draws now near to Teiglin, and turns not aside. He lay in the midst of a great burning, and the trees smoked about him. The stench of him is scarce to be endured. And all the long leagues back to Nargothrond his foul swath lies, we deem, in a line that swerves not, but points straight to us. What is to be done?'

'Little,' said Turambar, 'but to that little I have already given thought. The tidings you bring give me hope rather than dread; for if indeed he goes straight, as you say, and does not swerve, then I have some counsel for hardy hearts.'

The men wondered, for he said no more at that time; but they took heart from his steadfast bearing.

Now the river Teiglin ran in this manner. It flowed down from Ered Wethrin swift as Narog, but at first between low shores, until after the Crossings, gathering power from other streams, it clove a way through the feet of the highlands upon which stood the Forest of Brethil. Thereafter it ran in deep ravines, whose great sides were like walls of rock, but pent at the bottom the waters flowed with great force and noise. And right in the path of Glaurung there lay now one of these gorges, by no means the deepest, but the narrowest, just north of the inflow of Celebros. Therefore Turambar sent out three hardy men to keep watch from the brink on the movements of the Dragon; but he himself would ride to the high fall of Nen Girith, where news could find him swiftly, and whence he himself could look far across the lands.

But first he gathered the woodmen together in Ephel Brandir and spoke to them, saying: 'Men of Brethil, a deadly peril has come upon us, which only great hardihood shall turn aside. But in this matter numbers will avail little; we must use cunning, and hope for good fortune. If we went up against the Dragon with all our strength, as against an army of Orcs, we should but offer ourselves all to death, and so leave our wives and kin defenceless. Therefore I say that you should stay here, and prepare for flight. For if Glaurung comes, then you must abandon this place, and scatter far and wide; and so may some escape and live. For certainly, if he can, he will destroy it, and all that he espies; but afterwards he will not abide here. In Nargothrond lies all his treasure, and there are the deep halls in which he can lie safe, and grow.'

Then the men were dismayed, and were utterly downcast, for they trusted in Turambar, and had looked for more hopeful words. But he said: 'Nay, that is the worst. And it shall not come to pass, if my counsel and fortune are good. For I do not believe that this Dragon is unconquerable, though he grows greater in strength and malice with the years. I know somewhat of him. His power is rather in the evil spirit that dwells within him than in the might of his body, great though that be. For hear now this tale that I was told by some that fought in the year of the Nirnaeth, when I and most that hear me were children. In that field the Dwarves withstood him and Azaghâl of Belegost pricked him so deep that he fled back to Angband. But here is a thorn sharper and longer than the knife of Azaghâl.'

And Turambar swept Gurthang from its sheath and stabbed with it up above his head, and it seemed to those that looked on that a flame leapt from Turambar's hand many feet into the air. Then they gave a great cry: 'The Black Thorn of Brethil!'

'The Black Thorn of Brethil,' said Turambar: 'well may he fear it. For know this: it is the doom of this Dragon (and all his brood, it is said) that how great so ever be his armour of horn, harder than iron, below he must go with the belly of a snake. Therefore, Men of Brethil, I go now to seek the belly of Glaurung, by what means I may. Who will come with me? I need but a few with strong arms and stronger hearts.'

Then Dorlas stood forth and said: 'I will go with you, lord: for I would ever go forward rather than wait for a foe.'

But no others were so swift to the call, for the dread of Glaurung lay on them, and the tale of the scouts that had seen him had gone about and grown in the telling. Then Dorlas cried out: 'Hearken, Men of Brethil, it is now well seen that for the evil of our times the counsels of Brandir were vain. There is no escape by hiding. Will none of you take the place of the son of Handir, that the house of Haleth be not put to shame?' Thus Brandir, who sat indeed in the high-seat of the lord of the assembly, but unheeded, was scorned, and he was bitter in his heart; for Turambar did not rebuke Dorlas. But one Hunthor, Brandir's kinsman, arose and said: 'You do evilly, Dorlas, to speak thus to the shame of your lord, whose limbs by ill hazard cannot do as his heart would. Beware lest the contrary be seen in you at some turn! And how can it be said that his counsels were vain, when they were never taken? You, his liege, have ever set them at naught. I say to you that Glaurung comes now to us, as to Nargothrond before, because our deeds have betrayed us, as he feared. But since this woe is now come, with your leave, son of Handir, I will go on behalf of Haleth's house.'

Then Turambar said: 'Three is enough! You twain will I take. But, lord, I do not scorn you. See! We must go in great haste, and our task will need strong limbs. I deem that your place is with your people. For you are wise, and are a healer; and it may be that there will be great need of wisdom and healing ere long.' But these words, though fair spoken, did but embitter Brandir the more, and he said to Hunthor: 'Go then, but not with my leave. For a shadow lies on this man, and it will lead you to evil.'

Now Turambar was in haste to go; but when he came to Níniel to bid her farewell, she clung to him, weeping grievously. 'Go not forth, Turambar, I beg!' she said. 'Challenge not the shadow that you have fled from! Nay, nay, flee still, and take me with you, far away!'

'Níniel most dear,' he answered, 'we cannot flee further, you and I. We are hemmed in this land. And even should I go, deserting the people that befriended us, I could but take you forth into the houseless wild, to your death and the death of our child. A hundred leagues lie between us and any land that is yet beyond the reach of the Shadow. But take heart, Níniel. For I say to you: neither you nor I shall be slain by this Dragon, nor by any foes of the North.' Then Níniel ceased to weep and fell silent, but her kiss was cold as they parted.

Then Turambar with Dorlas and Hunthor went away hotfoot to Nen Girith, and when they came there the sun was westering and shadows were long; and the last two of the scouts were there awaiting them.

'You come not too soon, lord,' said they. 'For the Dragon has come on, and already when we left he had reached the brink of the Teiglin, and glared across the water. He moves ever by night, and we may look then for some stroke before tomorrow's dawn.'

Turambar looked out over the falls of Celebros and saw the sun going down to its setting, and black spires of smoke rising by the borders of the river. 'There is no time to lose,' he said; 'yet these tidings are good. For my fear was that he would seek about; and if he passed northward and came to the Crossings and so to the old road in the lowland, then hope would be dead. But now some fury of pride and malice drives him headlong.' But even as he spoke, he wondered, and mused in his mind: 'Or can it be that one so evil and fell shuns the Crossings, even as the Orcs? Haudh-en-Elleth! Does Finduilas lie still between me and my doom?'

Then he turned to his companions and said: 'This task now lies before us. We must wait yet a little, for too soon in this case were as ill as too late. When dusk falls, we must creep down, with all stealth, to Teiglin. But beware! For the ears of Glaurung are as keen as his eyes, and they are deadly. If we reach the river unmarked, we must then climb down into the ravine, and cross the water, and so come in the path that he will take when he stirs.'

'But how can he come forward so?' said Dorlas. 'Lithe he may be, but he is a great Dragon, and how shall he climb down the one cliff and up the other, when part must again be climbing before the hinder part is yet descended? And if he can so, what will it avail us to be in the wild water below?'

'Maybe he can so,' answered Turambar, 'and indeed if he does, it will go ill with us. But it is my hope from what we learn of him, and from the place where he now lies, that his purpose is otherwise. He is come to the brink of Cabed-en-Aras, over which, as you tell, a deer once leaped from the huntsmen of Haleth. So great is he now that I think he will seek to cast himself across there. That is all our hope, and we may trust to it.'

Dorlas' heart sank at these words; for he knew better than any all the land of Brethil, and Cabed-en-Aras was a grim place indeed. On the east side was a sheer cliff of some forty feet, bare but tree-grown at the crown; on the other side was a bank somewhat less sheer and less high, shrouded with hanging trees and bushes, but between them the water ran fiercely between rocks, and though a man bold and sure-footed might ford it by day, it was perilous to dare it at night. But this was the counsel of Turambar, and it was useless to gainsay him.

They set out therefore at dusk, and they did not go straight towards the Dragon, but took first the path towards the Crossings; then, before they came so far, they turned southward by a narrow track and passed into the twilight of the woods above Teiglin. And as they drew near to Cabed-en-Aras, step by step, halting often to listen, the reek of burning came to them, and a stench that sickened them. But all was deadly still, and there was no stir of air. The first stars glimmered in the east before them, and faint spires of smoke rose straight and unwavering against the last light in the west.

Now when Turambar was gone Níniel stood silent as a stone; but Brandir came to her and said: 'Níniel, fear not the worst until you must. But did I not counsel you to wait?'

'You did so,' she answered. 'Yet how would that profit me now? For love may abide and suffer unwedded.'

'That I know,' said Brandir. 'Yet wedding is not for nothing.'

'No,' said Níniel. 'For now I am two months gone with his child. But it does not seem to me that my fear of loss is the more heavy to bear. I understand you not.'

'Nor I myself,' said he. 'And yet I am afraid.'

'What a comforter you are!' she cried. 'But Brandir, friend: wedded or unwedded, mother or maid, my dread is beyond enduring. The Master of Doom is gone to challenge his doom far hence, and how shall I stay here and wait for the slow coming of tidings, good or ill? This night, it may be, he will meet with the Dragon, and how shall I stand or sit, or pass the dreadful hours?'

'I know not,' said he, 'but somehow the hours must pass, for you and for the wives of those that went with him.'

'Let them do as their hearts bid!' she cried. 'But for me, I shall go. The miles shall not lie between me and my lord's peril. I will go to meet the tidings!'

Then Brandir's dread grew black at her words, and he cried: 'That you shall not do, if I may hinder it. For thus will you endanger all counsel. The miles that lie between may give time for escape, if ill befall.'

'If ill befall, I shall not wish to escape,' she said. 'And now your wisdom is vain, and you shall not hinder me.' And she stood forth before the people that were still gathered in the open place of the Ephel, and she cried: 'Men of Brethil! I will not wait here. If my lord fails, then all hope is false. Your land and woods shall be burned utterly, and all your houses laid in ashes, and none, none, shall escape. Therefore why tarry here? Now I go to meet the tidings and whatever doom may send. Let all those of like mind come with me!'

Then many were willing to go with her: the wives of Dorlas and Hunthor because those whom they loved were gone with Turambar; others for pity of Níniel and desire to befriend her; and many more that were lured by the very rumour of the Dragon, in their hardihood or their folly (knowing little of evil) thinking to see strange and glorious deeds. For indeed so great in their minds had the Black Sword become that few could believe that even Glaurung would conquer him. Therefore they set forth soon in haste, a great company, towards a peril that they did not understand; and going with little rest they came wearily at last, just at nightfall, to Nen Girith but a little while after Turambar had departed. But night is a cold counsellor, and many were now amazed at their own rashness; and when they heard from the scouts that remained there how near Glaurung was come, and the desperate purpose of Turambar, their hearts were chilled, and they dared go no further. Some looked out towards Cabed-en-Aras with anxious eyes, but nothing could they see, and nothing hear save the cold voice of the falls. And Níniel sat apart, and a great shuddering seized her.

When Níniel and her company had gone, Brandir said to those that remained: 'Behold how I am scorned, and all my counsel disdained! Choose you another to lead you: for here I renounce both lordship and people. Let Turambar be your lord in name, since already he has taken all my authority. Let none seek of me ever again



either counsel or healing!’ And he broke his staff. To himself he thought: ‘Now nothing is left to me, save only my love of Níniel: therefore where she goes, in wisdom or folly, I must go. In this dark hour nothing can be foreseen; but it may well chance that even I could ward off some evil from her, if I were nigh.’

He girt himself therefore with a short sword, as seldom before, and took his crutch, and went with what speed he might out of the gate of the Ephel, limping after the others down the long path to the west march of Brethil.



## Chapter XVII: The Death Of Glaurung

At last, even as full night closed over the land, Turambar and his companions came to Cabed-en-Aras, and they were glad of the great noise of the water; for though it promised peril below, it covered all other sounds. Then Dorlas led them a little aside, southwards, and they climbed down by a cleft to the cliff-foot; but there his heart quailed, for many rocks and great stones lay in the river, and the water ran wild about them, grinding its teeth. 'This is a sure way to death,' said Dorlas.

'It is the only way, to death or to life,' said Turambar, 'and delay will not make it seem more hopeful. Therefore follow me!' And he went on before them, and by skill and hardihood, or by fate, he came across, and in the deep dark he turned to see who came after. A dark form stood beside him. 'Dorlas?' he said.

'No, it is I,' said Hunthor. 'Dorlas failed at the crossing, I think. For a man may love war, and yet dread many things. He sits shivering on the shore, I guess; and may shame take him for his words to my kinsman.'

Now Turambar and Hunthor rested a little, but soon the night chilled them, for they were both drenched with water, and they began to seek a way along the stream northwards towards the lodgement of Glaurung. There the chasm grew darker and narrower, and as they felt their way forward they could see a flicker above them as of smouldering fire, and they heard the snarling of the Great Worm in his watchful sleep. Then they groped for a way up, to come nigh under the brink; for in that lay all their hope to come at their enemy beneath his guard. But so foul now was the reek that their heads were dizzy, and they slipped as they clambered, and clung to the tree-stems, and retched, forgetting in their misery all fear save the dread of falling into the teeth of Teiglin.

Then Turambar said to Hunthor: 'We spend our waning strength to no avail. For till we be sure where the Dragon will pass, it is vain to climb.'

'But when we know,' said Hunthor, 'then there will be no time to seek a way up out of the chasm.'

'Truly,' said Turambar. 'But where all lies on chance, to chance we must trust.' They halted therefore and waited, and out of the dark ravine they watched a white star far above creep across the faint strip of sky; and then slowly Turambar sank into a dream, in which all his will was given to clinging, though a black tide sucked and gnawed at his limbs.

Suddenly there was a great noise and the walls of the chasm quivered and echoed. Turambar roused himself, and said to Hunthor: 'He stirs. The hour is upon us. Strike deep, for two must strike now for three!'

And with that Glaurung began his assault upon Brethil; and all passed much as Turambar had hoped. For now the Dragon crawled with slow weight to the edge of the cliff, and he did not turn aside, but made ready to spring over the chasm with his great forelegs and then draw his bulk after. Terror came with him; for he did not begin his passage right above, but a little to the northward, and the watchers from beneath could see the huge shadow of his head against the stars; and his jaws gaped, and he had seven tongues of fire. Then he sent forth a blast, so that all the ravine was filled with a red light, and black shadows flying among the rocks; but the trees before him withered and went up in smoke, and stones crashed down into the river. And thereupon he hurled himself forward, and grappled the further cliff with his mighty claws, and began to heave himself across.

Now there was need to be bold and swift, for though Turambar and Hunthor had escaped the blast, since they were not right in Glaurung's path, they yet had to come at him, before he passed over, or all their hope failed. Heedless of peril therefore Turambar clambered along the cliff to come beneath him; but there so deadly was the heat and the stench that he tottered and would have fallen if Hunthor, following stoutly behind, had not seized his arm and steadied him.

‘Great heart!’ said Turambar. ‘Happy was the choice that took you for a helper!’ But even as he spoke, a great stone hurtled from above and smote Hunthor on the head, and he fell into the water, and so ended: not the least valiant of the House of Haleth. Then Turambar cried: ‘Alas! It is ill to walk in my shadow! Why did I seek aid? For now you are alone, O Master of Doom, as you should have known it must be. Now conquer alone!’

Then he summoned to him all his will, and all his hatred of the Dragon and his Master, and it seemed to him that suddenly he found a strength of heart and of body that he had not known before; and he climbed the cliff, from stone to stone, and root to root, until he seized at last a slender tree that grew a little beneath the lip of the chasm, and though its top was blasted it still held fast by its roots. And even as he steadied himself in a fork of its boughs, the midmost parts of the Dragon came above him, and swayed down with their weight almost upon his head, ere Glaurung could heave them up. Pale and wrinkled was their underside, and all dank with a grey slime, to which clung all manner of dropping filth; and it stank of death. Then Turambar drew the Black Sword of Beleg and stabbed upwards with all the might of his arm, and of his hate, and the deadly blade, long and greedy, went into the belly even to its hilts.

Then Glaurung, feeling his death-pang, gave forth a scream, whereat all the woods were shaken, and the watchers at Nen Girith were aghast. Turambar reeled as from a blow, and slipped down, and his sword was torn from his grasp, and clave to the belly of the Dragon. For Glaurung in a great spasm bent up all his shuddering bulk and hurled it over the ravine, and there upon the further shore he writhed, screaming, lashing and coiling himself in his agony, until he had broken a great space all about him, and lay there at last in a smoke and a ruin, and was still.

Now Turambar clung to the roots of the tree, stunned and well-nigh overcome. But he strove against himself and drove himself on, and half sliding and half climbing he came down to the river, and dared again the perilous crossing, crawling now on hands and feet, clinging, blinded with spray, until he came over at last, and climbed wearily up the cleft by which they had descended. Thus he came at length to the place of the dying Dragon, and he looked on his stricken enemy without pity, and was glad.

There now Glaurung lay, with jaws agape; but all his fires were burned out, and his evil eyes were closed. He was stretched out in his length, and had rolled upon one side, and the hilts of Gurthang stood in his belly. Then the heart of Turambar rose high within him, and though the Dragon still breathed he would recover his sword, which if he prized it before was now worth to him all the treasure of Nargothrond. True proved the words spoken at its forging that nothing, great or small, should live that once it had bitten.

Therefore going up to his foe he set foot upon his belly, and seizing the hilts of Gurthang he put forth his strength to withdraw it. And he cried in mockery of Glaurung’s words at Nargothrond: ‘Hail, Worm of Morgoth! Well met again! Die now and the darkness have you! Thus is Túrin son of Húrin avenged.’ Then he wrenched out the sword, and even as he did so a spout of black blood followed it, and fell upon his hand, and his flesh was burned by the venom, so that he cried aloud at the pain. Thereat Glaurung stirred and opened his baleful eyes and looked upon Turambar with such malice that it seemed to him that he was smitten by an arrow; and for that and for the anguish of his hand he fell in a swoon, and lay as one dead beside the Dragon, and his sword was beneath him.

Now the screams of Glaurung came to the people at Nen Girith, and they were filled with terror; and when the watchers beheld from afar the great breaking and burning that the Dragon made in his throes, they believed that he was trampling and destroying those that had assailed him. Then indeed they wished the miles longer that lay between them; but they dared not leave the high place where they were gathered, for they remembered the words of Turambar that, if Glaurung conquered, he would go first to Ephel Brandir. Therefore they watched in fear for any sign of his movement, but none were so hardy as to go down and seek for tidings in the place of the battle. And Níniel sat, and did not move, save that she shuddered and could not still her limbs; for when she heard the voice of Glaurung her heart died within her, and she felt her darkness creeping upon her again.

Thus Brandir found her. For he came at last to the bridge over Celebros, slow and weary; all the long way alone he had limped on his crutch, and it was five leagues at the least from his home. Fear for Níniel had driven him on, and now the tidings that he learned were no worse than he had dreaded. ‘The Dragon has crossed the river,’ men told him, ‘and the Black Sword is surely dead, and those that went with him.’ Then Brandir stood by

Níniel, and guessed her misery, and he yearned to her; but he thought nonetheless: 'The Black Sword is dead, and Níniel lives.' And he shuddered, for suddenly it seemed cold by the waters of Nen Girith; and he cast his cloak about Níniel. But he found no words to say; and she did not speak.

Time passed, and still Brandir stood silent beside her, peering into the night and listening; but he could see nothing, and could hear no sound but the falling of the waters of Nen Girith, and he thought: 'Now surely Glaurung has gone and has passed into Brethil.' But he pitied his people no more, fools that had flouted his counsel, and had scorned him. 'Let the Dragon go to Amon Obel, and there will be time then to escape, and to lead Níniel away.' Whither, he scarce knew, for he had never journeyed beyond Brethil.

At last he bent down and touched Níniel on the arm, and said to her: 'Time passes, Níniel! Come! It is time to go. If you will let me, I will lead you.' Then silently she arose, and took his hand, and they passed over the bridge and went down the path to the Crossings of Teiglin. But those that saw them moving as shadows in the dark knew not who they were, and cared not. And when they had gone some little way through the silent trees, the moon rose beyond Amon Obel, and the glades of the forest were filled with a grey light. Then Níniel halted and said to Brandir: 'Is this the way?'

And he answered: 'What is the way? For all our hope in Brethil is ended. We have no way, save to escape the Dragon, and flee far from him while there is yet time.'

Níniel looked at him in wonder and said: 'Did you not offer to lead me to him? Or would you deceive me? The Black Sword was my beloved and my husband, and only to find him do I go. What else could you think? Now do as you will, but I must hasten.'

And even as Brandir stood a moment amazed, she sped from him; and he called after her, crying: 'Wait, Níniel! Go not alone! You know not what you will find. I will come with you!' But she paid no heed to him, and went now as though her blood burned her, which before had been cold; and though he followed as he could she passed soon out of his sight. Then he cursed his fate and his weakness; but he would not turn back.

Now the moon rose white in the sky, and was near the full, and as Níniel came down from the upland towards the land near the river, it seemed to her that she remembered it, and feared it. For she was come to the Crossings of Teiglin, and Haudh-en-Elleth stood there before her, pale in the moonlight, with a black shadow cast athwart it; and out of the mound came a great dread.

Then she turned with a cry and fled south along the river, and cast her cloak as she ran, as though casting off a darkness that clung to her; and beneath she was all clad in white, and she shone in the moon as she flitted among the trees. Thus Brandir above on the hill-side saw her, and turned to cross her course, if he could; and finding by fortune the narrow path that Turambar had used, for it left the more beaten road and went steeply down southward to the river, he came at last close behind her again. But though he called, she did not heed, or did not hear, and soon once more she passed on ahead; and so they drew near to the woods beside Cabed-en-Aras and the place of the agony of Glaurung.

The moon was then riding in the south unclouded, and the light was cold and clear. Coming to the edge of the ruin that Glaurung had wrought, Níniel saw his body lying there, and his belly grey in the moon-sheen; but beside him lay a man. Then forgetting her fear she ran on amid the smouldering wrack and so came to Turambar. He was fallen on his side, and his sword lay beneath him, but his face was wan as death in the white light. Then she threw herself down by him weeping, and kissed him; and it seemed to her that he breathed faintly, but she thought it but a trickery of false hope, for he was cold, and did not move, nor did he answer her. And as she caressed him she found that his hand was blackened as if it had been scorched, and she washed it with her tears, and tearing a strip from her raiment she bound it about. But still he did not move at her touch, and she kissed him again, and cried aloud: 'Turambar, Turambar, come back! Hear me! Awake! For it is Níniel. The Dragon is dead, dead, and I alone am here by you.' But he answered nothing. Her cry Brandir heard, for he had come to the edge of the ruin; but even as he stepped forward towards Níniel he was halted, and stood still. For at the cry of Níniel Glaurung stirred for the last time, and a quiver ran through all his body; and he opened his baleful eyes a slit, and the moon gleamed in them, as gasping he spoke:

‘Hail, Niënor, daughter of Húrin. We meet again ere we end. I give you joy that you have found your brother at last. And now you shall know him: a stabber in the dark, treacherous to foes, faithless to friends, and a curse unto his kin, Túrin son of Húrin! But the worst of all his deeds you shall feel in yourself.’

Then Niënor sat as one stunned, but Glaurung died; and with his death the veil of his malice fell from her, and all her memory grew clearer before her, from day unto day, neither did she forget any of those things that had befallen her since she lay on Haudh-en-Elleth. And her whole body shook with horror and anguish. But Brandir, who had heard all, was stricken, and leaned against a tree.

Then suddenly Niënor started to her feet, and stood pale as a wraith in the moon, and looked down on Túrin, and cried: ‘Farewell, O twice beloved! *A Túrin Turambar turún’ ambartanen*: master of doom by doom mastered! O happy to be dead!’ Then distraught with woe and the horror that had overtaken her she fled wildly from that place; and Brandir stumbled after her, crying: ‘Wait! Wait, Níniel!’

One moment she paused, looking back with staring eyes. ‘Wait?’ she cried. ‘Wait? That was ever your counsel. Would that I had heeded! But now it is too late. And now I will wait no more upon Middle-earth.’ And she sped on before him.

Swiftly she came to the brink of Cabed-en-Aras, and there stood and looked on the loud water crying: ‘Water, water! Take now Níniel Niënor daughter of Húrin; Mourning, Mourning daughter of Morwen! Take me and bear me down to the Sea!’

With that she cast herself over the brink: a flash of white swallowed in the dark chasm, a cry lost in the roaring of the river.

The waters of Teiglin flowed on, but Cabed-en-Aras was no more: Cabed Naeramarth, the Leap of Dreadful Doom, thereafter it was named by men; for no deer would ever leap there again, and all living things shunned it, and no man would walk upon its shore. Last of men to look down into its darkness was Brandir son of Handir; and he turned away in horror, for his heart quailed, and though he hated now his life, he could not there take the death that he desired. Then his thought turned to Túrin Turambar, and he cried: ‘Do I hate you, or do I pity you? But you are dead. I owe you no thanks, taker of all that I had or would have. But my people owe you a debt. It is fitting that from me they should learn it.’

And so he began to limp back to Nen Girith, avoiding the place of the Dragon with a shudder; and as he climbed the steep path again he came on a man that peered through the trees, and seeing him drew back. But he had marked his face in a gleam of the sinking moon.

‘Ha, Dorlas!’ he cried. ‘What news can you tell? How came you off alive? And what of my kinsman?’

‘I know not,’ answered Dorlas sullenly.

‘Then that is strange,’ said Brandir.

‘If you will know,’ said Dorlas, ‘the Black Sword would have us ford the races of Teiglin in the dark. Is it strange that I could not? I am a better man with an axe than some, but I am not goat-footed.’

‘So they went on without you to come at the Dragon?’ said Brandir. ‘But how when he passed over? At the least you would stay near, and would see what befell.’

But Dorlas made no answer, and stared only at Brandir with hatred in his eyes. Then Brandir understood, perceiving suddenly that this man had deserted his companions, and unmanned by shame had then hidden in the woods. ‘Shame on you, Dorlas!’ he said. ‘You are the begetter of our woes: egging on the Black Sword, bringing the Dragon upon us, putting me to scorn, drawing Hunthor to his death, and then you flee to skulk in the woods!’ And as he spoke another thought entered his mind, and he said in great anger: ‘Why did you not bring tidings? It was the least penance that you could do. Had you done so, the Lady Níniel would have had no need to seek them herself. She need never have seen the Dragon. She might have lived. Dorlas, I hate you!’

‘Keep your hate!’ said Dorlas. ‘It is as feeble as all your counsels. But for me the Orcs would have come and hung you as a scarecrow in your garden. Take the name skulker to yourself!’ And with that, being for his shame the readier to wrath, he aimed a blow at Brandir with his great fist, and so ended his life, before the look of

amazement left his eyes: for Brandir drew his sword and hewed him his death-blow. Then for a moment he stood trembling, sickened by the blood; and casting down his sword he turned, and went on his way, bowed upon his crutch.

As Brandir came to Nen Girith the pallid moon was gone down, and the night was fading; morning was opening in the east. The people that cowered there still by the bridge saw him come like a grey shadow in the dawn, and some called to him in wonder: 'Where have you been? Have you seen her? For the Lady Níniel is gone.'

'Yes,' said Brandir, 'she is gone. Gone, gone, never to return! But I am come to bring you tidings. Hear now, people of Brethil, and say if there was ever such a tale as the tale that I bear! The Dragon is dead, but dead also is Turambar at his side. And those are good tidings: yes, both are good indeed.'

Then the people murmured, wondering at his speech, and some said that he was mad; but Brandir cried: 'Hear me to the end! Níniel too is dead, Níniel the fair whom you loved, whom I loved dearest of all. She leaped from the brink of the Deer's Leap, and the teeth of Teiglin have taken her. She is gone, hating the light of day. For this she learned before she fled: Húrin's children were they both, sister and brother. The Mormegil he was called, Turambar he named himself, hiding his past: Túrin son of Húrin. Níniel we named her, not knowing her past: Niënor she was, daughter of Húrin. To Brethil they brought their dark doom's shadow. Here their doom has fallen, and of grief this land shall never again be free. Call it not Brethil, not the land of the Halethrim, but *Sarch nia Chîn Húrin*, Grave of the Children of Húrin!'

Then though they did not understand yet how this evil had come to pass, the people wept as they stood, and some said: 'A grave there is in Teiglin for Níniel the beloved, a grave shall there be for Turambar, most valiant of men. Our deliverer shall not be left to lie under the sky. Let us go to him.'



## Chapter XVIII: The Death Of Túrin

Now even as Níniel fled away, Túrin stirred, and it seemed to him that out of his deep darkness he heard her call to him far away; but as Glaurung died, the black swoon left him, and he breathed deep again, and sighed, and passed into a slumber of great weariness. But before dawn it grew bitter cold, and he turned in his sleep, and the hilts of Gurthang drove into his side, and suddenly he awoke. Night was going, and there was a breath of morning in the air; and he sprang to his feet, remembering his victory, and the burning venom on his hand. He raised it up, and looked at it, and marvelled. For it was bound about with a strip of white cloth, yet moist, and it was at ease; and he said to himself: 'Why should one tend me so, and yet leave me here to lie cold amid the wrack and the dragon-stench? What strange things have chanced?'

Then he called aloud, but there was no answer. All was black and drear about him, and there was a reek of death. He stooped and lifted his sword, and it was whole, and the light of its edges was undimmed. 'Foul was the venom of Glaurung,' he said, 'but you are stronger than I, Gurthang. All blood will you drink. Yours is the victory. But come! I must go seek for aid. My body is weary, and there is a chill in my bones.'

Then he turned his back upon Glaurung and left him to rot; but as he passed from that place each step seemed more heavy, and he thought: 'At Nen Girith, maybe, I will find one of the scouts awaiting me. But would I were soon in my own house, and might feel the gentle hands of Níniel, and the good skill of Brandir!' And so at last, walking wearily, leaning on Gurthang, through the grey light of early day he came to Nen Girith, and even as men were setting forth to seek his dead body, he stood before the people.

Then they gave back in terror, believing that it was his unquiet spirit, and the women wailed and covered their eyes. But he said: 'Nay, do not weep, but be glad! See! Do I not live? And have I not slain the Dragon that you feared?'

Then they turned upon Brandir, and cried: 'Fool, with your false tales, saying that he lay dead. Did we not say that you were mad?' Then Brandir was aghast, and stared at Túrin with fear in his eyes, and he could say nothing.

But Túrin said to him: 'It was you then that were there, and tended my hand? I thank you. But your skill is failing, if you cannot tell swoon from death.' Then he turned to the people: 'Speak not so to him, fools all of you. Which of you would have done better? At least he had the heart to come down to the place of battle, while you sit wailing!'

'But now, son of Handir, come! There is more that I would learn. Why are you here, and all this people, whom I left at the Ephel? If I may go into the peril of death for your sakes, may I not be obeyed when I am gone? And where is Níniel? At the least I may hope that you did not bring her hither, but left her where I bestowed her, in my house, with true men to guard it?'

And when no-one answered him, 'Come, say where is Níniel?' he cried. 'For her first I would see; and to her first will I tell the tale of the deeds in the night.'

But they turned their faces from him, and Brandir said at last: 'Níniel is not here.'

'That is well then,' said Túrin. 'Then I will go to my home. Is there a horse to bear me? Or a bier would be better. I faint with my labours.'

'Nay, nay!' said Brandir in anguish of heart. 'Your house is empty. Níniel is not there. She is dead.'

But one of the women—the wife of Dorlas, who loved Brandir little—cried shrilly: ‘Pay no heed to him, lord! For he is crazed. He came crying that you were dead, and called it good tidings. But you live. Why then should his tale of Níniel be true: that she is dead, and yet worse?’

Then Túrin strode towards Brandir: ‘So my death was good tidings?’ he cried. ‘Yes, ever you did begrudge her to me, that I knew. Now she is dead, you say. And yet worse? What lie have you begotten in your malice, Club-foot? Would you slay us then with foul words, since you can wield no other weapon?’

Then anger drove pity from Brandir’s heart, and he cried: ‘Crazed? Nay, crazed are you, Black Sword of black doom! And all this dotard people. I do not lie! Níniel is dead, dead, dead! Seek her in Teiglin!’

Then Túrin stood still and cold. ‘How do you know?’ he said softly. ‘How did you contrive it?’

‘I know because I saw her leap,’ answered Brandir. ‘But the contriving was yours. She fled from you, Túrin son of Húrin, and in Cabed-en-Aras she cast herself, that she might never see you again. Níniel! Níniel? Nay, Niënor daughter of Húrin.’

Then Túrin seized him and shook him; for in those words he heard the feet of his doom overtaking him, but in horror and fury his heart would not receive them, as a beast hurt to death that will wound ere it dies all that are near it.

‘Yes, I am Túrin son of Húrin,’ he cried. ‘So long ago you guessed. But nothing do you know of Niënor my sister. Nothing! She dwells in the Hidden Kingdom, and is safe. It is a lie of your own vile mind, to drive my wife witless, and now me. You limping evil—would you dog us both to death?’

But Brandir shook him off. ‘Touch me not!’ he said. ‘Stay your raving. She that you name wife came to you and tended you, and you did not answer her call. But one answered for you. Glaurung the Dragon, who I deem bewitched you both to your doom. So he spoke, before he ended: “Niënor daughter of Húrin, here is your brother: treacherous to foes, faithless to friends, a curse unto his kin, Túrin son of Húrin.”’ Then suddenly a fey laughter seized on Brandir. ‘On their deathbed men will speak true, they say,’ he cackled. ‘And even a Dragon too, it seems. Túrin son of Húrin, a curse unto your kin and unto all that harbour you!’

Then Túrin grasped Gurthang and a fell light was in his eyes. ‘And what shall be said of you, Club-foot?’ he said slowly. ‘Who told her secretly behind my back my right name? Who brought her to the malice of the Dragon? Who stood by and let her die? Who came hither to publish this horror at the swiftest? Who would now gloat upon me? Do men speak true before death? Then speak it now quickly.’

Then Brandir, seeing his death in Túrin’s face, stood still and did not quail, though he had no weapon but his crutch; and he said: ‘All that has chanced is a long tale to tell, and I am weary of you. But you slander me, son of Húrin. Did Glaurung slander you? If you slay me, then all shall see that he did not. Yet I do not fear to die, for then I will go to seek Níniel whom I loved, and perhaps I may find her again beyond the Sea.’

‘Seek Níniel!’ cried Túrin. ‘Nay, Glaurung you shall find, and breed lies together. You shall sleep with the Worm, your soul’s mate, and rot in one darkness!’ Then he lifted up Gurthang and hewed Brandir, and smote him to death. But the people hid their eyes from that deed, and as he turned and went from Nen Girith they fled from him in terror.

Then Túrin went as one witless through the wild woods, now cursing Middle-earth and all the life of Men, now calling upon Níniel. But when at last the madness of his grief left him he sat awhile and pondered all his deeds, and he heard himself crying: ‘She dwells in the Hidden Kingdom, and is safe!’ And he thought that now, though all his life was in ruin, he must go thither; for all the lies of Glaurung had ever led him astray. Therefore he arose and went to the Crossings of Teiglin, and as he passed by Haudh-en-Elleth he cried: ‘Bitterly have I paid, O Finduilas! that ever I gave heed to the Dragon. Send me now counsel!’

But even as he cried out he saw twelve huntsmen well-armed that came over the Crossings, and they were Elves; and as they drew near he knew one, for it was Mablung, chief huntsman of Thingol. And Mablung hailed him, crying: ‘Túrin! Well met at last. I seek you, and glad I am to see you living, though the years have been heavy on you.’



‘Heavy!’ said Túrin. ‘Yes, as the feet of Morgoth. But if you are glad to see me living, you are the last in Middle-earth. Why so?’

‘Because you were held in honour among us,’ answered Mablung; ‘and though you have escaped many perils, I feared for you at the last. I watched the coming forth of Glaurung, and I thought that he had fulfilled his wicked purpose and was returning to his Master. But he turned towards Brethil, and at the same time I learned from wanderers in the land that the Black Sword of Nargothrond had appeared there again, and the Orcs shunned its borders as death. Then I was filled with dread, and I said: “Alas! Glaurung goes where his Orcs dare not, to seek out Túrin.” Therefore I came hither as swift as might be, to warn you and aid you.’

‘Swift, but not swift enough,’ said Túrin. ‘Glaurung is dead.’

Then the Elves looked at him in wonder, and said: ‘You have slain the Great Worm! Praised for ever shall your name be among Elves and Men!’

‘I care not,’ said Túrin. ‘For my heart also is slain. But since you come from Doriath, give me news of my kin. For I was told in Dor-lómin that they had fled to the Hidden Kingdom.’

The Elves made no answer, but at length Mablung spoke: ‘They did so indeed, in the year before the coming of the Dragon. But they are not there now, alas!’ Then Túrin’s heart stood still, hearing the feet of doom that would pursue him to the end. ‘Say on!’ he cried. ‘And be swift!’

‘They went out into the wild seeking you,’ said Mablung. ‘It was against all counsel; but they would go to Nargothrond, when it was known that you were the Black Sword; and Glaurung came forth, and all their guard were scattered. Morwen none have seen since that day; but Niënor had a spell of dumbness upon her, and fled north into the woods like a wild deer, and was lost.’ Then to the wonder of the Elves Túrin laughed loud and shrill. ‘Is not that a jest?’ he cried. ‘O the fair Niënor! So she ran from Doriath to the Dragon, and from the Dragon to me. What a sweet grace of fortune! Brown as a berry she was, dark was her hair; small and slim as an Elf-child, none could mistake her!’

Then Mablung was amazed, and he said: ‘But some mistake is here. Not such was your sister. She was tall, and her eyes were blue, her hair fine gold, the very likeness in woman’s form of Húrin her father. You cannot have seen her!’

‘Can I not, can I not, Mablung?’ cried Túrin. ‘But why no! For see, I am blind! Did you not know? Blind, blind, groping since childhood in a dark mist of Morgoth! Therefore leave me! Go, go! Go back to Doriath, and may winter shrivel it! A curse upon Menegroth! And a curse on your errand! This only was wanting. Now comes the night!’

Then he fled from them, like the wind, and they were filled with wonder and fear. But Mablung said: ‘Some strange and dreadful thing has chanced that we know not. Let us follow him and aid him if we may: for now he is fey and witless.’

But Túrin sped far before them, and came to Cabed-en-Aras, and stood still; and he heard the roaring of the water, and saw that all the trees near and far were withered, and their sere leaves fell mournfully, as though winter had come in the first days of summer.

‘Cabed-en-Aras, Cabed Naeramarth!’ he cried. ‘I will not defile your waters where Níniel was washed. For all my deeds have been ill, and the latest the worst.’

Then he drew forth his sword, and said: ‘Hail Gurthang, iron of death, you alone now remain! But what lord or loyalty do you know, save the hand that wields you? From no blood will you shrink. Will you take Túrin Turambar? Will you slay me swiftly?’

And from the blade rang a cold voice in answer: ‘Yes, I will drink your blood, that I may forget the blood of Beleg my master, and the blood of Brandir slain unjustly. I will slay you swiftly.’

Then Túrin set the hilts upon the ground, and cast himself upon the point of Gurthang, and the black blade took his life.

But Mablung came and looked on the hideous shape of Glaurung lying dead, and he looked upon Túrin and was grieved, thinking of Húrin as he had seen him in the Nirnaeth Arnoediad, and the dreadful doom of his kin. As the Elves stood there, men came down from Nen Girith to look upon the Dragon, and when they saw to what end the life of Túrin Turambar had come they wept; and the Elves learning at last the reason of Túrin's words to them were aghast. Then Mablung said bitterly: 'I also have been meshed in the doom of the Children of Húrin, and thus with words have slain one that I loved.'

Then they lifted up Túrin, and saw that his sword was broken asunder. So passed all that he possessed.

With toil of many hands they gathered wood and piled it high and made a great burning and destroyed the body of the Dragon, until he was but black ash and his bones beaten to dust, and the place of that burning was ever bare and barren thereafter. But Túrin they laid in a high mound where he had fallen, and the shards of Gurthang were set beside him. And when all was done, and the minstrels of Elves and Men had made lament, telling of the valour of Turambar and the beauty of Níniel, a great grey stone was brought and set upon the mound; and thereon the Elves carved in the Runes of Doriath:

### TÚRIN TURAMBAR DAGNIR GLAURUNGA

and beneath they wrote also:

### NIËNOR NÍNIEL

But she was not there, nor was it ever known whither the cold waters of Teiglin had taken her.

*[Here ends the Tale of the Children of Húrin, longest of all the lays of Beleriand.*

*After the deaths of Túrin and Niënor Morgoth released Húrin from bondage in furtherance of his evil purpose. In the course of his wanderings he reached the Forest of Brethil, and came up in the evening from the Crossings of Teiglin to the place of the burning of Glaurung and the great stone standing on the brink of Cabed Naeramarth. Of what befell there this is told:]*

But Húrin did not look at the stone, for he knew what was written there; and his eyes had seen that he was not alone. Sitting in the shadow of the stone there was a figure bent over its knees. Some homeless wanderer broken with age it seemed, too wayworn to heed his coming; but its rags were the remnants of a woman's garb. At length as Húrin stood there silent she cast back her tattered hood and lifted up her face slowly, haggard and hungry as a long-hunted wolf. Grey she was, sharp-nosed with broken teeth, and with a lean hand she clawed at the cloak upon her breast. But suddenly her eyes looked into his, and then Húrin knew her; for though they were wild now and full of fear, a light still gleamed in them hard to endure: the elven-light that long ago had earned her her name, Eledhwen, proudest of mortal women in the days of old.

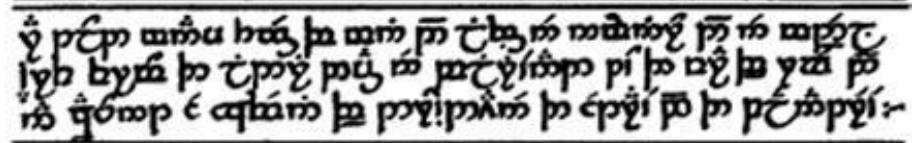
'Eledhwen! Eledhwen!' Húrin cried; and she rose and stumbled forward, and he caught her in his arms.

'You come at last,' she said. 'I have waited too long.' 'It was a dark road. I have come as I could,' he answered. 'But you are late,' she said, 'too late. They are lost.'

'I know,' he said. 'But you are not.'

'Almost,' she said. 'I am spent utterly. I shall go with the sun. They are lost.' She clutched at his cloak. 'Little time is left,' she said. 'If you know, tell me! How did she find him?'

But Húrin did not answer, and he sat beside the stone with Morwen in his arms; and they did not speak again. The sun went down, and Morwen sighed and clasped his hand and was still; and Húrin knew that she had died.







## Elements In Quenya And Sindarin Names

These notes have been compiled for those who take an interest in the Eldarin languages, and *The Lord of the Rings* is extensively drawn upon for illustration. They are necessarily very compressed, giving an air of certainty and finality that is not altogether justified; and they are very selective, this depending both on considerations of length and the limitations of the editor's knowledge. The headings are not arranged systematically by roots or in Quenya or Sindarin forms, but somewhat arbitrarily, the aim being to make the component elements of names as readily identifiable as possible.

### A

**adan:**—(plural *Edain*) in *Adanedhel*, *Aradan*, *Dúnedain*. For its meaning and history see *Atani* in the Index.

**aelin:**—“lake, pool” in *Aelin-uial*; cf. *lin* (I).

**aglar:**—“glory, brilliance” in *Dagor Aglareb*, *Aglarond*. The form in Quenya, *alkar*, has transposition of the consonants: to Sindarin *aglareb* corresponds *Alkarinquë*. The root is *kal-*, “shine”, q.v.

**aina:**—“holy” in *Ainur*, *Ainulindalë*.

**alda:**—“tree” (Quenya) in *Aldaron*, *Aldudenië*, *Malinalda*, corresponding to Sindarin *galadh* (seen in *Caras Galadhon* and the *Galadhrim* of Lothlórien).

**alqua:**—“swan” (Sindarin *alph*) in *Alqualondë*; from a root *alak-*, “rushing” occurring also in *Ancalagon*.

**amarth:**—“doom” in *Amon Amarth*, *Cabed Naeramarth*, *Úmarth*, and in the Sindarin form of Túrin's name “Master of Doom”, *Turamarth*. The Quenya form of the word appears in *Turambar*.

**amon:**—“hill”, a Sindarin word occurring as the first element of many names; plural *emyn* in *Emyn Beraid*.

**anca:**—“jaws” in *Ancalagon* (for the second element in this name see *alqua*).

**an(d):**—“long” in *Andram*, *Anduin*; also in *Anfalas* (“Langstrand”) in Gondor, *Cair Andros* (“ship of long-foam”), an island in Anduin, and *Angerthas*, “long rune-rows”.

**andúnë:**—“sunset, west” in *Andúnië*, to which corresponds in Sindarin *annûn*, cf. *Annúminas*, and *Henneth Annûn*, “window of the sunset” in Ithilien. The ancient root of these words, *ndu*, meaning “down, from on high”, appears also in Quenya *númen*, “the way of the sunset, west” and in Sindarin *dûn*, “west”, cf. *Dúnedain*. Adûnaic *adûn* in *Adûnakhôr*, *Anadûnê* was a loan from Eldarin speech.

**anga:**—“iron”, Sindarin *ang*, in *Angainor*, *Angband*, *Anghabar*, *Anglachel*, *Angrist*, *Angrod*, *Anguirel*, *Gurthang*; *angren*, “of iron” in *Angrenost*, plural *engrin* in *Ered Engrin*.

**anna:**—“gift” in *Annatar*, *Melian*, *Yavanna*; the same stem in *Andor*, “Land of Gift”.

**annon:**—“great door or gate”, plural *ennyn*, in *Annon-in-Gelydh*; cf. *Morannon*, the “Black Gate” of Mordor and *Sirannon*, the “Gate-stream” of Moria.

**ar-:**—“beside, outside” (whence Quenya *ar*, “and”, Sindarin *a*), probably in *Araman*, “outside Aman”; cf. also (*Nirnaeth*) *Arnoediad*, “(Tears) without reckoning”.

**ar(a)-:**—“high, noble, royal” appears in a great many names, as *Aradan*, *Aredhel*, *Argonath*, *Arnor*, etc.; extended stem *arat-* appearing in *Aratar*, and in *aráto*, “champion, eminent man”, e.g. *Angrod* from *Angaráto* and *Finrod* from *Findaráto*; also *aran*, “king” in *Aranrúth*. *Ereinion*, “scion of kings” (name of Gil-galad) has

the plural of *aran*; cf. *Fornost Erain*, “Norbury of the Kings” in Arnor. The prefix *Ar-* of the Adûnaic names of the Kings of Númenor was derived from this.

**arien**:—(the Maia of the Sun) is derived from a root *as-* seen also in Quenya *árë*, “sunlight”.

**atar**:—“father” in *Atanatári* (see *Atani* in the Index), *Ilúvatar*.

## B

**band**:—“prison, duress” in *Angband*; from original *mbando*, of which the Quenya form appears in *Mandos* (Sindarin *Angband*=Quenya *Angamando*).

**bar**:—“dwelling” in *Bar-en-Danwedh*. The ancient word *mbár* (Quenya *már*, Sindarin *bar*) meant the “home” both of persons and of peoples, and thus appears in many place-names, as *Brithombar*, *Dimbar* (the first element of which means “sad, gloomy”), *Eldamar*, *Val(i)mar*, *Vinyamar*, *Marnu-Falmar*. *Mardil*, name of the first of the Ruling Stewards of Gondor, means “devoted to the house” (*i.e.* of the Kings).

**barad**:—“tower” in *Barad-dûr*, *Barad Eithel*, *Barad Nimras*; the plural in *Emyn Beraid*.

**beleg**:—“mighty” in *Beleg*, *Belegaer*, *Belegost*, *Laer Cú Beleg*.

**bragol**:—“sudden” in *Dagor Bragollach*.

**brethil**:—probably means “silver birch”; cf. *Nimbrethil*, the birch-woods in Arvernien, and *Fimbrethil*, one of the Entwines.

**brith**:—“gravel” in *Brithiach*, *Brithombar*, *Brithon*.

## C

For many names beginning with C see entries under *K*.

**calen (galen)**:—the usual Sindarin word for “green”, in *Ard-galen*, *Tol Galen*, *Calenardhon*; also in *Parth Galen* (“Green Sward”) beside Anduin and *Pinnath Gelin* (“Green Ridges”) in Gondor. See *kal-*.

**cam**:—(from *kamba*) “hand”, but specifically of the hand held cupped in the attitude of receiving or holding, in *Camlost*, *Erchamion*.

**carak-**:—This root is seen in Quenya *carca*, “fang”, of which the Sindarin form *carch* occurs in *Carcharoth*, and also in *Carchost* (“Fang Fort”, one of the Towers of the Teeth at the entrance to Mordor). Cf. *Caragdûr*, *Carach Angren* (“Iron Jaws”, the rampart and dike guarding the entrance to Udûn in Mordor), and *Helcaraxë*.

**caran**:—“red”, Quenya *carnë*, in *Caranthir*, *Carnil*, *Orocarni*; also in *Caradhras*, from *caran-rass*, the “Red-horn” in the Misty Mountains, and *Carnimírië*, “red-jewelled”, the rowan-tree in Quickbeam’s song. The translation of *Carcharoth* in the text as “Red Maw” must depend on association with this word; see *carak-*.

**celeb**:—“silver” (Quenya *telep*, *telpë*, as in *Telperion*) in *Celeborn*, *Celebrant*, *Celebros*. *Celebrimbor* means “silver-fist”, from the adjective *celebrin*, “silver” (meaning not “made of silver” but “like silver, in hue or worth”) and *paur* (Quenya *quárë*) “fist”, often used to mean “hand”; the Quenya form of the name was *Telperinquar*. *Celebrindal* has *celebrin* and *tal, dal*, “foot”.

**coron**:—“mound” in *Corollairë* (also called *Coron Oiolairë*, which latter word means “Ever-summer”, cf. *Oiolossë*); cf. *Cerin Amroth*, the great mound in Lothlórien.

**cú**:—“bow” in *Cúthalion*, *Dor Cúarthol*, *Laer Cú Beleg*.

**cuivië**:—“awakening” in *Cuiviénen* (Sindarin *Nen Echui*). Other derivatives of the same root are *Dor Firn-i-Guinar*; *coirë*, the first beginning of Spring, Sindarin *echuir*, *The Lord of the Rings* *Appendix D*; and *coimas*, “life-bread”, Quenya name of *lembas*.

**cul-**:—“golden-red” in *Culúrien*.

**curu**:—“skill” in *Curufin(wë)*, *Curunír*.

## D

**dae**:—“shadow” in *Dor Daedeloth*, and perhaps in *Daeron*.

**dagor**:—“battle”; the root is *ndak*-, cf. *Haudh-en-Ndengin*. Another derivative is *Dagnir* (*Dagnir Glaurunga*, “Glaurung’s Bane”).

**del**:—“horror” in *Deldúwath*; *deloth*, “abhorrence” in *Dor Daedeloth*.

**dîn**:—“silent” in *Dor Dínen*; cf. *Rath Dínen*, the Silent Street in Minas Tirith, and *Amon Dîn*, one of the beacon-hills of Gondor.

**dol**:—“head” in *Lórindol*; often applied to hills and mountains, as in *Dol Guldur*, *Dolmed*, *Mindolluin* (also *Nardol*, one of the beacon-hills of Gondor, and *Fanuidhol*, one of the Mountains of Moria).

**dôr**:—“land” (i.e. dry land as opposed to sea) was derived from *ndor*; it occurs in many Sindarin names, as *Doriath*, *Dorthonion*, *Eriador*, *Gondor*, *Mordor*, etc. In Quenya the stem was blended and confused with a quite distinct word *nórë*, meaning “people”; in origin *Valinórë* was strictly “the people of the Valar”, but *Valandor*, “the land of the Valar”, and similarly *Númen(n)órë*, “people of the West”, but *Númendor*, “land of the West”. Quenya *Endor*, “Middle-earth” was from *ened*, “middle” and *ndor*; this in Sindarin became *Ennor* (cf. *ennorath*, “middle lands” in the chant *A Elbereth Gilthoniel*).

**draug**:—“wolf” in *Draugluin*.

**dú**:—“night, dimness” in *Deldúwath*, *Ephel Dúath*. Derived from earlier *dome*, whence Quenya *lómë*; thus Sindarin *dúlin*, “nightingale” corresponds to *lómelindë*.

**duin**:—“(long) river” in *Anduin*, *Baranduin*, *Esgalduin*, *Malduin*, *Taur-im-Duinath*.

**dûr**:—“dark” in *Barad-dûr*, *Caragdûr*, *Dol Guldur*; also in *Durthang* (a castle in Mordor).

## E

**ëar**:—“sea” (Quenya) in *Eärendil*, *Eärrámë*, and many other names. The Sindarin word *gaer* (in *Belegaer*) is apparently derived from the same original stem.

**echor**:—in *Echoriath*, “Encircling Mountains” and *Orfalch Echor*; cf. *Rammas Echor*, “the great wall of the outer circle” about the Pelennor Fields at Minas Tirith.

**edhel**:—“elf” (Sindarin) in *Adanedhel*, *Aredhel*, *Glóredhel*, *Ost-in-Edhil*; also in *Peredhil*, “Halfelven”.

**eithel**:—“well” in *Eithel Ivrin*, *Eithel Sirion*, *Barad Eithel*; also in *Mitheithel*, the river Hoarwell in Eriador (named from its source). See *kel*-.

**êl, elen**:—“star”. According to Elvish legend, *ele* was a primitive exclamation “behold!” made by the Elves when they first saw the stars. From this origin derived the ancient words *êl* and *elen*, meaning “star”, and the adjectives *elda* and *elena*, meaning “of the stars”. These elements appear in a great many names. For the later use of the name *Eldar* see the Index. The Sindarin equivalent of *Elda* was *Edhel* (plural *Edhil*), q.v.; but the strictly corresponding form was *Eledh*, which occurs in *Eledhwen*.

**er**:—“one, alone”, in *Amon Ereb* (cf. *Erebor*, the Lonely Mountain), *Erchamion*, *Eressëa*, *Eru*.

**ereg**:—“thorn, holly” in *Eregion*, *Region*.

**esgal**:—“screen, hiding” in *Esgalduin*.

## F

**falas**:—“shore, line of surf” (Quenya *falassë*) in *Falas*, *Belfalas*; also *Anfalas* in Gondor. Cf. *Falathar*, *Falathrim*. Another derivative from the root was Quenya *falma*, “(crested) wave”, whence *Falmari*, *Mar-nu-Falmar*.



**faroth:**—is derived from a root meaning “hunt, pursue”; in the Lay of Leithian the *Taur-en-Faroth* above Nargothrond are called “the Hills of the Hunters”.

**faug-:**—“gape” in *Anfauglir*, *Anfauglith*, *Dor-nu-Fauglith*.

**fëa:**—“spirit” in *Fëanor*, *Fëanturi*.

**fin-:**—“hair” in *Finduilas*, *Fingon*, *Finrod*, *Glorfindel*.

**formen:**—“north” (Quenya) in *Formenos*; Sindarin *forn* (also *for*, *forod*) in *Fornost*.

**fuin:**—“gloom, darkness” (Quenya *huinë*) in *Fuinur*, *Taur-nu-Fuin*.



**gaer:**—“sea” in *Belegaer* (and in *Gaerys*, Sindarin name of Ossë). Said to derive from the stem *gaya*, “awe, dread”, and to have been the name made for the vast and terrifying Great Sea when the Eldar first came to its shores.

**gaur:**—“werewolf” (from a root *ngwaw-*, “howl”) in *Tol-in-Gaurhoth*.

**gil:**—“star” in *Dagor-nuin-Giliath*, *Osgiliath* (*giliath*, “host of stars”); *Gil-Estel*, *Gil-galad*.

**girth:**—“shuddering” in *Nen Girth*; cf. also *Girithron*, name of the last month of the year in Sindarin (*The Lord of the Rings* [Appendix D](#)).

**glîn:**—“gleam” (particularly applied to the eyes) in *Maeglin*.

**golodh:**—is the Sindarin form of Quenya *Noldo*; see [gûl](#). Plural *Golodhrim*, and *Gelydh* (in *Annon-in-Gelydh*).

**gond:**—“stone” in *Gondolin*, *Gondor*, *Gonnhirrim*, *Argonath*, *seregon*. The name of the hidden city of King Turgon was devised by him in Quenya as *Ondolindë* (Quenya *ondo*=Sindarin *gond*, and *lindë*, “singing, song”); but it was known always in legend in the Sindarin form *Gondolin*, which was probably interpreted as *gond-dolen*, “Hidden Rock”.

**gor:**—“horror, dread” in *Gorthaur*, *Gorthol*; *goroath* of the same meaning, with reduplicated *gor*, in *Gorgoroth*, *Ered Gorgoroth*.

**groth (grod):**—“delving, underground dwelling” in *Menegroth*, *Nogrod* (probably also in *Nimrodel*, “lady of the white cave”). *Nogrod* was originally *Novrod*, “hollow delving” (hence the translation *Hollowbold*), but was altered under the influence of *naug*, “dwarf”.

**gûl:**—“sorcery” in *Dol Guldur*, *Minas Morgul*. This word was derived from the same ancient stem *ngol-* that appears in *Noldor*; cf. Quenya *nôlē*, “long study, lore, knowledge”. But the Sindarin word was darkened in sense by its frequent use in the compound *morgul*, “black arts”.

**gurth:**—“death” in *Gurthang* (see also [Melkor](#) in the Index).

**gwaith:**—“people” in *Gwaith-i-Mirdain*; cf. *Enedwaith*, “Middle-folk”, name of the land between the Greyflood and the Isen.

**gwath, wath:**—“shadow” in *Deldúwath*, *Ephel Dúath*; also in *Gwathló*, the river Greyflood in Eriador. Related forms in *Ered Wethrin*, *Thuringwethil*. (This Sindarin word referred to dim light, not to the shadows of objects cast by light: these were called *morchaint*, “dark shapes”.)



**hadhod:**—in *Hadhodrond* (translation of *Khazad-dûm*) was a rendering of *Khazâd* into Sindarin sounds.

**haudh:**—“mound” in *Haudh-en-Arwen*, *Haudh-en-Elleth*, etc.

**heru:**—“lord” in *Herumor*, *Herunúmen*; Sindarin *hîr* in *Gonnhirrim*, *Rohirrim*, *Barahir*; *híril*, “lady” in *Hirilorn*.



**him:**—“cool” in *Himlad* (and *Himring?*).

**híni:**—“children” in *Eruhíni*, “Children of Eru”; *Narn i Hîn Húrin*.

**hîth:**—“mist” in *Hithaeglin*, *Hithlum* (also in *Nen Hithoel*, a lake in Anduin). *Hithlum* is Sindarin in form, adapted from the Quenya name *Hísilómë* given by the Noldorin exiles (Quenya *hisië*, “mist”, cf. *Hisimë*, the name of the eleventh month of the year, *The Lord of the Rings* [Appendix D](#)).

**hoth:**—“host, horde” (nearly always in a bad sense) in *Tol-in-Gaurhoth*; also in *Loss(h)oth*, the Snowmen of Forochel (*The Lord of the Rings* [Appendix A](#) ([I, iii](#))) and *Glamhoth*, “din-horde”, a name for Orcs.

**hyarmen:**—“south” (Quenya) in *Hyarmentir*; Sindarin *har-*, *harn*, *harad*.

## I

**iâ:**—“void, abyss” in *Moria*.

**iant:**—“bridge” in *Iant Iaur*.

**iâth:**—“fence” in *Doriath*.

**iaur:**—“old” in *Iant Iaur*; cf. the Elvish name of Bombadil, *Iarwain*.

**ilm-:**—This stem appears in *Ilmen*, *Ilmarë*, and also in *Ilmarin* (“mansion of the high airs”, the dwelling of Manwë and Varda upon Oiolossë).

**ilúvë:**—“the whole, the all” in *Ilúvatar*.

## K

**kal- (gal-):**—This root, meaning “shine”, appears in *Calacirya*, *Calaquendi*, *Tar-Calion*; *galvorn*, *Gil-galad*, *Galadriel*. The last two names have no connexion with Sindarin *galadh*, “tree”, although in the case of Galadriel such a connexion was often made, and the name altered to *Galadhrriel*. In the High-elven speech her name was *Al(a)táriel*, derived from *alata*, “radiance” (Sindarin *galad*) and *riel*, “garlanded maiden” (from a root *rig-*, “twine, wreath”): the whole meaning “maiden crowned with a radiant garland”, referring to her hair. *calen* (*galen*), “green” is etymologically “bright”, and derives from this root; see also [aglar](#).

**káno:**—“commander”: this Quenya word is the origin of the second element in *Fingon* and *Turgon*.

**kel-:**—“go away”, of water “flow away, flow down”, in *Celon*; from *et-kele*, “issue of water, spring” was derived, with transposition of the consonants, Quenya *ehelë*, Sindarin *eithel*.

**kemen:**—“earth” in *Kementári*; a Quenya word referring to the earth as a flat floor beneath *menel*, the heavens.

**khelek-:**—“ice” in *Helcar*, *Helcaraxë* (Quenya *helka*, “icy, ice-cold”). But in *Helevorn* the first element is Sindarin *heledh*, “glass”, taken from Khuzdul *kheled* (cf. *Kheled-zâram*, “Mirrormere”); *Helevorn* means “black glass” (cf. *galvorn*).

**khil-:**—“follow” in *Hildor*, *Hildórien*, *Eluchil*.

**kir-:**—“cut, cleave” in *Calacirya*, *Cirth*, *Angerthas*, *Cirith* (*Ninniach*, *Thoronath*). From the sense “pass swiftly through” was derived Quenya *círya*, “sharp-prowed ship” (cf. English *cutter*), and this meaning appears also in *Círdan*, *Tar-Ciryatan*, and no doubt in the name of Isildur’s son *Ciryon*.

## L

**lad:**—“plain, valley” in *Dagorlad*, *Himlad*; *imlad*, a narrow valley with steep sides, in *Imladris* (cf. also *Imlad Morgul* in the Ephel Dúath).

**laurë:**—“gold” (but of light and colour, not of the metal) in *Laurelin*; the Sindarin forms in *Glóredhel*, *Glorfindel*, *Loeg Ningloron*, *Lóringol*, *Rathlóriel*.

**lhach**:—“leaping flame” in *Dagor Bragollach*, and probably in *Anglachel* (the sword made by Eöl of meteoritic iron).

**lin (1)**:—“pool, mere” in *Linaewen* (which contains *aew* (Quenya *aiwë*) “small bird”), *Teiglin*; cf. *aelin*.

**lin- (2)**:—This root, meaning “sing, make a musical sound”, occurs in *Ainulindalë*, *Laurelin*, *Lindar*, *Lindon*, *Ered Lindon*, *lómelindi*.

**lith**:—“ash” in *Anfauglith*, *Dor-nu-Faугlith*; also in *Ered Lithui*, the Ashen Mountains, forming the northern border of Mordor, and *Lithlad*, “Plain of Ashes” at the feet of Ered Lithui.

**lok**:—“bend, loop” in *Urulóki* (Quenya *(h)lókë*, “snake, serpent”, Sindarin *lhûg*).

**lóm**:—“echo” in *Dor-lómin*, *Ered Lómin*; related are *Lammoth*, *Lanthir Lamath*.

**lómë**:—“dusk” in *Lómion*, *lómelindi*; see *dú*.

**londë**:—“land-locked haven” in *Alqualondë*; the Sindarin form *lond* (*lonn*) in *Mithlond*.

**los**:—“snow” in *Oiolossë* (Quenya *oio*, “ever” and *lossë*, “snow, snow-white”); Sindarin *loss* in *Amon Uilos* and *Aeglos*.

**loth**:—“flower” in *Lothlórien*, *Nimloth*; Quenya *lótë* in *Ninquelótë*, *Vingilótë*.

**luin**:—“blue” in *Ered Luin*, *Helluin*, *Luinil*, *Mindolluin*.

## M

**maeg**:—“sharp, piercing” (Quenya *maika*) in *Maeglin*.

**mal**:—“gold” in *Malduin*, *Malinalda*; also in *mallorn*, and in the Field of *Cormallen*, which means “golden circle” and was named from the *culumalda* trees that grew there (see *cul*-).

**man**:—“good, blessed, unmarred” in *Aman*, *Manwë*; derivatives of *Aman* in *Amandil*, *Araman*, *Úmanyar*.

**mel**:—“love” in *Melian* (from *Melyanna*, “dear gift”); this stem is seen also in the Sindarin word *mellon*, “friend” in the inscription on the West-gate of Moria.

**men**:—“way” in *Númen*, *Hyarmen*, *Rómen*, *Formen*.

**menel**:—“the heavens” in *Meneldil*, *Menelmacar*, *Meneltarma*.

**mereth**:—“feast” in *Mereth Aderthad*; also in *Merethrond*, the Hall of Feasts in Minas Tirith.

**minas**:—“tower” in *Annúminas*, *Minas Anor*, *Minas Tirith*, etc. The same stem occurs in other words referring to isolated, prominent, things, e.g. *Mindolluin*, *Mindon*; probably related is Quenya *minya*, “first” (cf. *Tar-Minyatur*, the name of Elros as first King of Númenor).

**mîr**:—“jewel” (Quenya *mîrë*) in *Elemmîrë*, *Gwaith-i-Mîrdain*, *Míriel*, *Nauglamîr*, *Tar-Atanamir*.

**mith**:—“grey” in *Mithlond*, *Mithrandir*, *Mithrim*; also in *Mitheithel*, the river Hoarwell in Eriador.

**mor**:—“dark” in *Mordor*, *Morgoth*, *Moria*, *Moriquendi*, *Mormegil*, *Morwen*, etc.

**moth**:—“dusk” in *Nan Elmoth*.

## N

**nan(d)**:—“valley” in *Nan Dungortheb*, *Nan Elmoth*, *Nan Tathren*.

**nár**:—“fire” in *Narsil*, *Narya*; present also in the original forms of *Aegnor* (*Aikanáro*, “Sharp Flame” or “Fell Fire”) and *Fëanor* (*Fëanáro*, “Spirit of Fire”). The Sindarin form was *naur*, as in *Sammath Naur*, the Chambers of Fire in Orodruin. Derived from the same ancient root (*a*)*nar* was the name of the Sun, Quenya *Anar* (also in *Anárion*), Sindarin *Anor* (cf. *Minas Anor*, *Anórien*).

**naug**:—“dwarf” in *Naugrim*; see also *Nogrod* in entry [groth](#). Related is another Sindarin word for “dwarf”, *nogoth*, plural *noegyth* (*Noegyth Nibin*, “Petty-dwarves”) and *nogothrim*.

**-(n)dil**:—is a very frequent ending of personal names, *Amandil*, *Eärendil* (shortened *Eärnil*), *Elendil*, *Mardil*, etc.; it implies “devotion”, “disinterested love” (see *Mardil* in entry [bar](#)).

**-(n)dur**:—in names such as *Eärendur* (shortened *Eärnur*) is similar in meaning to **-(n)dil**.

**neldor**:—“beech” in *Neldoreth*; but it seems that this was properly the name of Hírilorn, the great beech-tree with three trunks (*neldë*, “three” and *orn*).

**nen**:—“water”, used of lakes, pools, and lesser rivers, in *Nen Girith*, *Nenning*, *Nenuial*, *Nenya*; *Cuiviénen*, *Uinen*; also in many names in *The Lord of the Rings*, as *Nen Hithoel*, *Bruinen*, *Eryn Arnen*, *Núnnen*. *Nîn*, “wet” in *Loeg Ningloron*; also in *Nindalf*.

**nim**:—“white” (from earlier *nimf*, *nimp*) in *Nimbrethil*, *Nimloth*, *Nimphelos*, *niphredil* (*niphred*, “pallor”), *Barad Nimras*, *Ered Nimrais*. The Quenya form was *ninquë*; thus *Ninquelótë*=*Nimloth*. Cf. also *Taniquetil*.



**orn**:—“tree” in *Celeborn*, *Hirilorn*; cf. *Fangorn*, “Treebeard”, and *mallorn*, plural *mellyrn*, the trees of Lothlórien.

**orod**:—“mountain” in *Orodruin*, *Thangorodrim*; *Orocarni*, *Oromet*. Plural *ered* in *Ered Engrin*, *Ered Lindon*, etc.

**os(t)**:—“fortress” in *Angrenost*, *Belegost*, *Formenos*, *Fornost*, *Mandos*, *Nargothrond* (from *Narog-ost-rond*), *Os(t)giliath*, *Ost-in-Edhil*.



**palan**:—(Quenya) “far and wide” in *palantíri*, *Tar-Palantir*.

**pel**:—“go round, encircle” in *Pelargir*, *Pelóri*, and in the *Pelennor*, the “fenced land” of Minas Tirith; also in *Ephel Brandir*, *Ephel Dúath* (*ephel* from *et-pel*, “outer fence”).



**quen-** (**quet-**):—“say, speak” in *Quendi* (*Calaquendi*, *Laiquendi*, *Moriquendi*), *Quenya*, *Valaquenta*, *Quenta Silmarillion*. The Sindarin forms have *p* (or *b*) for *qu*; e.g. *pedo*, “speak” in the inscription on the West-gate of Moria, corresponding to the Quenya stem *quet-*, and Gandalf’s words before the gate, *lasto beth lammen*, “listen to the words of my tongue”, where *beth*, “word” corresponds to Quenya *quetta*.



**ram**:—“wall” (Quenya *ramba*) in *Andram*, *Ramdal*; also in *Rammas Echor*, the wall about the Pelennor Fields at Minas Tirith.

**ran**:—“wander, stray” in *Rána*, the Moon, and in *Mithrandir*, *Aerandir*; also in the river *Gilraen* in Gondor.

**rant**:—“course” in the river-names *Adurant* (with *adu*, “double”) and *Celebrant* (“Silverlode”).

**ras**:—“horn” in *Barad Nimras*, also in *Caradhras* (“Redhorn”) and *Methedras* (“Last Peak”) in the Misty Mountains; plural *rais* in *Ered Nimrais*.

**rau****ko**:—“demon” in *Valaraukar*; Sindarin *raug*, *rog* in *Balrog*.

**ril**:—“brilliance” in *Idril*, *Silmaril*; also in *Andúril* (the sword of Aragorn) and in *mithril* (Moria-silver). Idril’s name in Quenya form was *Itarillë* (or *Itarildë*), from a stem *ita-*, “sparkle”.

**rim**:—“great number, host” (Quenya *rimbë*) was commonly used to form collective plurals, as [Golodhrim](#), [Mithrim](#) (see the Index), *Naugrim*, *Thangorodrim*, etc.

**ring**:—“cold, chill” in *Ringil*, *Ringwil*, *Himring*; also in the river *Ringló* in Gondor, and in *Ringarë*, Quenya name of the last month of the year (*The Lord of the Rings* [Appendix D](#)).

**ris**:—“cleave” appears to have blended with the stem *kris-* of similar meaning (a derivative of the root *kir-*, “cleave, cut”, q.v.); hence *Angrist* (also *Orcrist*, “Orc-cleaver”, the sword of Thorin Oakenshield), *Crissaegrim*, *Imladris*.

**roch**:—“horse” (Quenya *rokko*) in *Rochallor*, *Rohan* (from *Rochand*, “land of horses”), *Rohirrim*; also in *Roheryn*, “horse of the lady” (cf. [heru](#)), Aragorn’s horse, which was so called because given to him by Arwen (*The Return of the King* [V 2](#)).

**rom-**:—A stem used of the sound of trumpets and horns which appears in *Oromë* and *Valaróma*; cf. *Béma*, the name of this Vala in the language of Rohan as translated into Anglo-Saxon in *The Lord of the Rings* [Appendix A \(II\)](#): Anglo-Saxon *beme*, “trumpet”.

**rómen**:—“uprising, sunrise, east” (Quenya) in *Rómenna*. The Sindarin words for “east”, *rhûn* (in *Talath Rhúnen*) and *amrûn*, were of the same origin.

**rond**:—meant a vaulted or arched roof, or a large hall or chamber so roofed; so *Nargothrond* (see [ost](#)), *Hadhodrond*, *Aglarond*. It could be applied to the heavens, hence the name *Elrond*, “star-dome”.

**ros**:—“foam, spindrift, spray” in *Celebros*, *Elros*, *Rauros*; also in *Cair Andros*, an island in the river Anduin.

**ruin**:—“red flame” (Quenya *rúnya*) in *Orodruin*.

**rûth**:—“anger” in *Aranrûth*.



**sarn**:—“(small) stone” in *Sarn Athrad* (*Sarn Ford* on the Brandywine is a half-translation of this); also in *Sarn Gebir* (“stone-spikes”: *ceber*, plural *cebir*, “stakes”), rapids in the river Anduin. A derivative is *Serni*, a river in Gondor.

**sereg**:—“blood” (Quenya *serkë*) in *seregon*.

**sil-**:—(and variant *thil-*) “shine (with white or silver light)” in *Belthil*, *Galathilion*, *Silpion*, and in Quenya *Isil*, Sindarin *Ithil*, the Moon (whence *Isildur*, *Narsil*; *Minas Ithil*, *Ithilien*). The Quenya word *Silmarilli* is said to derive from the name *silima* that Fëanor gave to the substance from which they were made.

**sîr**:—“river”, from root *sir-*, “flow”, in *Ossiriand* (the first element is from the stem of the numeral “seven”, Quenya *otso*, Sindarin *odo*), *Sirion*; also in *Sirannon* (the “Gate-stream” of Moria) and *Sirith* (“a flowing”, as *tirith*, “watching” from *tir*), a river in Gondor. With change of *s* to *h* in the middle of words it is present in *Minhiriath*, “between the rivers”, the region between the Brandywine and the Greyflood; in *Nanduhirion*, “vale of dim streams”, the Dimrill Dale (see [nan\(d\)](#) and [dû](#)); and in *Ethir Anduin*, the outflow or delta of Anduin (from *et-sîr*).

**sûl**:—“wind” in *Amon Sûl*, *Sûlimo*; cf. *Sûlimë*, Quenya name of the third month of the year (*The Lord of the Rings* [Appendix D](#)).



**tal (dal)**:—“foot” in *Celebrindal*, and with the meaning “end” in *Ramdal*.

**talath**:—“flat lands, plain” in *Talath Dirnen*, *Talath Rhúnen*.

**tar-**:—“high” (Quenya *tára*, “lofty”), prefix of the Quenya names of the Númenórean Kings; also in *Annatar*. Feminine *tári*, “she that is high, Queen” in *Elentári*, *Kementári*. Cf. *tarma*, “pillar” in *Meneltarma*.

**tathar**:—“willow”; adjective *tathren* in *Nan-tathren*; Quenya *tasarë* in *Tasarinan*, *Nan-tasarion* (see [Nan-tathren](#) in the Index).

**taur**:—“wood, forest” (Quenya *taurë*) in *Tauron*, *Taur-im-Duinath*, *Taur-nu-Fuin*.

**tel-**:—“finish, end, be last” in *Teleri*.

**thalion**:—“strong, dauntless” in *Cúthalion*, *Thalion*.

**thang**:—“oppression” in *Thangorodrim*, also in *Durthang* (a castle in Mordor). Quenya *sanga* meant “press, throng”, whence *Sangahyando*, “Throng-cleaver”, name of a man in Gondor (*The Lord of the Rings* Appendix A (I, iv)).

**thar-**:—“athwart, across” in *Sarn Athrad*, *Thargelion*; also in *Tharbad* (from *thara-pata*, “crossway”) where the ancient road from Arnor and Gondor crossed the Greyflood.

**thaur**:—“abominable, abhorrent” in *Sauron* (from *Thauron*), *Gorthaur*.

**thin(d)**:—“grey” in *Thingol*; Quenya *sinda* in *Sindar*, *Singollo* (*Sindacollo*: *collo*, “cloak”).

**thôl**:—“helm” in *Dor Cúarthol*, *Gorthol*.

**thôn**:—“pine-tree” in *Dorthonion*.

**thoron**:—“eagle” in *Thorondor* (Quenya *Sorontar*), *Cirith Thoronath*. The Quenya form is perhaps present in the constellation-name *Soronúmë*.

**tîl**:—“point, horn” in *Taniquetil*, *Tilion* (“the Horned”); also in *Celebdil*, “Silvertine”, one of the Mountains of Moria.

**tîn-**:—“sparkle” (Quenya *tinta*, “cause to sparkle”, *tinwë*, “spark”) in *Tintallë*; also in *tindómë*, “starry twilight” (*The Lord of the Rings* Appendix D), whence *tindómerel*, “daughter of the twilight”, a poetic name for the nightingale (Sindarin *Tinúviel*). It appears also in Sindarin *ithildin*, “starmoon”, the substance of which the devices on the West-gate of Moria were made.

**tîr**:—“watch, watch over” in *Minas Tirith*, *palantîri*, *Tar-Palantir*, *Tirion*.

**tol**:—“isle” (rising with sheer sides from the sea or from a river) in *Tol Eressëa*, *Tol Galen*, etc.

**tum**:—“valley” in *Tumhalad*, *Tumladen*; Quenya *tumbo* (cf. Treebeard’s *tumbalemorna*, “black deep valley”, *The Two Towers*). Cf. *Utumno*, Sindarin *Udûn* (Gandalf in Moria named the Balrog “Flame of Udûn”), a name afterwards used of the deep dale in Mordor between the Morannon and the Isenmouthe.

**tur**:—“power, mastery” in *Turambar*, *Turgon*, *Túrin*, *Fëanturi*, *Tar-Minyatur*.

## U

**uial**:—“twilight” in *Aelin-uial*, *Nenuial*.

**ur-**:—“heat, be hot” in *Urolóki*; cf. *Úrimë* and *Úrui*, Quenya and Sindarin names of the eighth month of the year (*The Lord of the Rings* Appendix D). Related is the Quenya word *aurë*, “sunlight, day” (cf. Fingon’s *cry* before the Nirnaeth Arnoediad), Sindarin *aur*, which in the form *Or-* is prefixed to the names of the days of the week.

## V

**val-**:—“power” in *Valar*, *Valacirca*, *Valaquenta*, *Valaraukar*, *Val(i)-mar*, *Valinor*. The original stem was *bal-*, preserved in Sindarin *Balan*, plural *Belain*, the Valar, and in *Balrog*.

## W

**wen**:—“maiden” is a frequent ending, as in *Eärwen*, *Morwen*.

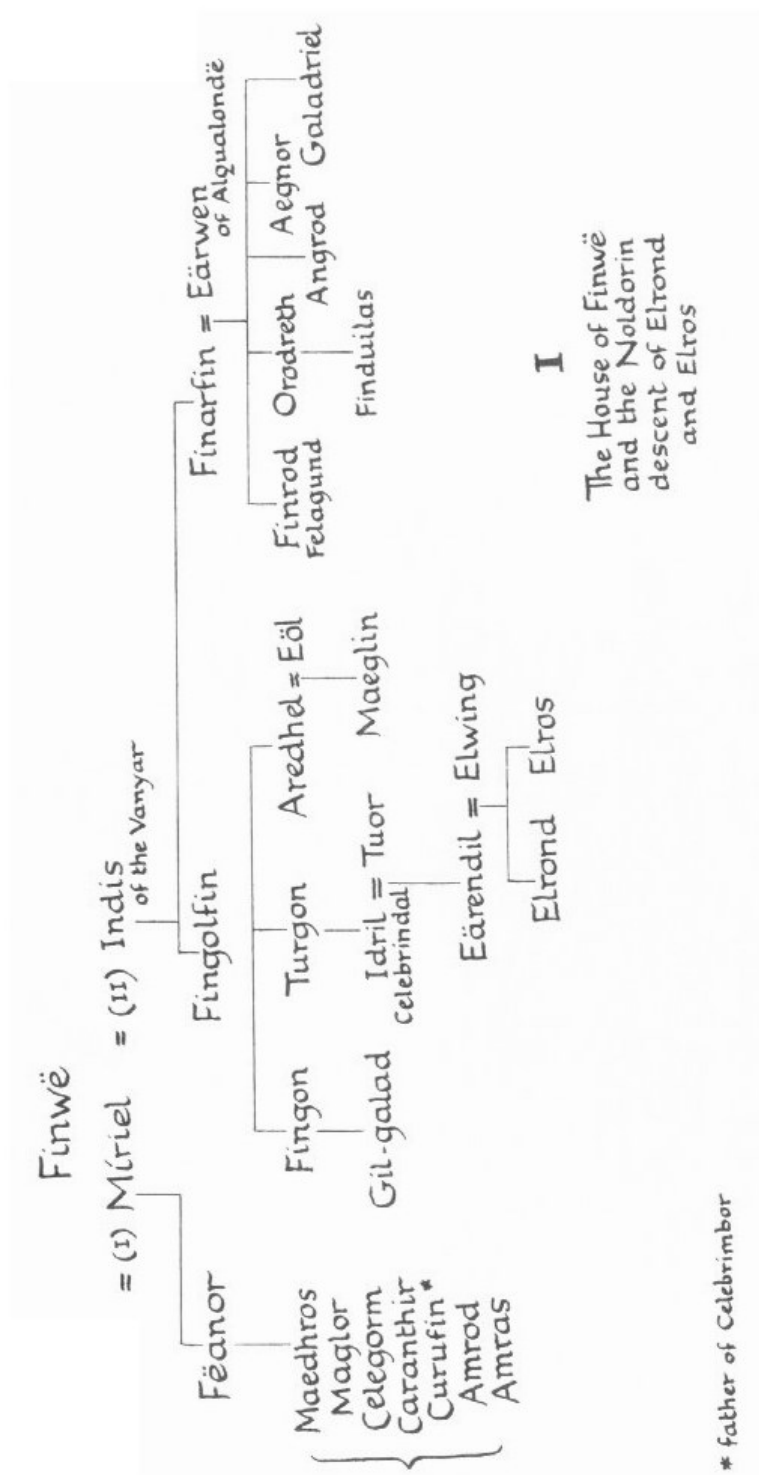
**wing**:—“foam, spray” in *Elwing*, *Vingelot* (and only in these two names).

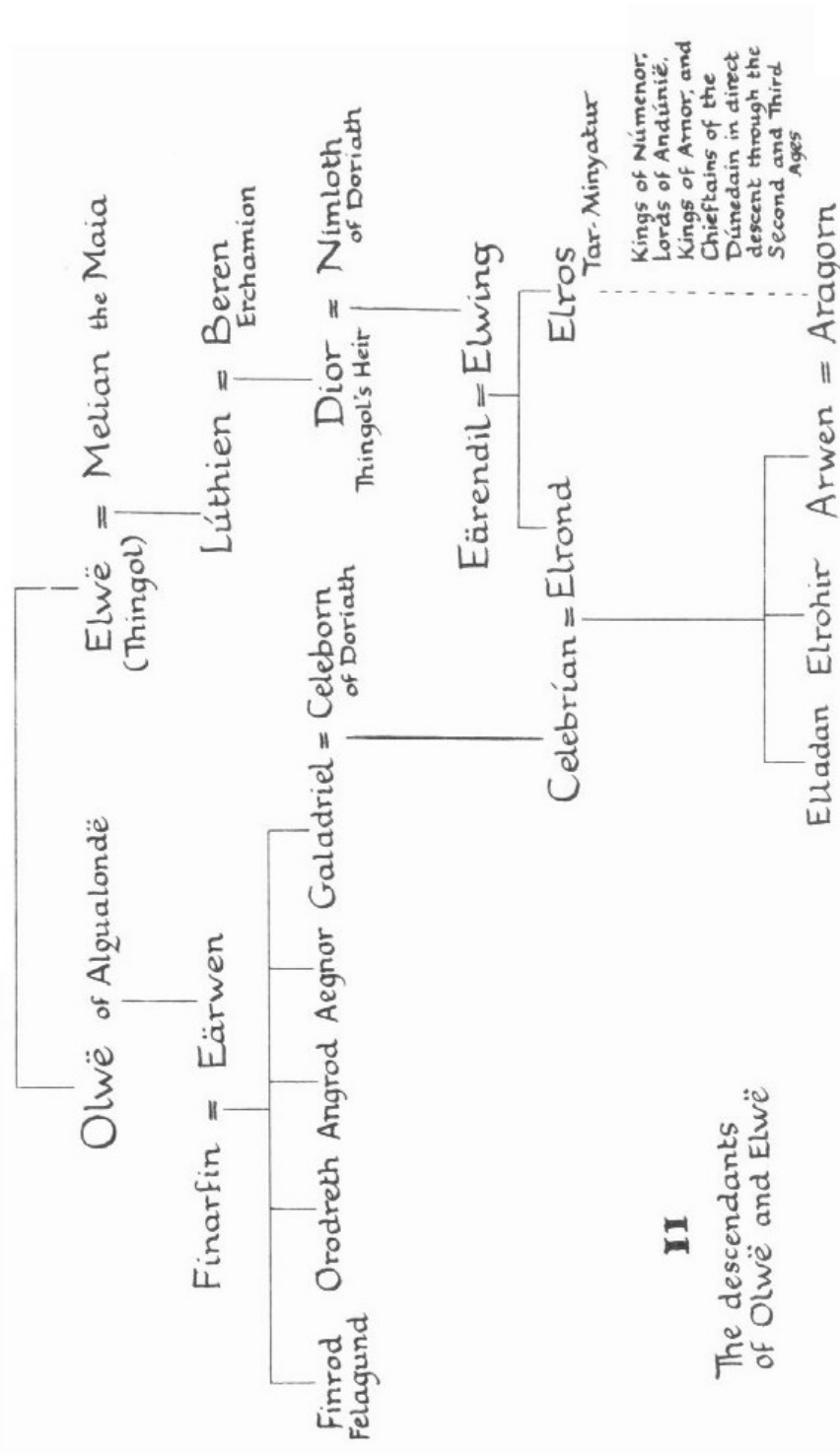
## Þ

**yávë**:—“fruit” (Quenya) in *Yavanna*; cf. *Yavannië*, Quenya name of the ninth month of the year, and *yávië*, “autumn” (*The Lord of the Rings* [Appendix D](#)).



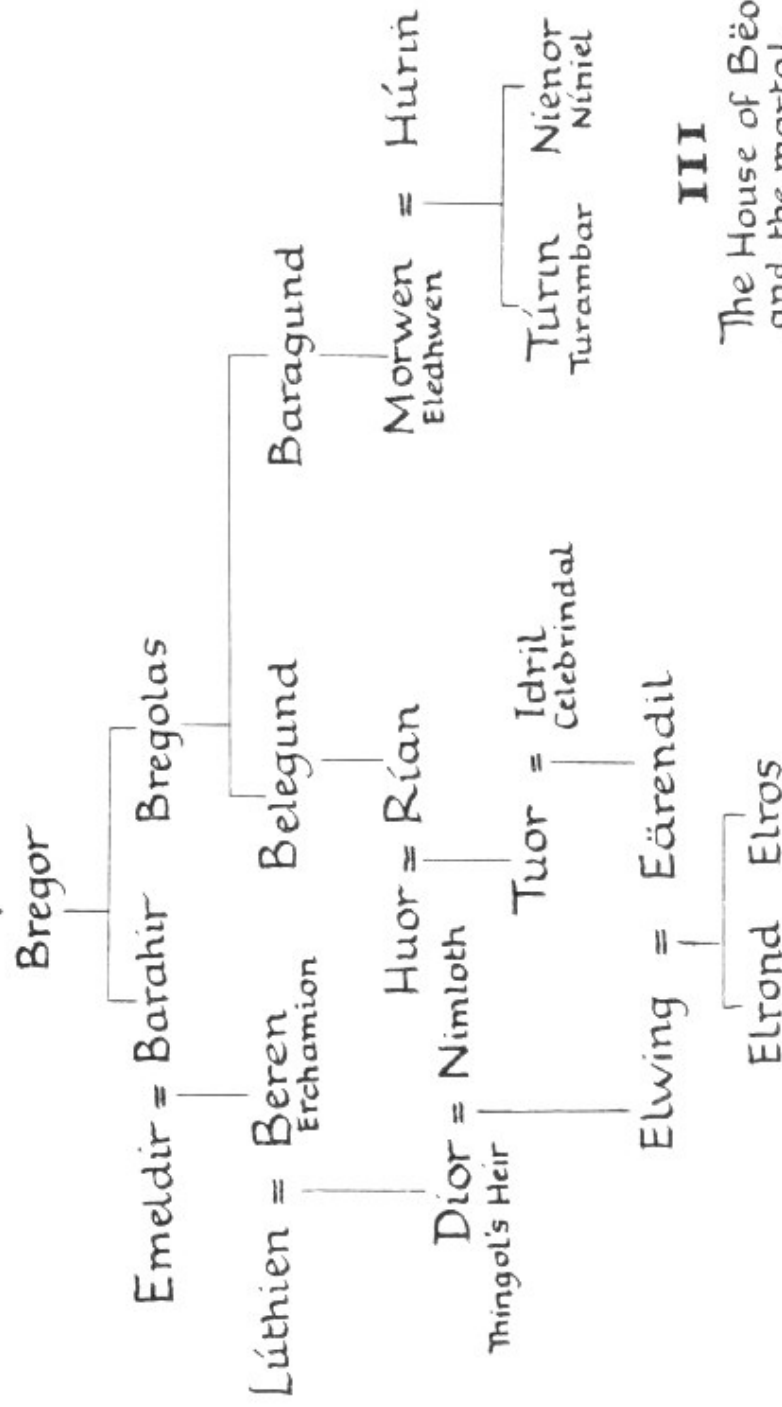
## Genealogical Tables





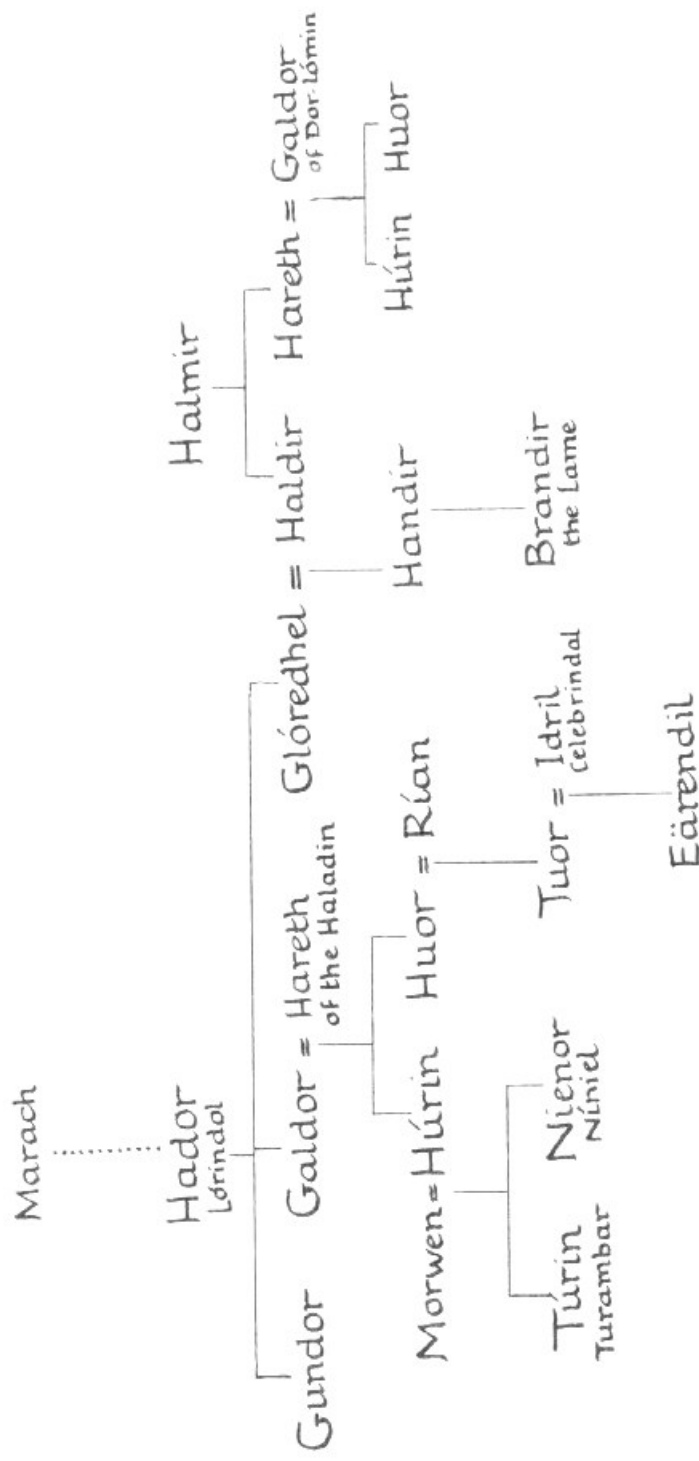


# Bëor the Old



## III

The House of Bëor  
and the mortal  
descent of Elrond  
and Elros



#### IV

The House of Hador  
of Dor-lómin

#### V

The People of Haleth  
(The Haladin of Brethil)

# QUENDI *The Elves*

## ELDAR

*Elves of the Great Journey  
from Cuiviénen*

## AVARI

*'The Unwilling': Elves who  
refused the Great Journey*

### VANYAR

*All went to  
Aman*

### NOLDOR

*All went to  
Aman*

### CALAQQUENDI

*'Elves of the Light' (High Elves)  
(They came to Aman in the days  
of the Two Trees)*

### TELERI

*Those that  
went to Aman*

*Those that  
remained in  
Beleriand:*

#### SINDAR

*Grey-elves*

*Those that left the  
march of the Teleri  
east of the Misty Mts.:*

#### NANDOR

*of whom some after-  
wards entered Beleriand:*

#### LAIQUENDI

*Green-elves of  
Ossiríand*

#### ÚMANYAR

*The Eldar who were 'not of Aman'*

The Sundering of the Elves  
and some of the names  
given to their divisions

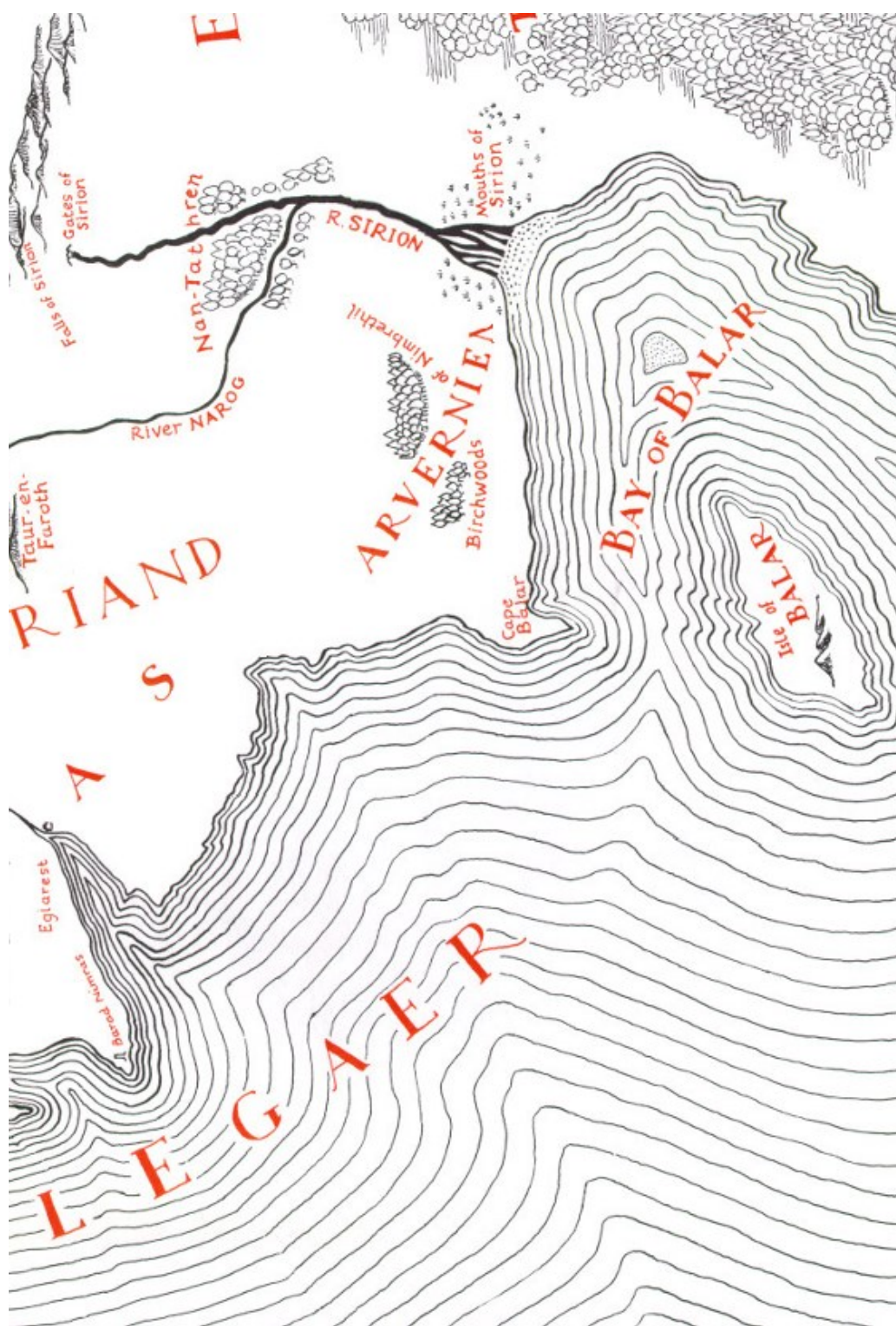
### MORIQUENDI

*'Elves of the Darkness'  
(They never saw the Light of the Trees)*

## Maps









FAUGLITH  
(Ard-galen)

LOTHLANN



ERED LUIN (ERED LINDON)

THARGELION

ESTOLAD

HIMLAD

HATH  
EST OF LDORETH  
ESgalduin  
FOREST OF REGION

March of Maedhros

Little Gellon

RIVER GELLON

River Eimoth

RIVER AROS

LADROS

R-NU-FUIN  
(Dorthonion)

DOR DÍMEN

DUNGORTHEB

Mount Helevorn

Lake Helevorn

Mount Dolmed

Belegost

Sarn

March of Maedhros

Little Gellon

River Gellon

River Eimoth

River Aros

Mount Helevorn

Lake Helevorn

Mount Dolmed

Belegost

Sarn

March of Maedhros













## Appendix A: Annals Of The Kings And Rulers

Concerning the sources for most of the matter contained in the following Appendices, especially A to D, see the note at the end of the [Prologue](#). The section [A III](#), *Durin's Folk*, was probably derived from Gimli the Dwarf, who maintained his friendship with Peregrin and Meriadoc and met them again many times in Gondor and Rohan.

The legends, histories, and lore to be found in the sources are very extensive. Only selections from them, in most places much abridged, are here presented. Their principal purpose is to illustrate the War of the Ring and its origins, and to fill up some of the gaps in the main story. The ancient legends of the First Age, in which Bilbo's chief interest lay, are very briefly referred to, since they concern the ancestry of Elrond and the Númenórean kings and chieftains. Actual extracts from longer annals and tales are placed within quotation marks. Insertions of later date are enclosed in brackets. Notes within quotation marks are found in the sources. Others are editorial.<sup>359</sup>

The dates given are those of the Third Age, unless they are marked S.A. (Second Age) or F.A. (Fourth Age). The Third Age was held to have ended when the Three Rings passed away in September 3021, but for the purposes of records in Gondor F.A. I began on March 25, 3021. On the equation of the dating of Gondor and Shire Reckoning see Vol. I [p. 4](#) and III [p. 1112](#). In lists the dates following the names of kings and rulers are the dates of their deaths, if only one date is given. The sign † indicates a premature death, in battle or otherwise, though an annal of the event is not always included.

### I. The Númenórean Kings

#### (i) *Númenór*

ƒëanor was the greatest of the Eldar in arts and lore, but also the proudest and most selfwilled. He wrought the Three Jewels, the *Silmarilli*, and filled them with the radiance of the Two Trees, Telperion and Laurelin,<sup>360</sup> that gave light to the land of the Valar. The Jewels were coveted by Morgoth the Enemy, who stole them and, after destroying the Trees, took them to Middle-earth, and guarded them in his great fortress of Thangorodrim.<sup>361</sup> Against the will of the Valar ƒëanor forsook the Blessed Realm and went in exile to Middle-earth, leading with him a great part of his people; for in his pride he purposed to recover the Jewels from Morgoth by force. Thereafter followed the hopeless war of the Eldar and the Edain against Thangorodrim, in which they were at last utterly defeated. The Edain (*Atani*) were three peoples of Men who, coming first to the West of Middle-earth and the shores of the Great Sea, became allies of the Eldar against the Enemy.

There were three unions of the Eldar and the Edain: Lúthien and Beren; Idril and Tuor; Arwen and Aragorn. By the last the long-sundered branches of the Halfelven were reunited and their line was restored.

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<sup>359</sup> A few references are given by page to this edition of *The Lord of the Rings*, and to the hardback 4<sup>th</sup> (reset 4<sup>th</sup> edition (1995)) edition of *The Hobbit*.

<sup>360</sup> Cf. pp. [244](#); [598](#); [971](#): no likeness remained in Middle-earth of Laurelin the Golden.

<sup>361</sup> [P. 243](#); [p. 712](#).

Luthien Tinúviel was the daughter of King Thingol Grey-cloak of Doriath in the First Age, but her mother was Melian of the people of the Valar. Beren was the son of Barahir of the First House of the Edain. Together they wrested a *silmaril* from the Iron Crown of Morgoth.<sup>362</sup> Lúthien became mortal and was lost to Elven-kind. Dior was her son. Elwing was his daughter and had in her keeping the *silmaril*.

Idril Celebrindal was the daughter of Turgon, king of the hidden city of Gondolin.<sup>363</sup> Tuor was the son of Huor of the House of Hador, the Third House of the Edain and the most renowned in the wars with Morgoth. Eärendil the Mariner was their son.

Eärendil wedded Elwing, and with the power of the *silmaril* passed the Shadows<sup>364</sup> and came to the Uttermost West, and speaking as ambassador of both Elves and Men obtained the help by which Morgoth was overthrown. Eärendil was not permitted to return to mortal lands, and his ship bearing the *silmaril* was set to sail in the heavens as a star, and a sign of hope to the dwellers in Middle-earth oppressed by the Great Enemy or his servants.<sup>365</sup> The *silmarilli* alone preserved the ancient light of the Two Trees of Valinor before Morgoth poisoned them; but the other two were lost at the end of the First Age. Of these things the full tale, and much else concerning Elves and Men, is told in *The Silmarillion*.

The sons of Eärendil were Elros and Elrond, the *Peredhil* or Halfelven. In them alone the line of the heroic chieftains of the Edain in the First Age was preserved; and after the fall of Gil-galad<sup>366</sup> the lineage of the High-elven Kings was also in Middle-earth only represented by their descendants.

At the end of the First Age the Valar gave to the Halfelven an irrevocable choice to which kindred they would belong. Elrond chose to be of Elven-kind, and became a master of wisdom. To him therefore was granted the same grace as to those of the High Elves that still lingered in Middle-earth: that when weary at last of the mortal lands they could take ship from the Grey Havens and pass into the Uttermost West; and this grace continued after the change of the world. But to the children of Elrond a choice was also appointed: to pass with him from the circles of the world; or if they remained to become mortal and die in Middle-earth. For Elrond, therefore, all chances of the War of the Ring were fraught with sorrow.<sup>367</sup>

Elros chose to be of Man-kind and remain with the Edain; but a great life-span was granted to him many times that of lesser men.

As a reward for their sufferings in the cause against Morgoth, the Valar, the Guardians of the World, granted to the Edain a land to dwell in, removed from the dangers of Middle-earth. Most of them, therefore, set sail over Sea, and guided by the Star of Eärendil came to the great Isle of Elenna, westernmost of all Mortal lands. There they founded the realm of Númenór.

There was a tall mountain in the midst of the land, the Meneltarma, and from its summit the farsighted could descry the white tower of the Haven of the Eldar in Eressëa. Thence the Eldar came to the Edain and enriched them with knowledge and many gifts; but one command had been laid upon the Númenóreans, the 'Ban of the Valar': they were forbidden to sail west out of sight of their own shores or to attempt to set foot on the Undying Lands. For though a long span of life had been granted to them, in the beginning thrice that of lesser Men, they

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<sup>362</sup> P. 193; p. 712.

<sup>363</sup> *The Hobbit*, p. 49; *The Lord of the Rings*, p. 316.

<sup>364</sup> P. 233.

<sup>365</sup> Pp. 361, 365; pp. 712, 720; pp. 915, 922.

<sup>366</sup> Pp. 52, 185.

<sup>367</sup> See pp. 974, 978.

must remain mortal, since the Valar were not permitted to take from them the Gift of Men (or the Doom of Men, as it was afterwards called).

Elros was the first King of Númenor, and was afterwards known by the High-elven name Tar-Minyatur. His descendants were long-lived but mortal. Later when they became powerful they begrudged the choice of their forefather, desiring the immortality within the life of the world that was the fate of the Eldar, and murmuring against the Ban. In this way began their rebellion which, under the evil teaching of Sauron, brought about the Downfall of Númenor and the ruin of the ancient world, as is told in the *Akallabêth*.

These are the names of the Kings and Queens of Númenor: Elros Tar-Minyatur, Vardamir, Tar-Amandil, Tar-Elendil, Tar-Meneldur, Tar-Aldarion, Tar-Ancalimë (the first Ruling Queen), Tar-Anárion, Tar-Súrion, Tar-Telperiën (the second Queen), Tar-Minastir, Tar-Ciryatan, Tar-Atanamir the Great, Tar-Ancalimon, Tar-Telemmaitë, Tar-Vanimeldë (the third Queen), Tar-Alcarin, Tar-Calmacil, Tar-Ardamin.

After Ardamin the Kings took the sceptre in names of the Númenórean (or Adunaic) tongue: Ar-Adûnakhôr, Ar-Zimrathôn, Ar-Sakalthôr, Ar-Gimilzôr, Ar-Inziladûn. Inziladûn repented of the ways of the Kings and changed his name to Tar-Palantir 'The Farsighted'. His daughter should have been the fourth Queen, Tar-Míriel, but the King's nephew usurped the sceptre and became Ar-Pharazôn the Golden, last King of the Númenóreans.

In the days of Tar-Elendil the first ships of the Númenóreans came back to Middle-earth. His elder child was a daughter, Silmariën. Her son was Valandil, first of the Lords of Andúnië in the west of the land, renowned for their friendship with the Eldar. From him were descended Amandil, the last lord, and his son Elendil the Tall.

The sixth King left only one child, a daughter. She became the first Queen; for it was then made a law of the royal house that the eldest child of the King, whether man or woman, should receive the sceptre.

The realm of Númenor endured to the end of the Second Age and increased ever in power and splendour; and until half the Age had passed the Númenóreans grew also in wisdom and joy. The first sign of the shadow that was to fall upon them appeared in the days of Tar-Minastir, eleventh King. He it was that sent a great force to the aid of Gil-galad. He loved the Eldar but envied them. The Númenóreans had now become great mariners, exploring all the seas eastward, and they began to yearn for the West and the forbidden waters; and the more joyful was their life, the more they began to long for the immortality of the Eldar.

Moreover, after Minastir the Kings became greedy of wealth and power. At first the Númenóreans had come to Middle-earth as teachers and friends of lesser Men afflicted by Sauron; but now their havens became fortresses, holding wide coastlands in subjection. Atanamir and his successors levied heavy tribute, and the ships of the Númenóreans returned laden with spoil.

It was Tar-Atanamir who first spoke openly against the Ban and declared that the life of the Eldar was his by right. Thus the shadow deepened, and the thought of death darkened the hearts of the people. Then the Númenóreans became divided: on the one hand were the Kings and those who followed them, and were estranged from the Eldar and the Valar; on the other were the few who called themselves the Faithful. They lived mostly in the west of the land.

The Kings and their followers little by little abandoned the use of the Eldarin tongues; and at last the twentieth King took his royal name, in Númenórean form, calling himself Ar-Adûnakhôr, 'Lord of the West'. This seemed ill-omened to the Faithful, for hitherto they had given that title only to one of the Valar, or to the Elder King himself.<sup>368</sup> And indeed Ar-Adûnakhôr began to persecute the Faithful and punished those who used the Elven-tongues openly; and the Eldar came no more to Númenor.

The power and wealth of the Númenóreans nonetheless continued to increase; but their years lessened as their fear of death grew, and their joy departed. Tar-Palantir attempted to amend the evil; but it was too late, and there was rebellion and strife in Númenor. When he died, his nephew, leader of the rebellion, seized the sceptre,

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<sup>368</sup> P. 235.

and became King Ar-Pharazôn. Ar-Pharazôn the Golden was the proudest and most powerful of all the Kings, and no less than the kingship of the world was his desire.

He resolved to challenge Sauron the Great for the supremacy in Middle-earth, and at length he himself set sail with a great navy, and he landed at Umbar. So great was the might and splendour of the Númenóreans that Sauron's own servants deserted him; and Sauron humbled himself, doing homage, and craving pardon. Then Ar-Pharazôn in the folly of his pride carried him back as a prisoner to Númenor. It was not long before he had bewitched the King and was master of his counsel; and soon he had turned the hearts of all the Númenóreans, except the remnant of the Faithful, back towards the darkness.

And Sauron lied to the King, declaring that everlasting life would be his who possessed the Undying Lands, and that the Ban was imposed only to prevent the Kings of Men from surpassing the Valar. 'But great Kings take what is their right,' he said.

At length Ar-Pharazôn listened to this counsel, for he felt the waning of his days and was besotted by the fear of Death. He prepared then the greatest armament that the world had seen, and when all was ready he sounded his trumpets and set sail; and he broke the Ban of the Valar, going up with war to wrest everlasting life from the Lords of the West. But when Ar-Pharazôn set foot upon the shores of Aman the Blessed, the Valar laid down their Guardianship and called upon the One, and the world was changed. Númenor was thrown down and swallowed in the Sea, and the Undying Lands were removed for ever from the circles of the world. So ended the glory of Númenor.

The last leaders of the Faithful, Elendil and his sons, escaped from the Downfall with nine ships, bearing a seedling of Nimloth, and the Seven Seeing-stones (gifts of the Eldar to their House);<sup>369</sup> and they were borne on the wind of a great storm and cast upon the shores of Middle-earth. There they established in the North-west the Númenorean realms in exile, Arnor and Gondor.<sup>370</sup> Elendil was the High King and dwelt in the North at Annúminas; and the rule in the South was committed to his sons, Isildur and Anárion. They founded there Osgiliath, between Minas Ithil and Minas Anor,<sup>371</sup> not far from the confines of Mordor. For this good at least they believed had come out of ruin, that Sauron also had perished.

But it was not so. Sauron was indeed caught in the wreck of Númenor, so that the bodily form in which he long had walked perished; but he fled back to Middle-earth, a spirit of hatred borne upon a dark wind. He was unable ever again to assume a form that seemed fair to men, but became black and hideous, and his power thereafter was through terror alone. He re-entered Mordor, and hid there for a time in silence. But his anger was great when he learned that Elendil, whom he most hated, had escaped him, and was now ordering a realm upon his borders.

Therefore, after a time he made war upon the Exiles, before they should take root. Orodruin burst once more into flame, and was named anew in Gondor Amon Amarth, Mount Doom. But Sauron struck too soon, before his own power was rebuilt, whereas the power of Gil-galad had increased in his absence; and in the Last Alliance that was made against him Sauron was overthrown and the One Ring was taken from him.<sup>372</sup> So ended the Second Age.

## ***(ii) The Realms In Exile***

### **The Northern Line: Heirs Of Isildur**

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<sup>369</sup> P. 597; p. 971.

<sup>370</sup> P. 242.

<sup>371</sup> P. 244.

<sup>372</sup> P. 243.

*Arnor*. Elendil †S.A. 3441, Isildur †2, Valandil 249,<sup>373</sup> Eldacar 339, Arantar 435, Tarcil 515, Tarondor 602, Valandur †652, Elendur 777, Eärendur 861.

*Arthedain*. Amlaith of Fornost<sup>374</sup> (eldest son of Eärendur) 946, Beleg 1029, Mallor 1110, Celepharn 1191, Celebrindor 1272, Malvegil 1349,<sup>375</sup> Argeleb I †i356, Arveleg I 1409, Araphor 1589, Argeleb II 1670, Arvegil 1743, Arveleg II 1813, Araval 1891, Araphant 1964, Arvedui Last-king †1975. End of the North-kingdom.

*Chieftains*. Aranarth (elder son of Arvedui) 2106, Arahael 2177, Aranuir 2247, Aravir 2319, Aragorn I †2327, Araglas 2455, Arahad I 2523, Aragost 2588, Aravorn 2654, Arahad II 2719, Arassuil 2784, Arathorn I †2848, Argonui 2912, Arador †2930, Arathorn II †2933, Aragorn II FA. 120.

## The Southern Line: Heirs Of Anárion

*Kings of Gondor*. Elendil, (Isildur and) Anárion †SA. 3440, Meneldil son of Anárion 158, Cemendur 238, Eärendil 324, Anardil 411, Ostohor 492, Rómendacil I (Tarostar) †541, Turambar 667, Atanatar I 748, Siriondil 830. Here followed the four ‘Ship-kings’:

Tarannon Falastur 913. He was the first childless king, and was succeeded by the son of his brother Tarciryan. Eärnil I †936, Ciryandil †1015, Hyarmendacil I (Ciryaher) 1149. Gondor now reached the height of its power.

Atanatar II Alcarin ‘the Glorious’ 1226, Narmacil I 1294. He was the second childless king and was succeeded by his younger brother. Calmacil 1304, Minalcar (regent 1240-1304), crowned as Rómendacil II 1304, died 1366, Valacar 1432. In his time the first disaster of Gondor began, the Kin-strife.

Eldacar son of Valacar (at first called Vinitharya) deposed 1437. Castamir the Usurper †1447. Eldacar restored, died 1490.

Aldamir (second son of Eldacar) †1540, Hyarmendacil II (Vinyarion) 1621, Minardil †1634, Telemnar †1636. Telemnar and all his children perished in the plague; he was succeeded by his nephew, the son of Minastan, second son of Minardil. Tarondor 1798, Telumehtar Umbardacil 1850, Narmacil II †1856, Calimehtar 1936, Ondoher †1944. Ondoher and his two sons were slain in battle. After a year in 1945 the crown was given to the victorious general Eärnil, a descendant of Telumehtar Umbardacil. Eärnil II 2043, Eärnur †2050. Here the line of the Kings came to an end, until it was restored by Elessar Telcontar in 3019. The realm was then ruled by the Stewards.

Stewards of Gondor. The House of Húrin: Pelendur 1998. He ruled for a year after the fall of Ondoher, and advised Gondor to reject Arvedui’s claim to the crown. Vorondil the Hunter 2029.<sup>376</sup> Mardil Voronwë ‘the Steadfast’, the first of the Ruling Stewards. His successors ceased to use High-elven names.

*Ruling Stewards*. Mardil 2080, Eradan 2116, Herion 2148, Belegorn 2204, Húrin I 2244, Túrin I 2278, Hador 2395, Barahir 2412, Dior 2435, Denethor I 2477, Boromir 2489, Cirion 2567. In his time the Rohirrim came to Calenardhon.

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<sup>373</sup> He was the fourth son of Isildur, born in Imladris. His brothers were slain in the Gladden Fields.

<sup>374</sup> After Eärendur the Kings no longer took names in High-elven form.

<sup>375</sup> After Malvegil, the Kings at Fornost again claimed lordship over the whole of Arnor, and took names with the prefix *ar(a)* in token of this.

<sup>376</sup> See p. 755. The wild white kine that were still to be found near the Sea of Rhûn were said in legend to be descended from the Kine of Araw, the huntsman of the Valar, who alone of the Valar came often to Middle-earth in the Elder Days. *Oromë* is the High-elven form of his name (p. 838).



Hallas 2605, Húrin II 2628, Belecthor I 2655, Orodreth 2685, Ecthelion I 2698, Egalmoth 2743, Beren 2763, Beregon 2811, Belecthor II 2872, Thorondir 2882, Túrin II 2914, Turgon 2953, Ecthelion II 2984, Denethor II. He was the last of the Ruling Stewards, and was followed by his second son Faramir, Lord of Eryn Arn, Steward to King Elessar, F.A. 82.

### ***(iii) Eriador, Arnor, And The Heirs Of Isildur***

‘Eriador was of old the name of all the lands between the Misty Mountains and the Blue; in the South it was bounded by the Greyflood and the Glanduin that flows into it above Tharbad.

‘At its greatest Arnor included all Eriador, except the regions beyond the Lune, and the lands east of Greyflood and Loudwater, in which lay Rivendell and Hollin. Beyond the Lune was Elvish country, green and quiet, where no Men went; but Dwarves dwelt, and still dwell, in the east side of the Blue Mountains, especially in those parts south of the Gulf of Lune, where they have mines that are still in use. For this reason they were accustomed to pass east along the Great Road, as they had done for long years before we came to the Shire. At the Grey Havens dwelt Círdan the Shipwright, and some say he dwells there still, until the Last Ship sets sail into the West. In the days of the Kings most of the High Elves that still lingered in Middle-earth dwelt with Círdan or in the seaward lands of Lindon. If any now remain they are few.’

### **The North-Kingdom And The Dúnedain**

After Elendil and Isildur there were eight High Kings of Arnor. After Eärendur, owing to dissensions among his sons their realm was divided into three: Arthedain, Rhudaur, and Cardolan. Arthedain was in the North-west and included the land between Brandywine and Lune, and also the land north of the Great Road as far as the Weather Hills. Rhudaur was in the North-east and lay between the Ettenmoors, the Weather Hills, and the Misty Mountains, but included also the Angle between the Hoarwell and the Loudwater. Cardolan was in the South, its bounds being the Brandywine, the Greyflood, and the Great Road.

In Arthedain the line of Isildur was maintained and endured, but the line soon perished in Cardolan and Rhudaur. There was often strife between the kingdoms, which hastened the waning of the Dúnedain. The chief matter of debate was the possession of the Weather Hills and the land westward towards Bree. Both Rhudaur and Cardolan desired to possess Amon Sûl (Weathertop), which stood on the borders of their realms; for the Tower of Amon Sûl held the chief Palantír of the North, and the other two were both in the keeping of Arthedain.

‘It was in the beginning of the reign of Malvegil of Arthedain that evil came to Arnor. For at that time the realm of Angmar arose in the North beyond the Ettenmoors. Its lands lay on both sides of the Mountains, and there were gathered many evil men, and Orcs, and other fell creatures. [The lord of that land was known as the Witch-king, but it was not known until later that he was indeed the chief of the Ringwraiths, who came north with the purpose of destroying the Dúnedain in Arnor, seeing hope in their disunion, while Gondor was strong.]’

In the days of Argeleb son of Malvegil, since no descendants of Isildur remained in the other kingdoms, the kings of Arthedain again claimed the lordship of all Arnor. The claim was resisted by Rhudaur. There the Dúnedain were few, and power had been seized by an evil lord of the Hillmen, who was in secret league with Angmar. Argeleb therefore fortified the Weather Hills;<sup>377</sup> but he was slain in battle with Rhudaur and Angmar.

Arveleg son of Argeleb, with the help of Cardolan and Lindon, drove back his enemies from the Hills; and for many years Arthedain and Cardolan held in force a frontier along the Weather Hills, the Great Road, and the lower Hoarwell. It is said that at this time Rivendell was besieged.

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<sup>377</sup> P. 185.

A great host came out of Angmar in 1409, and crossing the river entered Cardolan and surrounded Weathertop. The Dúnedain were defeated and Arveleg was slain. The Tower of Amon Sûl was burned and razed; but the *palantír* was saved and carried back in retreat to Fornost. Rhudaur was occupied by evil Men subject to Angmar,<sup>378</sup> and the Dúnedain that remained there were slain or fled west. Cardolan was ravaged. Araphor son of Arveleg was not yet full-grown, but he was valiant, and with aid from Círdan he repelled the enemy from Fornost and the North Downs. A remnant of the faithful among the Dúnedain of Cardolan also held out in Tyrn Gorthad (the Barrow-downs), or took refuge in the Forest behind.

It is said that Angmar was for a time subdued by the Elvenfolk coming from Lindon; and from Rivendell, for Elrond brought help over the Mountains out of Lórien. It was at this time that the Stoors that had dwelt in the Angle (between Hoarwell and Loudwater) fled west and south, because of the wars, and the dread of Angmar, and because the land and clime of Eriador, especially in the east, worsened and became unfriendly. Some returned to Wilderland, and dwelt beside the Gladden, becoming a riverside people of fishers.

In the days of Argeleb II the plague came into Eriador from the South-east, and most of the people of Cardolan perished, especially in Minhiriath. The Hobbits and all other peoples suffered greatly, but the plague lessened as it passed northwards, and the northern parts of Arthedain were little affected. It was at this time that an end came of the Dúnedain of Cardolan, and evil spirits out of Angmar and Rhudaur entered into the deserted mounds and dwelt there.

‘It is said that the mounds of Tyrn Gorthad, as the Barrow-downs were called of old, are very ancient, and that many were built in the days of the old world of the First Age by the forefathers of the Edain, before they crossed the Blue Mountains into Beleriand, of which Lindon is all that now remains. Those hills were therefore revered by the Dúnedain after their return; and there many of their lords and kings were buried. [Some say that the mound in which the Ring-bearer was imprisoned had been the grave of the last prince of Cardolan, who fell in the war of 1409.]’

‘In 1974 the power of Angmar arose again, and the Witch-king came down upon Arthedain before winter was ended. He captured Fornost, and drove most of the remaining Dúnedain over the Lune; among them were the sons of the king. But King Arvedui held out upon the North Downs until the last, and then fled north with some of his guard; and they escaped by the swiftness of their horses.

‘For a while Arvedui hid in the tunnels of the old dwarf-mines near the far end of the Mountains, but he was driven at last by hunger to seek the help of the Lossoth, the Snowmen of Forochel.<sup>379</sup> Some of these he found in camp by the seashore; but they did not help the king willingly, for he had nothing to offer them, save a few jewels which they did not value; and they were afraid of the Witch-king, who (they said) could make frost or thaw at his will. But partly out of pity for the gaunt king and his men, and partly out of fear of their weapons, they gave them a little food and built for them snow-huts. There Arvedui was forced to wait, hoping for help from the south; for his horses had perished.

‘When Círdan heard from Aranarth son of Arvedui of the king’s flight to the north, he at once sent a ship to Forochel to seek for him. The ship came there at last after many days, because of contrary winds, and the mariners saw from afar the little fire of drift-wood which the lost men contrived to keep alight. But the winter was long in loosing its grip that year; and though it was then March, the ice was only beginning to break, and lay far out from the shore.

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<sup>378</sup> P. 201.

<sup>379</sup> These are a strange, unfriendly people, remnant of the Forodwaith, Men of far-off days, accustomed to the bitter colds of the realm of Morgoth. Indeed those colds linger still in that region, though they lie hardly more than a hundred leagues north of the Shire. The Lossoth house in the snow, and it is said that they can run on the ice with bones on their feet, and have carts without wheels. They live mostly, inaccessible to their enemies, on the great Cape of Forochel that shuts off to the north-west the immense bay of that name; but they often camp on the south shores of the bay at the feet of the Mountains.



‘When the Snowmen saw the ship they were amazed and afraid, for they had seen no such ship on the sea within their memories; but they had become now more friendly, and they drew the king and those that survived of his company out over the ice in their sliding carts, as far as they dared. In this way a boat from the ship was able to reach them.

‘But the Snowmen were uneasy: for they said that they smelled danger in the wind. And the chief of the Lossoth said to Arvedui: “Do not mount on this sea-monster! If they have them, let the seamen bring us food and other things that we need, and you may stay here till the Witch-king goes home. For in summer his power wanes; but now his breath is deadly, and his cold arm is long.”

‘But Arvedui did not take his counsel. He thanked him, and at parting gave him his ring, saying: “This is a thing of worth beyond your reckoning. For its ancients alone. It has no power, save the esteem in which those hold it who love my house. It will not help you, but if ever you are in need, my kin will ransom it with great store of all that you desire.”<sup>380</sup>

‘Yet the counsel of the Lossoth was good, by chance or by foresight; for the ship had not reached the open sea when a great storm of wind arose, and came with blinding snow out of the North; and it drove the ship back upon the ice and piled ice up against it. Even the mariners of Círdan were helpless, and in the night the ice crushed the hull, and the ship foundered. So perished Arvedui Last-king, and with him the *palantíri* were buried in the sea.<sup>381</sup> It was long afterwards that news of the shipwreck of Forochel was learned from the Snowmen.’

The Shire-folk survived, though war swept over them and most of them fled into hiding. To the help of the king they sent some archers who never returned; and others went also to the battle in which Angmar was overthrown (of which more is said in the annals of the South). Afterwards in the peace that followed the Shire-folk ruled themselves and prospered. They chose a Thain to take the place of the King, and were content; though for a long time many still looked for the return of the King. But at last that hope was forgotten, and remained only in the saying *When the King comes back*, used of some good that could not be achieved, or of some evil that could not be amended. The first Shire-thain was one Bucca of the Marish, from whom the Oldbucks claimed descent. He became Thain in 379 of our reckoning (1979).

After Arvedui the North-kingdom ended, for the Dúnedain were now few and all the peoples of Eriador diminished. Yet the line of the kings was continued by the Chieftains of the Dúnedain, of whom Aranarth son of Arvedui was the first. Arahael his son was fostered in Rivendell, and so were all the sons of the chieftains after him; and there also were kept the heirlooms of their house: the ring of Barahir, the shards of Narsil, the star of Elendil, and the sceptre of Annuminas.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> In this way the ring of the House of Isildur was saved; for it was afterwards ransomed by the Dúnedain. It is said that it was none other than the ring which Felagund of Nargothrond gave to Barahir, and Beren recovered at great peril.

<sup>381</sup> These were the Stones of Annúminas and Amon Sûl. The only Stone left in the North was the one in the Tower on Emyrn Beraid that looks towards the Gulf of Lune. That was guarded by the Elves, and though we never knew it, it remained there, until Círdan put it aboard Elrond’s ship when he left (pp. 45, 108). But we are told that it was unlike the others and not in accord with them; it looked only to the Sea. Elendil set it there so that he could look back with ‘straight sight’ and see Eressëa in the vanished West; but the bent seas below covered Númenor for ever.

<sup>382</sup> The sceptre was the chief mark of royalty in Númenor, the King tells us; and that was also so in Arnor, whose kings wore no crown, but bore a single white gem, the Elendilmir, Star of Elendil, bound on their brows with a silver fillet (p. 146; pp. 848, 861, 967). In speaking of a crown (pp. 170, 247) Bilbo no doubt referred to Gondor; he seems to have become well acquainted with matters concerning Aragorn’s line. The sceptre of Númenor is said to have perished with Ar-Pharazôn. That of Annúminas was the silver rod of the Lords of Andúnië, and is now perhaps the most ancient work of Men’s hands preserved in Middle-earth. It was already more than five thousand years old when Elrond surrendered it to Aragorn (p. 972). The crown of Gondor was

‘When the kingdom ended the Dúnedain passed into the shadows and became a secret and wandering people, and their deeds and labours were seldom sung or recorded. Little now is remembered of them since Elrond departed. Although even before the Watchful Peace ended evil things again began to attack Eriador or to invade it secretly, the Chieftains for the most part lived out their long lives. Aragorn I, it is said, was slain by wolves, which ever after remained a peril in Eriador, and are not yet ended. In the days of Arahad I the Orcs, who had, as later appeared, long been secretly occupying strongholds in the Misty Mountains, so as to bar all the passes into Eriador, suddenly revealed themselves. In 2509 Celebrian wife of Elrond was journeying to Lórien when she was waylaid in the Redhorn Pass, and her escort being scattered by the sudden assault of the Orcs, she was seized and carried off. She was pursued and rescued by Elladan and Elrohir, but not before she had suffered torment and had received a poisoned wound.<sup>383</sup> She was brought back to Imladris, and though healed in body by Elrond, lost all delight in Middle-earth, and the next year went to the Havens and passed over Sea. And later in the days of Arassuil, Orcs, multiplying again in the Misty Mountains, began to ravage the lands, and the Dúnedain and the sons of Elrond fought with them. It was at this time that a large band came so far west as to enter the Shire, and were driven off by Bandobras Took.’<sup>384</sup>

There were fifteen Chieftains, before the sixteenth and last was born, Aragorn II, who became again King of both Gondor and Arnor. ‘Our King, we call him; and when he comes north to his house in Annúminas restored and stays for a while by Lake Evendim, then everyone in the Shire is glad. But he does not enter this land and binds himself by the law that he has made, that none of the Big People shall pass its borders. But he rides often with many fair people to the Great Bridge, and there he welcomes his friends, and any others who wish to see him; and some ride away with him and stay in his house as long as they have a mind. Thain Peregrin has been there many times; and so has Master Samwise the Mayor. His daughter Elanor the Fair is one of the maids of Queen Evenstar.’

It was the pride and wonder of the Northern Line that, though their power departed and their people dwindled, through all the many generations the succession was unbroken from father to son. Also, though the length of lives of the Dúnedain grew ever less in Middle-earth, after the ending of their kings the waning was swifter in Gondor; and many of the Chieftains of the North still lived to twice the age of Men, and far beyond the days of even the oldest amongst us. Aragorn indeed lived to be two hundred and ten years old, longer than any of his line since King Arvegil; but in Aragorn Elessar the dignity of the kings of old was renewed.

#### ***(iv) Gondor And The Heirs Of Anárion***

There were thirty-one kings in Gondor after Anárion who was slain before the Barad-dûr. Though war never ceased on their borders, for more than a thousand years the Dúnedain of the South grew in wealth and power by land and sea, until the reign of Atanatar II, who was called Alcarin, the Glorious. Yet the signs of decay had then already appeared; for the high men of the South married late, and their children were few. The first childless king was Falastur, and the second Narmacil I, the son of Atanatar Alcarin.

It was Ostroher the seventh king who rebuilt Minas Anor, where afterwards the kings dwelt in summer rather than in Osgiliath. In his time Gondor was first attacked by wild men out of the East. But Tarostar, his son, defeated them and drove them out, and took the name of Rómendacil ‘East-victor’. He was, however, later slain in battle with fresh hordes of Easterlings. Turambar his son avenged him, and won much territory eastwards.

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derived from the form of a Númenórean war-helm. In the beginning it was indeed a plain helm; and it is said to have been the one that Isildur wore in the Battle of Dagorlad (for the helm of Anárion was crushed by the stone-cast from Barad-dûr that slew him). But in the days of Atanatar Alcarin this was replaced by the jewelled helm that was used in the crowning of Aragorn.

<sup>383</sup> P. 227.

<sup>384</sup> P. 5; p. 1016.

With Tarannon, the twelfth king, began the line of the Ship-kings, who built navies and extended the sway of Gondor along the coasts west and south of the Mouths of Anduin. To commemorate his victories as Captain of the Hosts, Tarannon took the crown in the name of Falastur ‘Lord of the Coasts’.

Eärnil I, his nephew, who succeeded him, repaired the ancient haven of Pelargir, and built a great navy. He laid siege by sea and land to Umbar, and took it, and it became a great harbour and fortress of the power of Gondor.<sup>385</sup> But Eärnil did not long survive his triumph. He was lost with many ships and men in a great storm off Umbar. Ciryandil his son continued the building of ships; but the Men of the Harad, led by the lords that had been driven from Umbar, came up with great power against that stronghold, and Ciryandil fell in battle in Haradwaith.

For many years Umbar was invested, but could not be taken because of the sea-power of Gondor. Ciryaher son of Ciryandil bided his time, and at last when he had gathered strength he came down from the north by sea and by land, and crossing the River Harnen his armies utterly defeated the Men of the Harad, and their kings were compelled to acknowledge the overlordship of Gondor (1050). Ciryaher then took the name of Hyarmendacil ‘South-victor’.

The might of Hyarmendacil no enemy dared to contest during the remainder of his long reign. He was king for one hundred and thirty-four years, the longest reign but one of all the Line of Anárion. In his day Gondor reached the summit of its power. The realm then extended north to the field of Celebrant and the southern eaves of Mirkwood; west to the Greyflood; east to the inland Sea of Rhûn; south to the River Harnen, and thence along the coast to the peninsula and haven of Umbar. The Men of the Vales of Anduin acknowledged its authority; and the kings of the Harad did homage to Gondor, and their sons lived as hostages in the court of its King. Mordor was desolate, but was watched over by great fortresses that guarded the passes.

So ended the line of the Ship-kings. Atanatar Alcarin son of Hyarmendacil lived in great splendour, so that men said *precious stones are pebbles in Gondor for children to play with*. But Atanatar loved ease and did nothing to maintain the power that he had inherited, and his two sons were of like temper. The waning of Gondor had already begun before he died, and was doubtless observed by its enemies. The watch upon Mordor was neglected. Nonetheless it was not until the days of Valacar that the first great evil came upon Gondor: the civil war of the Kin-strife, in which great loss and ruin was caused and never fully repaired.

Minalcar, son of Calmacil, was a man of great vigour, and in 1240 Narmacil, to rid himself of all cares, made him Regent of the realm. From that time onwards he governed Gondor in the name of the kings until he succeeded his father. His chief concern was with the Northmen.

These had increased greatly in the peace brought by the power of Gondor. The kings showed them favour, since they were the nearest in kin of lesser Men to the Dúnedain (being for the most part descendants of those peoples from whom the Edain of old had come); and they gave them wide lands beyond Anduin south of Greenwood the Great, to be a defence against men of the East. For in the past the attacks of the Easterlings had come mostly over the plain between the Inland Sea and the Ash Mountains.

In the days of Narmacil I their attacks began again, though at first with little force; but it was learned by the regent that the Northmen did not always remain true to Gondor, and some would join forces with the Easterlings, either out of greed for spoil, or in the furtherance of feuds among their princes. Minalcar therefore in 1248 led out a great force, and between Rhovanion and the Inland Sea he defeated a large army of the Easterlings and destroyed all their camps and settlements east of the Sea. He then took the name of Rómendacil.

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<sup>385</sup> The great cape and land-locked firth of Umbar had been Númenórean land since days of old; but it was a stronghold of the King’s Men, who were afterwards called the Black Númenóreans, corrupted by Sauron, and who hated above all the followers of Elendil. After the fall of Sauron their race swiftly dwindled or became merged with the Men of Middle-earth, but they inherited without lessening their hatred of Gondor. Umbar, therefore, was only taken at great cost.

On his return Rómendacil fortified the west shore of Anduin as far as the inflow of the Limlight, and forbade any stranger to pass down the River beyond the Emyrn Muil. He it was that built the pillars of the Argonath at the entrance to Nen Hithoel. But since he needed men, and desired to strengthen the bond between Gondor and the Northmen, he took many of them into his service and gave to some high rank in his armies.

Rómendacil showed especial favour to Vidugavia, who had aided him in the war. He called himself King of Rhovanion, and was indeed the most powerful of the Northern princes, though his own realm lay between Greenwood and the River Celduin.<sup>386</sup> In 1250 Rómendacil sent his son Valacar as an ambassador to dwell for a while with Vidugavia and make himself acquainted with the language, manners, and policies of the Northmen. But Valacar far exceeded his father's designs. He grew to love the Northern lands and people, and he married Vidumavi, daughter of Vidugavia. It was some years before he returned. From this marriage came later the war of the Kin-strife.

'For the high men of Gondor already looked askance at the Northmen among them; and it was a thing unheard of before that the heir of the crown, or any son of the King, should wed one of lesser and alien race. There was already rebellion in the southern provinces when King Valacar grew old. His queen had been a fair and noble lady, but short-lived according to the fate of lesser Men, and the Dúnedain feared that her descendants would prove the same and fall from the majesty of the Kings of Men. Also they were unwilling to accept as lord her son, who though he was now called Eldacar, had been born in an alien country and was named in his youth Vinitharya, a name of his mother's people.

'Therefore when Eldacar succeeded his father there was war in Gondor. But Eldacar did not prove easy to thrust from his heritage. To the lineage of Gondor he added the fearless spirit of the Northmen. He was handsome and valiant, and showed no sign of ageing more swiftly than his father. When the confederates led by descendants of the kings rose against him, he opposed them to the end of his strength. At last he was besieged in Osgiliath, and held it long, until hunger and the greater forces of the rebels drove him out, leaving the city in flames. In that siege and burning the Tower of the Dome of Osgiliath was destroyed, and the *palantír* was lost in the waters.

'But Eldacar eluded his enemies, and came to the North, to his kinsfolk in Rhovanion. Many gathered to him there, both of the Northmen in the service of Gondor, and of the Dúnedain of the northern parts of the realm. For many of the latter had learned to esteem him, and many more came to hate his usurper. This was Castamir, grandson of Calimehtar, younger brother of Rómendacil II. He was not only one of those nearest by blood to the crown, but he had the greatest following of all the rebels; for he was the Captain of Ships, and was supported by the people of the coasts and of the great havens of Pelargir and Umbar.

'Castamir had not long sat upon the throne before he proved himself haughty and ungenerous. He was a cruel man, as he had first shown in the taking of Osgiliath. He caused Ornendil son of Eldacar, who was captured, to be put to death; and the slaughter and destruction done in the city at his bidding far exceeded the needs of war. This was remembered in Minas Anor and in Ithilien; and there love for Castamir was further lessened when it became seen that he cared little for the land, and thought only of the fleets, and purposed to remove the king's seat to Pelargir.

'Thus he had been king only ten years, when Eldacar, seeing his time, came with a great army out of the north, and folk flocked to him from Calenardhon and Anórien and Ithilien. There was a great battle in Lebennin at the Crossings of Erui, in which much of the best blood in Gondor was shed. Eldacar himself slew Castamir in combat, and so was avenged for Ornendil; but Castamir's sons escaped, and with others of their kin and many people of the fleets they held out long at Pelargir.

'When they had gathered there all the force that they could (for Eldacar had no ships to beset them by sea) they sailed away, and established themselves at Umbar. There they made a refuge for all the enemies of the king, and a lordship independent of his crown. Umbar remained at war with Gondor for many lives of men, a threat

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<sup>386</sup> The River Running.

to its coastlands and to all traffic on the sea. It was never again completely subdued until the days of Elessar; and the region of South Gondor became a debatable land between the Corsairs and the Kings.'

'The loss of Umbar was grievous to Gondor, not only because the realm was diminished in the south and its hold upon the Men of the Harad was loosened, but because it was there that Ar-Pharazôn the Golden, last King of Númenor, had landed and humbled the might of Sauron. Though great evil had come after, even the followers of Elendil remembered with pride the coming of the great host of Ar-Pharazôn out of the deeps of the Sea; and on the highest hill of the headland above the Haven they had set a great white pillar as a monument. It was crowned with a globe of crystal that took the rays of the Sun and of the Moon and shone like a bright star that could be seen in clear weather even on the coasts of Gondor or far out upon the western sea. So it stood, until after the second arising of Sauron, which now approached, Umbar fell under the domination of his servants, and the memorial of his humiliation was thrown down.'

After the return of Eldacar the blood of the kingly house and other houses of the Dúnedain became more mingled with that of lesser Men. For many of the great had been slain in the Kin-strife; while Eldacar showed favour to the Northmen, by whose help he had regained the crown, and the people of Gondor were replenished by great numbers that came from Rhovanion.

This mingling did not at first hasten the waning of the Dúnedain, as had been feared; but the waning still proceeded, little by little, as it had before. For no doubt it was due above all to Middle-earth itself, and to the slow withdrawing of the gifts of the Númenóreans after the downfall of the Land of the Star. Eldacar lived to his two hundred and thirty-fifth year, and was king for fifty-eight years, of which ten were spent in exile.

The second and greatest evil came upon Gondor in the reign of Telemnar, the twenty-sixth king, whose father Minardil, son of Eldacar, was slain at Pelargir by the Corsairs of Umbar. (They were led by Angamaitë and Sangahyando, the great-grandsons of Castamir.) Soon after a deadly plague came with dark winds out of the East. The King and all his children died, and great numbers of the people of Gondor, especially those that lived in Osgiliath. Then for weariness and fewness of men the watch on the borders of Mordor ceased and the fortresses that guarded the passes were unmanned.

Later it was noted that these things happened even as the Shadow grew deep in Greenwood, and many evil things reappeared, signs of the arising of Sauron. It is true that the enemies of Gondor also suffered, or they might have overwhelmed it in its weakness; but Sauron could wait, and it may well be that the opening of Mordor was what he chiefly desired.

When King Telemnar died the White Tree of Minas Anor also withered and died. But Tarondor, his nephew, who succeeded him, replanted a seedling in the citadel. He it was who removed the King's house permanently to Minas Anor, for Osgiliath was now partly deserted, and began to fall into ruin. Few of those who had fled from the plague into Ithilien or to the western dales were willing to return.

Tarondor, coming young to the throne, had the longest reign of all the Kings of Gondor; but he could achieve little more than the reordering of his realm within, and the slow nursing of its strength. But Telumehtar his son, remembering the death of Minardil, and being troubled by the insolence of the Corsairs, who raided his coasts even as far as the Anfalas, gathered his forces and in 1810 took Umbar by storm. In that war the last descendants of Castamir perished, and Umbar was again held for a while by the kings. Telumehtar added to his name the title Umbardacil. But in the new evils that soon befell Gondor Umbar was again lost, and fell into the hands of the Men of the Harad.

The third evil was the invasion of the Wainriders, which sapped the waning strength of Gondor in wars that lasted for almost a hundred years. The Wainriders were a people, or a confederacy of many peoples, that came from the East; but they were stronger and better armed than any that had appeared before. They journeyed in great wains, and their chieftains fought in chariots. Stirred up, as was afterwards seen, by the emissaries of Sauron, they made a sudden assault upon Gondor, and King Narmacil II was slain in battle with them beyond Anduin in 1856. The people of eastern and southern Rhovanion were enslaved; and the frontiers of Gondor were for that time withdrawn to the Anduin and the Emyn Muil. [At this time it is thought that the Ringwraiths re-entered Mordor.]



Calimehtar, son of Narmacil II, helped by a revolt in Rhovanion, avenged his father with a great victory over the Easterlings upon Dagorlad in 1899, and for a while the peril was averted. It was in the reign of Araphant in the North and of Ondoher son of Calimehtar in the South that the two kingdoms again took counsel together after long silence and estrangement. For at last they perceived that some single power and will was directing the assault from many quarters upon the survivors of Númenor. It was at that time that Arvedui heir of Araphant wedded Fíriel daughter of Ondoher (1940). But neither kingdom was able to send help to the other; for Angmar renewed its attack upon Arthedain at the same time as the Wainriders reappeared in great force.

Many of the Wainriders now passed south of Mordor and made alliance with men of Khand and of Near Harad; and in this great assault from north and south, Gondor came near to destruction. In 1944 King Ondoher and both his sons, Artamir and Faramir, fell in battle north of the Morannon, and the enemy poured into Ithilien. But Eärnil, Captain of the Southern Army, won a great victory in South Ithilien and destroyed the army of Harad that had crossed the River Poros. Hastening north, he gathered to him all that he could of the retreating Northern Army and came up against the main camp of the Wainriders, while they were feasting and revelling, believing that Gondor was overthrown and that nothing remained but to take the spoil. Eärnil stormed the camp and set fire to the wains, and drove the enemy in a great rout out of Ithilien. A great part of those who fled before him perished in the Dead Marshes.

‘On the death of Ondoher and his sons, Arvedui of the North-kingdom claimed the crown of Gondor, as the direct descendant of Isildur, and as the husband of Fíriel, only surviving child of Ondoher. The claim was rejected. In this Pelendur, the Steward of King Ondoher, played the chief part.

‘The Council of Gondor answered: “The crown and royalty of Gondor belongs solely to the heirs of Meneldil, son of Anárion, to whom Isildur relinquished this realm. In Gondor this heritage is reckoned through the sons only; and we have not heard that the law is otherwise in Arnor.”

‘To this Arvedui replied: “Elendil had two sons, of whom Isildur was the elder and the heir of his father. We have heard that the name of Elendil stands to this day at the head of the line of the Kings of Gondor, since he was accounted the high king of all lands of the Dúnedain. While Elendil still lived, the conjoint rule in the South was committed to his sons; but when Elendil fell, Isildur departed to take up the high kingship of his father, and committed the rule in the South in like manner to the son of his brother. He did not relinquish his royalty in Gondor, nor intend that the realm of Elendil should be divided for ever.

“Moreover, in Númenor of old the sceptre descended to the eldest child of the king, whether man or woman. It is true that the law has not been observed in the lands of exile ever troubled by war; but such was the law of our people, to which we now refer, seeing that the sons of Ondoher died childless.”<sup>387</sup>

‘To this Gondor made no answer. The crown was claimed by Eärnil, the victorious captain; and it was granted to him with the approval of all the Dúnedain in Gondor, since he was of the royal house. He was the son of Siriondil, son of Calimmacil, son of Arciryas brother of Narmacil II. Arvedui did not press his claim; for he had neither the power nor the will to oppose the choice of the Dúnedain of Gondor; yet the claim was never forgotten by his descendants even when their kingship had passed away. For the time was now drawing near when the North-kingdom would come to an end.

‘Arvedui was indeed the last king, as his name signifies. It is said that this name was given to him at his birth by Malbeth the Seer, who said to his father: “*Arvedui* you shall call him, for he will be the last in Arthedain. Though a choice will come to the Dúnedain, and if they take the one that seems less hopeful, then your son will change his name and become king of a great realm. If not, then much sorrow and many lives of men shall pass, until the Dúnedain arise and are united again.”

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<sup>387</sup> That law was made in Númenor (as we have learned from the King) when Tar-Aldarion, the sixth king, left only one child, a daughter. She became the first Ruling Queen, Tar-Ancalimë. But the law was otherwise before her time. Tar-Elendil, the fourth king, was succeeded by his son Tar-Meneldur, though his daughter Silmariën was the elder. It was, however, from Silmariën that Elendil was descended.

‘In Gondor also one king only followed Eärnil. It may be that if the crown and the sceptre had been united, then the kingship would have been maintained and much evil averted. But Eärnil was a wise man, and not arrogant, even if, as to most men in Gondor, the realm in Arthedain seemed a small thing, for all the lineage of its lords.

‘He sent messages to Arvedui announcing that he received the crown of Gondor, according to the laws and the needs of the South-kingdom, “but I do not forget the royalty of Arnor, nor deny our kinship, nor wish that the realms of Elendil should be estranged. I will send to your aid when you have need, so far as I am able.”

‘It was, however, long before Eärnil felt himself sufficiently secure to do as he promised. King Araphant continued with dwindling strength to hold off the assaults of Angmar, and Arvedui when he succeeded did likewise; but at last in the autumn of 1973 messages came to Gondor that Arthedain was in great straits, and that the Witch-king was preparing a last stroke against it. Then Eärnil sent his son Eärnur north with a fleet, as swiftly as he could, and with as great strength as he could spare. Too late. Before Eärnur reached the havens of Lindon, the Witch-king had conquered Arthedain and Arvedui had perished.

‘But when Eärnur came to the Grey Havens there was joy and great wonder among both Elves and Men. So great in draught and so many were his ships that they could scarcely find harbourage, though both the Harlond and the Forlond also were filled; and from them descended an army of power, with munition and provision for a war of great kings. Or so it seemed to the people of the North, though this was but a small sending-force of the whole might of Gondor. Most of all, the horses were praised, for many of them came from the Vales of Anduin and with them were riders tall and fair, and proud princes of Rhovanion.

‘Then Círdan summoned all who would come to him, from Lindon or Arnor, and when all was ready the host crossed the Lune and marched north to challenge the Witch-king of Angmar. He was now dwelling, it is said, in Fornost, which he had filled with evil folk, usurping the house and rule of the kings. In his pride he did not await the onset of his enemies in his stronghold, but went out to meet them, thinking to sweep them, as others before, into the Lune.

‘But the Host of the West came down on him out of the Hills of Evendim, and there was a great battle on the plain between Nenuial and the North Downs. The forces of Angmar were already giving way and retreating towards Fornost when the main body of the horsemen that had passed round the hills came down from the north and scattered them in a great rout. Then the Witch-king, with all that he could gather from the wreck, fled northwards, seeking his own land of Angmar. Before he could gain the shelter of Carn Dûm the cavalry of Gondor overtook him with Eärnur riding at their head. At the same time a force under Glorfindel the Elf-lord came up out of Rivendell. Then so utterly was Angmar defeated that not a man nor an orc of that realm remained west of the Mountains.

‘But it is said that when all was lost suddenly the Witch-king himself appeared, black-robed and black-masked upon a black horse. Fear fell upon all who beheld him; but he singled out the Captain of Gondor for the fullness of his hatred, and with a terrible cry he rode straight upon him. Eärnur would have withstood him; but his horse could not endure that onset, and it swerved and bore him far away before he could master it.

‘Then the Witch-king laughed, and none that heard it ever forgot the horror of that cry. But Glorfindel rode up then on his white horse, and in the midst of his laughter the Witch-king turned to flight and passed into the shadows. For night came down on the battlefield, and he was lost, and none saw whither he went.

‘Eärnur now rode back, but Glorfindel, looking into the gathering dark, said: “Do not pursue him! He will not return to this land. Far off yet is his doom, and not by the hand of man will he fall.” These words many remembered; but Eärnur was angry, desiring only to be avenged for his disgrace.

‘So ended the evil realm of Angmar; and so did Eärnur, Captain of Gondor, earn the chief hatred of the Witch-king; but many years were still to pass before that was revealed.’

It was thus in the reign of King Eärnil, as later became clear, that the Witch-king escaping from the North came to Mordor, and there gathered the other Ringwraiths, of whom he was the chief. But it was not until 2000 that they issued from Mordor by the Pass of Cirith Ungol and laid siege to Minas Ithil. This they took in 2002, and captured the *palantir* of the tower. They were not expelled while the Third Age lasted; and Minas Ithil became a place of fear, and was renamed Minas Morgul. Many of the people that still remained in Ithilien deserted it.

‘Eärnur was a man like his father in valour, but not in wisdom. He was a man of strong body and hot mood; but he would take no wife, for his only pleasure was in fighting, or in the exercise of arms. His prowess was such that none in Gondor could stand against him in those weapon-sports in which he delighted, seeming rather a champion than a captain or king, and retaining his vigour and skill to a later age than was then usual.’

When Eärnur received the crown in 2043 the King of Minas Morgul challenged him to single combat, taunting him that he had not dared to stand before him in battle in the North. For that time Mardil the Steward restrained the wrath of the king. Minas Anor, which had become the chief city of the realm since the days of King Telemnar, and the residence of the kings, was now renamed Minas Tirith, as the city ever on guard against the evil of Morgul.

Eärnur had held the crown only seven years when the Lord of Morgul repeated his challenge, taunting the king that to the faint heart of his youth he had now added the weakness of age. Then Mardil could no longer restrain him, and he rode with a small escort of knights to the gate of Minas Morgul. None of that riding were ever heard of again. It was believed in Gondor that the faithless enemy had trapped the king, and that he had died in torment in Minas Morgul; but since there were no witnesses of his death, Mardil the Good Steward ruled Gondor in his name for many years.

Now the descendants of the kings had become few. Their numbers had been greatly diminished in the Kin-strife; whereas since that time the kings had become jealous and watchful of those near akin. Often those on whom suspicion fell had fled to Umbar and there joined the rebels; while others had renounced their lineage and taken wives not of Númenórean blood.

So it was that no claimant to the crown could be found who was of pure blood, or whose claim all would allow; and all feared the memory of the Kin-strife, knowing that if any such dissension arose again, then Gondor would perish. Therefore, though the years lengthened, the Steward continued to rule Gondor, and the crown of Elendil lay in the lap of King Eärnil in the Houses of the Dead, where Eärnur had left it.

## The Stewards

The House of the Stewards was called the House of Húrin, for they were descendants of the Steward of King Minardil (1621-34), Húrin of Emyr Arnen, a man of high Númenórean race. After his day the kings had always chosen their stewards from among his descendants; and after the days of Pelendur the Stewardship became hereditary as a kingship, from father to son or nearest kin.

Each new Steward indeed took office with the oath ‘to hold rod and rule in the name of the king, until he shall return’. But these soon became words of ritual little heeded, for the Stewards exercised all the power of the kings. Yet many in Gondor still believed that a king would indeed return in some time to come; and some remembered the ancient line of the North, which it was rumoured still lived on in the shadows. But against such thoughts the Ruling Stewards hardened their hearts.

Nonetheless the Stewards never sat on the ancient throne; and they wore no crown, and held no sceptre. They bore a white rod only as the token of their office; and their banner was white without charge; but the royal banner had been sable, upon which was displayed a white tree in blossom beneath seven stars.

After Mardil Voronwë, who was reckoned the first of the line, there followed twenty-four Ruling Stewards of Gondor, until the time of Denethor II, the twenty-sixth and last. At first they had quiet, for those were the days of the Watchful Peace, during which Sauron withdrew before the power of the White Council and the Ringwraiths remained hidden in Morgul Vale. But from the time of Denethor I, there was never full peace again, and even when Gondor had no great or open war its borders were under constant threat.

In the last years of Denethor I the race of uruks, black orcs of great strength, first appeared out of Mordor, and in 2475 they swept across Ithilien and took Osgiliath. Boromir son of Denethor (after whom Boromir of the Nine Walkers was later named) defeated them and regained Ithilien; but Osgiliath was finally ruined, and its great stone-bridge was broken. No people dwelt there afterwards. Boromir was a great captain, and even the Witch-king feared him. He was noble and fair of face, a man strong in body and in will, but he received a



Morgul-wound in that war which shortened his days, and he became shrunken with pain and died twelve years after his father.

After him began the long rule of Cirion. He was watchful and wary, but the reach of Gondor had grown short, and he could do little more than defend his borders, while his enemies (or the power that moved them) prepared strokes against him that he could not hinder. The Corsairs harried his coasts, but it was in the north that his chief peril lay. In the wide lands of Rhovanion, between Mirkwood and the River Running, a fierce people now dwelt, wholly under the shadow of Dol Guldur. Often they made raids through the forest, until the vale of Anduin south of the Gladden was largely deserted. These Balchoth were constantly increased by others of like kind that came in from the east, whereas the people of Calenardhon had dwindled. Cirion was hard put to it to hold the line of the Anduin.

‘Foreseeing the storm, Cirion sent north for aid, but over-late; for in that year (2510) the Balchoth, having built many great boats and rafts on the east shores of Anduin, swarmed over the River and swept away the defenders. An army marching up from the south was cut off and driven north over the Limlight, and there it was suddenly attacked by a horde of Orcs from the Mountains and pressed towards the Anduin. Then out of the North there came help beyond hope, and the horns of the Rohirrim were first heard in Gondor. Eorl the Young came with his riders and swept away the enemy, and pursued the Balchoth to the death over the fields of Calenardhon. Cirion granted to Eorl that land to dwell in, and he swore to Cirion the Oath of Eorl, of friendship at need or at call to the Lords of Gondor.’

In the days of Beren, the nineteenth Steward, an even greater peril came upon Gondor. Three great fleets, long prepared, came up from Umbar and the Harad, and assailed the coasts of Gondor in great force; and the enemy made many landings, even as far north as the mouth of the Isen. At the same time the Rohirrim were assailed from the west and the east, and their land was overrun, and they were driven into the dales of the White Mountains. In that year (2758) the Long Winter began with cold and great snows out of the North and the East which lasted for almost five months. Helm of Rohan and both his sons perished in that war; and there was misery and death in Eriador and in Rohan. But in Gondor south of the mountains things were less evil, and before spring came Beregonnd son of Beren had overcome the invaders. At once he sent aid to Rohan. He was the greatest captain that had arisen in Gondor since Boromir; and when he succeeded his father (2763) Gondor began to recover its strength. But Rohan was slower to be healed of the hurts that it had received. It was for this reason that Beren welcomed Saruman, and gave to him the keys of Orthanc; and from that year on (2759) Saruman dwelt in Isengard.

It was in the days of Beregonnd that the War of the Dwarves and Orcs was fought in the Misty Mountains (2793-9), of which only rumour came south, until the Orcs fleeing<sup>394</sup> from Nanduhirion attempted to cross Rohan and establish themselves in the White Mountains. There was fighting for many years in the dales before that danger was ended.

When Belecthor II, the twenty-first Steward, died, the White Tree died also in Minas Tirith; but it was left standing ‘until the King returns’, for no seedling could be found.

In the days of Túrin II the enemies of Gondor began to move again; for Sauron was grown again to power and the day of his arising was drawing near. All but the hardiest of its people deserted Ithilien and removed west over Anduin, for the land was infested by Mordor-orcs. It was Túrin that built secret refuges for his soldiers in Ithilien, of which Henneth Annûn was the longest guarded and manned. He also fortified again the isle of Cair Andros<sup>388</sup> to defend Anórien. But his chief peril lay in the south, where the Haradrim had occupied South Gondor, and there was much fighting along the Poros. When Ithilien was invaded in great strength, King Folcwine of Rohan fulfilled the Oath of Eorl and repaid his debt for the aid brought by Beregonnd, sending many men to Gondor. With their aid Túrin won a victory at the crossing of the Poros; but the sons of Folcwine both fell in the battle. The Riders buried them after the fashion of their people, and they were laid in one mound, for

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<sup>388</sup> This name means ‘Ship of Long-foam’; for the isle was shaped like a great ship, with a high prow pointing north, against which the white foam of Anduin broke on sharp rocks.

they were twin brothers. Long it stood, *Haudh in Gwanûr*, high upon the shore of the river, and the enemies of Gondor feared to pass it.

Turgon followed Túrin, but of his time it is chiefly remembered that two years ere his death, Sauron arose again, and declared himself openly; and he re-entered Mordor long prepared for him. Then the Barad-dûr was raised once more, and Mount Doom burst into flame, and the last of the folk of Ithilien fled far away. When Turgon died Saruman took Isengard for his own, and fortified it.

‘Ecthelion II, son of Turgon, was a man of wisdom. With what power was left to him he began to strengthen his realm against the assault of Mordor. He encouraged all men of worth from near or far to enter his service, and to those who proved trustworthy he gave rank and reward. In much that he did he had the aid and advice of a great captain whom he loved above all. Thorongil men called him in Gondor, the Eagle of the Star, for he was swift and keen-eyed, and wore a silver star upon his cloak; but no-one knew his true name nor in what land he was born. He came to Ecthelion from Rohan, where he had served the King Thengel, but he was not one of the Rohirrim. He was a great leader of men, by land or by sea, but he departed into the shadows whence he came, before the days of Ecthelion were ended.

‘Thorongil often counselled Ecthelion that the strength of the rebels in Umbar was a great peril to Gondor, and a threat to the fiefs of the south that would prove deadly, if Sauron moved to open war. At last he got leave of the Steward and gathered a small fleet, and he came to Umbar unlooked for by night, and there burned a great part of the ships of the Corsairs. He himself overthrew the Captain of the Haven in battle upon the quays, and then he withdrew his fleet with small loss. But when they came back to Pelargir, to men’s grief and wonder, he would not return to Minas Tirith, where great honour awaited him.

‘He sent a message of farewell to Ecthelion, saying: “Other tasks now call me, lord, and much time and many perils must pass, ere I come again to Gondor, if that be my fate.” Though none could guess what those tasks might be, nor what summons he had received, it was known whither he went. For he took boat and crossed over Anduin, and there he said farewell to his companions and went on alone; and when he was last seen his face was towards the Mountains of Shadow.

‘There was dismay in the City at the departure of Thorongil, and to all men it seemed a great loss, unless it were to Denethor, the son of Ecthelion, a man now ripe for the Stewardship, to which after four years he succeeded on the death of his father.

‘Denethor II was a proud man, tall, valiant, and more kingly than any man that had appeared in Gondor for many lives of men; and he was wise also, and far-sighted, and learned in lore. Indeed he was as like to Thorongil as to one of nearest kin, and yet was ever placed second to the stranger in the hearts of men and the esteem of his father. At the time many thought that Thorongil had departed before his rival became his master; though indeed Thorongil had never himself vied with Denethor, nor held himself higher than the servant of his father. And in one matter only were their counsels to the Steward at variance: Thorongil often warned Ecthelion not to put trust in Saruman the White in Isengard, but to welcome rather Gandalf the Grey. But there was little love between Denethor and Gandalf; and after the days of Ecthelion there was less welcome for the Grey Pilgrim in Minas Tirith. Therefore later, when all was made clear, many believed that Denethor, who was subtle in mind and looked further and deeper than other men of his day, had discovered who this stranger Thorongil in truth was, and suspected that he and Mithrandir designed to supplant him.

‘When Denethor became Steward (2984) he proved a masterful lord, holding the rule of all things in his own hand. He said little. He listened to counsel, and then followed his own mind. He had married late (2976), taking as wife Finduilas, daughter of Adrahil of Dol Amroth. She was a lady of great beauty and gentle heart, but before twelve years had passed she died. Denethor loved her, in his fashion, more dearly than any other, unless it were the elder of the sons that she bore him. But it seemed to men that she withered in the guarded city, as a flower of the seaward vales set upon a barren rock. The shadow in the east filled her with horror, and she turned her eyes ever south to the sea that she missed.

‘After her death Denethor became more grim and silent than before, and would sit long alone in his tower deep in thought, foreseeing that the assault of Mordor would come in his time. It was afterwards believed that needing knowledge, but being proud, and trusting in his own strength of will, he dared to look in the *palantir* of

the White Tower. None of the Stewards had dared to do this, nor even the kings Eärnil and Eärnur, after the fall of Minas Ithil when the *palantír* of Isildur came into the hands of the Enemy; for the Stone of Minas Tirith was the *palantír* of Anárion, most close in accord with the one that Sauron possessed.

‘In this way Denethor gained his great knowledge of things that passed in his realm, and far beyond his borders, at which men marvelled; but he bought the knowledge dearly, being aged before his time by his contest with the will of Sauron. Thus pride increased in Denethor together with despair, until he saw in all the deeds of that time only a single combat between the Lord of the White Tower and the Lord of the Barad-dûr, and mistrusted all others who resisted Sauron, unless they served himself alone.

‘So time drew on to the War of the Ring, and the sons of Denethor grew to manhood. Boromir, five years the elder, beloved by his father, was like him in face and pride, but in little else. Rather he was a man after the sort of King Eärnur of old, taking no wife and delighting chiefly in arms; fearless and strong, but caring little for lore, save the tales of old battles. Faramir the younger was like him in looks but otherwise in mind. He read the hearts of men as shrewdly as his father, but what he read moved him sooner to pity than to scorn. He was gentle in bearing, and a lover of lore and of music, and therefore by many in those days his courage was judged less than his brother’s. But it was not so, except that he did not seek glory in danger without a purpose. He welcomed Gandalf at such times as he came to the City, and he learned what he could from his wisdom; and in this as in many other matters he displeased his father.

‘Yet between the brothers there was great love, and had been since childhood, when Boromir was the helper and protector of Faramir. No jealousy or rivalry had arisen between them since, for their father’s favour or for the praise of men. It did not seem possible to Faramir that anyone in Gondor could rival Boromir, heir of Denethor, Captain of the White Tower; and of like mind was Boromir. Yet it proved otherwise at the test. But of all that befell these three in the War of the Ring much is said elsewhere. And after the War the days of the Ruling Stewards came to an end; for the heir of Isildur and Anárion returned and the kingship was renewed, and the standard of the White Tree flew once more from the Tower of Ecthelion.’

### ***(v) Here Follows A Part Of The Tale Of Aragorn And Arwen***

‘Arador was the grandfather of the King. His son Arathorn sought in marriage Gilraen the Fair, daughter of Dírhael, who was himself a descendant of Aranarth. To this marriage Dírhael was opposed; for Gilraen was young and had not reached the age at which the women of the Dúnedain were accustomed to marry.

“Moreover,” he said, “Arathorn is a stern man of full age, and will be chieftain sooner than men looked for; yet my heart forebodes that he will be short-lived.”

‘But Ivorwen, his wife, who was also foresighted, answered: “The more need of haste! The days are darkening before the storm, and great things are to come. If these two wed now, hope may be born for our people; but if they delay, it will not come while this age lasts.”

‘And it happened that when Arathorn and Gilraen had been married only one year, Arador was taken by hill-trolls in the Coldfells north of Rivendell and was slain; and Arathorn became Chieftain of the Dúnedain. The next year Gilraen bore him a son, and he was called Aragorn. But Aragorn was only two years old when Arathorn went riding against the Orcs with the sons of Elrond, and he was slain by an orc-arrow that pierced his eye; and so he proved indeed short-lived for one of his race, being but sixty years old when he fell.

‘Then Aragorn, being now the Heir of Isildur, was taken with his mother to dwell in the house of Elrond; and Elrond took the place of his father and came to love him as a son of his own. But he was called Estel, that is “Hope”, and his true name and lineage were kept secret at the bidding of Elrond; for the Wise then knew that the Enemy was seeking to discover the Heir of Isildur, if any remained upon earth.

‘But when Estel was only twenty years of age, it chanced that he returned to Rivendell after great deeds in the company of the sons of Elrond; and Elrond looked at him and was pleased, for he saw that he was fair and noble and was early come to manhood, though he would yet become greater in body and in mind. That day therefore Elrond called him by his true name, and told him who he was and whose son; and he delivered to him the heirlooms of his house.

“Here is the ring of Barahir,” he said, “the token of our kinship from afar; and here also are the shards of Narsil. With these you may yet do great deeds; for I foretell that the span of your life shall be greater than the measure of Men, unless evil befalls you or you fail at the test. But the test will be hard and long. The Sceptre of Annúminas I withhold, for you have yet to earn it.”

‘The next day at the hour of sunset Aragorn walked alone in the woods, and his heart was high within him; and he sang, for he was full of hope and the world was fair. And suddenly even as he sang he saw a maiden walking on a greensward among the white stems of the birches; and he halted amazed, thinking that he had strayed into a dream, or else that he had received the gift of the Elf-minstrels, who can make the things of which they sing appear before the eyes of those that listen.

‘For Aragorn had been singing a part of the Lay of Lúthien which tells of the meeting of Lúthien and Beren in the forest of Neldoreth. And behold! there Lúthien walked before his eyes in Rivendell, clad in a mantle of silver and blue, fair as the twilight in Elven-home; her dark hair strayed in a sudden wind, and her brows were bound with gems like stars.

‘For a moment Aragorn gazed in silence, but fearing that she would pass away and never be seen again, he called to her crying, *Tinúviel, Tinúviel!* even as Beren had done in the Elder Days long ago.

‘Then the maiden turned to him and smiled, and she said: “Who are you? And why do you call me by that name?”

‘And he answered: “Because I believed you to be indeed Lúthien Tinúviel, of whom I was singing. But if you are not she, then you walk in her likeness.”

“So many have said,” she answered gravely. “Yet her name is not mine. Though maybe my doom will be not unlike hers. But who are you?”

“Estel I was called,” he said; “but I am Aragorn, Arathorn’s son, Isildur’s Heir, Lord of the Dúnedain”; yet even in the saying he felt that this high lineage, in which his heart had rejoiced, was now of little worth, and as nothing compared to her dignity and loveliness.

‘But she laughed merrily and said: “Then we are akin from afar. For I am Arwen Elrond’s daughter, and am named also Undómiel.”

“Often is it seen,” said Aragorn, “that in dangerous days men hide their chief treasure. Yet I marvel at Elrond and your brothers; for though I have dwelt in this house from childhood, I have heard no word of you. How comes it that we have never met before? Surely your father has not kept you locked in his hoard?”

“No,” she said, and looked up at the Mountains that rose in the east. “I have dwelt for a time in the land of my mother’s kin, in far Lothlórien. I have but lately returned to visit my father again. It is many years since I walked in Imladris.”

‘Then Aragorn wondered, for she had seemed of no greater age than he, who had lived yet no more than a score of years in Middle-earth. But Arwen looked in his eyes and said: “Do not wonder! For the children of Elrond have the life of the Eldar.”

‘Then Aragorn was abashed, for he saw the elven-light in her eyes and the wisdom of many days; yet from that hour he loved Arwen Undómiel daughter of Elrond.

‘In the days that followed Aragorn fell silent, and his mother perceived that some strange thing had befallen him; and at last he yielded to her questions and told her of the meeting in the twilight of the trees.

“My son,” said Gilraen, “your aim is high, even for the descendant of many kings. For this lady is the noblest and fairest that now walks the earth. And it is not fit that mortal should wed with the Elf-kin.”

“Yet we have some part in that kinship,” said Aragorn, “if the tale of my forefathers is true that I have learned.”

“It is true,” said Gilraen, “but that was long ago and in another age of this world, before our race was diminished. Therefore I am afraid; for without the good will of Master Elrond the Heirs of Isildur will soon come to an end. But I do not think that you will have the good will of Elrond in this matter.”

“Then bitter will my days be, and I will walk in the wild alone,” said Aragorn.

“That will indeed be your fate,” said Gilraen; but though she had in a measure the foresight of her people, she said no more to him of her foreboding, nor did she speak to anyone of what her son had told her.

But Elrond saw many things and read many hearts. One day, therefore, before the fall of the year he called Aragorn to his chamber, and he said: “Aragorn, Arathorn’s son, Lord of the Dúnedain, listen to me! A great doom awaits you, either to rise above the height of all your fathers since the days of Elendil, or to fall into darkness with all that is left of your kin. Many years of trial lie before you. You shall neither have wife, nor bind any woman to you in troth, until your time comes and you are found worthy of it.”

Then Aragorn was troubled, and he said: “Can it be that my mother has spoken of this?”

“No indeed,” said Elrond. “Your own eyes have betrayed you. But I do not speak of my daughter alone. You shall be betrothed to no man’s child as yet. But as for Arwen the Fair, Lady of Imladris and of Lórien, Evenstar of her people, she is of lineage greater than yours, and she has lived in the world already so long that to her you are but as a yearling shoot beside a young birch of many summers. She is too far above you. And so, I think, it may well seem to her. But even if it were not so, and her heart turned towards you, I should still be grieved because of the doom that is laid on us.”

“What is that doom?” said Aragorn.

“That so long as I abide here, she shall live with the youth of the Eldar,” answered Elrond, “and when I depart, she shall go with me, if she so chooses.”

“I see,” said Aragorn, “that I have turned my eyes to a treasure no less dear than the treasure of Thingol that Beren once desired. Such is my fate.” Then suddenly the foresight of his kindred came to him, and he said: “But lo! Master Elrond, the years of your abiding run short at last, and the choice must soon be laid on your children, to part either with you or with Middle-earth.”

“Truly,” said Elrond. “Soon, as we account it, though many years of Men must still pass. But there will be no choice before Arwen, my beloved, unless you, Aragorn, Arathorn’s son, come between us and bring one of us, you or me, to a bitter parting beyond the end of the world. You do not know yet what you desire of me.” He sighed, and after a while, looking gravely upon the young man, he said again: “The years will bring what they will. We will speak no more of this until many have passed. The days darken, and much evil is to come.”

Then Aragorn took leave lovingly of Elrond; and the next day he said farewell to his mother, and to the house of Elrond, and to Arwen, and he went out into the wild. For nearly thirty years he laboured in the cause against Sauron; and he became a friend of Gandalf the Wise, from whom he gained much wisdom. With him he made many perilous journeys, but as the years wore on he went more often alone. His ways were hard and long, and he became somewhat grim to look upon, unless he chanced to smile; and yet he seemed to Men worthy of honour, as a king that is in exile, when he did not hide his true shape. For he went in many guises, and won renown under many names. He rode in the host of the Rohírrim, and fought for the Lord of Gondor by land and by sea; and then in the hour of victory he passed out of the knowledge of Men of the West, and went alone far into the East and deep into the South, exploring the hearts of Men, both evil and good, and uncovering the plots and devices of the servants of Sauron.

Thus he became at last the most hardy of living Men, skilled in their crafts and lore, and was yet more than they; for he was elven-wise, and there was a light in his eyes that when they were kindled few could endure. His face was sad and stern because of the doom that was laid on him, and yet hope dwelt ever in the depths of his heart, from which mirth would arise at times like a spring from the rock.

It came to pass that when Aragorn was nine and forty years of age he returned from perils on the dark confines of Mordor, where Sauron now dwelt again and was busy with evil. He was weary and he wished to go back to

Rivendell and rest there for a while ere he journeyed into the far countries; and on his way he came to the borders of Lórien and was admitted to the hidden land by the Lady Galadriel.

‘He did not know it, but Arwen Undómiel was also there, dwelling again for a time with the kin of her mother. She was little changed, for the mortal years had passed her by; yet her face was more grave, and her laughter now seldom was heard. But Aragorn was grown to full stature of body and mind, and Galadriel bade him cast aside his wayworn raiment, and she clothed him in silver and white, with a cloak of elven-grey and a bright gem on his brow. Then more than any king of Men he appeared, and seemed rather an Elf-lord from the Isles of the West. And thus it was that Arwen first beheld him again after their long parting; and as he came walking towards her under the trees of Caras Galadhon laden with flowers of gold, her choice was made and her doom appointed.

‘Then for a season they wandered together in the glades of Lothlórien, until it was time for him to depart. And on the evening of Midsummer Aragorn, Arathorn’s son, and Arwen daughter of Elrond went to the fair hill, Cerin Amroth, in the midst of the land, and they walked unshod on the undying grass with elanor and niphredil about their feet. And there upon that hill they looked east to the Shadow and west to the Twilight, and they plighted their troth and were glad.

‘And Arwen said: “Dark is the Shadow, and yet my heart rejoices; for you, Estel, shall be among the great whose valour will destroy it.”

‘But Aragorn answered: “Alas! I cannot foresee it, and how it may come to pass is hidden from me. Yet with your hope I will hope. And the Shadow I utterly reject. But neither, lady, is the Twilight for me; for I am mortal, and if you will cleave to me, Evenstar, then the Twilight you must also renounce.”

‘And she stood then as still as a white tree, looking into the West, and at last she said: “I will cleave to you, Dúnadan, and turn from the Twilight. Yet there lies the land of my people and the long home of all my kin.” She loved her father dearly.

‘When Elrond learned the choice of his daughter, he was silent, though his heart was grieved and found the doom long feared none the easier to endure. But when Aragorn came again to Rivendell he called him to him, and he said:

“My son, years come when hope will fade, and beyond them little is clear to me. And now a shadow lies between us. Maybe, it has been appointed so, that by my loss the kingship of Men may be restored. Therefore, though I love you, I say to you: Arwen Undómiel shall not diminish her life’s grace for less cause. She shall not be the bride of any Man less than the King of both Gondor and Arnor. To me then even our victory can bring only sorrow and parting—but to you hope of joy for a while. Alas, my son! I fear that to Arwen the Doom of Men may seem hard at the ending.”

‘So it stood afterwards between Elrond and Aragorn, and they spoke no more of this matter; but Aragorn went forth again to danger and toil. And while the world darkened and fear fell on Middle-earth, as the power of Sauron grew and the Barad-dûr rose ever taller and stronger, Arwen remained in Rivendell, and when Aragorn was abroad, from afar she watched over him in thought; and in hope she made for him a great and kingly standard, such as only one might display who claimed the lordship of the Númenóreans and the inheritance of Elendil.

‘After a few years Gilraen took leave of Elrond and returned to her own people in Eriador, and lived alone; and she seldom saw her son again, for he spent many years in far countries. But on a time, when Aragorn had returned to the North, he came to her, and she said to him before he went:

“This is our last parting, Estel, my son. I am aged by care, even as one of lesser Men; and now that it draws near I cannot face the darkness of our time that gathers upon Middle-earth. I shall leave it soon.”

‘Aragorn tried to comfort her, saying: “Yet there may be a light beyond the darkness; and if so, I would have you see it and be glad.”

‘But she answered only with this *linnod*:

*Ónen i-Estel Edain, ú-chebin estel anim,*<sup>389</sup>

and Aragorn went away heavy of heart. Gilraen died before the next spring.

‘Thus the years drew on to the War of the Ring; of which more is told elsewhere: how the means unforeseen was revealed whereby Sauron might be overthrown, and how hope beyond hope was fulfilled. And it came to pass that in the hour of defeat Aragorn came up from the sea and unfurled the standard of Arwen in the battle of the Fields of Pelennor, and in that day he was first hailed as king. And at last when all was done he entered into the inheritance of his fathers and received the crown of Gondor and sceptre of Arnor; and at Midsummer in the year of the Fall of Sauron he took the hand of Arwen Undómiel, and they were wedded in the city of the Kings.

‘The Third Age ended thus in victory and hope; and yet grievous among the sorrows of that Age was the parting of Elrond and Arwen, for they were sundered by the Sea and by a doom beyond the end of the world. When the Great Ring was unmade and the Three were shorn of their power, then Elrond grew weary at last and forsook Middle-earth, never to return. But Arwen became as a mortal woman, and yet it was not her lot to die until all that she had gained was lost.

‘As Queen of Elves and Men she dwelt with Aragorn for six-score years in great glory and bliss; yet at last he felt the approach of old age and knew that the span of his life-days was drawing to an end, long though it had been. Then Aragorn said to Arwen:

“At last, Lady Evenstar, fairest in this world, and most beloved, my world is fading. Lo! we have gathered, and we have spent, and now the time of payment draws near.”

‘Arwen knew well what he intended, and long had foreseen it; nonetheless she was overborne by her grief. “Would you then, lord, before your time leave your people that live by your word?” she said.

“Not before my time,” he answered. “For if I will not go now, then I must soon go perforce. And Eldarion our son is a man full-ripe for kingship.”

‘Then going to the House of the Kings in the Silent Street, Aragorn laid him down on the long bed that had been prepared for him. There he said farewell to Eldarion, and gave into his hands the winged crown of Gondor and the sceptre of Arnor; and then all left him save Arwen, and she stood alone by his bed. And for all her wisdom and lineage she could not forbear to plead with him to stay yet for a while. She was not yet weary of her days, and thus she tasted the bitterness of the mortality that she had taken upon her.

“Lady Undómiel,” said Aragorn, “the hour is indeed hard, yet it was made even in that day when we met under the white birches in the garden of Elrond where none now walk. And on the hill of Cerin Amroth when we forsook both the Shadow and the Twilight this doom we accepted. Take counsel with yourself, beloved, and ask whether you would indeed have me wait until I wither and fall from my high seat unmanned and witless. Nay, lady, I am the last of the Númenóreans and the latest King of the Elder Days; and to me has been given not only a span thrice that of Men of Middle-earth, but also the grace to go at my will, and give back the gift. Now, therefore, I will sleep.

“I speak no comfort to you, for there is no comfort for such pain within the circles of the world. The uttermost choice is before you: to repent and go to the Havens and bear away into the West the memory of our days together that shall there be evergreen but never more than memory; or else to abide the Doom of Men.”

“Nay, dear lord,” she said, “that choice is long over. There is now no ship that would bear me hence, and I must indeed abide the Doom of Men, whether I will or I nill: the loss and the silence. But I say to you, King of the Númenóreans, not till now have I understood the tale of your people and their fall. As wicked fools I scorned them, but I pity them at last. For if this is indeed, as the Eldar say, the gift of the One to Men, it is bitter to receive.”

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<sup>389</sup> ‘I gave Hope to the Dúnedain, I have kept no hope for myself.’



“So it seems,” he said. “But let us not be overthrown at the final test, who of old renounced the Shadow and the Ring. In sorrow we must go, but not in despair. Behold! we are not bound for ever to the circles of the world, and beyond them is more than memory. Farewell!”

“Estel, Estel!” she cried, and with that even as he took her hand and kissed it, he fell into sleep. Then a great beauty was revealed in him, so that all who after came there looked on him in wonder; for they saw that the grace of his youth, and the valour of his manhood, and the wisdom and majesty of his age were blended together. And long there he lay, an image of the splendour of the Kings of Men in glory undimmed before the breaking of the world.

‘But Arwen went forth from the House, and the light of her eyes was quenched, and it seemed to her people that she had become cold and grey as nightfall in winter that comes without a star. Then she said farewell to Eldarion, and to her daughters, and to all whom she had loved; and she went out from the city of Minas Tirith and passed away to the land of Lórien, and dwelt there alone under the fading trees until winter came. Galadriel had passed away and Celeborn also was gone, and the land was silent.

‘There at last when the mallorn-leaves were falling, but spring had not yet come,<sup>390</sup> she laid herself to rest upon Cerin Amroth; and there is her green grave, until the world is changed, and all the days of her life are utterly forgotten by men that come after, and elanor and niphredil bloom no more east of the Sea.

‘Here ends this tale, as it has come to us from the South; and with the passing of Evenstar no more is said in this book of the days of old.’

## II. The House Of Eorl

‘Eorl the Young was lord of the Men of Éothéod. That land lay near the sources of Anduin, between the furthest ranges of the Misty Mountains and the northernmost parts of Mirkwood. The Éothéod had moved to those regions in the days of King Eärnil II from lands in the vales of Anduin between the Carrock and the Gladden, and they were in origin close akin to the Beornings and the men of the west-eaves of the forest. The forefathers of Eorl claimed descent from kings of Rhovanion, whose realm lay beyond Mirkwood before the invasions of the Wainriders, and thus they accounted themselves kinsmen of the kings of Gondor descended from Eldacar. They loved best the plains, and delighted in horses and in all feats of horsemanship, but there were many men in the middle vales of Anduin in those days, and moreover the shadow of Dol Guldur was lengthening; when therefore they heard of the overthrow of the Witch-king, they sought more room in the North, and drove away the remnants of the people of Angmar on the east side of the Mountains. But in the days of Léod, father of Eorl, they had grown to be a numerous people and were again somewhat straitened in the land of their home.

‘In the two thousand five hundred and tenth year of the Third Age a new peril threatened Gondor. A great host of wild men from the North-east swept over Rhovanion and coming down out of the Brown Lands crossed the Anduin on rafts. At the same time by chance or design the Orcs (who at that time before their war with the Dwarves were in great strength) made a descent from the Mountains. The invaders overran Calenardhon, and Cirion, Steward of Gondor, sent north for help; for there had been long friendship between the Men of Anduin’s Vale and the people of Gondor. But in the valley of the River men were now few and scattered, and slow to render such aid as they could. At last tidings came to Eorl of the need of Gondor, and late though it seemed, he set out with a great host of riders.

‘Thus he came to the battle of the Field of Celebrant, for that was the name of the green land that lay between Silverlode and Limlight. There the northern army of Gondor was in peril. Defeated in the Wold and cut off from the south, it had been driven across the Limlight, and was then suddenly assailed by the Orc-host that pressed it towards the Anduin. All hope was lost when, unlooked for, the Riders came out of the North and broke upon the rear of the enemy. Then the fortunes of battle were reversed, and the enemy was driven with

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<sup>390</sup> P. 335.



slaughter over Limlight. Eorl led his men in pursuit, and so great was the fear that went before the horsemen of the North that the invaders of the Wold were also thrown into panic, and the Riders hunted them over the plains of Calenardhon.'

The people of that region had become few since the Plague, and most of those that remained had been slaughtered by the savage Easterlings. Cirion, therefore, in reward for his aid, gave Calenardhon between Anduin and Isen to Eorl and his people; and they sent north for their wives and children and their goods and settled in that land. They named it anew the Mark of the Riders, and they called themselves the Eorlingas; but in Gondor their land was called Rohan, and its people the Rohirrim (that is, the Horse-lords). Thus Eorl became the first King of the Mark, and he chose for his dwelling a green hill before the feet of the White Mountains that were the south-wall of his land. There the Rohirrim lived afterwards as free men under their own kings and laws, but in perpetual alliance with Gondor.

'Many lords and warriors, and many fair and valiant women, are named in the songs of Rohan that still remember the North. Frumgar, they say, was the name of the chieftain who led his people to Éothéod. Of his son, Fram, they tell that he slew Scatha, the great dragon of Ered Mithrin, and the land had peace from the long-worms afterwards. Thus Fram won great wealth, but was at feud with the Dwarves, who claimed the hoard of Scatha. Fram would not yield them a penny, and sent to them instead the teeth of Scatha made into a necklace, saying: "Jewels such as these you will not match in your treasuries, for they are hard to come by." Some say that the Dwarves slew Fram for this insult. There was no great love between Éothéod and the Dwarves.

'Léod was the name of Eorl's father. He was a tamer of wild horses; for there were many at that time in the land. He captured a white foal and it grew quickly to a horse strong, and fair, and proud. No man could tame it. When Léod dared to mount it, it bore him away, and at last threw him, and Léod's head struck a rock, and so he died. He was then only two and forty years old, and his son a youth of sixteen.

'Eorl vowed that he would avenge his father. He hunted long for the horse, and at last he caught sight of him; and his companions expected that he would try to come within bowshot and kill him. But when they drew near, Eorl stood up and called in a loud voice: "Come hither, Mansbane, and get a new name!" To their wonder the horse looked towards Eorl, and came and stood before him, and Eorl said: "Felaróf I name you. You loved your freedom, and I do not blame you for that. But now you owe me a great weregild, and you shall surrender your freedom to me until your life's end."

'Then Eorl mounted him, and Felaróf submitted; and Eorl rode him home without bit or bridle; and he rode him in like fashion ever after. The horse understood all that men said, though he would allow no man but Eorl to mount him. It was upon Felaróf that Eorl rode to the Field of Celebrant; for that horse proved as long-lived as Men, and so were his descendants. These were the *mearas*, who would bear no-one but the King of the Mark or his sons, until the time of Shadowfax. Men said of them that Béma (whom the Eldar call Oromë) must have brought their sire from West over Sea.

'Of the Kings of the Mark between Eorl and Théoden most is said of Helm Hammerhand. He was a grim man of great strength. There was at that time a man named Freca, who claimed descent from King Fréawine, though he had, men said, much Dunlendish blood, and was dark-haired. He grew rich and powerful, having wide lands on either side of the Adorn.<sup>391</sup> Near its source he made himself a stronghold and paid little heed to the king. Helm mistrusted him, but called him to his councils; and he came when it pleased him.

'To one of these councils Freca rode with many men, and he asked the hand of Helm's daughter for his son Wulf. But Helm said: "You have grown big since you were last here; but it is mostly fat, I guess"; and men laughed at that, for Freca was wide in the belt.

'Then Freca fell in a rage and reviled the king, and said this at the last: "Old kings that refuse a proffered staff may fall on their knees." Helm answered: "Come! The marriage of your son is a trifle. Let Helm and Freca deal with it later. Meanwhile the king and his council have matters of moment to consider."

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<sup>391</sup> It flows into Isen from the west of Ered Nimrais.

‘When the council was over, Helm stood up and laid his great hand on Freca’s shoulder, saying: “The king does not permit brawls in his house, but men are freer outside”; and he forced Freca to walk before him out from Edoras into the field. To Freca’s men that came up he said: “Be off! We need no hearers. We are going to speak of a private matter alone. Go and talk to my men!” And they looked and saw that the king’s men and his friends far outnumbered them, and they drew back.

“Now, Dunlending,” said the king, “you have only Helm to deal with, alone and unarmed. But you have said much already, and it is my turn to speak. Freca, your folly has grown with your belly. You talk of a staff! If Helm dislikes a crooked staff that is thrust on him, he breaks it. So!” With that he smote Freca such a blow with his fist that he fell back stunned, and died soon after.

‘Helm then proclaimed Freca’s son and near kin the king’s enemies; and they fled, for at once Helm sent many men riding to the west marches.’

Four years later (2758) great troubles came to Rohan, and no help could be sent from Gondor, for three fleets of the Corsairs attacked it and there was war on all its coasts. At the same time Rohan was again invaded from the East, and the Dunlendings seeing their chance came over the Isen and down from Isengard. It was soon known that Wulf was their leader. They were in great force, for they were joined by enemies of Gondor that landed in the mouths of Lefnui and Isen.

The Rohirrim were defeated and their land was overrun; and those who were not slain or enslaved fled to the dales of the mountains. Helm was driven back with great loss from the Crossings of Isen and took refuge in the Hornburg and the ravine behind (which was after known as Helm’s Deep). There he was besieged. Wulf took Edoras and sat in Meduseld and called himself king. There Haleth Helm’s son fell, last of all, defending the doors.

‘Soon afterwards the Long Winter began, and Rohan lay under snow for nearly five months (November to March, 2758-9). Both the Rohirrim and their foes suffered grievously in the cold, and in the dearth that lasted longer. In Helm’s Deep there was a great hunger after Yule; and being in despair, against the king’s counsel, Háma his younger son led men out on a sortie and foray, but they were lost in the snow. Helm grew fierce and gaunt for famine and grief; and the dread of him alone was worth many men in the defence of the Burg. He would go out by himself, clad in white, and stalk like a snow-troll into the camps of his enemies, and slay many men with his hands. It was believed that if he bore no weapon no weapon would bite on him. The Dunlendings said that if he could find no food he ate men. That tale lasted long in Dunland. Helm had a great horn, and soon it was marked that before he sallied forth he would blow a blast upon it that echoed in the Deep; and then so great a fear fell on his enemies that instead of gathering to take him or kill him they fled away down the Coomb.

‘One night men heard the horn blowing, but Helm did not return. In the morning there came a sun-gleam, the first for long days, and they saw a white figure standing still on the Dike, alone, for none of the Dunlendings dared come near. There stood Helm, dead as a stone, but his knees were unbent. Yet men said that the horn was still heard at times in the Deep and the wraith of Helm would walk among the foes of Rohan and kill men with fear.

‘Soon after the winter broke. Then Fréaláf, son of Hild, Helm’s sister, came down out of Dunharrow, to which many had fled; and with a small company of desperate men he surprised Wulf in Meduseld and slew him, and regained Edoras. There were great floods after the snows, and the vale of Entwash became a vast fen. The Eastern invaders perished or withdrew; and there came help at last from Gondor, by the roads both east and west of the mountains. Before the year (2759) was ended the Dunlendings were driven out, even from Isengard; and then Fréaláf became king.

‘Helm was brought from the Hornburg and laid in the ninth mound. Ever after the white *simbelmynë* grew there most thickly, so that the mound seemed to be snow-clad. When Fréaláf died a new line of mounds was begun.’

The Rohirrim were grievously reduced by war and dearth and loss of cattle and horses; and it was well that no great danger threatened them again for many years, for it was not until the time of King Folcwine that they recovered their former strength.

It was at the crowning of Fréaláf that Saruman appeared, bringing gifts, and speaking great praise of the valour of the Rohirrim. All thought him a welcome guest. Soon after he took up his abode in Isengard. For this, Beren, Steward of Gondor, gave him leave, for Gondor still claimed Isengard as a fortress of its realm, and not part of Rohan. Beren also gave into Saruman's keeping the keys of Orthanc. That tower no enemy had been able to harm or to enter.

In this way Saruman began to behave as a lord of Men; for at first he held Isengard as a lieutenant of the Steward and warden of the tower. But Fréaláf was as glad as Beren to have this so, and to know that Isengard was in the hands of a strong friend. A friend he long seemed, and maybe in the beginning he was one in truth. Though afterwards there was little doubt in men's minds that Saruman went to Isengard in hope to find the Stone still there, and with the purpose of building up a power of his own. Certainly after the last White Council (2953) his designs towards Rohan, though he hid them, were evil. He then took Isengard for his own and began to make it a place of guarded strength and fear, as though to rival the Barad-dûr. His friends and servants he drew then from all who hated Gondor and Rohan, whether Men or other creatures more evil.

## *The Kings Of The Mark*

### **First Line**

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2485-2545:—1. *Eorl the Young*. He was so named because he succeeded his father in youth and remained yellow-haired and ruddy to the end of his days. These were shortened by a renewed attack of the Easterlings. Eorl fell in battle in the Wold, and the first mound was raised. Felaróf was laid there also.

2512-70:—2. *Brego*. He drove the enemy out of the Wold, and Rohan was not attacked again for many years. In 2569 he completed the great hall of Meduseld. At the feast his son Baldor vowed that he would tread 'the Paths of the Dead' and did not return.<sup>393</sup> Brego died of grief the next year.

2544-2645:—3. *Aldor the Old*. He was Brego's second son. He became known as the Old, since he lived to a great age, and was king for 75 years. In his time the Rohirrim increased, and drove out or subdued the last of the Dunlendish people that lingered east of Isen. Harrowdale and other mountain-valleys were settled. Of the next three kings little is said, for Rohan had peace and prospered in their time.

2570-2659:—4. *Fréa*. Eldest son, but fourth child of Aldor; he was already old when he became king.

2594-2680:—5. *Fréawine*.

2619-99:—6. *Goldwine*.

2644-2718:—7. *Déor*. In his time the Dunlendings raided often over the Isen. In 2710 they occupied the deserted ring of Isengard, and could not be dislodged.

2668-2741:—8. *Gram*.

2691-2759:—9. *Helm Hammerhand*. At the end of his reign Rohan suffered great loss, by invasion and the Long Winter. Helm and his sons Haleth and Háma perished. Fréaláf, Helm's sister's son, became king.

### **Second Line**

2726-2798:—10. *Fréaláf Hildeson*. In his time Saruman came to Isengard, from which the Dunlendings had been driven. The Rohirrim at first profited by his friendship in the days of dearth and weakness that followed.

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<sup>392</sup> The dates are given according to the reckoning of Gondor (Third Age). Those in the margin are of birth and death.

<sup>393</sup> Pp. 787, 797.

2752-2842:—11. *Brytta*. He was called by his people Léofa, for he was loved by all; he was openhanded and a help to all the needy. In his time there was war with Orcs that, driven from the North, sought refuges in the White Mountains.<sup>394</sup> When he died it was thought that they had all been hunted out; but it was not so.

2780-2851:—12. *Walda*. He was king only nine years. He was slain with all his companions when they were trapped by Orcs, as they rode by mountain-paths from Dunharrow.

2804-64:—13. *Folca*. He was a great hunter, but he vowed to chase no wild beast while there was an Orc left in Rohan. When the last orc-hold was found and destroyed, he went to hunt the great boar of Everholt in the Firien Wood. He slew the boar but died of the tusk-wounds that it gave him.

2830-2903:—14. *Folcwine*. When he became king the Rohirrim had recovered their strength. He reconquered the west-march (between Adorn and Isen) that Dunlendings had occupied. Rohan had received great help from Gondor in the evil days. When, therefore, he heard that the Haradrim were assailing Gondor with great strength, he sent many men to the help of the Steward. He wished to lead them himself, but was dissuaded, and his twin sons Folcred and Fastred (born 2858) went in his stead. They fell side by side in battle in Ithilien (2885). Túrin II of Gondor sent to Folcwine a rich weregild of gold.

2870-2953:—15. *Fengel*. He was the third son and fourth child of Folcwine. He is not remembered with praise. He was greedy of food and of gold, and at strife with his marshals, and with his children. Thengel, his third child and only son, left Rohan when he came to manhood and lived long in Gondor, and won honour in the service of Turgon.

2905-80:—16. *Thengel*. He took no wife until late, but in 2943 he wedded Morwen of Lossarnach in Gondor, though she was seventeen years the younger. She bore him three children in Gondor, of whom Théoden, the second, was his only son. When Fengel died the Rohirrim recalled him, and he returned unwillingly. But he proved a good and wise king; though the speech of Gondor was used in his house, and not all men thought that good. Morwen bore him two more daughters in Rohan; and the last, Théodwyn, was the fairest, though she came late (2963), the child of his age. Her brother loved her dearly. It was soon after Thengel's return that Saruman declared himself Lord of Isengard and began to give trouble to Rohan, encroaching on its borders and supporting its enemies.

2948-3019:—17. *Théoden*. He is called Théoden Ednew in the lore of Rohan, for he fell into a decline under the spells of Saruman, but was healed by Gandalf, and in the last year of his life arose and led his men to victory at the Hornburg, and soon after to the Fields of Pelennor, the greatest battle of the Age. He fell before the gates of Mundburg. For a while he rested in the land of his birth, among the dead Kings of Gondor, but was brought back and laid in the eighth mound of his line at Edoras. Then a new line was begun.

### Third Line

In 2989 Théodwyn married Éomund of Eastfold, the chief Marshal of the Mark. Her son Éomer was born in 2991, and her daughter Éowyn in 2995. At that time Sauron had arisen again, and the shadow of Mordor reached out to Rohan. Orcs began to raid in the eastern regions and slay or steal horses. Others also came down from the Misty Mountains, many being great uruks in the service of Saruman, though it was long before that was suspected. Éomund's chief charge lay in the east marches; and he was a great lover of horses and hater of Orcs. If news came of a raid he would often ride against them in hot anger, unwarily and with few men. Thus it came about that he was slain in 3002; for he pursued a small band to the borders of the Eryn Muil, and was there surprised by a strong force that lay in wait in the rocks. Not long after Théodwyn took sick and died to the great grief of the king. Her children he took into his house, calling them son and daughter. He had only one child of his own, Théodred his son, then twenty-four years old; for the queen Elfhild had died in childbirth, and Théoden did not wed again. Éomer and Éowyn grew up at Edoras and saw the dark shadow fall on the halls of

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<sup>394</sup> P. 1054.

Théoden. Éomer was like his fathers before him; but Éowyn was slender and tall, with a grace and pride that came to her out of the South from Morwen of Lossarnach, whom the Rohirrim had called Steelsheen.

2991-F.A. 63 (3084):—*Éomer Éadig*. When still young he became a Marshal of the Mark (3017) and was given his father's charge in the east marches. In the War of the Ring Théodred fell in battle with Saruman at the Crossings of Isen. Therefore before he died on the Fields of the Pelennor Théoden named Éomer his heir and called him king. In that day Éowyn also won renown, for she fought in that battle, riding in disguise; and was known after in the Mark as the Lady of the Shield-arm.<sup>395</sup>

Éomer became a great king, and being young when he succeeded Théoden he reigned for sixty-five years, longer than all their kings before him save Aldor the Old. In the War of the Ring he made the friendship of King Elessar, and of Imrahil of Dol Amroth; and he rode often to Gondor. In the last year of the Third Age he wedded Lothíriel, daughter of Imrahil. Their son Elfwine the Fair ruled after him.

In Éomer's day in the Mark men had peace who wished for it, and the people increased both in the dales and the plains, and their horses multiplied. In Gondor the King Elessar now ruled, and in Arnor also. In all the lands of those realms of old he was king, save in Rohan only; for he renewed to Éomer the gift of Ciríon, and Éomer took again the Oath of Eorl. Often he fulfilled it. For though Sauron had passed, the hatreds and evils that he bred had not died, and the King of the West had many enemies to subdue before the White Tree could grow in peace. And wherever King Elessar went with war King Éomer went with him; and beyond the Sea of Rhûn and on the far fields of the South the thunder of the cavalry of the Mark was heard, and the White Horse upon Green flew in many winds until Éomer grew old.

### III. Durin's Folk

Concerning the beginning of the Dwarves strange tales are told both by the Eldar and by the Dwarves themselves; but since these things lie far back beyond our days little is said of them here. Durin is the name that the Dwarves used for the eldest of the Seven Fathers of their race, and the ancestor of all the kings of the Longbeards.<sup>396</sup> He slept alone, until in the deeps of time and the awakening of that people he came to Azanulbizar, and in the caves above Kheled-zâram in the east of the Misty Mountains he made his dwelling, where afterwards were the Mines of Moria renowned in song.

There he lived so long that he was known far and wide as Durin the Deathless. Yet in the end he died before the Elder Days had passed, and his tomb was in Khazad-dûm; but his line never failed, and five times an heir was born in his House so like to his Forefather that he received the name of Durin. He was indeed held by the Dwarves to be the Deathless that returned; for they have many strange tales and beliefs concerning themselves and their fate in the world.

After the end of the First Age the power and wealth of Khazad-dûm was much increased; for it was enriched by many people and much lore and craft when the ancient cities of Nogrod and Belegost in the Blue Mountains were ruined at the breaking of Thangorodrim. The power of Moria endured throughout the Dark Years and the dominion of Sauron, for though Eregion was destroyed and the gates of Moria were shut, the halls of Khazad-dûm were too deep and strong and filled with a people too numerous and valiant for Sauron to conquer from without. Thus its wealth remained long unravished, though its people began to dwindle.

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<sup>395</sup> For her shield-arm was broken by the mace of the Witch-king; but he was brought to nothing, and thus the words of Glorfindel long before to King Eärnur were fulfilled, that the Witch-king would not fall by the hand of man. For it is said in the songs of the Mark that in this deed Éowyn had the aid of Théoden's esquire, and that he also was not a Man but a Halfling out of a far country, though Éomer gave him honour in the Mark and the name of Holdwine. [This Holdwine was none other than Meriadoc the Magnificent who was Master of Buckland.]

<sup>396</sup> *The Hobbit*, p. 50.

It came to pass that in the middle of the Third Age Durin was again its king, being the sixth of that name. The power of Sauron, servant of Morgoth, was then again growing in the world, though the Shadow in the Forest that looked towards Moria was not yet known for what it was. All evil things were stirring. The Dwarves delved deep at that time, seeking beneath Barazinbar for *mithril*, the metal beyond price that was becoming yearly ever harder to win.<sup>397</sup> Thus they roused from sleep<sup>398</sup> a thing of terror that, flying from Thangorodrim, had lain hidden at the foundations of the earth since the coming of the Host of the West: a Balrog of Morgoth. Durin was slain by it, and the year after Náin I, his son; and then the glory of Moria passed, and its people were destroyed or fled far away.

Most of those that escaped made their way into the North, and Thráin I, Náin's son, came to Erebor, the Lonely Mountain, near the eastern eaves of Mirkwood, and there he began new works, and became King under the Mountain. In Erebor he found the great jewel, the Arkenstone, Heart of the Mountain.<sup>399</sup> But Thorin I his son removed and went into the far North to the Grey Mountains, where most of Durin's folk were now gathering; for those mountains were rich and little explored. But there were dragons in the wastes beyond; and after many years they became strong again and multiplied, and they made war on the Dwarves, and plundered their works. At last Dáin I, together with Frór his second son, was slain at the doors of his hall by a great cold-drake.

Not long after most of Durin's Folk abandoned the Grey Mountains. Grór, Dáin's son, went away with many followers to the Iron Hills; but Thrór, Dáin's heir, with Borin his father's brother and the remainder of the people returned to Erebor. To the Great Hall of Thráin, Thrór brought back the Arkenstone, and he and his folk prospered and became rich, and they had the friendship of all Men that dwelt near. For they made not only things of wonder and beauty but weapons and armour of great worth; and there was great traffic of ore between them and their kin in the Iron Hills. Thus the Northmen who lived between Celduin (River Running) and Carnen (Redwater) became strong and drove back all enemies from the East; and the Dwarves lived in plenty, and there was feasting and song in the Halls of Erebor.<sup>400</sup>

So the rumour of the wealth of Erebor spread abroad and reached the ears of the dragons, and at last Smaug the Golden, greatest of the dragons of his day, arose and without warning came against King Thrór and descended on the Mountain in flames. It was not long before all that realm was destroyed, and the town of Dale nearby was ruined and deserted; but Smaug entered into the Great Hall and lay there upon a bed of gold.

From the sack and the burning many of Thrór's kin escaped; and last of all from the halls by a secret door came Thrór himself and his son Thráin II. They went away south with their family<sup>401</sup> into long and homeless wandering. With them went also a small company of their kinsmen and faithful followers.

Years afterwards Thrór, now old, poor, and desperate, gave to his son Thráin the one great treasure he still possessed, the last of the Seven Rings, and then he went away with one old companion only, called Nár. Of the Ring he said to Thráin at their parting:

'This may prove the foundation of new fortune for you yet, though that seems unlikely. But it needs gold to breed gold.'

'Surely you do not think of returning to Erebor?' said Thráin.

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<sup>397</sup> P. 317.

<sup>398</sup> Or released from prison; it may well be that it had already been awakened by the malice of Sauron.

<sup>399</sup> *The Hobbit*, pp. 207-8.

<sup>400</sup> *The Hobbit*, pp. 22.

<sup>401</sup> Among whom were the children of Thráin II: Thorin (Oakenshield), Frerin, and Dís. Thorin was then a youngster in the reckoning of the Dwarves. It was afterwards learned that more of the Folk under the Mountain had escaped than was at first hoped; but most of these went to the Iron Hills.



‘Not at my age,’ said Thrór. ‘Our vengeance on Smaug I bequeath to you and your sons. But I am tired of poverty and the scorn of Men. I go to see what I can find.’ He did not say where.

He was a little crazed perhaps with age and misfortune and long brooding on the splendour of Moria in his forefathers’ days; or the Ring, it may be, was turning to evil now that its master was awake, driving him to folly and destruction. From Dunland, where he was then dwelling, he went north with Nár, and they crossed the Redhorn Pass and came down into Azanulbizar.

When Thrór came to Moria the Gate was open. Nár begged him to beware, but he took no heed of him, and walked proudly in as an heir that returns. But he did not come back. Nár stayed nearby for many days in hiding. One day he heard a loud shout and the blare of a horn, and a body was flung out on the steps. Fearing that it was Thrór, he began to creep near, but there came a voice from within the gate:

‘Come on, bearding! We can see you. But there is no need to be afraid today. We need you as a messenger.’

Then Nár came up, and found that it was indeed the body of Thrór, but the head was severed and lay face downwards. As he knelt there, he heard orc-laughter in the shadows, and the voice said:

‘If beggars will not wait at the door, but sneak in to try thieving, that is what we do to them. If any of your people poke their foul beards in here again, they will fare the same. Go and tell them so! But if his family wish to know who is now king here, the name is written on his face. I wrote it! I killed him! I am the master!’

Then Nár turned the head and saw branded on the brow in dwarf-runes so that he could read it the name AZOG. That name was branded in his heart and in the hearts of all the Dwarves afterwards. Nár stooped to take the head, but the voice of Azog<sup>402</sup> said:

‘Drop it! Be off! Here’s your fee, beggar-beard.’ A small bag struck him. It held a few coins of little worth.

Weeping, Nár fled down the Silverlode; but he looked back once and saw that Orcs had come from the gate and were hacking up the body and flinging the pieces to the black crows.

Such was the tale that Nár brought back to Thráin; and when he had wept and torn his beard he fell silent. Seven days he sat and said no word. Then he stood up and said: ‘This cannot be borne!’ That was the beginning of the War of the Dwarves and the Orcs, which was long and deadly, and fought for the most part in deep places beneath the earth.

Thráin at once sent messengers bearing the tale, north, east, and west; but it was three years before the Dwarves had mustered their strength. Durin’s Folk gathered all their host, and they were joined by great forces sent from the Houses of other Fathers; for this dishonour to the heir of the Eldest of their race filled them with wrath. When all was ready they assailed and sacked one by one all the strongholds of the Orcs that they could find from Gundabad to the Gladden. Both sides were pitiless, and there was death and cruel deeds by dark and by light. But the Dwarves had the victory through their strength, and their matchless weapons, and the fire of their anger, as they hunted for Azog in every den under mountain.

At last all the Orcs that fled before them were gathered in Moria, and the Dwarf-host in pursuit came to Azanulbizar. That was a great vale that lay between the arms of the mountains about the lake of Kheled-zâram and had been of old part of the kingdom of Khazad-dûm. When the Dwarves saw the gate of their ancient mansions upon the hill-side they sent up a great shout like thunder in the valley. But a great host of foes was arrayed on the slopes above them, and out of the gates poured a multitude of Orcs that had been held back by Azog for the last need.

At first fortune was against the Dwarves; for it was a dark day of winter without sun, and the Orcs did not waver, and they outnumbered their enemies, and had the higher ground. So began the Battle of Azanulbizar (or Nanduhirion in the Elvish tongue), at the memory of which the Orcs still shudder and the Dwarves weep. The first assault of the vanguard led by Thráin was thrown back with loss, and Thráin was driven into a wood of

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<sup>402</sup> Azog was the father of Bolg; see *The Hobbit*, p. 24.

great trees that then still grew not far from Kheled-zâram. There Frerin his son fell, and Fundin his kinsman, and many others, and both Thráin and Thorin were wounded.<sup>403</sup> Elsewhere the battle swayed to and fro with great slaughter, until at last the people of the Iron Hills turned the day. Coming late and fresh to the field the mailed warriors of Náin, Grór's son, drove through the Orcs to the very threshold of Moria, crying 'Azog! Azog!' as they hewed down with their mattocks all who stood in their way.

Then Náin stood before the Gate and cried with a great voice: 'Azog! If you are in come out! Or is the play in the valley too rough?'

Thereupon Azog came forth, and he was a great Orc with a huge iron-clad head, and yet agile and strong. With him came many like him, the fighters of his guard, and as they engaged Náin's company he turned to Náin, and said:

'What? Yet another beggar at my doors? Must I brand you too?' With that he rushed at Náin and they fought. But Náin was half blind with rage, and also very weary with battle, whereas Azog was fresh and fell and full of guile. Soon Náin made a great stroke with all his strength that remained, but Azog darted aside and kicked Náin's leg, so that the mattock splintered on the stone where he had stood, but Náin stumbled forward. Then Azog with a swift swing hewed his neck. His mail-collar withstood the edge, but so heavy was the blow that Náin's neck was broken and he fell.

Then Azog laughed, and he lifted up his head to let forth a great yell of triumph; but the cry died in his throat. For he saw that all his host in the valley was in a rout, and the Dwarves went this way and that slaying as they would, and those that could escape from them were flying south, shrieking as they ran. And hard by all the soldiers of his guard lay dead. He turned and fled back towards the Gate.

Up the steps after him leaped a Dwarf with a red axe. It was Dáin Ironfoot, Náin's son. Right before the doors he caught Azog, and there he slew him, and hewed off his head. That was held a great feat, for Dáin was then only a stripling in the reckoning of the Dwarves. But long life and many battles lay before him, until old but unbowed he fell at last in the War of the Ring. Yet hardy and full of wrath as he was, it is said that when he came down from the Gate he looked grey in the face, as one who has felt great fear.

When at last the battle was won the Dwarves that were left gathered in Azanulbizar. They took the head of Azog and thrust into its mouth the purse of small money, and then they set it on a stake. But no feast nor song was there that night; for their dead were beyond the count of grief. Barely half of their number, it is said, could still stand or had hope of healing.

None the less in the morning Thráin stood before them. He had one eye blinded beyond cure, and he was halt with a leg-wound; but he said: 'Good! We have the victory. Khazad-dûm is ours!'

But they answered: 'Durin's Heir you may be, but even with one eye you should see clearer. We fought this war for vengeance, and vengeance we have taken. But it is not sweet. If this is victory, then our hands are too small to hold it.'

And those who were not of Durin's Folk said also: 'Khazad-dûm was not our Fathers' house. What is it to us, unless a hope of treasure? But now, if we must go without the rewards and the wergilds that are owed to us, the sooner we return to our own lands the better pleased we shall be.'

Then Thráin turned to Dáin, and said: 'But surely my own kin will not desert me?' 'No,' said Dáin. 'You are the father of our Folk, and we have bled for you, and will again. But we will not enter Khazad-dûm. You will not enter Khazad-dûm. Only I have looked through the shadow of the Gate. Beyond the shadow it waits for you still: Durin's Bane. The world must change and some other power than ours must come before Durin's Folk walk again in Moria.'

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<sup>403</sup> It is said that Thorin's shield was cloven and he cast it away and he hewed off with his axe a branch of an oak and held it in his left hand to ward off the strokes of his foes, or to wield as a club. In this way he got his name.



So it was that after Azanulbizar the Dwarves dispersed again. But first with great labour they stripped all their dead, so that Orcs should not come and win there a store of weapons and mail. It is said that every Dwarf that went from that battlefield was bowed under a heavy burden. Then they built many pyres and burned all the bodies of their kin. There was a great felling of trees in the valley, which remained bare ever after, and the reek of the burning was seen in Lórien.<sup>404</sup>

When the dreadful fires were in ashes the allies went away to their own countries, and Dáin Ironfoot led his father's people back to the Iron Hills. Then standing by the great stake, Thráin said to Thorin Oakenshield: 'Some would think this head dearly bought! At least we have given our kingdom for it. Will you come with me back to the anvil? Or will you beg your bread at proud doors?'

'To the anvil,' answered Thorin. 'The hammer will at least keep the arms strong, until they can wield sharper tools again.'

So Thráin and Thorin with what remained of their following (among whom were Balin and Glóin) returned to Dunland, and soon afterwards they removed and wandered in Eriador, until at last they made a home in exile in the east of the Ered Luin beyond the Lune. Of iron were most of the things that they forged in those days, but they prospered after a fashion, and their numbers slowly increased.<sup>405</sup> But, as Thrór had said, the Ring needed gold to breed gold, and of that or any other precious metal they had little or none.

Of this Ring something may be said here. It was believed by the Dwarves of Durin's Folk to be the first of the Seven that was forged; and they say that it was given to the King of Khazad-dûm, Durin III, by the Elven-smiths themselves and not by Sauron, though doubtless his evil power was on it, since he had aided in the forging of all the Seven. But the possessors of the Ring did not display it or speak of it, and they seldom surrendered it until near death, so that others did not know for certain where it was bestowed. Some thought that it had remained in Khazad-dûm, in the secret tombs of the kings, if they had not been discovered and plundered; but among the kindred of Durin's Heir it was believed (wrongly) that Thrór had worn it when he rashly returned there. What then had become of it they did not know. It was not found on the body of Azog.<sup>406</sup>

None the less it may well be, as the Dwarves now believe, that Sauron by his arts had discovered who had this Ring, the last to remain free, and that the singular misfortunes of the heirs of Durin were largely due to his malice. For the Dwarves had proved untameable by this means. The only power over them that the Rings wielded was to inflame their hearts with a greed of gold and precious things, so that if they lacked them all other good things seemed profitless, and they were filled with wrath and desire for vengeance on all who deprived them. But they were made from their beginning of a kind to resist most steadfastly any domination. Though they could be slain or broken, they could not be reduced to shadows enslaved to another will; and for the same reason their lives were not affected by any Ring, to live either longer or shorter because of it. All the more did Sauron hate the possessors and desire to dispossess them.

It was therefore perhaps partly by the malice of the Ring that Thráin after some years became restless and discontented. The lust for gold was ever in his mind. At last, when he could endure it no longer, he turned his thoughts to Erebor, and resolved to go back there. He said nothing to Thorin of what was in his heart; but with Balin and Dwalin and a few others, he arose and said farewell and departed.

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<sup>404</sup> Such dealings with their dead seemed grievous to the Dwarves, for it was against their use; but to make such tombs as they were accustomed to build (since they will lay their dead only in stone not in earth) would have taken many years. To fire therefore they turned, rather than leave their kin to beast or bird or carrion-orc. But those who fell in Azanulbizar were honoured in memory, and to this day a Dwarf will say proudly of one of his sires: 'he was a burned Dwarf, and that is enough.'

<sup>405</sup> They had very few women-folk. Dís Thrain's daughter was there. She was the mother of Fíli and Kíli, who were born in the Ered Luin. Thorin had no wife.

<sup>406</sup> P. 268.

Little is known of what happened to him afterwards. It would now seem that as soon as he was abroad with few companions he was hunted by the emissaries of Sauron. Wolves pursued him, Orcs waylaid him, evil birds shadowed his path, and the more he strove to go north the more misfortunes opposed him. There came a dark night when he and his companions were wandering in the land beyond Anduin, and they were driven by a black rain to take shelter under the eaves of Mirkwood. In the morning he was gone from the camp, and his companions called him in vain. They searched for him many days, until at last giving up hope they departed and came at length back to Thorin. Only long after was it learned that Thráin had been taken alive and brought to the pits of Dol Guldur. There he was tormented and the Ring taken from him, and there at last he died.

So Thorin Oakenshield became the Heir of Durin, but an heir without hope. When Thráin was lost he was ninety-five, a great dwarf of proud bearing; but he seemed content to remain in Eriador. There he laboured long, and trafficked, and gained such wealth as he could; and his people were increased by many of the wandering Folk of Durin who heard of his dwelling in the west and came to him. Now they had fair halls in the mountains, and store of goods, and their days did not seem so hard, though in their songs they spoke ever of the Lonely Mountain far away.

The years lengthened. The embers in the heart of Thorin grew hot again, as he brooded on the wrongs of his House and the vengeance upon the Dragon that he had inherited. He thought of weapons and armies and alliances, as his great hammer rang in his forge; but the armies were dispersed and the alliances broken and the axes of his people were few; and a great anger without hope burned him as he smote the red iron on the anvil.

But at last there came about by chance a meeting between Gandalf and Thorin that changed all the fortunes of the House of Durin, and led to other and greater ends beside. On a time<sup>407</sup> Thorin, returning west from a journey, stayed at Bree for the night. There Gandalf was also. He was on his way to the Shire, which he had not visited for some twenty years. He was weary, and thought to rest there for a while.

Among many cares he was troubled in mind by the perilous state of the North; because he knew then already that Sauron was plotting war, and intended, as soon as he felt strong enough, to attack Rivendell. But to resist any attempt from the East to regain the lands of Angmar and the northern passes in the mountains there were now only the Dwarves of the Iron Hills. And beyond them lay the desolation of the Dragon. The Dragon Sauron might use with terrible effect. How then could the end of Smaug be achieved?

It was even as Gandalf sat and pondered this that Thorin stood before him, and said: ‘Master Gandalf, I know you only by sight, but now I should be glad to speak with you. For you have often come into my thoughts of late, as if I were bidden to seek you. Indeed I should have done so, if I had known where to find you.’

Gandalf looked at him with wonder. ‘That is strange, Thorin Oakenshield,’ he said. ‘For I have thought of you also; and though I am on my way to the Shire, it was in my mind that is the way also to your halls.’

‘Call them so, if you will,’ said Thorin. ‘They are only poor lodgings in exile. But you would be welcome there, if you would come. For they say that you are wise and know more than any other of what goes on in the world; and I have much on my mind and would be glad of your counsel.’

‘I will come,’ said Gandalf; ‘for I guess that we share one trouble at least. The Dragon of Erebor is on my mind, and I do not think that he will be forgotten by the grandson of Thrór.’

The story is told [elsewhere](#) of what came of that meeting: of the strange plan that Gandalf made for the help of Thorin, and how Thorin and his companions set out from the Shire on the quest of the Lonely Mountain that came to great ends unforeseen. Here only those things are recalled that directly concern Durin’s Folk.

The Dragon was slain by Bard of Esgaroth, but there was battle in Dale. For the Orcs came down upon Erebor as soon as they heard of the return of the Dwarves; and they were led by Bolg, son of that Azog whom Dáin slew in his youth. In that first Battle of Dale, Thorin Oakenshield was mortally wounded; and he died and was laid in a tomb under the Mountain with the Arkenstone upon his breast. There fell also Fili and Kili, his sister-

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<sup>407</sup> March 15, 2941.

sons. But Dáin Ironfoot, his cousin, who came from the Iron Hills to his aid and was also his rightful heir, became then King Dáin II, and the Kingdom under the Mountain was restored, even as Gandalf had desired. Dáin proved a great and wise king, and the Dwarves prospered and grew strong again in his day.

In the late summer of that same year (2941) Gandalf had at last prevailed upon Saruman and the White Council to attack Dol Guldur, and Sauron retreated and went to Mordor, there to be secure, as he thought, from all his enemies. So it was that when the War came at last the main assault was turned southwards; yet even so with his far-stretched right hand Sauron might have done great evil in the North, if King Dáin and King Brand had not stood in his path. Even as Gandalf said afterwards to Frodo and Gimli, when they dwelt together for a time in Minas Tirith. Not long before news had come to Gondor of events far away.

‘I grieved at the fall of Thorin,’ said Gandalf; ‘and now we hear that Dáin has fallen, fighting in Dale again, even while we fought here. I should call that a heavy loss, if it was not a wonder rather that in his great age he could still wield his axe as mightily as they say that he did, standing over the body of King Brand before the Gate of Erebor until the darkness fell.

‘Yet things might have gone far otherwise and far worse. When you think of the great Battle of the Pelennor, do not forget the battles in Dale and the valour of Durin’s Folk. Think of what might have been. Dragon-fire and savage swords in Eriador, night in Rivendell. There might be no Queen in Gondor. We might now hope to return from the victory here only to ruin and ash. But that has been averted—because I met Thorin Oakenshield one evening on the edge of spring in Bree. A chance-meeting, as we say in Middle-earth.’

Dís was the daughter of Thráin II. She is the only dwarf-woman named in these histories. It was said by Gimli that there are few dwarf-women, probably no more than a third of the whole people. They seldom walk abroad except at great need. They are in voice and appearance, and in garb if they must go on a journey, so like to the dwarf-men that the eyes and ears of other peoples cannot tell them apart. This has given rise to the foolish opinion among Men that there are no dwarf-women, and that the Dwarves ‘grow out of stone’.

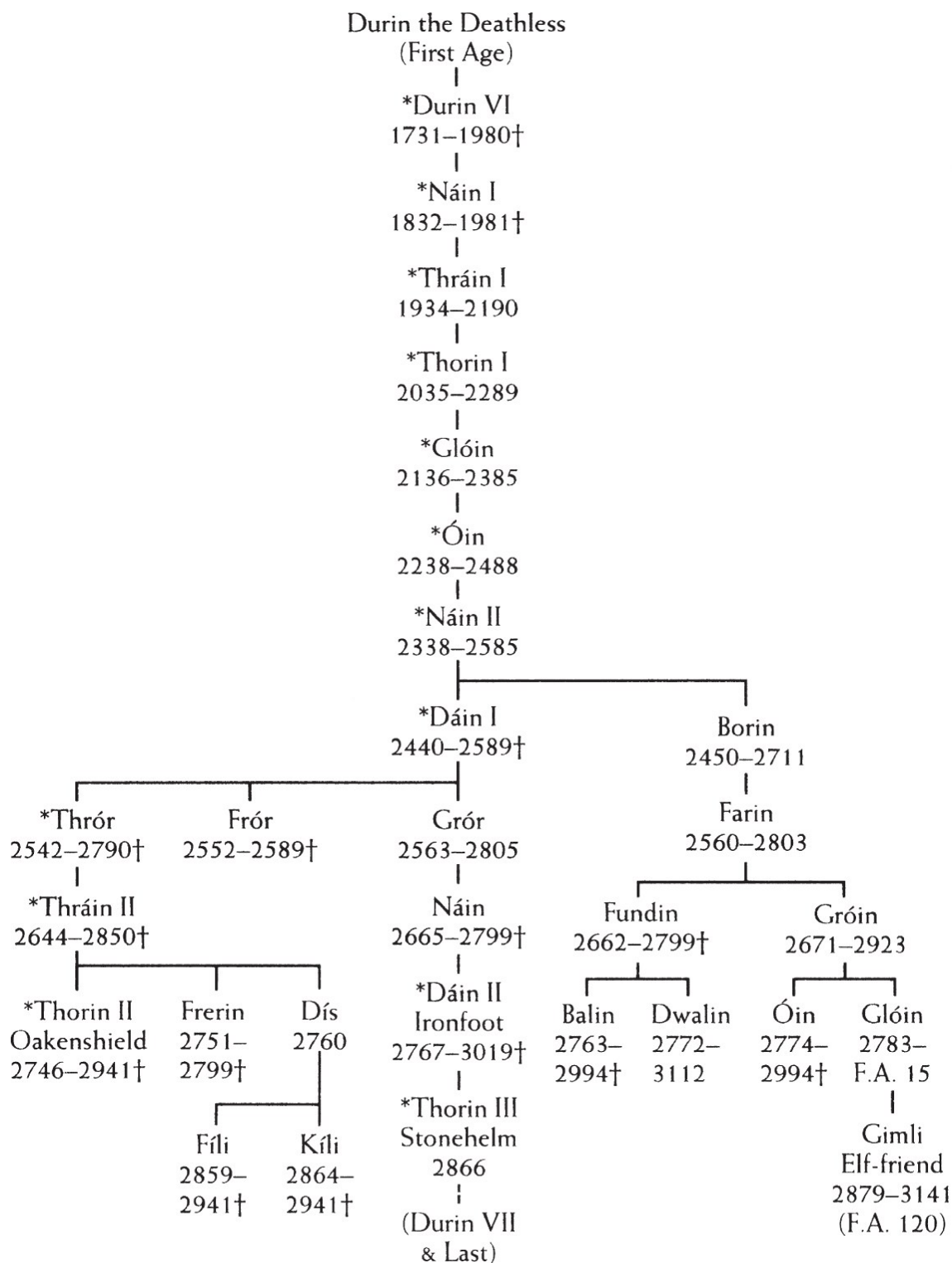
It is because of the fewness of women among them that the kind of the Dwarves increases slowly, and is in peril when they have no secure dwellings. For Dwarves take only one wife or husband each in their lives, and are jealous, as in all matters of their rights. The number of dwarf-men that marry is actually less than one-third. For not all the women take husbands: some desire none; some desire one that they cannot get, and so will have no other. As for the men, very many also do not desire marriage, being engrossed in their crafts.

Gimli Glóin’s son is renowned, for he was one of the Nine Walkers that set out with the Ring; and he remained in the company of King Elessar throughout the War. He was named Elf-friend because of the great love that grew between him and Legolas, son of King Thranduil, and because of his reverence for the Lady Galadriel.

After the fall of Sauron, Gimli brought south a part of the Dwarf-folk of Erebor, and he became Lord of the Glittering Caves. He and his people did great works in Gondor and Rohan. For Minas Tirith they forged gates of *mithril* and steel to replace those broken by the Witch-king. Legolas his friend also brought south Elves out of Greenwood, and they dwelt in Ithilien, and it became once again the fairest country in all the westlands.

But when King Elessar gave up his life Legolas followed at last the desire of his heart and sailed over Sea.

***The Line Of The Dwarves Of Erebor As It Was Set Out By Gimli Glóin’s Son For King Elessar***



\* The names of those who were held to be kings of Durin's Folk, whether in exile or not, are marked so. Of the other companions of Thorin Oakenshield in the journey to Erebor Ori, Nori, and Dori were also of the House of Durin, and more remote kinsman of Thorin. Bifur, Bofur, and Bombur were descended from Dwarves of Moria but were not of Durin's line. For † see [p. 1033](#).

Foundation of Erebor, 1999.

Dain I slain by a dragon, 2589.

Return to Erebor, 2590.

Sack of Erebor, 2770.

Murder of Thrór, 2790.

Mustering of the Dwarves, 2790-3.

War of the Dwarves and Orcs, 2793-9.

Battle of Nanduhirion, 2799.

Thráin goes wandering, 2841.

Death of Thráin and loss of his Ring, 2850.

Battle of Five Armies and death of Thorin II, 2941.

Balin goes to Moria, 2989.

### ***Here Follows One Of The Last Notes In The Red Book***

**W**e have heard tell that Legolas took Gimli Glóin's son with him because of their great friendship, greater than any that has been between Elf and Dwarf. If this is true, then it is strange indeed: that a Dwarf should be willing to leave Middle-earth for any love, or that the Eldar should receive him, or that the Lords of the West should permit it. But it is said that Gimli went also out of desire to see again the beauty of Galadriel; and it may be that she, being mighty among the Eldar, obtained this grace for him. More cannot be said of this matter.



## Appendix B: The Tale Of Years (Chronology Of The Westlands)

The *First Age* ended with the Great Battle, in which the Host of Valinor broke Thangorodrim<sup>408</sup> and overthrew Morgoth. Then most of the Noldor returned into the Far West<sup>409</sup> and dwelt in Eressëa within sight of Valinor; and many of the Sindar went over Sea also.

The *Second Age* ended with the first overthrow of Sauron, servant of Morgoth, and the taking of the One Ring.

The *Third Age* came to its end in the War of the Ring; but the *Fourth Age* was not held to have begun until Master Elrond departed, and the time was come for the dominion of Men and the decline of all other 'speaking-peoples' in Middle-earth.<sup>410</sup>

In the Fourth Age the earlier ages were often called the *Elder Days*; but that name was properly given only to the days before the casting out of Morgoth. The histories of that time are not recorded here.

### The Second Age

These were the dark years for Men of Middle-earth, but the years of the glory of Númenor. Of events in Middle-earth the records are few and brief, and their dates are often uncertain.

In the beginning of this age many of the High Elves still remained. Most of these dwelt in Lindon west of the Ered Luin; but before the building of the Barad-dûr many of the Sindar passed eastward, and some established realms in the forests far away, where their people were mostly Silvan Elves. Thranduil, king in the north of Greenwood the Great, was one of these. In Lindon north of the Lune dwelt Gil-galad, last heir of the kings of the Noldor in exile. He was acknowledged as High King of the Elves of the West. In Lindon south of the Lune dwelt for a time Celeborn, kinsman of Thingol; his wife was Galadriel, greatest of Elven women. She was sister of Finrod Felagund, Friend-of-Men, once king of Nargothrond, who gave his life to save Beren son of Barahir.

Later some of the Noldor went to Eregion, upon the west of the Misty Mountains, and near to the West-gate of Moria. This they did because they learned that *mithril* had been discovered in Moria.<sup>411</sup> The Noldor were great craftsmen and less unfriendly to the Dwarves than the Sindar; but the friendship that grew up between the people of Durin and the Elven-smiths of Eregion was the closest that there has ever been between the two races. Celebrimbor was Lord of Eregion and the greatest of their craftsmen; he was descended from Fëanor.

#### Year

**1:**—Foundation of the Grey Havens, and of Lindon.

**32:**—The Edain reach Númenor.

**c.40:**—Many Dwarves leaving their old cities in Ered Luin go to Moria and swell its numbers.

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<sup>408</sup> P. 243.

<sup>409</sup> P. 597, *The Hobbit*, p. 151.

<sup>410</sup> P. 971.

<sup>411</sup> P. 317.

**442:**—Death of Elros Tar-Minyatur.

**c.500:**—Sauron begins to stir again in Middle-earth.

**521:**—Birth in Númenor of Silmariën.

**600:**—The first ships of the Númenóreans appear off the coasts.

**750:**—Eregion founded by the Noldor.

**c.1000:**—Sauron, alarmed by the growing power of the Númenóreans, chooses Mordor as a land to make into a stronghold. He begins the building of Barad-dûr.

**1075:**—Tar-Ancalimë becomes the first Ruling Queen of Númenor.

**1200:**—Sauron endeavours to seduce the Eldar. Gil-galad refuses to treat with him; but the smiths of Eregion are won over. The Númenóreans begin to make permanent havens.

**c.1500:**—The Elven-smiths instructed by Sauron reach the height of their skill. They begin the forging of the Rings of Power.

**c.1590:**—The Three Rings are completed in Eregion.

**c.1600:**—Sauron forges the One Ring in Orodruin. He completes the Barad-dûr. Celebrimbor perceives the designs of Sauron.

**1693:**—War of the Elves and Sauron begins. The Three Rings are hidden.

**1695:**—Sauron's forces invade Eriador. Gil-galad sends Elrond to Eregion.

**1697:**—Eregion laid waste. Death of Celebrimbor. The gates of Moria are shut. Elrond retreats with remnant of the Noldor and founds the refuge of Imladris.

**1699:**—Sauron overruns Eriador.

**1700:**—Tar-Minastir sends a great navy from Númenor to Lindon. Sauron is defeated.

**1701:**—Sauron is driven out of Eriador. The Westlands have peace for a long while.

**c.1800:**—From about this time onward the Númenóreans begin to establish dominions on the coasts. Sauron extends his power eastwards. The shadow falls on Númenor.

**2251:**—Death of Tar-Atanamir. Tar-Ancalimon takes the sceptre. Rebellion and division of the Númenóreans begins. About this time the Nazgûl or Ringwraiths, slaves of the Nine Rings, first appear.

**2280:**—Umbar is made into a great fortress of Númenor.

**2350:**—Pelargir is built. It becomes the chief haven of the Faithful Númenóreans.

**2899:**—Ar-Adûnakhôr takes the sceptre.

**3175:**—Repentance of Tar-Palantir. Civil war in Númenor.

**3255:**—Ar-Pharazôn the Golden seizes the sceptre.

**3261:**—Ar-Pharazôn sets sail and lands at Umbar.

**3262:**—Sauron is taken as prisoner to Númenor; 3262-3310 Sauron seduces the King and corrupts the Númenóreans.

**3310:**—Ar-Pharazôn begins the building of the Great Armament.

**3319:**—Ar-Pharazôn assails Valinor. Downfall of Númenor. Elendil and his sons escape.

**3320:**—Foundations of the Realms in Exile: Arnor and Gondor. The Stones are divided ([p. 598](#)). Sauron returns to Mordor.

**3429:**—Sauron attacks Gondor, takes Minas Ithil and burns the White Tree. Isildur escapes down Anduin and goes to Elendil in the North. Anárion defends Minas Anor and Osgiliath.



**3430:**—The Last Alliance of Elves and Men is formed.

**3431:**—Gil-galad and Elendil march east to Imladris.

**3434:**—The host of the Alliance crosses the Misty Mountains. Battle of Dagorlad and defeat of Sauron. Siege of Barad-dûr begins.

**3440:**—Anárion slain.

**3441:**—Sauron overthrown by Elendil and Gil-galad, who perish. Isildur takes the One Ring. Sauron passes away and the Ringwraiths go into the shadows. The Second Age ends.

## The Third Age

These were the fading years of the Eldar. For long they were at peace, wielding the Three Rings while Sauron slept and the One Ring was lost; but they attempted nothing new, living in memory of the past. The Dwarves hid themselves in deep places, guarding their hoards; but when evil began to stir again and dragons reappeared, one by one their ancient treasures were plundered, and they became a wandering people. Moria for long remained secure, but its numbers dwindled until many of its vast mansions became dark and empty. The wisdom and the life-span of the Númenóreans also waned as they became mingled with lesser Men.

When maybe a thousand years had passed, and the first shadow had fallen on Greenwood the Great, the *Istari* or Wizards appeared in Middle-earth. It was afterwards said that they came out of the Far West and were messengers sent to contest the power of Sauron, and to unite all those who had the will to resist him; but they were forbidden to match his power with power, or to seek to dominate Elves or Men by force and fear.

They came therefore in the shape of Men, though they were never young and aged only slowly, and they had many powers of mind and hand. They revealed their true names to few,<sup>412</sup> but used such names as were given to them. The two highest of this order (of whom it is said there were five) were called by the Eldar Curunír, ‘the Man of Skill’, and Mithrandir, ‘the Grey Pilgrim’, but by Men in the North Saruman and Gandalf. Curunír journeyed often into the East, but dwelt at last in Isengard. Mithrandir was closest in friendship with the Eldar, and wandered mostly in the West, and never made for himself any lasting abode.

Throughout the Third Age the guardianship of the Three Rings was known only to those who possessed them. But at the end it became known that they had been held at first by the three greatest of the Eldar: Gil-galad, Galadriel and Círdan. Gil-galad before he died gave his ring to Elrond; Círdan later surrendered his to Mithrandir. For Círdan saw further and deeper than any other in Middle-earth, and he welcomed Mithrandir at the Grey Havens, knowing whence he came and whither he would return.

‘Take this ring, Master,’ he said, ‘for your labours will be heavy; but it will support you in the weariness that you have taken upon yourself. For this is the Ring of Fire, and with it you may rekindle hearts in a world that grows chill. But as for me, my heart is with the Sea, and I will dwell by the grey shores until the last ship sails. I will await you.’

### Year

**2:**—Isildur plants a seedling of the White Tree in Minas Anor. He delivers the South-kingdom to Meneldil. Disaster of the Gladden Fields; Isildur and his three elder sons are slain.

**3:**—Ohtar brings the shards of Narsil to Imladris.

**10:**—Valandil becomes King of Arnor.

**109:**—Elrond weds Celebrían, daughter of Celeborn.

**130:**—Birth of Elladan and Elrohir, sons of Elrond.

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<sup>412</sup> P. 670.



**241:**—Birth of Arwen Undómiel.

**420:**—King Ostroher rebuilds Minas Anor.

**490:**—First invasion of Easterlings.

**500:**—Rómendacil I defeats the Easterlings.

**541:**—Rómendacil slain in battle.

**830:**—Falastur begins the line of the Ship-kings of Gondor.

**861:**—Death of Eärendur, and division of Arnor.

**933:**—King Eärnil I takes Umbar, which becomes a fortress of Gondor.

**936:**—Eärnil lost at sea.

**1015:**—King Ciryandil slain in the siege of Umbar.

**1050:**—Hyarmendacil conquers the Harad. Gondor reaches the height of its power. About this time a shadow falls on Greenwood, and men begin to call it Mirkwood. The Periannath are first mentioned in records, with the coming of the Harfoots to Eriador.

**c.1100:**—The Wise (the Istari and the chief Eldar) discover that an evil power has made a stronghold at Dol Guldur. It is thought to be one of the Nazgûl.

**c.1149:**—Reign of Atanatar Alcarin begins.

**1150:**—The Fallohides enter Eriador. The Stoors come over the Redhorn Pass and move to the Angle, or to Dunland.

**c.1300:**—Evil things begin to multiply again. Orcs increase in the Misty Mountains and attack the Dwarves. The Nazgûl reappear. The chief of these comes north to Angmar. The Periannath migrate westward; many settle at Bree.

**1356:**—The Witch-king of Angmar invades Arnor. King Arveleg I slain. Fornost and Tyn Gorthad are defended. The Tower of Amon Sûl destroyed.

**1409:**—King Valacar of Gondor dies, and the civil war of the Kin-strife begins.

**1432:**—Burning of Osgiliath and loss of the palantír. Eldacar flees to Rhovanion; his son Ornendil is murdered.

**1437:**—Eldacar returns and drives out the usurper Castamir. Battle of the Crossings of Erui. Siege of Pelargir.

**1447:**—Rebels escape and seize Umbar.

**1448:**—King Aldamir slain in war with the Harad and Corsairs of Umbar.

**1540:**—Hyarmendacil II defeats the Men of Harad.

**1551:**—Many Periannath migrate from Bree, and are granted land beyond Baranduin by Argeleb II.

**c.1630:**—They are joined by Stoors coming up from Dunland.

**1601:**—The Corsairs ravage Pelargir and slay King Minardil.

**1634:**—The Great Plague devastates Gondor. Death of King Telemnar and his children. The White Tree dies in Minas Anor. The plague spreads north and west, and many parts of Eriador become desolate. Beyond the Baranduin the Periannath survive, but suffer great loss.

**1636:**—King Tarondor removes the King's House to Minas Anor, and plants a seedling of the White Tree. Osgiliath begins to fall into ruin. Mordor is left unguarded.

**1640:**—King Telumehtar Umbardacil retakes Umbar and drives out the Corsairs.

**1810:**—The attacks of the Wainriders upon Gondor begin.

**1851:**—Gondor loses its eastern territories, and Narmacil II falls in battle.

**1856:**—King Calimehtar defeats the Wainriders on Dagorlad.

**1899:**—Calimehtar builds the White Tower in Minas Anor.

**1900:**—Gondor and Arnor renew communications and form an alliance. Arvedui weds Fíriel daughter of Ondoher of Gondor.

**1940:**—Ondoher falls in battle. Eärnil defeats the enemy in South Ithilien. He then wins the Battle of the Camp, and drives Wainriders into the Dead Marshes. Arvedui claims the crown of Gondor.

**1944:**—Eärnil II receives the crown.

**1945:**—End of the North-kingdom. The Witch-king overruns Arthedain and takes Fornost.

**1974:**—Arvedui drowned in the Bay of Forochel. The palantíri of Annúminas and Amon Sûl are lost. Eärnur brings a fleet to Lindon. The Witch-king defeated at the Battle of Fornost, and pursued to the Ettenmoors. He vanishes from the North.

**1975:**—Aranarth takes the title of Chieftain of the Dúnedain. The heirlooms of Arnor are given into the keeping of Elrond.

**1976:**—Frumgar leads the Éothéod into the North.

**1977:**—King Argeleb I slain in battle with Rhudaur. About this time the Stoors leave the Angle, and some return to Wilderland.

**1979:**—Bucca of the Marish becomes first Thain of the Shire.

**1980:**—The Witch-king comes to Mordor and there gathers the Nazgûl. A Balrog appears in Moria, and slays Durin VI.

**1981:**—Náin I slain. The Dwarves flee from Moria. Many of the Silvan Elves of Lórien flee south. Amroth and Nimrodel are lost.

**1999:**—Thráin I comes to Erebor and founds a dwarf-kingdom ‘under the Mountain’.

**2002:**—The Nazgûl issue from Mordor and besiege Minas Ithil.

**2043:**—Fall of Minas Ithil, afterwards known as Minas Morgul. The palantír is captured.

**2000:**—Eärnur becomes King of Gondor. He is challenged by the Witch-king.

**2050:**—The challenge is renewed. Eärnur rides to Minas Morgul and is lost. Mardil becomes the first Ruling Steward.

**2060:**—The power of Dol Guldur grows. The Wise fear that it may be Sauron taking shape again.

**2063:**—Gandalf goes to Dol Guldur. Sauron retreats and hides in the East. The Watchful Peace begins. The Nazgûl remain quiet in Minas Morgul.

**2210:**—Thorin I leaves Erebor, and goes north to the Grey Mountains, where most of the remnants of Durin’s Folk are now gathering.

**2340:**—Isumbras I becomes thirteenth Thain, and first of the Took line. The Oldbucks occupy the Buckland.

**2460:**—The Watchful Peace ends. Sauron returns with increased strength to Dol Guldur.

**2463:**—The White Council is formed. About this time Déagol the Stoor finds the One Ring, and is murdered by Sméagol.

**2470:**—About this time Sméagol-Gollum hides in the Misty Mountains.

**2475:**—Attack on Gondor renewed. Osgiliath finally ruined, and its stone-bridge broken.

**c.2480:**—Orcs begin to make secret strongholds in the Misty Mountains so as to bar all the passes into Eriador. Sauron begins to people Moria with his creatures.

**2509:**—Celebrían, journeying to Lórien, is waylaid in the Redhorn Pass, and receives a poisoned wound.

**2510:**—Celebrian departs over Sea. Orcs and Easterlings overrun Calenardhon. Eorl the Young wins the victory of the Field of Celebrant. The Rohirrim settle in Calenardhon.

**2545:**—Eorl falls in battle in the Wold.

**2569:**—Brego son of Eorl completes the Golden Hall.

**2570:**—Baldor son of Brego enters the Forbidden Door and is lost. About this time Dragons reappear in the far North and begin to afflict the Dwarves.

**2589:**—Dáin I slain by a Dragon.

**2590:**—Thrór returns to Erebor. Grór his brother goes to the Iron Hills.

**c. 2670:**—Tobold plants ‘pipe-weed’ in the Southfarthing.

**2683:**—Isengrim II becomes tenth Thain and begins the excavation of Great Smials.

**2698:**—Ecthelion I rebuilds the White Tower in Minas Tirith.

**2740:**—Orcs renew their invasions of Eriador.

**2747:**—Bandobras Took defeats an Orc-band in the Northfarthing.

**2758:**—Rohan attacked from west and east and overrun. Gondor attacked by fleets of the Corsairs. Helm of Rohan takes refuge in Helm’s Deep. Wulf seizes Edoras.

**2758-9:**—The Long Winter follows. Great suffering and loss of life in Eriador and Rohan. Gandalf comes to the aid of the Shire-folk.

**2759:**—Death of Helm. Fréaláf drives out Wulf, and begins second line of Kings of the Mark. Saruman takes up his abode in Isengard.

**2770:**—Smaug the Dragon descends on Erebor. Dale destroyed. Thrór escapes with Thráin II and Thorin II.

**2790:**—Thrór slain by an Orc in Moria. The Dwarves gather for a war of vengeance. Birth of Gerontius, later known as the Old Took.

**2793:**—The War of the Dwarves and Orcs begins.

**2799:**—Battle of Nanduhirion before the East-gate of Moria. Dáin Iron-foot returns to the Iron Hills. Thráin II and his son Thorin wander westwards. They settle in the South of Ered Luin beyond the Shire (2802).

**2800-64:**—Orcs from the North trouble Rohan. King Walda slain by them (2861).

**2841:**—Thráin II sets out to revisit Erebor, but is pursued by the servants of Sauron.

**2845:**—Thráin the Dwarf is imprisoned in Dol Guldur; the last of the Seven Rings is taken from him.

**2850:**—Gandalf again enters Dol Guldur, and discovers that its master is indeed Sauron, who is gathering all the Rings and seeking for news of the One, and of Isildur’s Heir. He finds Thráin and receives the key of Erebor. Thráin dies in Dol Guldur.

**2851:**—The White Council meets. Gandalf urges an attack on Dol Guldur. Saruman overrules him.<sup>413</sup> Saruman begins to search near the Gladden Fields.

**2872:**—Belecthor II of Gondor dies. The White Tree dies, and no seedling can be found. The Dead Tree is left standing.

**2885:**—Stirred up by emissaries of Sauron the Haradrim cross the Poros and attack Gondor. The sons of Folcwine of Rohan are slain in the service of Gondor.

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<sup>413</sup> It afterwards became clear that Saruman had then begun to desire to possess the One Ring himself, and he hoped that it might reveal itself, seeking its master, if Sauron were let be for a time.

**2890:**—Bilbo born in the Shire.

**2901:**—Most of the remaining inhabitants of Ithilien desert it owing to the attacks of Uruks of Mordor. The secret refuge of Henneth Annûn is built.

**2907:**—Birth of Gilraen mother of Aragorn II.

**2911:**—The Fell Winter. The Baranduin and other rivers are frozen. White Wolves invade Eriador from the North.

**2912:**—Great floods devastate Enedwaith and Minhiriath. Tharbad is ruined and deserted.

**2920:**—Death of the Old Took.

**2929:**—Arathorn son of Arador of the Dúnedain weds Gilraen.

**2930:**—Arador slain by Trolls. Birth of Denethor II son of Ecthelion II in Minas Tirith.

**2931:**—Aragorn son of Arathorn II born on March 1<sup>st</sup>.

**2933:**—Arathorn II slain. Gilraen takes Aragorn to Imladris. Elrond receives him as foster-son and gives him the name Estel (Hope); his ancestry is concealed.

**2939:**—Saruman discovers that Sauron's servants are searching the Anduin near Gladden Fields, and that Sauron therefore has learned of Isildur's end. He is alarmed, but says nothing to the Council.

**2941:**—Thorin Oakenshield and Gandalf visit Bilbo in the Shire. Bilbo meets Sméagol-Gollum and finds the Ring. The White Council meets; Saruman agrees to an attack on Dol Guldur, since he now wishes to prevent Sauron from searching the River. Sauron having made his plans abandons Dol Guldur. The Battle of the Five Armies in Dale. Death of Thorin II. Bard of Esgaroth slays Smaug. Dáin of the Iron Hills becomes King under the Mountain (Dáin II).

**2942:**—Bilbo returns to the Shire with the Ring. Sauron returns in secret to Mordor.

**2944:**—Bard rebuilds Dale and becomes King. Gollum leaves the Mountains and begins his search for the 'thief' of the Ring.

**2948:**—Théoden son of Thengel, King of Rohan, born.

**2949:**—Gandalf and Balin visit Bilbo in the Shire.

**2950:**—Finduilas, daughter of Adrahil of Dol Amroth, born.

**2951:**—Sauron declares himself openly and gathers power in Mordor. He begins the rebuilding of Barad-dûr. Gollum turns towards Mordor. Sauron sends three of the Nazgûl to reoccupy Dol Guldur.

**2952:**—Elrond reveals to 'Estel' his true name and ancestry, and delivers to him the shards of Narsil. Arwen, newly returned from Lórien, meets Aragorn in the woods of Imladris. Aragorn goes out into the Wild.

**2953:**—Last meeting of the White Council. They debate the Rings. Saruman feigns that he has discovered that the One Ring has passed down Anduin to the Sea. Saruman withdraws to Isengard, which he takes as his own, and fortifies it. Being jealous and afraid of Gandalf he sets spies to watch all his movements; and notes his interest in the Shire. He soon begins to keep agents in Bree and the Southfarthing.

**2954:**—Mount Doom bursts into flame again. The last inhabitants of Ithilien flee over Anduin.

**2956:**—Aragorn meets Gandalf and their friendship begins.

**2957-80:**—Aragorn undertakes his great journeys and errandries. As Thorongil he serves in disguise both Thengel of Rohan and Ecthelion II of Gondor.

**2968:**—Birth of Frodo.

**2976:**—Denethor weds Finduilas of Dol Amroth.

**2977:**—Bain son of Bard becomes King of Dale.

**2978:**—Birth of Boromir son of Denethor II.

**2980:**—Aragorn enters Lórien, and there meets again Arwen Undómiel. Aragorn gives her the ring of Barahir, and they plight their troth upon the hill of Cerin Amroth. About this time Gollum reaches the confines of Mordor and becomes acquainted with Shelob. Théoden becomes King of Rohan. Birth of Samwise.

**2983:**—Faramir son of Denethor born.

**2984:**—Death of Ecthelion II. Denethor II becomes Steward of Gondor.

**2988:**—Finduilas dies young.

**2989:**—Balin leaves Erebor and enters Moria.

**2991:**—Éomer Éomund's son born in Rohan.

**2994:**—Balin perishes, and the dwarf-colony is destroyed.

**2995:**—Éowyn sister of Éomer born.

**c.3000:**—The shadow of Mordor lengthens. Saruman dares to use the palantír of Orthanc, but becomes ensnared by Sauron, who has the Ithil-stone. He becomes a traitor to the Council. His spies report that the Shire is being closely guarded by the Rangers.

**3001:**—Bilbo's farewell feast. Gandalf suspects his ring to be the One Ring. The guard on the Shire is doubled. Gandalf seeks for news of Gollum and calls on the help of Aragorn.

**3002:**—Bilbo becomes a guest of Elrond, and settles in Rivendell.

**3004:**—Gandalf visits Frodo in the Shire, and does so at intervals during the next four years.

**3007:**—Brand son of Bain becomes King in Dale. Death of Gilraen.

**3008:**—In the autumn Gandalf pays his last visit to Frodo.

**3009:**—Gandalf and Aragorn renew their hunt for Gollum at intervals during the next eight years, searching in the vales of Anduin, Mirkwood, and Rhovanion to the confines of Mordor. At some time during these years Gollum himself ventured into Mordor, and was captured by Sauron. Elrond sends for Arwen, and she returns to Imladris; the Mountains and all lands eastward are becoming dangerous.

**3017:**—Gollum is released from Mordor. He is taken by Aragorn in the Dead Marshes, and brought to Thranduil in Mirkwood. Gandalf visits Minas Tirith and reads the scroll of Isildur.

## **The Great Years**

### **3018**

#### **April**

**12:**—Gandalf reaches Hobbiton.

#### **June**

**20:**—Sauron attacks Osgiliath. About the same time Thranduil is attacked, and Gollum escapes.

**Mid-year's Day:**—Gandalf meets Radagast.

#### **July**

**4:**—Boromir sets out from Minas Tirith.

**10:**—Gandalf imprisoned in Orthanc.

#### **August**

All trace of Gollum is lost. It is thought that at about this time, being hunted both by the Elves and Sauron's servants, he took refuge in Moria; but when he had at last discovered the way to the West-gate he could not get out.

## **September**

**18:**—Gandalf escapes from Orthanc in the early hours. The Black Riders cross the Fords of Isen.

**19:**—Gandalf comes to Edoras as a beggar, and is refused admittance.

**20:**—Gandalf gains entrance to Edoras. Théoden commands him to go: ‘Take any horse, only be gone ere tomorrow is old!’

**21:**—Gandalf meets Shadowfax, but the horse will not allow him to come near. He follows Shadowfax far over the fields.

**22:**—The Black Riders reach Sarn Ford at evening; they drive off the guard of Rangers. Gandalf overtakes Shadowfax.

**23:**—Four Riders enter the Shire before dawn. The others pursue the Rangers eastward, and then return to watch the Greenway. A Black Rider comes to Hobbiton at nightfall. Frodo leaves Bag End. Gandalf having tamed Shadowfax rides from Rohan.

**24:**—Gandalf crosses the Isen.

**26:**—The Old Forest. Frodo comes to Bombadil.

**27:**—Gandalf crosses Greyflood. Second night with Bombadil.

**28:**—The Hobbits captured by a Barrow-wight. Gandalf reaches Sarn Ford.

**29:**—Frodo reaches Bree at night. Gandalf visits the Gaffer.

**30:**—Crickhollow and the Inn at Bree are raided in the early hours. Frodo leaves Bree. Gandalf comes to Crickhollow, and reaches Bree at night.

## **October**

**1:**—Gandalf leaves Bree.

**3:**—He is attacked at night on Weathertop.

**6:**—The camp under Weathertop attacked at night. Frodo wounded.

**9:**—Glorfindel leaves Rivendell.

**11:**—He drives the Riders off the Bridge of Mitheithel.

**13:**—Frodo crosses the Bridge.

**18:**—Glorfindel finds Frodo at dusk. Gandalf reaches Rivendell.

**20:**—Escape across the Ford of Bruinen.

**24:**—Frodo recovers and wakes. Boromir arrives in Rivendell at night.

**25:**—Council of Elrond.

## **December**

**25:**—The Company of the Ring leaves Rivendell at dusk.

## **3019**

### **January**

**8:**—The Company reach Hollin.

**11, 12:**—Snow on Caradhras.

**13:**—Attack by Wolves in the early hours. The Company reaches West-gate of Moria at nightfall. Gollum begins to trail the Ring-bearer.

**14:**—Night in Hall Twenty-one.

**15:**—The Bridge of Khazad-dûm, and fall of Gandalf. The Company reaches Nimrodel late at night.

**17:**—The Company comes to Caras Galadhon at evening.

**23:**—Gandalf pursues the Balrog to the peak of Zirakzigil.

**25:**—He casts down the Balrog, and passes away. His body lies on the peak.

## **February**

**15:**—The Mirror of Galadriel. Gandalf returns to life, and lies in a trance.

**16:**—Farewell to Lórien. Gollum in hiding on the west bank observes the departure.

**17:**—Gwaihir bears Gandalf to Lórien.

**23:**—The boats are attacked at night near Sarn Gebir.

**25:**—The Company pass the Argonath and camp at Parth Galen. First Battle of the Fords of Isen; Théodred son of Théoden slain.

**26:**—Breaking of the Fellowship. Death of Boromir; his horn is heard in Minas Tirith. Meriadoc and Peregrin captured. Frodo and Samwise enter the eastern Eryn Muir. Aragorn sets out in pursuit of the Orcs at evening. Éomer hears of the descent of the Orc-band from Eryn Muir.

**27:**—Aragorn reaches the west-cliff at sunrise. Éomer against Théoden's orders sets out from Eastfold about midnight to pursue the Orcs.

**28:**—Éomer overtakes the Orcs just outside Fangorn Forest.

**29:**—Meriadoc and Pippin escape and meet Treebeard. The Rohirrim attack at sunrise and destroy the Orcs. Frodo descends from the Eryn Muir and meets Gollum. Faramir sees the funeral boat of Boromir. Entmoot begins.

**30:**—Éomer returning to Edoras meets Aragorn.

## **March**

**1:**—Frodo begins the passage of the Dead Marshes at dawn. Entmoot continues. Aragorn meets Gandalf the White. They set out for Edoras. Faramir leaves Minas Tirith on an errand to Ithilien.

**2:**—Frodo comes to the end of the Marshes. Gandalf comes to Edoras and heals Théoden. The Rohirrim ride west against Saruman. Second Battle of Fords of Isen. Erkenbrand defeated. Entmoot ends in afternoon. The Ents march on Isengard and reach it at night.

**3:**—Théoden retreats to Helm's Deep. Battle of the Hornburg begins. Ents complete the destruction of Isengard.

**4:**—Théoden and Gandalf set out from Helm's Deep for Isengard. Frodo reaches the slag-mounds on the edge of the Desolation of the Morannon.

**5:**—Théoden reaches Isengard at noon. Parley with Saruman in Orthanc. Winged Nazgûl passes over the camp at Dol Baran. Gandalf sets out with Peregrin for Minas Tirith. Frodo hides in sight of the Morannon, and leaves at dusk.

**6:**—Aragorn overtaken by the Dúnedain in the early hours. Théoden sets out from the Hornburg for Harrowdale. Aragorn sets out later.

**7:**—Frodo taken by Faramir to Henneth Annûn. Aragorn comes to Dunharrow at nightfall.

**8:**—Aragorn takes the 'Paths of the Dead' at daybreak; he reaches Erech at midnight. Frodo leaves Henneth Annûn.

**9:**—Gandalf reaches Minas Tirith. Faramir leaves Henneth Annûn. Aragorn sets out from Erech and comes to Calembel. At dusk Frodo reaches the Morgul-road. Théoden comes to Dunharrow. Darkness begins to flow out of Mordor.

**10:**—The Dawnless Day. The Muster of Rohan: the Rohirrim ride from Harrowdale. Faramir rescued by Gandalf outside the gates of the City. Aragorn crosses Ringló. An army from the Morannon takes Cair Andros and passes into Anórien. Frodo passes the Cross-roads, and sees the Morgul-host set forth.

**11:**—Gollum visits Shelob, but seeing Frodo asleep nearly repents. Denethor sends Faramir to Osgiliath. Aragorn reaches Linhir and crosses into Lebennin. Eastern Rohan is invaded from the north. First assault on Lórien.

**12:**—Gollum leads Frodo into Shelob's lair. Faramir retreats to the Causeway Forts. Théoden camps under Min-Rimmon. Aragorn drives the enemy towards Pelargir. The Ents defeat the invaders of Rohan.

**13:**—Frodo captured by the Orcs of Cirith Ungol. The Pelennor is overrun. Faramir is wounded. Aragorn reaches Pelargir and captures the fleet. Théoden in Drúadan Forest.

**14:**—Samwise finds Frodo in the Tower. Minas Tirith is besieged. The Rohirrim led by the Wild Men come to the Grey Wood.

**15:**—In the early hours the Witch-king breaks the Gates of the City. Denethor burns himself on a pyre. The horns of the Rohirrim are heard at cockcrow. Battle of the Pelennor. Théoden is slain. Aragorn raises the standard of Arwen. Frodo and Samwise escape and begin their journey north along the Morgai. Battle under the trees in Mirkwood; Thranduil repels the forces of Dol Guldur. Second assault on Lórien.

**16:**—Debate of the commanders. Frodo from the Morgai looks out over the camp to Mount Doom.

**17:**—Battle of Dale. King Brand and King Dáin Ironfoot fall. Many Dwarves and Men take refuge in Erebor and are besieged. Shagrat brings Frodo's cloak, mail-shirt, and sword to Barad-dûr.

**18:**—The Host of the West marches from Minas Tirith. Frodo comes in sight of the Isenmouthe; he is overtaken by Orcs on the road from Durthang to Udûn.

**19:**—The Host comes to Morgul Vale. Frodo and Samwise escape and begin their journey along the road to the Barad-dûr.

**22:**—The dreadful nightfall. Frodo and Samwise leave the road and turn south to Mount Doom. Third assault on Lórien.

**23:**—The Host passes out of Ithilien. Aragorn dismisses the faint-hearted. Frodo and Samwise cast away their arms and gear.

**24:**—Frodo and Samwise make their last journey to the feet of Mount Doom. The Host camps in the Desolation of the Morannon.

**25:**—The Host is surrounded on the Slag-hills. Frodo and Samwise reach the Sammath Naur. Gollum seizes the Ring and falls in the Cracks of Doom. Downfall of Barad-dûr and passing of Sauron.

After the fall of the Dark Tower and the passing of Sauron the Shadow was lifted from the hearts of all who opposed him, but fear and despair fell upon his servants and allies. Three times Lórien had been assailed from Dol Guldur, but besides the valour of the elven people of that land, the power that dwelt there was too great for any to overcome, unless Sauron had come there himself. Though grievous harm was done to the fair woods on the borders, the assaults were driven back; and when the Shadow passed, Celeborn came forth and led the host of Lórien over Anduin in many boats. They took Dol Guldur, and Galadriel threw down its walls and laid bare its pits, and the forest was cleansed.

In the North also there had been war and evil. The realm of Thranduil was invaded, and there was long battle under the trees and great ruin of fire; but in the end Thranduil had the victory. And on the day of the New Year of the Elves, Celeborn and Thranduil met in the midst of the forest; and they renamed Mirkwood *Eryn Lasgalen*, The Wood of Greenleaves. Thranduil took all the northern region as far as the mountains that rise in the forest for his realm; and Celeborn took all the southern wood below the Narrows, and named it East Lórien; all the wide forest between was given to the Beornings and the Woodmen. But after the passing of Galadriel in a few years Celeborn grew weary of his realm and went to Imladris to dwell with the sons of Elrond. In the



Greenwood the Silvan Elves remained untroubled, but in Lórien there lingered sadly only a few of its former people, and there was no longer light or song in Caras Galadhon.

At the same time as the great armies besieged Minas Tirith a host of the allies of Sauron that had long threatened the borders of King Brand crossed the River Carnen, and Brand was driven back to Dale. There he had the aid of the Dwarves of Erebor; and there was a great battle at the Mountain's feet. It lasted three days, but in the end both King Brand and King Dáin Ironfoot were slain, and the Easterlings had the victory. But they could not take the Gate, and many, both Dwarves and Men, took refuge in Erebor, and there withstood a siege.

When news came of the great victories in the South, then Sauron's northern army was filled with dismay; and the besieged came forth and routed them, and the remnant fled into the East and troubled Dale no more. Then Bard II, Brand's son, became King in Dale, and Thorin III Stonehelm, Dain's son, became King under the Mountain. They sent their ambassadors to the crowning of King Elessar; and their realms remained ever after, as long as they lasted, in friendship with Gondor; and they were under the crown and protection of the King of the West.

## **The Chief Days From The Fall Of Barad-Dûr To The End Of The Third Age<sup>414</sup>**

### **3019 (S.R. 1419)**

#### **March**

**27:**—Bard II and Thorin III Stonehelm drive the enemy from Dale.

**28:**—Celeborn crosses Anduin; destruction of Dol Guldur begun.

#### **April**

**6:**—Meeting of Celeborn and Thranduil.

**8:**—The Ring-bearers are honoured on the Field of Cormallen.

#### **May**

**1:**—Crowning of King Elessar; Elrond and Arwen set out from Rivendell.

**8:**—Éomer and Éowyn depart for Rohan with the sons of Elrond.

**20:**—Elrond and Arwen come to Lórien.

**27:**—The escort of Arwen leaves Lórien.

#### **June**

**14:**—The sons of Elrond meet the escort and bring Arwen to Edoras.

**16:**—They set out for Gondor.

**25:**—King Elessar finds the sapling of the White Tree.

**1 *Lithe*:**—Arwen comes to the City.

***Mid-year's Day*:**—Wedding of Elessar and Arwen.

#### **July**

**18:**—Éomer returns to Minas Tirith.

**22:**—The funeral escort of King Théoden sets out.

#### **August**

**7:**—The escort comes to Edoras.

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<sup>414</sup> Months and days are given according to the Shire Calendar.

**10:**—Funeral of King Théoden.

**14:**—The guests take leave of King Éomer.

**15:**—Treebeard releases Saruman.

**18:**—They come to Helm's Deep.

**22:**—They come to Isengard; they take leave of the King of the West at sunset.

**28:**—They overtake Saruman; Saruman turns towards the Shire.

## **September**

**6:**—They halt in sight of the Mountains of Moria.

**13:**—Celeborn and Galadriel depart, the others set out for Rivendell.

**21:**—They return to Rivendell.

**22:**—The hundred and twenty-ninth birthday of Bilbo. Saruman comes to the Shire.

## **October**

**5:**—Gandalf and the Hobbits leave Rivendell.

**6:**—They cross the Ford of Bruinen; Frodo feels the first return of pain.

**28:**—They reach Bree at nightfall.

**30:**—They leave Bree. The 'Travellers' come to the Brandywine Bridge at dark.

## **November**

**1:**—They are arrested at Frogmorton.

**2:**—They come to Bywater and rouse the Shire-folk.

**3:**—Battle of Bywater, and Passing of Saruman. End of the War of the Ring.

## **3020 (S.R. 1420: The Great Year of Plenty)**

**March 13:**—Frodo is taken ill (on the anniversary of his poisoning by Shelob).

**April 6:**—The mallorn flowers in the Party Field.

**May 1:**—Samwise marries Rose.

**Mid-year's Day:**—Frodo resigns office of mayor, and Will Whitfoot is restored.

**September 22:**—Bilbo's hundred and thirtieth birthday.

**October 6:**—Frodo is again ill.

## **3021 (S.R. 1421: The Last of the Third Age)**

**March 13:**—Frodo is again ill.

**March 25:**—Birth of Elanor the Fair,<sup>415</sup> daughter of Samwise. On this day the Fourth Age began in the reckoning of Gondor.

**September 21:**—Frodo and Samwise set out from Hobbiton.

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<sup>415</sup> She became known as 'the Fair' because of her beauty; many said that she looked more like an elf-maid than a hobbit. She had golden hair, which had been very rare in the Shire; but two others of Samwise's daughters were also golden-haired, and so were many of the children born at this time.

**September 22:**—They meet the Last Riding of the Keepers of the Rings in Woody End.

**September 29:**—They come to the Grey Havens. Frodo and Bilbo depart over Sea with the Three Keepers. The end of the Third Age.

**October 6:**—Samwise returns to Bag End.

## **Later Events Concerning The Members Of The Fellowship Of The Ring**

**S.R. 1422:**—With the beginning of this year the Fourth Age began in the count of years in the Shire; but the numbers of the years of Shire Reckoning were continued.

**1427:**—Will Whitfoot resigns. Samwise is elected Mayor of the Shire. Peregrin Took marries Diamond of Long Cleeve. King Elessar issues an edict that Men are not to enter the Shire, and he makes it a Free Land under the protection of the Northern Sceptre.

**1430:**—Faramir, son of Peregrin, born.

**1431:**—Goldilocks, daughter of Samwise, born.

**1432:**—Meriadoc, called the Magnificent, becomes Master of Buckland. Great gifts are sent to him by King Éomer and the Lady Éowyn of Ithilien.

**1434:**—Peregrin becomes the Took and Thain. King Elessar makes the Thain, the Master, and the Mayor Counsellors of the North-kingdom. Master Samwise is elected Mayor for the second time.

**1436:**—King Elessar rides north, and dwells for a while by Lake Evendim. He comes to the Brandywine Bridge, and there greets his friends. He gives the Star of the Dúnedain to Master Samwise, and Elanor is made a maid of honour to Queen Arwen.

**1441:**—Master Samwise becomes Mayor for the third time.

**1442:**—Master Samwise and his wife and Elanor ride to Gondor and stay there for a year. Master Tolman Cotton acts as deputy Mayor.

**1448:**—Master Samwise becomes Mayor for the fourth time.

**1451:**—Elanor the Fair marries Fastred of Greenholm on the Far Downs.

**1452:**—The Westmarch, from the Far Downs to the Tower Hills (Emyn Beraid),<sup>416</sup> is added to the Shire by the gift of the King. Many hobbits remove to it.

**1454:**—Elfstan Fairbairn, son of Fastred and Elanor, is born.

**1455:**—Master Samwise becomes Mayor for the fifth time.

**1462:**—Master Samwise becomes Mayor for the sixth time. At his request the Thain makes Fastred Warden of Westmarch. Fastred and Elanor make their dwelling at Undertowers on the Tower Hills, where their descendants, the Fairbairns of the Towers, dwelt for many generations.

**1463:**—Faramir Took marries Goldilocks, daughter of Samwise.

**1469:**—Master Samwise becomes Mayor for the seventh and last time, being in 1476, at the end of his office, ninety-six years old.

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<sup>416</sup> P. 7 and note 381.

**1482:**—Death of Mistress Rose, wife of Master Samwise, on Mid-year's Day. On September 22 Master Samwise rides out from Bag End. He comes to the Tower Hills, and is last seen by Elanor, to whom he gives the Red Book afterwards kept by the Fairbairns. Among them the tradition is handed down from Elanor that Samwise passed the Towers, and went to the Grey Havens, and passed over Sea, last of the Ring-bearers.

**1484:**—In the spring of the year a message came from Rohan to Buckland that King Éomer wished to see Master Holdwine once again. Meriadoc was then old (102) but still hale. He took counsel with his friend the Thain, and soon after they handed over their goods and offices to their sons and rode away over the Sarn Ford, and they were not seen again in the Shire. It was heard after that Master Meriadoc came to Edoras and was with King Éomer before he died in that autumn. Then he and Thain Peregrin went to Gondor and passed what short years were left to them in that realm, until they died and were laid in Rath Dínen among the great of Gondor.

**1541:**—In this year<sup>417</sup> on March 1<sup>st</sup> came at last the Passing of King Elessar. It is said that the beds of Meriadoc and Peregrin were set beside the bed of the great king. Then Legolas built a grey ship in Ithilien, and sailed down Anduin and so over Sea; and with him, it is said, went Gimli the Dwarf. And when that ship passed an end was come in Middle-earth of the Fellowship of the Ring.

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<sup>417</sup> Fourth Age (Gondor) 120.

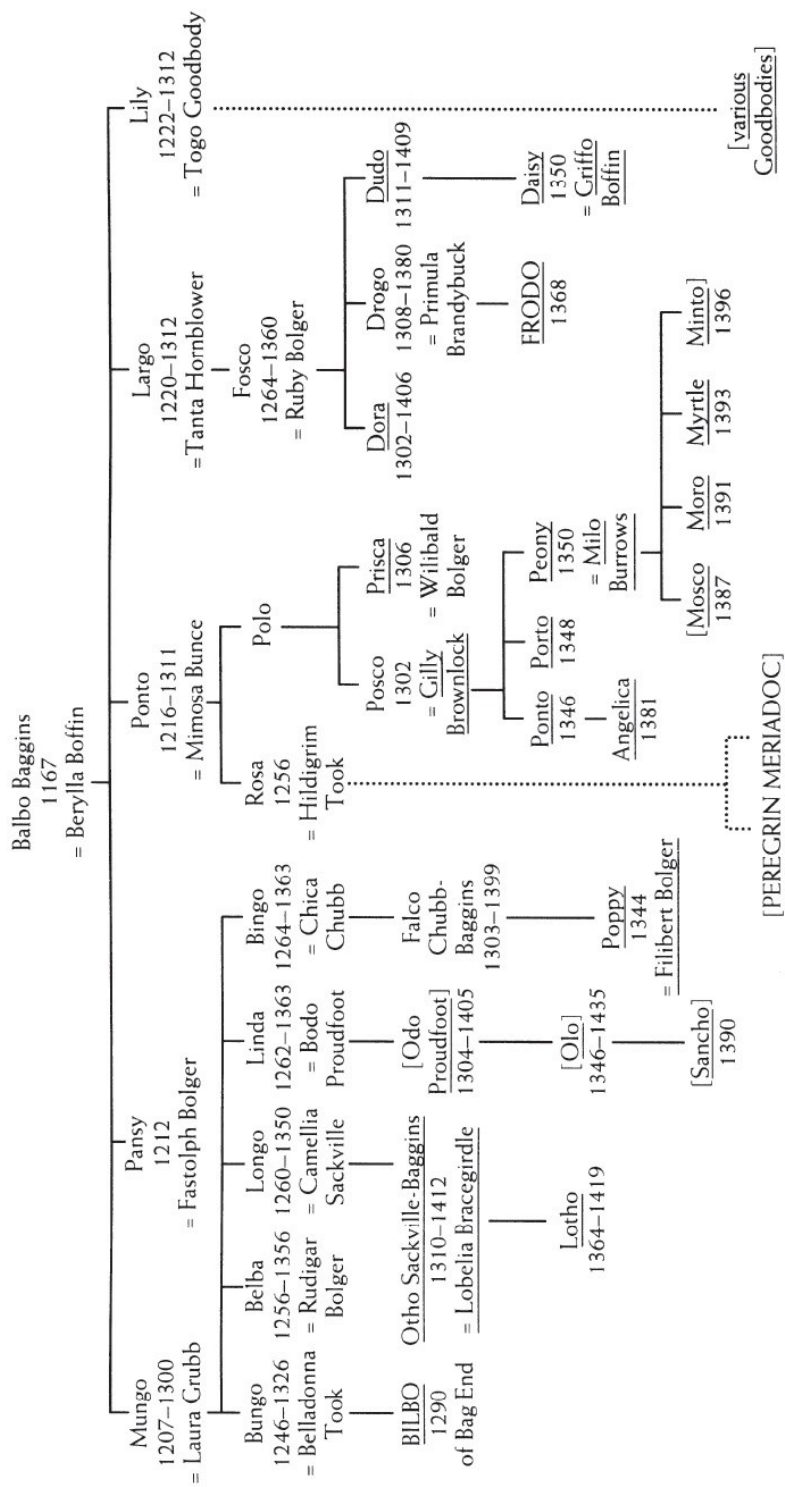


## Appendix C: Family Trees

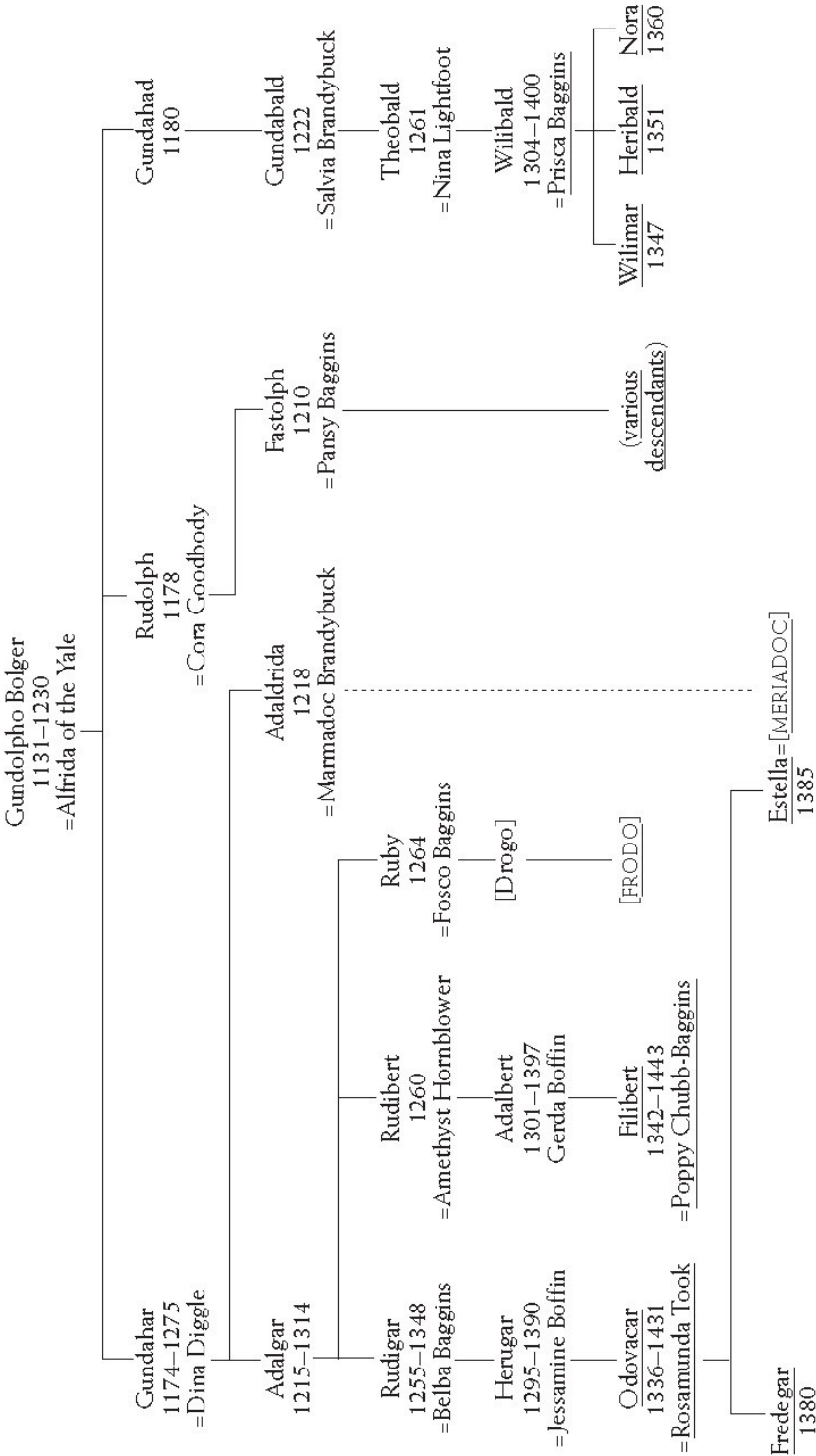
The names given in these Trees are only a selection from many. Most of them are either guests at Bilbo's Farewell Party, or their direct ancestors. The guests at the Party are underlined. A few other names of persons concerned in the events recounted are also given. In addition some genealogical information is provided concerning Samwise the founder of the family of *Gardner*, later famous and influential.

The figures after the names are those of birth (and death where that is recorded). All dates are given according to the Shire-reckoning, calculated from the crossing of the Brandywine by the brothers Marcho and Blanco in the Year I of the Shire (Third Age 1601).

# BAGGINS OF HOBBITON

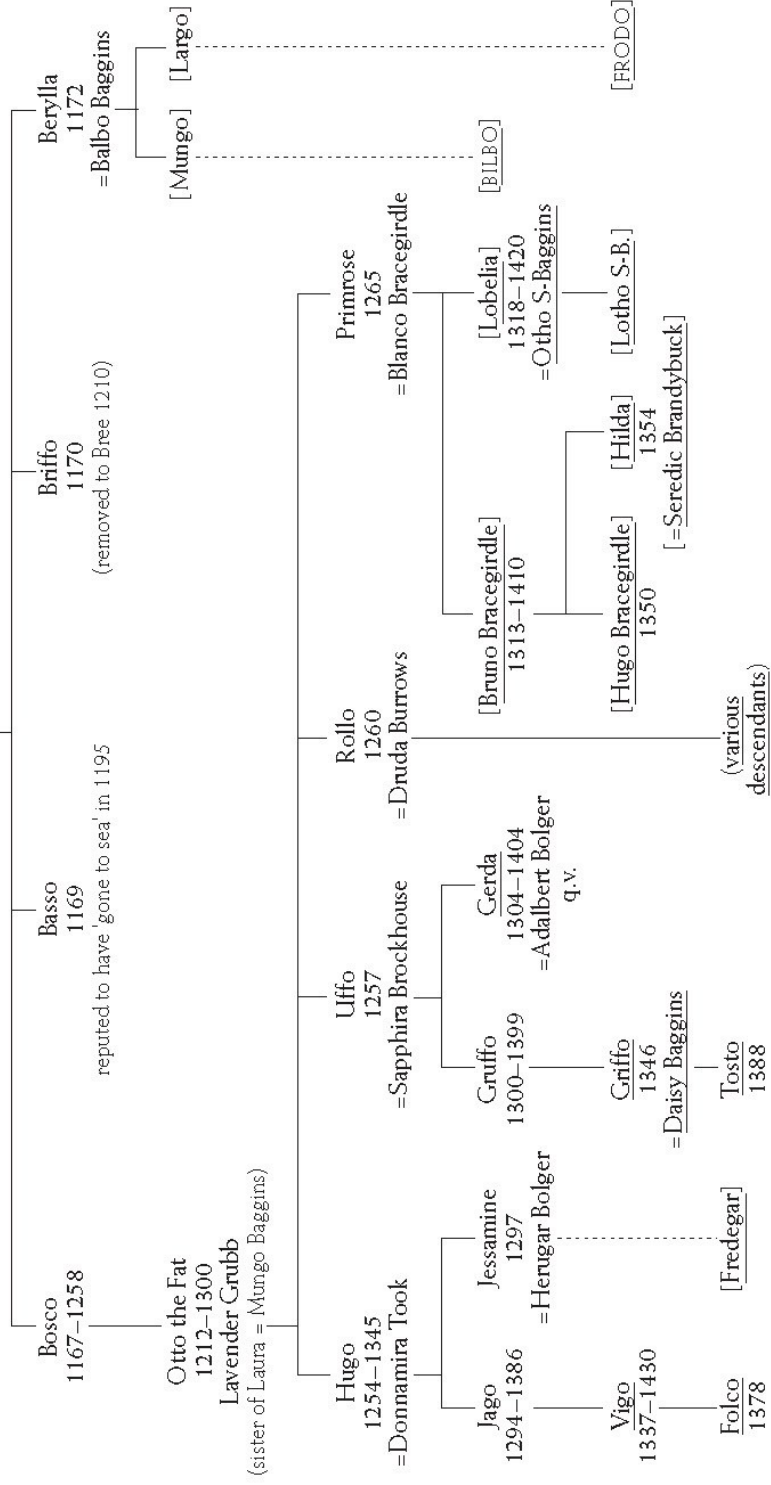


BOLGER OF BUDGEFORD



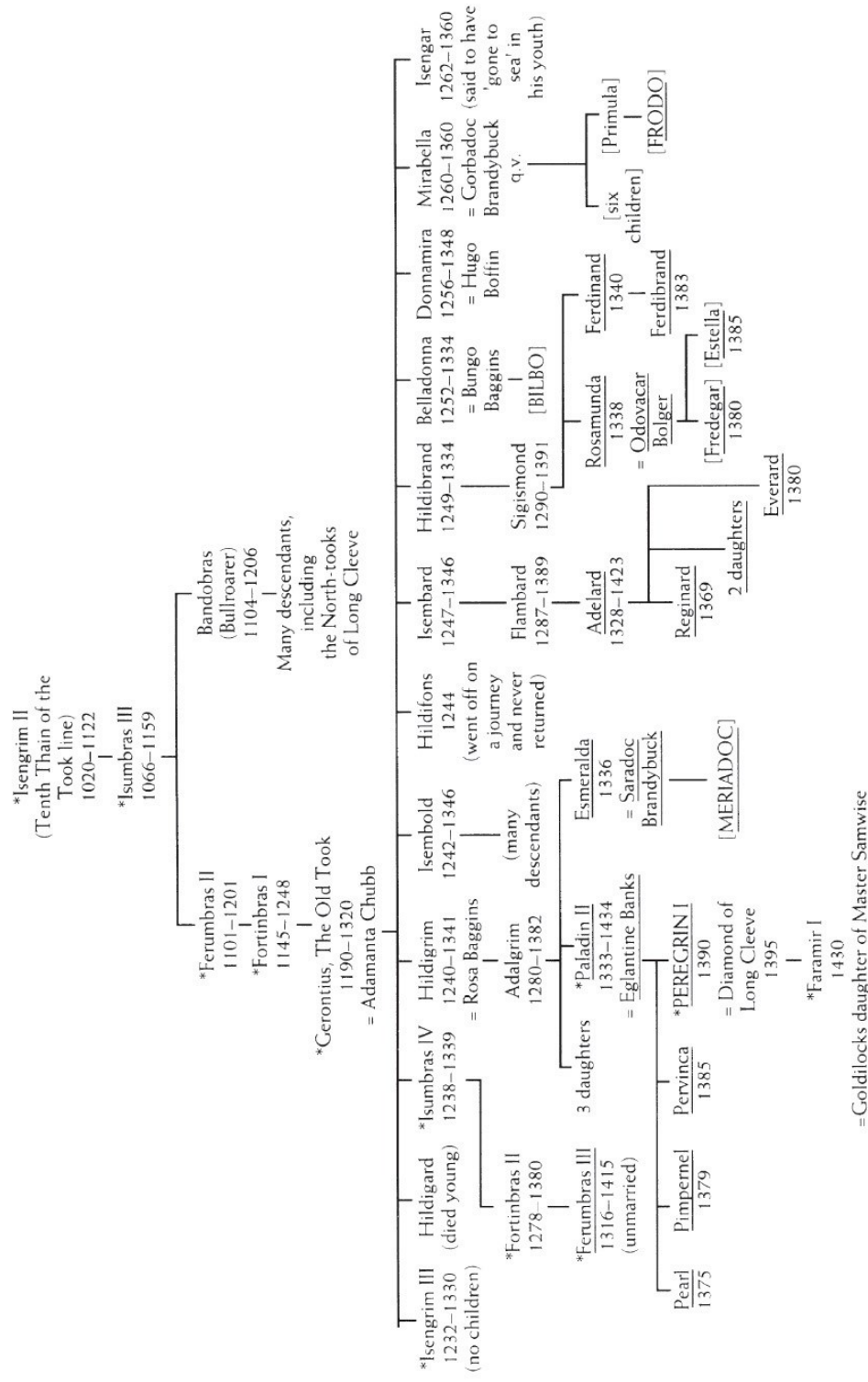
# BOFFIN OF THE YALE

Buffo Boffin  
= Ivy Goodenough



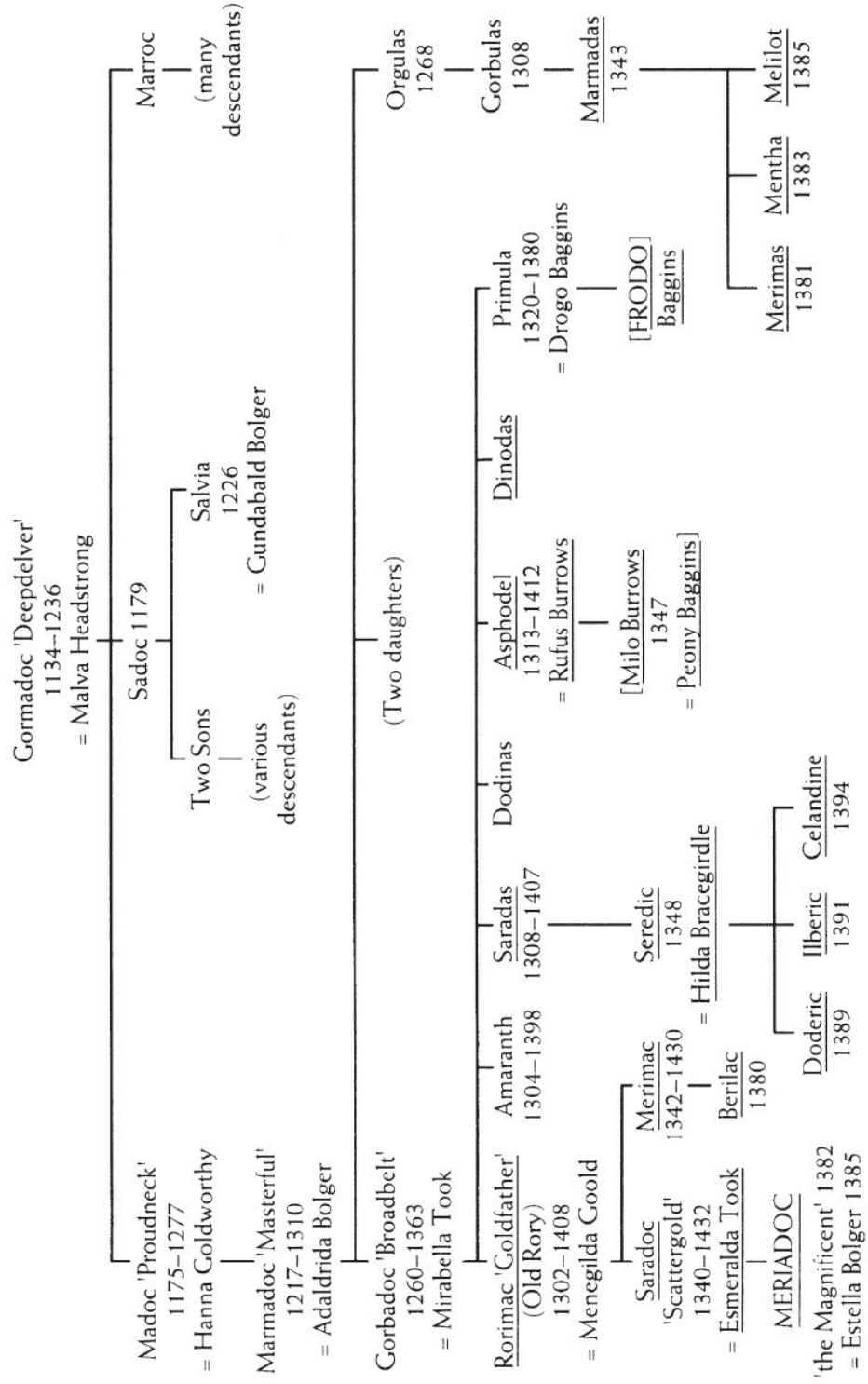


# TOOK OF GREAT SMIALS



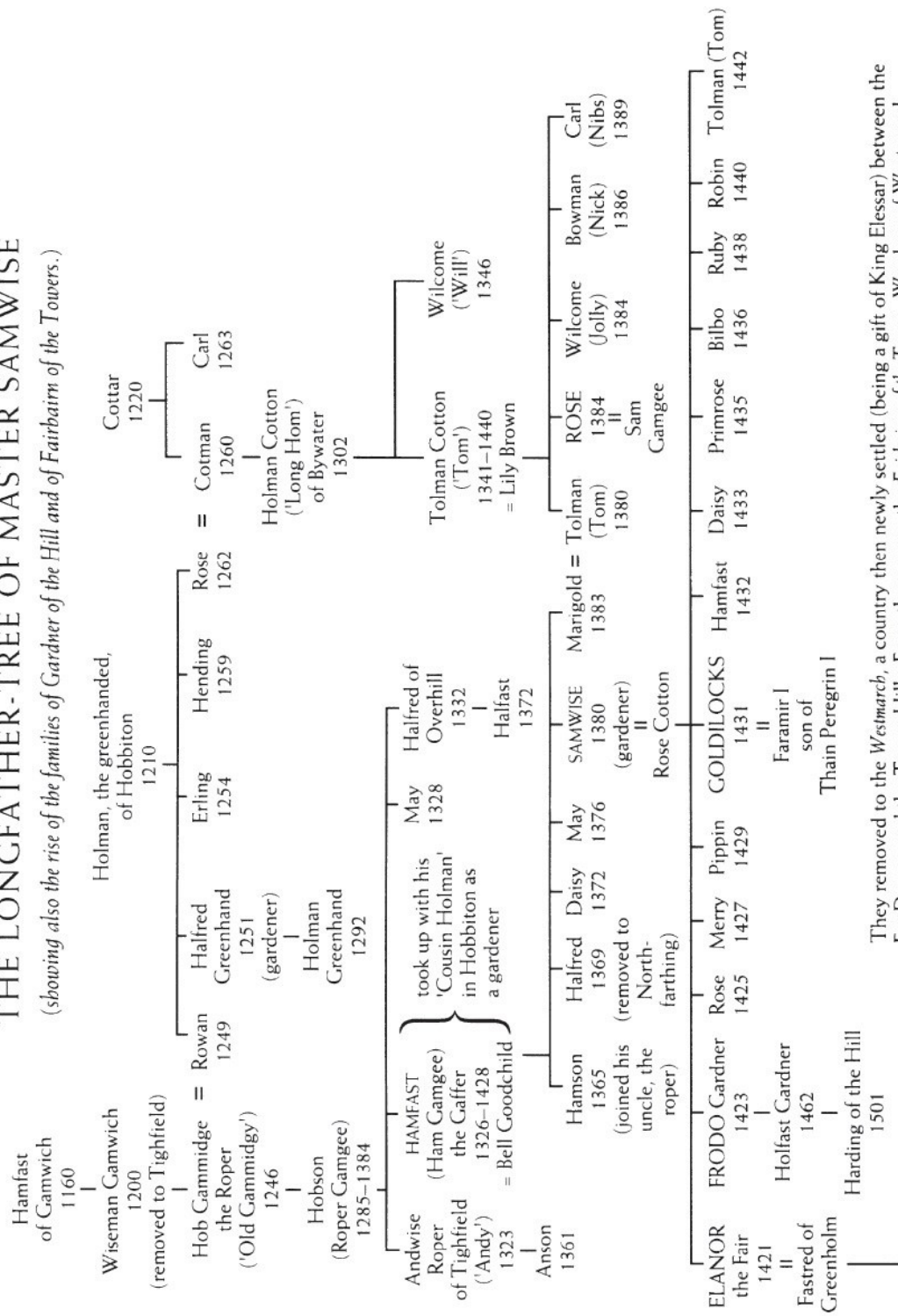
# BRANDYBUCK OF BUCKLAND

Gorhendad Oldbuck of the Marish, c. 740 began the building of *Brandy Hall* and changed the family name to *Brandybuck*.



# THE LONGFATHER-TREE OF MASTER SAMWISE

(showing also the rise of the families of Gardner of the Hill and of Fairbairn of the Towers.)



They removed to the *Westmarch*, a country then newly settled (being a gift of King Elessar) between the Far Downs and the Tower Hills. From them came the *Fairbairns of the Towers*, Wardens of *Westmarch*, who inherited the Red Book, and made several copies with various notes and later additions.



## Appendix D: Shire Calendar For Use In All Years

<p>(1) <i>Afteryule</i></p> <p>YULE 7 14 21 28</p> <p>1 8 15 22 29</p> <p>2 9 16 23 30</p> <p>3 10 17 24 -</p> <p>4 11 18 25 -</p> <p>5 12 19 26 -</p> <p>6 13 20 27 -</p>	<p>(4) <i>Astron</i></p> <p>1 8 15 22 29</p> <p>2 9 16 23 30</p> <p>3 10 17 24 -</p> <p>4 11 18 25 -</p> <p>5 12 19 26 -</p> <p>6 13 20 27 -</p> <p>7 14 21 28 -</p>	<p>(7) <i>Afterlithe</i></p> <p>LITHE 7 14 21 28</p> <p>1 8 15 22 29</p> <p>2 9 16 23 30</p> <p>3 10 17 24 -</p> <p>4 11 18 25 -</p> <p>5 12 19 26 -</p> <p>6 13 20 27 -</p>	<p>(10) <i>Winterfilth</i></p> <p>1 8 15 22 29</p> <p>2 9 16 23 30</p> <p>3 10 17 24 -</p> <p>4 11 18 25 -</p> <p>5 12 19 26 -</p> <p>6 13 20 27 -</p> <p>7 14 21 28 -</p>
<p>(2) <i>Solmath</i></p> <p>- 5 12 19 26</p> <p>- 6 13 20 27</p> <p>- 7 14 21 28</p> <p>1 8 15 22 29</p> <p>2 9 16 23 30</p> <p>3 10 17 24 -</p> <p>4 11 18 25 -</p>	<p>(5) <i>Thrimidge</i></p> <p>- 6 13 20 27</p> <p>- 7 14 21 28</p> <p>1 8 15 22 29</p> <p>2 9 16 23 30</p> <p>3 10 17 24 -</p> <p>4 11 18 25 -</p> <p>5 12 19 26 -</p>	<p>(8) <i>Wedmath</i></p> <p>- 5 12 19 26</p> <p>- 6 13 20 27</p> <p>- 7 14 21 28</p> <p>1 8 15 22 29</p> <p>2 9 16 23 30</p> <p>3 10 17 24 -</p> <p>4 11 18 25 -</p>	<p>(11) <i>Blotmath</i></p> <p>- 6 13 20 27</p> <p>- 7 14 21 28</p> <p>1 8 15 22 29</p> <p>2 9 16 23 30</p> <p>3 10 17 24 -</p> <p>4 11 18 25 -</p> <p>5 12 19 26 -</p>
<p>(3) <i>Rethe</i></p> <p>- 3 10 17 24</p> <p>- 4 11 18 25</p> <p>- 5 12 19 26</p> <p>- 6 13 20 27</p> <p>- 7 14 21 28</p> <p>1 8 15 22 29</p> <p>2 9 16 23 30</p>	<p>(6) <i>Forelithe</i></p> <p>- 4 11 18 25</p> <p>- 5 12 19 26</p> <p>- 6 13 20 27</p> <p>- 7 14 21 28</p> <p>1 8 15 22 29</p> <p>2 9 16 23 30</p> <p>3 10 17 24 LITHE</p> <p>Midyear's Day (Overlithe)</p>	<p>(9) <i>Halimath</i></p> <p>- 3 10 17 24</p> <p>- 4 11 18 25</p> <p>- 5 12 19 26</p> <p>- 6 13 20 27</p> <p>- 7 14 21 28</p> <p>1 8 15 22 29</p> <p>2 9 16 23 30</p>	<p>(12) <i>Foreyule</i></p> <p>- 4 11 18 25</p> <p>- 5 12 19 26</p> <p>- 6 13 20 27</p> <p>- 7 14 21 28</p> <p>1 8 15 22 29</p> <p>2 9 16 23 30</p> <p>3 10 17 24 YULE</p>

Every year began on the first day of the week, Saturday, and ended on the last day of the week, Friday. The Mid-year's Day, and in Leap-years the Overlithe, had no weekday name. The Lithe before Mid-year's Day was called 1 Lithe, and the one after was called 2 Lithe. The Yule at the end of the year was 1 Yule, and that at the



beginning was 2 Yule. The Overlithe was a day of special holiday, but it did not occur in any of the years important to the history of the Great Ring. It occurred in 1420, the year of the famous harvest and wonderful summer, and the merrymaking in that year is said to have been the greatest in memory or record.

## The Calendars

The Calendar in the Shire differed in several features from ours. The year no doubt was of the same length,<sup>418</sup> for long ago as those times are now reckoned in years and lives of men, they were not very remote according to the memory of the Earth. It is recorded by the Hobbits that they had no ‘week’ when they were still a wandering people, and though they had ‘months’, governed more or less by the Moon, their keeping of dates and calculations of time were vague and inaccurate. In the west-lands of Eriador, when they had begun to settle down, they adopted the Kings’ Reckoning of the Dúnedain, which was ultimately of Eldarin origin; but the Hobbits of the Shire introduced several minor alterations. This calendar, or ‘Shire Reckoning’ as it was called, was eventually adopted also in Bree, except for the Shire usage of counting as Year I the year of the colonization of the Shire.

It is often difficult to discover from old tales and traditions precise information about things which people knew well and took for granted in their own day (such as the names of letters, or of the days of the week, or the names and lengths of months). But owing to their general interest in genealogy, and to the interest in ancient history which the learned amongst them developed after the War of the Ring, the Shire-hobbits seem to have concerned themselves a good deal with dates; and they even drew up complicated tables showing the relations of their own system with others. I am not skilled in these matters, and may have made many errors; but at any rate the chronology of the crucial years S.R. 1418, 1419 is so carefully set out in the Red Book that there cannot be much doubt about days and times at that point.

It seems clear that the Eldar in Middle-earth, who had, as Samwise remarked, more time at their disposal, reckoned in long periods, and the Quenya word *yén*, often translated ‘year’ (p. 377), really means 144 of our years. The Eldar preferred to reckon in sixes and twelves as far as possible. A ‘day’ of the sun they called *ré* and reckoned from sunset to sunset. The *yén* contained 52,596 days. For ritual rather than practical purposes the Eldar observed a week or *enquië* of six days; and the *yén* contained 8,766 of these *enquier*, reckoned continuously throughout the period.

In Middle-earth the Eldar also observed a short period or solar year, called a *coranar* or ‘sun-round’ when considered more or less astronomically, but usually called *loa*, ‘growth’ (especially in the north-western lands) when the seasonal changes in vegetation were primarily considered, as was usual with the Elves generally. The *loa* was broken up into periods that might be regarded either as long months or short seasons. These no doubt varied in different regions; but the Hobbits only provide information concerning the Calendar of Imladris. In that calendar there were six of these ‘seasons’, of which the Quenya names were *tuilë*, *lairë*, *yávie*, *quelle*, *hrívë*, *coirë*, which may be translated ‘spring, summer, autumn, fading, winter, stirring’. The Sindarin names were *ethuil*, *laer*, *iavas*, *firith*, *rhîw*, *echuir*. ‘Fading’ was also called *lasse-lanta*, ‘leaf-fall’, or in Sindarin *narbeleth*, ‘sun-waning’.

*Lairë* and *hrívë* each contained 72 days, and the remainder 54 each. The *loa* began with *yestarë*, the day immediately before *tuilë*, and ended with *mettarë*, the day immediately after *coirë*. Between *yavië* and *quelle* were inserted three *enderi* or ‘middle-days’. This provided a year of 365 days which was supplemented by doubling the *enderi* (adding 3 days) in every twelfth year.

How any resulting inaccuracy was dealt with is uncertain. If the year was then of the same length as now, the *yén* would have been more than a day too long. That there was an inaccuracy is shown by a note in the Calendars of the Red Book to the effect that in the ‘Reckoning of Rivendell’ the last year of every third *yén* was

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<sup>418</sup> 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes, 46 seconds.

shortened by three days: the doubling of the three *enderi* due in that year was omitted; 'but that has not happened in our time'. Of the adjustment of any remaining inaccuracy there is no record.

The Númenóreans altered these arrangements. They divided the *loa* into shorter periods of more regular length; and they adhered to the custom of beginning the year in mid-winter, which had been used by Men of the North-west from whom they were derived in the First Age. Later they also made their week one of 7 days, and they reckoned the day from sunrise (out of the eastern sea) to sunrise.

The Númenórean system, as used in Númenor, and in Arnor and Gondor until the end of the kings, was called Kings' Reckoning. The normal year had 365 days. It was divided into twelve *astar* or months, of which ten had 30 days and two had 31. The long *astar* were those on either side of the Mid-year, approximately our June and July. The first day of the year was called *yestarë*, the middle day (183<sup>rd</sup>) was called *loëndë*, and the last day *mettarë*; these 3 days belonged to no month. In every fourth year, except the last of a century (*haranyë*), two *enderi* or 'middle-days' were substituted for the *loëndë*.

In Númenor calculation started with S.A. 1. The *Deficit* caused by deducting 1 day from the last year of a century was not adjusted until the last year of a millennium, leaving a *millennial deficit* of 4 hours, 46 minutes, 40 seconds. This addition was made in Númenor in S.A. 1000, 2000, 3000. After the Downfall in S.A. 3319 the system was maintained by the exiles, but it was much dislocated by the beginning of the Third Age with a new numeration: S.A. 3442 became T.A. 1. By making T.A. 4 a leap year instead of T.A. 3 (S.A. 3444) 1 more short year of only 365 days was intruded causing a deficit of 5 hours, 48 minutes, 46 seconds. The millennial additions were made 441 years late: in T.A. 1000 (S.A. 4441) and 2000 (S.A. 5441). To reduce the errors so caused, and the accumulation of the millennial deficits, Mardil the Steward issued a revised calendar to take effect in T.A. 2060, after a special addition of 2 days to 2059 (S.A. 5500), which concluded 5½ millennia since the beginning of the Númenórean system. But this still left about 8 hours deficit. Hador to 2360 added 1 day though this deficiency had not quite reached that amount. After that no more adjustments were made. (In T.A. 3000 with the threat of imminent war such matters were neglected.) By the end of the Third Age, after 660 more years, the Deficit had not yet amounted to 1 day.

The Revised Calendar introduced by Mardil was called Stewards' Reckoning and was adopted eventually by most of the users of the Westron language, except the Hobbits. The months were all of 30 days, and 2 days outside the months were introduced: 1 between the third and fourth months (March, April), and 1 between the ninth and tenth (September, October). These 5 days outside the months, *yestarë*, *tuilérë*, *loëndë*, *yáviérë*, and *mettarë*, were holidays.

The Hobbits were conservative and continued to use a form of Kings' Reckoning adapted to fit their own customs. Their months were all equal and had 30 days each; but they had 3 Summerdays, called in the Shire the Lithe or the Lithedays, between June and July. The last day of the year and the first of the next year were called the Yuledays. The Yuledays and the Lithedays remained outside the months, so that January 1 was the second and not the first day of the year. Every fourth year, except in the last year of the century,<sup>419</sup> there were four Lithedays. The Lithedays and the Yuledays were the chief holidays and times of feasting. The additional Litheday was added after Mid-year's Day, and so the 184<sup>th</sup> day of the Leap-years was called Overlithe and was a day of special merrymaking. In full Yuletide was six days long, including the last three and first three days of each year.

The Shire-folk introduced one small innovation of their own (eventually also adopted in Bree), which they called Shire-reform. They found the shifting of the weekday names in relation to dates from year to year untidy and inconvenient. So in the time of Isengrim II they arranged that the odd day which put the succession out, should have no weekday name. After that Mid-year's Day (and the Overlithe) was known only by its name and belonged to no week (p. 169). In consequence of this reform the year always began on the First Day of the week and ended on the Last Day; and the same date in any one year had the same weekday name in all other

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<sup>419</sup> In the Shire, in which Year 1 corresponded with T.A. 1601. In Bree in which Year 1 corresponded with T.A. 1300 it was the first year of the century.

years, so that Shire-folk no longer bothered to put the weekday in their letters or diaries.<sup>420</sup> They found this quite convenient at home, but not so convenient if they ever travelled further than Bree.

In the above notes, as in the narrative, I have used our modern names for both months and weekdays, though of course neither the Eldar nor the Dúnedain nor the Hobbits actually did so. Translation of the Westron names seemed to be essential to avoid confusion, while the seasonal implications of our names are more or less the same, at any rate in the Shire. It appears, however, that Mid-year's Day was intended to correspond as nearly as possible to the summer solstice. In that case the Shire dates were actually in advance of ours by some ten days, and our New Year's Day corresponded more or less to the Shire January 9.

In the Westron the Quenya names of the months were usually retained as the Latin names are now widely used in alien languages. They were: *Narvinyë*, *Nénimë*, *Súlimë*, *Víresse*, *Lótessë*, *Nárië*, *Cermië*, *Úrimë*, *Yavannië*, *Narquelië*, *Hisimë*, *Ringarë*. The Sindarin names (used only by the Dúnedain) were: *Narwain*, *Nínui*, *Gwaeron*, *Gwirth*, *Lothron*, *Nórui*, *Cerveth*, *Úrui*, *Ivanneth*, *Narbeleth*, *Hithui*, *Girithron*.

In this nomenclature the Hobbits, however, both of the Shire and of Bree, diverged from the Westron usage, and adhered to old-fashioned local names of their own, which they seem to have picked up in antiquity from the Men of the vales of Anduin; at any rate similar names were found in Dale and Rohan (cf. the notes on the languages, pp. 1130, 1135-6). The meanings of these names, devised by Men, had as a rule long been forgotten by the Hobbits, even in cases where they had originally known what their significance was; and the forms of the names were much obscured in consequence: *math*, for instance, at the end of some of them is a reduction of *month*.

The Shire names are set out in the Calendar. It may be noted that *Solmath* was usually pronounced, and sometimes written, *Somath*; *Thrimidge* was often written *Thrimich* (archaically *Thrimilch*); and *Blotmath* was pronounced *Blodmath* or *Blommath*. In Bree the names differed, being *Frery*, *Solmath*, *Rethe*, *Chithing*, *Thrimidge*, *Lithe*, *The Summerdays*, *Mede*, *Wedmath*, *Harvestmath*, *Wintring*, *Blooting*, and *Yulemath*. *Frery*, *Chithing* and *Yulemath* were also used in the Eastfarthing.<sup>421</sup>

The Hobbit week was taken from the Dúnedain, and the names were translations of those given to the days in the old North-kingdom, which in their turn were derived from the Eldar. The six-day week of the Eldar had days dedicated to, or named after, the Stars, the Sun, the Moon, the Two Trees, the Heavens, and the Valar or Powers, in that order, the last day being the chief day of the week. Their names in Quenya were *Elenya*, *Anarya*, *Isilya*, *Aldíya*, *Menelya*, *Valanya* (or *Tárion*); the Sindarin names were *Orgilion*, *Oranor*, *Orithil*, *Orgaladhad*, *Ormenel*, *Orbelain* (or *Rodyn*).

The Númenóreans retained the dedications and order, but altered the fourth day to *Aldëa* (*Orgaladh*) with reference to the White Tree only, of which Nimloth that grew in the King's Court in Númenor was believed to be a descendant. Also desiring a seventh day, and being great mariners, they inserted a 'Sea-day', *Eärenya* (*Oraearon*), after the Heavens' Day.

The Hobbits took over this arrangement, but the meanings of their translated names were soon forgotten, or no longer attended to, and the forms were much reduced, especially in everyday pronunciation. The first translation of the Númenórean names was probably made two thousand years or more before the end of the Third Age, when the week of the Dúnedain (the feature of their reckoning earliest adopted by alien peoples)

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<sup>420</sup> It will be noted if one glances at a [Shire Calendar](#), that the only weekday on which no month began was Friday. It thus became a jesting idiom in the Shire to speak of 'on Friday the first' when referring to a day that did not exist, or to a day on which very unlikely events such as the flying of pigs or (in the Shire) the walking of trees might occur. In full the expression was 'on Friday the first of Summerfilth'.

<sup>421</sup> It was a jest in Bree to speak of 'Winterfilth in the (muddy) Shire', but according to the Shire-folk Wintring was a Bree alteration of the older name, which had originally referred to the filling or completion of the year before Winter, and descended from times before the full adoption of Kings' Reckoning when their new year began after harvest.

was taken up by Men in the North. As with their names of months, the Hobbits adhered to these translations, although elsewhere in the Westron area the Quenya names were used.

Not many ancient documents were preserved in the Shire. At the end of the Third Age far the most notable survival was Yellowskin, or the Yearbook of Tuckborough.<sup>422</sup> Its earliest entries seem to have begun at least nine hundred years before Frodo's time; and many are cited in the Red Book annals and genealogies. In these the weekday names appear in archaic forms, of which the following are the oldest: (1) *Sterrendei*, (2) *Sunnendei*, (3) *Monendei*, (4) *Trewesdei*, (5) *Hevenesdei*, (6) *Meresdei*, (7) *Hihdei*. In the language of the time of the War of the Ring these had become *Sterday*, *Sunday*, *Monday*, *Trewsday*, *Hevensday* (or *Hensday*), *Mersday*, *Highday*.

I have translated these names also into our own names, naturally beginning with Sunday and Monday, which occur in the Shire week with the same names as ours, and re-naming the others in order. It must be noted, however, that the associations of the names were quite different in the Shire. The last day of the week, Friday (*Highday*), was the chief day, and one of holiday (after noon) and evening feasts. Saturday thus corresponds more nearly to our Monday, and Thursday to our Saturday.<sup>423</sup>

A few other names may be mentioned that have a reference to time, though not used in precise reckonings. The seasons usually named were *tuilë*, spring; *lairë*, summer; *yávië*, autumn (or harvest); *hrívë*, winter; but these had no exact definitions, and *quelle* (or *lasselanta*) was also used for the latter part of autumn and the beginning of winter.

The Eldar paid special attention to the 'twilight' (in the northerly regions), chiefly as the times of star-fading and star-opening. They had many names for these periods, of which the most usual were *tindómë* and *undómë*; the former most often referred to the time near dawn, and *undómë* to the evening. The Sindarin name was *uial*, which could be defined as *minuial* and *aduial*. These were often called in the Shire *morrowdim* and *evendim*. Cf. Lake Evendim as a translation of Nenuial.

The Shire Reckoning and dates are the only ones of importance for the narrative of the War of the Ring. All the days, months, and dates are in the Red Book translated into Shire terms, or equated with them in notes. The months and days, therefore, throughout *The Lord of the Rings* refer to the Shire Calendar. The only points in which the differences between this and our calendar are important to the story at the crucial period, the end of 3018 and the beginning of 3019 (S.R. 1418, 1419), are these: October 1418 has only 30 days, January 1 is the second day of 1419, and February has 30 days; so that March 25, the date of the downfall of the Barad-dûr, would correspond to our March 27, if our years began at the same seasonal point. The date was, however, March 25 in both Kings' and Stewards' Reckoning.

The New Reckoning was begun in the restored Kingdom in T.A. 3019. It represented a return to Kings' Reckoning adapted to fit a spring-beginning as in the Eldarin *loa*.<sup>424</sup>

In the New Reckoning the year began on March 25 old style, in commemoration of the fall of Sauron and the deeds of the Ring-bearers. The months retained their former names, beginning now with *Víresse* (April), but referred to periods beginning generally five days earlier than previously. All the months had 30 days. There were 3 *Enderi* or Middle-days (of which the second was called *Loëndë*), between *Yavannië* (September) and *Narquelië* (October), that corresponded with September 23, 24, 25 old style. But in honour of Frodo *Yavannië* 30, which corresponded with former September 22, his birthday, was made a festival, and the leap-year was provided for by doubling this feast, called *Cormarë* or Ringday.

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<sup>422</sup> Recording births, marriages, and deaths in the Took families, as well as matters, such as land-sales, and various Shire events.

<sup>423</sup> I have therefore in Bilbo's song (pp. 158-60) used Saturday and Sunday instead of Thursday and Friday.

<sup>424</sup> Though actually *theyestarë* of New Reckoning occurred earlier than in the Calendar of Imladris, in which it corresponded more or less with Shire April 6.



The Fourth Age was held to have begun with the departure of Master Elrond, which took place in September 3021; but for purposes of record in the Kingdom Fourth Age 1 was the year that began according to the New Reckoning in March 25, 3021, old style.

This reckoning was in the course of the reign of King Elessar adopted in all his lands except the Shire, where the old calendar was retained and Shire Reckoning was continued. Fourth Age 1 was thus called 1422; and insofar as the Hobbits took any account of the change of Age, they maintained that it began with 2 Yule 1422, and not in the previous March.

There is no record of the Shire-folk commemorating either March 25 or September 22; but in the Westfarthing, especially in the country round Hobbiton Hill, there grew up a custom of making holiday and dancing in the Party Field, when weather permitted, on April 6. Some said that it was old Sam Gardner's birthday, some that it was the day on which the Golden Tree first flowered in 1420, and some that it was the Elves' New Year. In the Buckland the Horn of the Mark was blown at sundown every November 2 and bonfires and feastings followed.<sup>425</sup>

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<sup>425</sup> Anniversary of its first blowing in the Shire in 3019.



## Appendix E: Writing And Spelling

### I. Pronunciation Of Words And Names

The Westron or Common Speech has been entirely translated into English equivalents. All Hobbit names and special words are intended to be pronounced accordingly: for example, *Bolger* has *g* as in *bulge*, and *mathom* rhymes with *fathom*.

In transcribing the ancient scripts I have tried to represent the original sounds (so far as they can be determined) with fair accuracy, and at the same time to produce words and names that do not look uncouth in modern letters. The High-elven Quenya has been spelt as much like Latin as its sounds allowed. For this reason *c* has been preferred to *k* in both Eldarin languages.

The following points may be observed by those who are interested in such details.

#### Consonants

**C:**—has always the value of *k* even before *e* and *i*: *celeb*, ‘silver’ should be pronounced as *keleb*.

**CH:**—is only used to represent the sound heard in *bach* (in German or Welsh), not that in English *church*. Except at the end of words and before *t* this sound was weakened to *h* in the speech of Gondor, and that change has been recognized in a few names, such as *Rohan*, *Rohirrim*. (*Imrahil* is a Númenórean name.)

**DH:**—represents the voiced (soft) *th* of English *these clothes*. It is usually related to *d*, as in S. *galadh*, ‘tree’ compared with Q. *alda*; but is sometimes derived from *n+r*, as in *Caradhras*, ‘Redhorn’ from *caranrass*.

**F:**—represents *f*, except at the end of words, where it is used to represent the sound of *v* (as in English of): *Nindalf*, *Fladrif*.

**G:**—has only the sound of *g* in *give*, *get*: *gil* ‘star’, in *Gildor*, *Gilraen*, *Osgiliath*, begins as in English *gild*.

**H:**—standing alone with no other consonant has the sound of *h* in *house*, *behold*. The Quenya combination *ht* has the sound of *cht*, as in German *echt*, *acht*: e.g. in the name *Telumehtar*, ‘Orion’.<sup>426</sup> See also **CH**, **DH**, **L**, **R**, **TH**, **W**, **Y**.

**I:**—initially before another vowel has the consonantal sound of *y* in *you*, *yore* in Sindarin only: as in *Ioreth*, *Iarwain*. See **Y**.

**K:**—is used in names drawn from other than Elvish languages, with the same value as *c*; *kh* thus represents the same sound as *ch* in Orkish *Grishnákh*, or Adûnaic (Númenórean) *Adûnakhôr*. On Dwarvish (Khuzdul) see note [below](#).

**L:**—represents more or less the sound of English initial *l*, as in *let*. It was, however, to some degree ‘palatalized’ between *e*, *i* and a consonant, or finally after *e*, *i*. (The Eldar would probably have transcribed English *bell*, *fill* as *beol*, *fiol*.) LH represents this sound when voiceless (usually derived from initial *sl-*). In (archaic) Quenya this is written *hl*, but was in the Third Age usually pronounced as *l*.

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<sup>426</sup> Usually called in Sindarin *Menelvagor* (p. 81), Q. *Menelmacar*.

**NG:**—represents *ng* in *finger*, except finally where it was sounded as in English *sing*. The latter sound also occurred initially in Quenya, but has been transcribed *n* (as in *Noldo*), according to the pronunciation of the Third Age.

**PH:**—has the same sound as *f*. It is used (a) where the *f*-sound occurs at the end of a word, as in *alph*, ‘swan’; (b) where the *f*-sound is related to or derived from a *p*, as in *i-Pheriannath*, ‘the Halflings’ (*perian*); (c) in the middle of a few words where it represents a long *ff* (from *pp*) as in *Ephel*, ‘outer fence’; and (d) in Adûnaic and Westron, as in *Ar-Pharazôn* (*pharaz*, ‘gold’).

**QU:**—has been used for *cw*, a combination very frequent in Quenya, though it did not occur in Sindarin.

**R:**—represents a trilled *r* in all positions; the sound was not lost before consonants (as in English *part*). The Orcs, and some Dwarves, are said to have used a back or uvular *r*, a sound which the Eldar found distasteful. **RH** represents a voiceless *r* (usually derived from older initial *sr-*). It was written *hr* in Quenya. Cf. **L**.

**S:**—is always voiceless, as in English *so*, *geese*; the *z*-sound did not occur in contemporary Quenya or Sindarin. **SH**, occurring in Westron, Dwarvish and Orkish, represents sounds similar to *sh* in English.

**TH:**—represents the voiceless *th* of English in *thin cloth*. This had become *s* in spoken Quenya, though still written with a different letter; as in Q. *Isil*, S. *Ithil*, ‘Moon’.

**TY:**—represents a sound probably similar to the *t* in English *tune*. It was derived mainly from *c* or *t+y*. The sound of English *ch*, which was frequent in Westron, was usually substituted for it by speakers of that language. Cf. **HY** under **Y**.

**V:**—has the sound of English *v*, but is not used finally. See **F**.

**W:**—has the sound of English *w*. **HW** is a voiceless *w*, as in English *white* (in northern pronunciation). It was not an uncommon initial sound in Quenya, though examples seem not to occur in this book. Both *v* and *w* are used in the transcription of Quenya, in spite of the assimilation of its spelling to Latin, since the two sounds, distinct in origin, both occurred in the language.

**Y:**—is used in Quenya for the consonant *y*, as in English *you*. In Sindarin *y* is a vowel (see [below](#)). **HY** has the same relation to *y* as **HW** to *w*, and represents a sound like that often heard in English *hew*, *huge*; *h* in Quenya *eht*, *iht* had the same sound. The sound of English *sh*, which was common in Westron, was often substituted by speakers of that language. Cf. **TY** above. **HY** was usually derived from *sy-* and *khy-*; in both cases related Sindarin words show initial *h*, as in Q. *Hyarmen*, ‘south’, S. *Harad*.

Note that consonants written twice, as *tt*, *ll*, *ss*, *nn*, represent long, ‘double’ consonants. At the end of words of more than one syllable these were usually shortened: as in *Rohan* from *Rochann* (archaic *Rochand*).

In Sindarin the combinations *ng*, *nd*, *mb*, which were specially favoured in the Eldarin languages at an earlier stage, suffered various changes. *mb* became *m* in all cases, but still counted as a long consonant for purposes of stress (see [below](#)), and is thus written *mm* in cases where otherwise the stress might be in doubt.<sup>427</sup> *ng* remained unchanged except initially and finally where it became the simple nasal (as in English *sing*). *Nd* became *nn* usually, as *Ennor*, ‘Middle-earth’, Q. *Endóre*; but remained *nd* at the end of fully accented monosyllables such as *thond*, ‘root’ (cf. *Morthond*, ‘Blackroot’), and also before *r*, as *Andros*, ‘long-foam’. This *nd* is also seen in some ancient names derived from an older period, such as *Nargothrond*, *Gondolin*, *Beleriand*. In the Third Age final *nd* in long words had become *n* from *nn*, as in *Ithilien*, *Rohan*, *Anórien*.

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<sup>427</sup> As in *galadhremmin ennorath* (p. 238) ‘tree-woven lands of Middle-earth’. *Remmirath* (p. 81) contains *rem*, ‘mesh’, Q. *rembe*, +*mîr*, ‘jewel’.

## Vowels

For vowels the letters *i*, *e*, *a*, *o*, *u* are used, and (in Sindarin only) *y*. As far as can be determined the sounds represented by these letters (other than *y*) were of normal kind, though doubtless many local varieties escape detection.<sup>428</sup> That is, the sounds were approximately those represented by *i*, *e*, *a*, *o*, *u* in English *machine*, *were*, *father*, *for*, *brute*, irrespective of quantity.

In Sindarin long *e*, *a*, *o* had the same quality as the short vowels, being derived in comparatively recent times from them (older *é*, *á*, *ó* had been changed). In Quenya long *é* and *ó* were, when correctly<sup>428</sup> pronounced, as by the Eldar, tenser and ‘closer’ than the short vowels.

Sindarin alone among contemporary languages possessed the ‘modified’ or fronted *u*, more or less as *u* in French *lune*. It was partly a modification of *o* and *u*, partly derived from older diphthongs *eu*, *iu*. For this sound *y* has been used (as in ancient English): as in *lyg*, ‘snake’, Q. *leuca*, or *emyn* pl. of *amon*, ‘hill’. In Gondor this *y* was usually pronounced like *i*.

Long vowels are usually marked with the ‘acute accent’, as in some varieties of Fëanorian script. In Sindarin long vowels in stressed monosyllables are marked with the circumflex, since they tended in such cases to be specially prolonged;<sup>429</sup> so in *dun* compared with *Dúnadan*. The use of the circumflex in other languages such as Adûnaic or Dwarvish has no special significance, and is used merely to mark these out as alien tongues (as with the use of *k*).

Final *e* is never mute or a mere sign of length as in English. To mark this final *e* it is often (but not consistently) written *ë*.

The groups *er*, *ir*, *ur* (finally or before a consonant) are not intended to be pronounced as in English *fern*, *fir*, *fur*, but rather as English *air*, *eer*, *oor*.

In Quenya *ui*, *oi*, *ai* and *iu*, *eu*, *au* are diphthongs (that is, pronounced in one syllable). All other pairs of vowels are dissyllabic. This is often dictated by writing *ëa* (*Eä*), *ëo*, *oë*.

In Sindarin the diphthongs are written *ae*, *ai*, *ei*, *oe*, *ui*, and *au*. Other combinations are not diphthongal. The writing of final *au* as *aw* is in accordance with English custom, but is actually not uncommon in Fëanorian spellings.

All these diphthongs<sup>430</sup> were ‘falling’ diphthongs, that is stressed on the first element, and composed of the simple vowels run together. Thus *ai*, *ei*, *oi*, *ui* are intended to be pronounced respectively as the vowels in English *rye* (not *ray*), *grey*, *boy*, *ruin*; and *au* (*aw*) as in *loud*, *how* and not as in *laud*, *haw*.

There is nothing in English closely corresponding to *ae*, *oe*, *eu*; *ae* and *oe* may be pronounced as *ai*, *oi*.

## Stress

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<sup>428</sup> A fairly widespread pronunciation of long *é* and *ó* as *ei* and *ou*, more or less as in English *say no*, both in Westron and in the renderings of Quenya names by Westron speakers, is shown by spellings such as *ei*, *ou* (or their equivalents in contemporary scripts). But such pronunciations were regarded as incorrect or rustic. They were naturally usual in the Shire. Those therefore who pronounce *yéni únótimë*, ‘long-years innumerable’, as is natural in English (*sc.* more or less as *yainy oonoatimy*) will err little more than Bilbo, Meriadoc, or Peregrin. Frodo is said to have shown great ‘skill with foreign sounds’.

<sup>429</sup> So also in *Annûn*, ‘sunset’, *Amrûn*, ‘sunrise’, under the influence of the related *dun*, ‘west’, and *rhûn*, ‘east’.

<sup>430</sup> Originally. But *iu* in Quenya was in the Third Age usually pronounced as a rising diphthong as *yu* in English *yule*.

The position of the ‘accent’ or stress is not marked, since in the Eldarin languages concerned its place is determined by the form of the word. In words of two syllables it falls in practically all cases on the first syllable. In longer words it falls on the last syllable but one, where that contains a long vowel, a diphthong, or a vowel followed by two (or more) consonants. Where the last syllable but one contains (as often) a short vowel followed by only one (or no) consonant, the stress falls on the syllable before it, the third from the end. Words of the last form are favoured in the Eldarin languages, especially Quenya.

In the following examples the stressed vowel is marked by a capital letter: *isIldur*, *Orome*, *erEssëa*, *fĒanor*, *ancAlima*, *elentÁri*, *dEnethor*, *periAnnath*, *ecthElion*, *pelArgir*, *sillvren*. Words of the type *elentÁri*, ‘star-queen’ seldom occur in Quenya where the vowel is *é*, *á*, *ó*, unless (as in this case) they are compounds; they are commoner with the vowels *í*, *ú*, as *andÚne*, ‘sunset, west’.

They do not occur in Sindarin except in compounds. Note that Sindarin *dh*, *th*, *ch* are single consonants and represent single letters in the original scripts.

## Note

In names drawn from other languages than Eldarin the same values for the letters are intended, where not specially described above, except in the case of Dwarvish. In Dwarvish, which did not possess the sounds represented above by *th* and *ch* (*kh*), *th* and *kh* are aspirates, that is *t* or *k* followed by an *h*, more or less as in *backhand*, *outhouse*.

Where *z* occurs the sound intended is that of English *z*. *gh* in the Black Speech and Orkish represents a ‘back spirant’ (related to *g* as *dh* to *d*): as in *ghâsh* and *agh*.

The ‘outer’ or Mannish names of the Dwarves have been given Northern forms, but the letter-values are those described. So also in the case of the personal and place-names of Rohan (where they have not been modernized), except that here *éa* and *éo* are diphthongs, which may be represented by the *ea* of English *bear*, and the *eo* of *Theobald*; *y* is the modified *u*. The modernized forms are easily recognized and are intended to be pronounced as in English. They are mostly place-names: as Dunharrow (for *Dúnharg*), except Shadowfax and Wormtongue.

## II. Writing

The scripts and letters used in the Third Age were all ultimately of Eldarin origin, and already at that time of great antiquity. They had reached the stage of full alphabetic development, but older modes in which only the consonants were denoted by full letters were still in use.

The alphabets were of two main, and in origin independent, kinds: the *Tengwar* or *Tîw*, here translated as ‘letters’; and the *Certar* or *Cirth*, translated as ‘runes’. The *Tengwar* were devised for writing with brush or pen, and the squared forms of inscriptions were in their case derivative from the written forms. The *Certar* were devised and mostly used only for scratched or incised inscriptions.

The *Tengwar* were the more ancient; for they had been developed by the Noldor, the kindred of the Eldar most skilled in such matters, long before their exile. The oldest Eldarin letters, the *Tengwar* of Rúmil, were not used in Middle-earth. The later letters, the *Tengwar* of Fëanor, were largely a new invention, though they owed something to the letters of Rúmil. They were brought to Middle-earth by the exiled Noldor, and so became known to the Edain and Númenóreans. In the Third Age their use had spread over much the same area as that in which the Common Speech was known.

The *Cirth* were devised first in Beleriand by the Sindar, and were long used only for inscribing names and brief memorials upon wood or stone. To that origin they owe their angular shapes, very similar to the runes of our times, though they differed from these in details and were wholly different in arrangement. The *Cirth* in their older and simpler form spread eastward in the Second Age, and became known to many peoples, to Men and Dwarves, and even to Orcs, all of whom altered them to suit their purposes and according to their skill or lack of it. One such simple form was still used by the Men of Dale, and a similar one by the Rohirrim.

But in Beleriand, before the end of the First Age, the Cirth, partly under the influence of the Tengwar of the Noldor, were rearranged and further developed. Their richest and most ordered form was known as the Alphabet of Daeron, since in Elvish tradition it was said to have been devised by Daeron, the minstrel and loremaster of King Thingol of Doriath. Among the Eldar the Alphabet of Daeron did not develop true cursive forms, since for writing the Elves adopted the Fëanorian letters. The Elves of the West indeed for the most part gave up the use of runes altogether. In the country of Eregion, however, the Alphabet of Daeron was maintained in use and passed thence to Moria, where it became the alphabet most favoured by the Dwarves. It remained ever after in use among them and passed with them to the North. Hence in later times it was often called *Angerthas Moria* or the Long Rune-rows of Moria. As with their speech the Dwarves made use of such scripts as were current and many wrote the Fëanorian letters skilfully; but for their own tongue they adhered to the Cirth, and developed written pen-forms from them.

### **(i) The Fëanorian Letters**

The [table](#) shows, in formal book-hand shape, all the letters that were commonly used in the West-lands in the Third Age. The arrangement is the one most usual at the time, and the one in which the letters were then usually recited by name.

This script was not in origin an ‘alphabet’: that is, a haphazard series of letters, each with an independent value of its own, recited in a traditional order that has no reference either to their shapes or to their functions.<sup>431</sup> It was, rather, a system of consonantal signs, of similar shapes and style, which could be adapted at choice or convenience to represent the consonants of languages observed (or devised) by the Eldar. None of the letters had in itself a fixed value; but certain relations between them were gradually recognized.

The system contained twenty-four primary letters, 1-24, arranged in four *témar* (series), each of which had six *tyeller* (grades). There were also ‘additional letters’, of which 25-36 are examples. Of these 27 and 29 are the only strictly independent letters; the remainder are modifications of other letters. There was also a number of *tehtar* (signs) of varied uses. These do not appear in the table.<sup>432</sup>

The *primary letters* were each formed of a *telco* (stem) and a *lúva* (bow).

## **The Tengwar**

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<sup>431</sup> The only relation in our alphabet that would have appeared intelligible to the Eldar is that between P and B; and their separation from one another, and from F, M, V, would have seemed to them absurd.

<sup>432</sup> Many of them appear in the examples on the title-page, and in the inscription on [p. 50](#), transcribed on [p. 254](#). They were mainly used to express vowel-sounds, in Quenya usually regarded as modifications of the accompanying consonant; or to express more briefly some of the most frequent consonant combinations.

	I	II	III	IV
1	1 p	2 p	3 ɸ	4 ɸ
2	5 p	6 p	7 ɸɸ	8 ɸɸ
3	9 b	10 b	11 ɸ	12 ɸ
4	13 b	14 b	15 ɸɸ	16 ɸɸ
5	17 m	18 m	19 ɸɸ	20 ɸɸ
6	21 n	22 n	23 ɸ	24 ɸ
	25 ɣ	26 ɣ	27 ɣ	28 ɣ
	29 ɥ	30 ɥ	31 ɥ	32 ɥ
	33 λ	34 λ	35 λ	36 λ

The forms seen in 1-4 were regarded as normal. The stem could be raised, as in 9-16; or reduced, as in 17-24. The bow could be open, as in Series I and III; or closed, as in II and IV; and in either case it could be doubled, as e.g. in 5-8.

The theoretic freedom of application had in the Third Age been modified by custom to this extent that Series I was generally applied to the dental or *t*-series (*tincotéma*), and II to the labials or *p*-series (*parmatéma*). The application of Series III and IV varied according to the requirements of different languages.



In languages like the Westron, which made much use of consonants<sup>433</sup> such as our *ch*, *j*, *sh*, Series III was usually applied to these; in which case Series IV was applied to the normal *k*-series (*calmatéma*). In Quenya, which possessed besides the *calmatéma* both a palatal series (*tyelpetéma*) and a labialized series (*quessetéma*), the palatals were represented by a Fëanorian diacritic denoting ‘following *y*’ (usually two underposed dots), while Series IV was a *kw*-series.

Within these general applications the following relations were also commonly observed. The normal letters, Grade 1, were applied to the ‘voiceless stops’: *t*, *p*, *k*, etc. The doubling of the bow indicated the addition of ‘voice’: thus if 1, 2, 3, 4=*t*, *p*, *ch*, *k* (or *t*, *p*, *k*, *kw*) then 5, 6, 7, 8=*d*, *b*, *j*, *g* (or *d*, *b*, *g*, *gw*). The raising of the stem indicated the opening of the consonant to a ‘spirant’: thus assuming the above values for Grade 1, Grade 3 (9-12)=*th*, *f*, *sh*, *ch* (or *th*, *f*, *kh*, *khw/hw*), and Grade 4 (13-16)=*dh*, *v*, *zh*, *gh* (or *dh*, *v*, *gh*, *ghw/w*).

The original Fëanorian system also possessed a grade with extended stems, both above and below the line. These usually represented aspirated consonants (e.g. *t+h*, *p+h*, *k+h*), but might represent other consonantal variations required. They were not needed in the languages of the Third Age that used this script; but the extended forms were much used as variants (more clearly distinguished from Grade 1) of Grades 3 and 4.

Grade 5 (17-20) was usually applied to the nasal consonants: thus 17 and 18 were the most common signs for *n* and *m*. According to the principle observed above, Grade 6 should then have represented the voiceless nasals; but since such sounds (exemplified by Welsh *nh* or ancient English *hn*) were of very rare occurrence in the languages concerned, Grade 6 (21-24) was most often used for the weakest or ‘semi-vocalic’ consonants of each series. It consisted of the smallest and simplest shapes among the primary letters. Thus 21 was often used for a weak (untrilled) *r*, originally occurring in Quenya and regarded in the system of that language as the weakest consonant of the *tincotéma*; 22 was widely used for *w*; where Series III was used as a palatal series 23 was commonly used as consonantal *y*.<sup>434</sup>

Since some of the consonants of Grade 4 tended to become weaker in pronunciation, and to approach or to merge with those of Grade 6 (as described above), many of the latter ceased to have a clear function in the Eldarin languages; and it was from these letters that the letters expressing vowels were largely derived.

## Note

**T**he standard spelling of Quenya diverged from the applications of the letters above described. Grade 2 was used for *nd*, *mb*, *ng*, *ngw*, all of which were frequent, since *b*, *g*, *gw* only appeared in these combinations, while for *rd*, *ld* the special letters 26, 28 were used. (For *lv*, not for *lw*, many speakers, especially Elves, used *lb*: this was written with 27+6, since *lmb* could not occur.) Similarly, Grade 4 was used for the extremely frequent combinations *nt*, *mp*, *nk*, *nqu*, since Quenya did not possess *dh*, *gh*, *ghw*, and for *v* used letter 22. See the Quenya letter-names [pp. 1122-3](#).

*The additional letters.* No. 27 was universally used for *l*. No. 25 (in origin a modification of 21) was used for ‘full’ trilled *r*. Nos. 26, 28 were modifications of these. They were frequently used for voiceless *r* (*rh*) and *l* (*lh*) respectively. But in Quenya they were used for *rd* and *ld*. 29 represented *s*, and 31 (with doubled curl) *z* in those languages that required it. The inverted forms, 30 and 32, though available for use as separate signs, were mostly used as mere variants of 29 and 31, according to the convenience of writing, e.g. they were much used when accompanied by superimposed *tehtar*.

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<sup>433</sup> The representation of the sounds here is the same as that employed in transcription and described above, except that here *ch* represents the *ch* in English *church*; *j* represents the sound of English *j*, and *zh* the sound heard in *azure* and *occasion*.

<sup>434</sup> The inscription on the West-gate of Moria gives an example of a mode, used for the spelling of Sindarin, in which Grade 6 represented the simple nasals, but Grade 5 represented the double or long nasals much used in Sindarin: 17=*nn*, but 21=*n*.



No. 33 was in origin a variation representing some (weaker) variety of 11; its most frequent use in the Third Age was *h*. 34 was mostly used (if at all) for voiceless *w* (*hw*). 35 and 36 were, when used as consonants, mostly applied to *y* and *w* respectively.

The vowels were in many modes represented by *tehtar*, usually set above a consonantal letter. In languages such as Quenya, in which most words ended in a vowel, the *tehta* was placed above the preceding consonant; in those such as Sindarin, in which most words ended in a consonant, it was placed above the following consonant. When there was no consonant present in the required position, the *tehta* was placed above the ‘short carrier’, of which a common form was like an undotted *i*. The actual *tehtar* used in different languages for vowel-signs were numerous. The commonest, usually applied to (varieties of) *e*, *i*, *a*, *o*, *u*, are exhibited in the examples given. The three dots, most usual in formal writing for *a*, were variously written in quicker styles, a form like a circumflex being often employed.<sup>435</sup> The single dot and the ‘acute accent’ were frequently used for *i* and *e* (but in some modes for *e* and *i*). The curls were used for *o* and *u*. In the Ring-inscription the curl open to the right is used for *u*; but on the title-page this stands for *o*, and the curl open to the left for *u*. The curl to the right was favoured, and the application depended on the language concerned: in the Black Speech *o* was rare.

Long vowels were usually represented by placing the *tehta* on the ‘long carrier’, of which a common form was like an undotted *j*. But for the same purpose the *tehtar* could be doubled. This was, however, only frequently done with the curls, and sometimes with the ‘accent’. Two dots was more often used as a sign for following *y*.

The West-gate inscription illustrates a mode of ‘full writing’ with the vowels represented by separate letters. All the vocalic letters used in Sindarin are shown. The use of No. 30 as a sign for vocalic *y* may be noted; also the expression of diphthongs by placing the *tehta* for following *y* above the vowel-letter. The sign for following *w* (required for the expression of *au*, *aw*) was in this mode the *u*-curl or a modification of it  $\sim$ . But the diphthongs were often written out in full, as in the transcription. In this mode length of vowel was usually indicated by the ‘acute accent’, called in that case *andaith*, ‘long mark’.

There were beside the *tehtar* already mentioned a number of others, chiefly used to abbreviate the writing, especially by expressing frequent consonant combinations without writing them out in full. Among these, a bar (or a sign like a Spanish *tilde*) placed above a consonant was often used to indicate that it was preceded by the nasal of the same series (as in *nt*, *mp*, or *nk*); a similar sign placed below was, however, mainly used to show that the consonant was long or doubled. A downward hook attached to the bow (as in *hobbits*, the last word on the title-page) was used to indicate a following *s*, especially in the combinations *ts*, *ps*, *ks* (*x*), that were favoured in Quenya.

There was of course no ‘mode’ for the representation of English. One adequate phonetically could be devised from the Fëanorian system. The brief example on the title-page does not attempt to exhibit this. It is rather an example of what a man of Gondor might have produced, hesitating between the values of the letters familiar in his ‘mode’ and the traditional spelling of English. It may be noted that a dot below (one of the uses of which was to represent weak obscured vowels) is here employed in the representation of unstressed *and*, but is also used in *here* for silent final *e*; *the*, *of*, and *of the* are expressed by abbreviations (extended *dh*, extended *v*, and the latter with an under-stroke).

## The Names Of The Letters

In all modes each letter and sign had a name; but these names were devised to fit or describe the phonetic uses in each particular mode. It was, however, often felt desirable, especially in describing the uses of the letters in other modes, to have a name for each letter in itself as a shape. For this purpose the Quenya ‘full names’ were commonly employed, even where they referred to uses peculiar to Quenya. Each ‘full name’ was an actual word in Quenya that contained the letter in question. Where possible it was the first sound of the word; but

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<sup>435</sup> In Quenya in which *a* was very frequent, its vowel sign was often omitted altogether. Thus for *calma*, ‘lamp’ *clm* could be written. This would naturally read as *calma*, since *cl* was not in Quenya a possible initial combination, and *m* never occurred finally. A possible reading was *calama*, but no such word existed.

where the sound or the combination expressed did not occur initially it followed immediately after an initial vowel. The names of the letters in the table were (1) *tinco*, metal; *parma*, book; *calma*, lamp; *quesse*, feather; (2) *ando*, gate; *umbar*, fate; *anga*, iron; *ungwe*, spider's web; (3) *thule* (*súle*), spirit; *formen*, north; *harma*, treasure (or *aha*, rage); *hwesta*, breeze; (4) *anto*, mouth; *ampa*, hook; *anca*, jaws; *unquē*, a hollow; (5) *númen*, west; *malta*, gold; *noldo* (older *ngoldo*), one of the kindred of the Noldor; *nwalme* (older *ngwalme*), torment; (6) *ore*, heart (inner mind); *vala*, angelic power; *anna*, gift; *vilya*, air; sky (older *wilya*); *rómen*, east; *arda*, region; *lambe*, tongue; *alda*, tree; *silme*, starlight; *silme nuquerna* (*s* reversed), *are*, sunlight (or *esse*, name); *áre nuquerna*; *hyarmen*, south; *hwesta sindarinwa*, *yanta*, bridge; *úre*, heat. Where there are variants this is due to the names being given before certain changes affected Quenya as spoken by the Exiles. Thus No. 11 was called *harma* when it represented the spirant *ch* in all positions, but when this sound became breath *h* initially<sup>436</sup> (though remaining medially) the name *aha* was devised. *áre* was originally *áze*, but when this *z* became merged with *21*, the sign was in Quenya used for the very frequent *ss* of that language, and the name *esse* was given to it. *hwesta sindarinwa* or 'Grey-elven *hw*' was so called because in Quenya *12* had the sound of *hw*, and distinct signs for *chw* and *hw* were not required. The names of the letters most widely known and used were *17 n*, *33 hy*, *25 r*, *10 f*: *númen*, *hyarmen*, *rómen*, *formen*=west, south, east, north (cf. Sindarin *dûn* or *annûn*, *harad*, *rhûn* or *amrûn*, *forod*). These letters commonly indicated the points W, S, E, N even in languages that used quite different terms. They were, in the West-lands, named in this order, beginning with and facing west; *hyarmen* and *formen* indeed meant left-hand region and right-hand region (the opposite to the arrangement in many Mannish languages).

## (ii) The Cirth

The *Certhas Daeron* was originally devised to represent the sounds of Sindarin only. The oldest *cirth* were Nos. 1, 2, 5, 6; 8, 9, 12; 18, 19, 22; 29, 31; 35, 36; 39, 42, 46, 50; and a *certh* varying between 13 and 15. The assignment of values was unsystematic. Nos. 39, 42, 46, 50 were vowels and remained so in all later developments. Nos. 13, 15 were used for *h* or *s*, according as 35 was used for *s* or *h*. This tendency to hesitate in the assignment of values for *s* and *h* continued in later arrangements. In those characters that consisted of a 'stem' and a 'branch', 1-31, the attachment of the branch was, if on one side only, usually made on the right side. The reverse was not infrequent, but had no phonetic significance.

The extension and elaboration of this *certhas* was called in its older form the *Angerthas Daeron*, since the additions to the old *cirth* and their reorganization was attributed to Daeron. The principal additions, however, the introductions of two new series, 13-17, and 23-28, were actually most probably inventions of the Noldor of Eregion, since they were used for the representation of sounds not found in Sindarin.

## The Angerthas

In the rearrangement of the *Angerthas* the following principles are observable (evidently inspired by the Fëanorian system): (1) adding a stroke to a branch added 'voice'; (2) reversing the *certh* indicated opening to a 'spirant'; (3) placing the branch on both sides of the stem added voice and nasality. These principles were regularly carried out, except in one point. For (archaic) Sindarin a sign for a spirant *m* (or nasal *v*) was required, and since this could best be provided by a reversal of the sign for *m*, the reversible No. 6 was given the value *m*, but No. 5 was given the value *hw*.

No. 36, the theoretic value of which was *z*, was used, in spelling Sindarin or Quenya, for *ss*: cf. Fëanorian 31. No. 39 was used for either *i* or *y* (consonant); 34, 35 were used indifferently for *s*; and 38 was used for the frequent sequence *nd*, though it was not clearly related in shape to the dentals.

<sup>436</sup> For breath *h* Quenya originally used a simple raised stem without bow, called *halla*, 'tall'. This could be placed before a consonant to indicate that it was unvoiced and breathed; voiceless *r* and *l* were usually so expressed and are transcribed *hr*, *hl*. Later 33 was used for independent *h*, and the value of *hy* (its older value) was represented by adding the *tehta* for following *y*.

1	Რ	16	Ს	31	Ტ	46	Უ
2	Ს	17	Ტ	32	Უ	47	Უ
3	Ტ	18	Ტ̇	33	Უ̇	48	Უ̇
4	Ტ	19	Ტ̇	34	Უ̇	49	Უ̇
5	Ტ̇	20	Ტ̇	35	Უ̇	50	Უ̇
6	Ტ̇	21	Ტ̇	36	Უ̇	51	Უ̇
7	Ტ̇	22	Ტ̇	37	Უ̇	52	Უ̇
8	Ტ̇	23	Ტ̇	38	Უ̇	53	Უ̇
9	Ტ̇	24	Ტ̇	39	Უ̇	54	Უ̇
10	Ტ̇	25	Ტ̇	40	Უ̇	55	Უ̇
11	Ტ̇	26	Ტ̇	41	Უ̇	56	Უ̇
12	Ტ̇	27	Ტ̇	42	Უ̇	57	Უ̇
13	Ტ̇	28	Ტ̇	43	Უ̇	58	Უ̇
14	Ტ̇	29	Ტ̇	44	Უ̇		Უ̇
15	Ტ̇	30	Ტ̇	45	Უ̇	Უ̇	Უ̇

Values

1	<b>p</b>	16	<b>zh</b>	31	<b>l</b>	46	<b>e</b>
2	<b>b</b>	17	<b>nj—z</b>	32	<b>lh</b>	47	<b>ē</b>
3	<b>f</b>	18	<b>k</b>	33	<b>ng—nd</b>	48	<b>a</b>
4	<b>v</b>	19	<b>g</b>	34	<b>s—h</b>	49	<b>ā</b>
5	<b>hw</b>	20	<b>kh</b>	35	<b>s—’</b>	50	<b>o</b>
6	<b>m</b>	21	<b>gh</b>	36	<b>z—ŋ</b>	51	<b>ō</b>
7	<b>(mh) mb</b>	22	<b>ŋ—n</b>	37	<b>ng*</b>	52	<b>ö</b>
8	<b>t</b>	23	<b>kw</b>	38	<b>nd—nj</b>	53	<b>n*</b>
9	<b>d</b>	24	<b>gw</b>	39	<b>i (y)</b>	54	<b>h—s</b>
10	<b>th</b>	25	<b>khw</b>	40	<b>y*</b>	55	<b>*</b>
11	<b>dh</b>	26	<b>ghw,w</b>	41	<b>hy*</b>	56	<b>*</b>
12	<b>n—r</b>	27	<b>ngw</b>	42	<b>u</b>	57	<b>ps*</b>
13	<b>ch</b>	28	<b>nw</b>	43	<b>ū</b>	58	<b>ts*</b>
14	<b>j</b>	29	<b>r—j</b>	44	<b>w</b>		<b>+h</b>
15	<b>sh</b>	30	<b>rh—zh</b>	45	<b>ü</b>		<b>&amp;</b>

In the [Table of Values](#) those on the left are, when separated by ‘—,’ the values of the older *Angerthas*. Those on the right are the values of the Dwarvish *Angerthas Moria*.<sup>437</sup> The Dwarves of Moria, as can be seen, introduced a number of unsystematic changes in value, as well as certain new *cirth*: 37, 40, 41, 53, 55, 56. The dislocation in values was due mainly to two causes: (1) the alteration in the values of 34, 35, 54 respectively to *h*,’ (the clear or glottal beginning of a word with an initial vowel that appeared in Khuzdul), and *s*; (2) the abandonment of the Nos. 14, 16 for which the Dwarves substituted 29, 30. The consequent use of 12 for *r*, the invention of 53 for *n* (and its confusion with 22); the use of 17 as *z*, to go with 54 in its value *s*, and the consequent use of 36 as

<sup>437</sup> Those in ( ) are values only found in Elvish use; \* marks *cirth* only used by Dwarves.

*q* and the new *certh* 37 for *ng* may also be observed. The new 55, 56 were in origin a halved form of 46, and were used for vowels like those heard in English *butter*, which were frequent in Dwarvish and in the Westron. When weak or evanescent they were often reduced to a mere stroke without a stem. This *Angerthas Moria* is represented in the [tomb-inscription](#).

The Dwarves of Erebor used a further modification of this system, known as the mode of Erebor, and exemplified in the Book of Mazarbul. Its chief characteristics were: the use of 43 as *z*; of 17 as *ks* (*x*); and the invention of two new *cirth*, 57, 58 for *ps* and *ts*. They also reintroduced 14, 16 for the values *j*, *zh*; but used 29, 30 for *g*, *gh*, or as mere variants of 19, 21. These peculiarities are not included in the table, except for the special Ereborian *cirth*, 57, 58.



## Appendix F: Peoples & Languages

### I. The Languages And Peoples Of The Third Age

The language represented in this history by English was the *Westron* or ‘Common Speech’ of the West-lands of Middle-earth in the Third Age. In the course of that age it had become the native language of nearly all the speaking-peoples (save the Elves) who dwelt within the bounds of the old kingdoms of Arnor and Gondor; that is along all the coasts from Umbar northward to the Bay of Forochel, and inland as far as the Misty Mountains and the Ephel Dúath. It had also spread north up the Anduin, occupying the lands west of the River and east of the mountains as far as the Gladden Fields.

At the time of the War of the Ring at the end of the age these were still its bounds as a native tongue, though large parts of Eriador were now deserted, and few Men dwelt on the shores of the Anduin between the Gladden and Rauros.

A few of the ancient Wild Men still lurked in the Drúadan Forest in Anórien; and in the hills of Dunland a remnant lingered of an old people, the former inhabitants of much of Gondor. These clung to their own languages; while in the plains of Rohan there dwelt now a Northern people, the Rohirrim, who had come into that land some five hundred years earlier. But the Westron was used as a second language of intercourse by all those who still retained a speech of their own, even by the Elves, not only in Arnor and Gondor but throughout the vales of Anduin, and eastward to the further eaves of Mirkwood. Even among the Wild Men and the Dunlendings who shunned other folk there were some that could speak it, though brokenly.

#### *Of The Elves*

The Elves far back in the Elder Days became divided into two main branches: the West-elves (the *Eldar*) and the East-elves. Of the latter kind were most of the Elven-folk of Mirkwood and Lórien; but their languages do not appear in this history, in which all the Elvish names and words are of *Eldarin* form.<sup>438</sup> Of the *Eldarin* tongues two are found in this book: the High-elven or *Quenya*, and the Grey-elven or *Sindarin*. The High-elven was an ancient tongue of Eldamar beyond the Sea, the first to be recorded in writing. It was no longer a birth-tongue, but had become, as it were, an ‘Elvenlatin’, still used for ceremony, and for high matters of lore and song, by the High Elves, who had returned in exile to Middle-earth at the end of the First Age.

The Grey-elven was in origin akin to *Quenya*; for it was the language of those Eldar who, coming to the shores of Middle-earth, had not passed over the Sea but had lingered on the coasts in the country of Beleriand. There Thingol Greycloak of Doriath was their king, and in the long twilight their tongue had changed with the changefulness of mortal lands and had become far estranged from the speech of the Eldar from beyond the Sea.

The Exiles, dwelling among the more numerous Grey-elves, had adopted the *Sindarin* for daily use; and hence it was the tongue of all those Elves and Elf-lords that appear in this history. For these were all of Eldarin race, even where the folk that they ruled were of the lesser kindreds. Noblest of all was the Lady Galadriel of the

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<sup>438</sup> In Lórien at this period Sindarin was spoken, though with an ‘accent’, since most of its folk were of Silvan origin. This ‘accent’ and his own limited acquaintance with Sindarin misled Frodo (as is pointed out in *The Thain’s Book* by a commentator of Gondor). All the Elvish words cited in Book Two chs. 6, 7, 8 are in fact Sindarin, and so are most of the names of places and persons. But *Lórien*, *Caras Galadhon*, *Amroth*, *Nimrodel* are probably of Silvan origin, adapted to Sindarin.



royal house of Finarfin and sister of Finrod Felagund, King of Nargothrond. In the hearts of the Exiles the yearning for the Sea was an unquiet never to be stilled; in the hearts of the Grey-elves it slumbered, but once awakened it could not be appeased.

## *Of Men*

The *Westron* was a Mannish speech, though enriched and softened under Elvish influence. It was in origin the language of those whom the Eldar called the *Atani* or *Edain*, ‘Fathers of Men’, being especially the people of the Three Houses of the Elf-friends who came west into Beleriand in the First Age, and aided the Eldar in the War of the Great Jewels against the Dark Power of the North.

After the overthrow of the Dark Power, in which Beleriand was for the most part drowned or broken, it was granted as a reward to the Elf-friends that they also, as the Eldar, might pass west over Sea. But since the Undying Realm was forbidden to them, a great isle was set apart for them, most westerly of all mortal lands. The name of that isle was *Númenor* (Westernesse). Most of the Elf-friends, therefore, departed and dwelt in *Númenor*, and there they became great and powerful, mariners of renown and lords of many ships. They were fair of face and tall, and the span of their lives was thrice that of the Men of Middle-earth. These were the *Númenóreans*, the Kings of Men, whom the Elves called the *Dúnedain*.

The *Dúnedain* alone of all races of Men knew and spoke an Elvish tongue; for their forefathers had learned the Sindarin tongue, and this they handed on to their children as a matter of lore, changing little with the passing of the years. And their men of wisdom learned also the High-elven Quenya and esteemed it above all other tongues, and in it they made names for many places of fame and reverence, and for many men of royalty and great renown.<sup>439</sup>

But the native speech of the *Númenóreans* remained for the most part their ancestral Mannish tongue, the *Adûnaic*, and to this in the latter days of their pride their kings and lords returned, abandoning the Elven-speech, save only those few that held still to their ancient friendship with the Eldar. In the years of their power the *Númenóreans* had maintained many forts and havens upon the western coasts of Middle-earth for the help of their ships; and one of the chief of these was at Pelargir near the Mouths of Anduin. There *Adûnaic* was spoken, and mingled with many words of the languages of lesser men it became a Common Speech that spread thence along the coasts among all that had dealings with Westernesse.

After the Downfall of *Númenor*, Elendil led the survivors of the Elf-friends back to the North-western shores of Middle-earth. There many already dwelt who were in whole or part of *Númenórean* blood; but few of them remembered the Elvish speech. All told the *Dúnedain* were thus from the beginning far fewer in number than the lesser men among whom they dwelt and whom they ruled, being lords of long life and great power and wisdom. They used therefore the Common Speech in their dealing with other folk and in the government of their wide realms; but they enlarged the language and enriched it with many words drawn from elven-tongues.

In the days of the *Númenórean* kings this ennobled *Westron* speech spread far and wide, even among their enemies; and it became used more and more by the *Dúnedain* themselves, so that at the time of the War of the Ring the elven-tongue was known to only a small part of the peoples of Gondor, and spoken daily by fewer. These dwelt mostly in Minas Tirith and the townlands adjacent, and in the land of the tributary princes of Dol Amroth. Yet the names of nearly all places and persons in the realm of Gondor were of Elvish form and meaning. A few were of forgotten origin, and descended doubtless from the days before the ships of the

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<sup>439</sup> Quenya, for example, are the names *Númenor* (or in full *Númenóre*), and *Elendil*, *Isildur*, and *Anárion*, and all the royal names of *Gondor*, including *Elessar*, ‘Elfstone’. Most of the names of the other men and women of the *Dúnedain*, such as *Aragorn*, *Denethor*, *Gilraen* are of Sindarin form, being often the names of Elves or Men remembered in the songs and histories of the First Age (as *Beren*, *Húrin*). Some few are of mixed forms, as *Boromir*.

Númenóreans sailed the Sea; among these were *Umbar*, *Arnach* and *Erech*; and the mountain-names *Eilenach* and *Rimmon*. *Forlong* was also a name of the same sort.

Most of the Men of the northern regions of the West-lands were descended from the *Edain* of the First Age, or from their close kin. Their languages were, therefore, related to the Adûnaic, and some still preserved a likeness to the Common Speech. Of this kind were the peoples of the upper vales of Anduin: the Beornings, and the Woodmen of Western Mirkwood; and further north and east the Men of the Long Lake and of Dale. From the lands between the Gladden and the Carrock came the folk that were known in Gondor as the Rohirrim, Masters of Horses. They still spoke their ancestral tongue, and gave new names in it to nearly all the places in their new country; and they called themselves the Eorlings, or the Men of the Riddermark. But the lords of that people used the Common Speech freely, and spoke it nobly after the manner of their allies in Gondor; for in Gondor whence it came the Westron kept still a more gracious and antique style.

Wholly alien was the speech of the Wild Men of Drúadan Forest. Alien, too, or only remotely akin, was the language of the Dunlendings. These were a remnant of the peoples that had dwelt in the vales of the White Mountains in ages past. The Dead Men of Dunharrow were of their kin. But in the Dark Years others had removed to the southern dales of the Misty Mountains; and thence some had passed into the empty lands as far north as the Barrow-downs. From them came the Men of Bree; but long before these had become subjects of the North Kingdom of Arnor and had taken up the Westron tongue. Only in Dunland did Men of this race hold to their old speech and manners: a secret folk, unfriendly to the Dúnedain, hating the Rohirrim.

Of their language nothing appears in this book, save the name *Forgoil* which they gave to the Rohirrim (meaning Strawheads, it is said). *Dunland* and *Dunlending* are the names that the Rohirrim gave to them, because they were swarthy and dark-haired; there is thus no connexion between the word *dunn* in these names and the Grey-elven word *Dun*, ‘west’.

## *Of Hobbits*

The Hobbits of the Shire and of Bree had at this time, for probably a thousand years, adopted the Common Speech. They used it in their own manner freely and carelessly; though the more learned among them had still at their command a more formal language when occasion required.

There is no record of any language peculiar to Hobbits. In ancient days they seem always to have used the languages of Men near whom, or among whom, they lived. Thus they quickly adopted the Common Speech after they entered Eriador, and by the time of their settlement at Bree they had already begun to forget their former tongue. This was evidently a Mannish language of the upper Anduin, akin to that of the Rohirrim; though the southern Stoors appear to have adopted a language related to Dunlendish before they came north to the Shire.<sup>440</sup>

Of these things in the time of Frodo there were still some traces left in local words and names, many of which closely resembled those found in Dale or in Rohan. Most notable were the names of days, months, and seasons; several other words of the same sort (such as *mathom* and *smial*) were also still in common use, while more were preserved in the place-names of Bree and the Shire. The personal names of the Hobbits were also peculiar and many had come down from ancient days.

*Hobbit* was the name usually applied by the Shire-folk to all their kind. Men called them *Halflings* and the Elves *Periannath*. The origin of the word *hobbit* was by most forgotten. It seems, however, to have been at first a name given to the Harfoots by the Fallohides and Stoors, and to be a worn-down form of a word preserved more fully in Rohan: *holbytla*, ‘hole-builder’.

## *Of Other Races*

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<sup>440</sup> The Stoors of the Angle, who returned to Wilderland, had already adopted the Common Speech; but *Déagol* and *Sméagol* are names in the Mannish language of the region near the Gladden.



*Ents*. The most ancient people surviving in the Third Age were the *Onodrim* or *Enyd*. *Ent* was the form of their name in the language of Rohan. They were known to the Eldar in ancient days, and to the Eldar indeed the Ents ascribed not their own language but the desire for speech. The language that they had made was unlike all others: slow, sonorous, agglomerated, repetitive, indeed long-winded; formed of a multiplicity of vowel-shades and distinctions of tone and quality which even the lore-masters of the Eldar had not attempted to represent in writing. They used it only among themselves; but they had no need to keep it secret, for no others could learn it.

Ents were, however, themselves skilled in tongues, learning them swiftly and never forgetting them. But they preferred the languages of the Eldar, and loved best the ancient High-elven tongue. The strange words and names that the Hobbits record as used by Treebeard and other Ents are thus Elvish, or fragments of Elf-speech strung together in Ent-fashion.<sup>441</sup> Some are Quenya: as *Taurelilómëa-tumbalemorna Tumbaletaurëa Lómëanor*, which may be rendered 'Forestmanyshadowed-deepvalleyblack Deepvalleyforested Gloomy-land', and by which Treebeard meant, more or less: 'there is a black shadow in the deep dales of the forest'. Some are Sindarin: as *Fangorn*, 'beard-(of)-tree', or *Fimbrethil*, 'slender-beech'.

*Orcs and the Black Speech*. *Orc* is the form of the name that other races had for this foul people as it was in the language of Rohan. In Sindarin it was *orch*. Related, no doubt, was the word *uruk* of the Black Speech, though this was applied as a rule only to the great soldier-orcs that at this time issued from Mordor and Isengard. The lesser kinds were called, especially by the Uruk-hai, *snaga*, 'slave'.

The Orcs were first bred by the Dark Power of the North in the Elder Days. It is said that they had no language of their own, but took what they could of other tongues and perverted it to their own liking; yet they made only brutal jargons, scarcely sufficient even for their own needs, unless it were for curses and abuse. And these creatures, being filled with malice, hating even their own kind, quickly developed as many barbarous dialects as there were groups or settlements of their race, so that their Orkish speech was of little use to them in intercourse between different tribes.

So it was that in the Third Age Orcs used for communication between breed and breed the Westron tongue; and many indeed of the older tribes, such as those that still lingered in the North and in the Misty Mountains, had long used the Westron as their native language, though in such a fashion as to make it hardly less unlovely than Orkish. In this jargon *tark*, 'man of Gondor', was a debased form of *tarkil*, a Quenya word used in Westron for one of Númenorean descent; see p. 906.

It is said that the Black Speech was devised by Sauron in the Dark Years, and that he had desired to make it the language of all those that served him, but he failed in that purpose. From the Black Speech, however, were derived many of the words that were in the Third Age wide-spread among the Orcs, such as *ghâsh*, 'fire', but after the first overthrow of Sauron this language in its ancient form was forgotten by all but the Nazgûl. When Sauron arose again, it became once more the language of Barad-dûr and of the captains of Mordor. The inscription on the Ring was in the ancient Black Speech, while the curse of the Mordor-orc on p. 445 was in the more debased form used by the soldiers of the Dark Tower, of whom Grishnákh was the captain. *Sharkû* in that tongue means *old man*.

*Trolls*. *Troll* has been used to translate the Sindarin *Torog*. In their beginning far back in the twilight of the Elder Days, these were creatures of dull and lumpish nature and had no more language than beasts. But Sauron had made use of them, teaching them what little they could learn and increasing their wits with wickedness. Trolls therefore took such language as they could master from the Orcs; and in the Westlands the Stone-trolls spoke a debased form of the Common Speech.

But at the end of the Third Age a troll-race not before seen appeared in southern Mirkwood and in the mountain borders of Mordor. Olog-hai they were called in the Black Speech. That Sauron bred them none doubted,

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<sup>441</sup> Except where the Hobbits seem to have made some attempts to represent shorter murmurs and calls made by the Ents; *a-lalla-lalla-rumba-kamanda-lindor-burúme* also is not Elvish, and is the only extant (probably very inaccurate) attempt to represent a fragment of actual Entish.

though from what stock was not known. Some held that they were not Trolls but giant Orcs; but the Olog-hai were in fashion of body and mind quite unlike even the largest of Orc-kind, whom they far surpassed in size and power. Trolls they were, but filled with the evil will of their master: a fell race, strong, agile, fierce and cunning, but harder than stone. Unlike the older race of the Twilight they could endure the Sun, so long as the will of Sauron held sway over them. They spoke little, and the only tongue that they knew was the Black Speech of Barad-dûr.

*Dwarves.* The Dwarves are a race apart. Of their strange beginning, and why they are both like and unlike Elves and Men, *The Silmarillion* tells; but of this tale the lesser Elves of Middle-earth had no knowledge, while the tales of later Men are confused with memories of other races.

They are a tough, thraven race for the most part, secretive, laborious, retentive of the memory of injuries (and of benefits), lovers of stone, of gems, of things that take shape under the hands of the craftsman rather than things that live by their own life. But they are not evil by nature, and few ever served the Enemy of free will, whatever the tales of Men may have alleged. For Men of old lusted after their wealth and the work of their hands, and there has been enmity between the races.

But in the Third Age close friendship still was found in many places between Men and Dwarves; and it was according to the nature of the Dwarves that, travelling and labouring and trading about the lands, as they did after the destruction of their ancient mansions, they should use the languages of Men among whom they dwelt. Yet in secret (a secret which unlike the Elves, they did not willingly unlock, even to their friends) they used their own strange tongue, changed little by the years; for it had become a tongue of lore rather than a cradle-speech, and they tended it and guarded it as a treasure of the past. Few of other race have succeeded in learning it. In this history it appears only in such place-names as Gimli revealed to his companions; and in the battle-cry which he uttered in the siege of the Hornburg. That at least was not secret, and had been heard on many a field since the world was young. *Baruk Khazâd! Khazâd ai-mânu!*, 'Axes of the Dwarves! The Dwarves are upon you!'

Gimli's own name, however, and the names of all his kin, are of Northern (Mannish) origin. Their own secret and 'inner' names, their true names, the Dwarves have never revealed to anyone of alien race. Not even on their tombs do they inscribe them.

## II. On Translation

In presenting the matter of the Red Book, as a history for people of today to read, the whole of the linguistic setting has been translated as far as possible into terms of our own times. Only the languages alien to the Common Speech have been left in their original form; but these appear mainly in the names of persons and places.

The Common Speech, as the language of the Hobbits and their narratives, has inevitably been turned into modern English. In the process the difference between the varieties observable in the use of the Westron has been lessened. Some attempt has been made to represent varieties by variations in the kind of English used; but the divergence between the pronunciation and idiom of the Shire and the Westron tongue in the mouths of the Elves or of the high men of Gondor was greater than has been shown in this book. Hobbits indeed spoke for the most part a rustic dialect, whereas in Gondor and Rohan a more antique language was used, more formal and more terse.

One point in the divergence may here be noted, since, though important, it has proved impossible to represent. The Westron tongue made in the pronouns of the second person (and often also in those of the third) a distinction, independent of number, between 'familiar' and 'deferential' forms. It was, however, one of the peculiarities of Shire-usage that the deferential forms had gone out of colloquial use. They lingered only among the villagers, especially of the Westfarthing, who used them as endearments. This was one of the things referred to when people of Gondor spoke of the strangeness of Hobbit-speech. Peregrin Took, for instance, in his first few days in Minas Tirith used the familiar for people of all ranks, including the Lord Denethor himself. This may have amused the aged Steward, but it must have astonished his servants. No doubt this free use of the

familiar forms helped to spread the popular rumour that Peregrin was a person of very high rank in his own country.<sup>442</sup>

It will be noticed that Hobbits such as Frodo, and other persons such as Gandalf and Aragorn, do not always use the same style. This is intentional. The more learned and able among the Hobbits had some knowledge of ‘book-language’, as it was termed in the Shire; and they were quick to note and adopt the style of those whom they met. It was in any case natural for much-travelled folk to speak more or less after the manner of those among whom they found themselves, especially in the case of men who, like Aragorn, were often at pains to conceal their origin and their business. Yet in those days all the enemies of the Enemy revered what was ancient, in language no less than in other matters, and they took pleasure in it according to their knowledge. The Eldar, being above all skilled in words, had the command of many styles, though they spoke most naturally in a manner nearest to their own speech, one even more antique than that of Gondor. The Dwarves, too, spoke with skill, readily adapting themselves to their company, though their utterance seemed to some rather harsh and guttural. But Orcs and Trolls spoke as they would, without love of words or things; and their language was actually more degraded and filthy than I have shown it. I do not suppose that any will wish for a closer rendering, though models are easy to find. Much the same sort of talk can still be heard among the orc-minded; dreary and repetitive with hatred and contempt, too long removed from good to retain even verbal vigour, save in the ears of those to whom only the squalid sounds strong.

Translation of this kind is, of course, usual because inevitable in any narrative dealing with the past. It seldom proceeds any further. But I have gone beyond it. I have also translated all Westron names according to their senses. When English names or titles appear in this book it is an indication that names in the Common Speech were current at the time, beside, or instead of, those in alien (usually Elvish) languages.

The Westron names were as a rule translations of older names: as Rivendell, Hoarwell, Silverlode, Langstrand, The Enemy, the Dark Tower. Some differed in meaning: as Mount Doom for *Orodruin*, ‘burning mountain’, or Mirkwood for *Taur-e-Ndaedelos*, ‘forest of the great fear’. A few were alterations of Elvish names: as Lune and Brandywine derived from *Lhûn* and *Baranduin*.

This procedure perhaps needs some defence. It seemed to me that to present all the names in their original forms would obscure an essential feature of the times as perceived by the Hobbits (whose point of view I was mainly concerned to preserve): the contrast between a wide-spread language, to them as ordinary and habitual as English is to us, and the living remains of far older and more reverend tongues. All names if merely transcribed would seem to modern readers equally remote: for instance, if the Elvish name *Imladris* and the Westron translation *Karningul* had both been left unchanged. But to refer to Rivendell as Imladris was as if one now was to speak of Winchester as Camelot, except that the identity was certain, while in Rivendell there still dwelt a lord of renown far older than Arthur would be, were he still king at Winchester today.

The name of the Shire (*Sûza*) and all other places of the Hobbits have thus been Englished. This was seldom difficult, since such names were commonly made up of elements similar to those used in our simpler English place-names; either words still current like *hill* or *field*; or a little worn down like *ton* beside *town*. But some were derived, as already noted, from old hobbit-words no longer in use, and these have been represented by similar English things, such as *wich*, or *bottle*, ‘dwelling’, or *micel*, ‘great’.

In the case of persons, however, Hobbit-names in the Shire and in Bree were for those days peculiar, notably in the habit that had grown up, some centuries before this time, of having inherited names for families. Most of these surnames had obvious meanings (in the current language being derived from jesting nicknames, or from place-names, or—especially in Bree—from the names of plants and trees). Translation of these presented little

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<sup>442</sup> In one or two places an attempt has been made to hint at these distinctions by an inconsistent use of *thou*. Since this pronoun is now unusual and archaic it is employed mainly to represent the use of ceremonious language; but a change from *you* to *thou*, *thee* is sometimes meant to show, there being no other means of doing this, a significant change from the deferential, or between men and women normal, forms to the familiar.

difficulty; but there remained one or two older names of forgotten meaning, and these I have been content to anglicize in spelling: as Took for *Tûk*, or Boffin for *Bophûn*.

I have treated Hobbit first-names, as far as possible, in the same way. To their maid-children Hobbits commonly gave the names of flowers or jewels. To their man-children they usually gave names that had no meaning at all in their daily language; and some of their women's names were similar. Of this kind are Bilbo, Bungo, Polo, Lotho, Tanta, Nina, and so on. There are many inevitable but accidental resemblances to names we now have or know: for instance Otho, Odo, Drogo, Dora, Cora, and the like. These names I have retained, though I have usually anglicized them by altering their endings, since in Hobbit-names *a* was a masculine ending, and *o* and *e* were feminine.

In some old families, especially those of Fallohide origin such as the Tookes and the Bolgers, it was, however, the custom to give high-sounding first-names. Since most of these seem to have been drawn from legends of the past, of Men as well as of Hobbits, and many while now meaningless to Hobbits closely resembled the names of Men in the Vale of Anduin, or in Dale, or in the Mark, I have turned them into those old names, largely of Frankish and Gothic origin, that are still used by us or are met in our histories. I have thus at any rate preserved the often comic contrast between the first-names and surnames, of which the Hobbits themselves were well aware. Names of classical origin have rarely been used; for the nearest equivalents to Latin and Greek in Shire-lore were the Elvish tongues, and these the Hobbits seldom used in nomenclature. Few of them at any time knew the 'languages of the kings', as they called them.

The names of the Bucklanders were different from those of the rest of the Shire. The folk of the Marish and their offshoot across the Brandywine were in many ways peculiar, as has been told. It was from the former language of the southern Stoors, no doubt, that they inherited many of their very odd names. These I have usually left unaltered, for if queer now, they were queer in their own day. They had a style that we should perhaps feel vaguely to be 'Celtic'.

Since the survival of traces of the older language of the Stoors and the Bree-men resembled the survival of Celtic elements in England, I have sometimes imitated the latter in my translation. Thus Bree, Combe (Coomb), Archet, and Chetwood are modelled on relics of British nomenclature, chosen according to sense: *bree*, 'hill' *chet*, 'wood'. But only one personal name has been altered in this way. Meriadoc was chosen to fit the fact that this character's shortened name, Kali, meant in the Westron 'jolly, gay', though it was actually an abbreviation of the now unmeaning Buckland name Kalimac.

I have not used names of Hebraic or similar origin in my transpositions. Nothing in Hobbit-names corresponds to this element in our names. Short names such as Sam, Tom, Tim, Mat were common as abbreviations of actual Hobbit-names, such as Tomba, Tolma, Matta, and the like. But Sam and his father Ham were really called Ban and Ran. These were shortenings of *Banazîr* and *Ranugad*, originally nicknames, meaning 'halfwise, simple' and 'stay-at-home'; but being words that had fallen out of colloquial use they remained as traditional names in certain families. I have therefore tried to preserve these features by using Samwise and Hamfast, modernizations of ancient English *samwîs* and *hámfæst* which corresponded closely in meaning.

Having gone so far in my attempt to modernize and make familiar the language and names of Hobbits, I found myself involved in a further process. The Mannish languages that were related to the Westron should, it seemed to me, be turned into forms related to English. The language of Rohan I have accordingly made to resemble ancient English, since it was related both (more distantly) to the Common Speech, and (very closely) to the former tongue of the northern Hobbits, and was in comparison with the Westron archaic. In the Red Book it is noted in several places that when Hobbits heard the speech of Rohan they recognized many words and felt the language to be akin to their own, so that it seemed absurd to leave the recorded names and words of the Rohirrim in a wholly alien style.

In several cases I have modernized the forms and spellings of place-names in Rohan: as in *Dunharrow* or *Snowbourn*; but I have not been consistent, for I have followed the Hobbits. They altered the names that they heard in the same way, if they were made of elements that they recognized, or if they resembled place-names in

the Shire; but many they left alone, as I have done, for instance, in *Edoras*, ‘the courts’. For the same reasons a few personal names have also been modernized, as Shadowfax and Wormtongue.<sup>443</sup>

This assimilation also provided a convenient way of representing the peculiar local hobbit-words that were of northern origin. They have been given the forms that lost English words might well have had, if they had come down to our day. Thus *mathom* is meant to recall ancient English *máthm*, and so to represent the relationship of the actual Hobbit *kast* to R. *kastu*. Similarly *smial* (or *smile*), ‘burrow,’ is a likely form for a descendant of *smygel*, and represents well the relationship of Hobbit *trân* to R. *trahan*. *Sméagol* and *Déagol* are equivalents made up in the same way for the names *Trahald*, ‘burrowing, worming in’, and *Nahald*, ‘secret’ in the Northern tongues.

The still more northerly language of Dale is in this book seen only in the names of the Dwarves that came from that region and so used the language of the Men there, taking their ‘outer’ names in that tongue. It may be observed that in this book as in *The Hobbit* the form *dwarves* is used, although the dictionaries tell us that the plural of *dwarf* is *dwarfs*. It should be *dwarrows* (or *dwerrows*), if singular and plural had each gone its own way down the years, as have *man* and *men*, or *goose* and *geese*. But we no longer speak of a dwarf as often as we do of a man, or even of a goose, and memories have not been fresh enough among Men to keep hold of a special plural for a race now abandoned to folk-tales, where at least a shadow of truth is preserved, or at last to nonsense-stories in which they have become mere figures of fun. But in the Third Age something of their old character and power is still glimpsed, if already a little dimmed; these are the descendants of the Naugrim of the Elder Days, in whose hearts still burns the ancient fire of Aulë the Smith, and the embers smoulder of their long grudge against the Elves; and in whose hands still lives the skill in work of stone that none have surpassed.

It is to mark this that I have ventured to use the form *dwarves*, and remove them a little, perhaps, from the sillier tales of these latter days. *Dwarrows* would have been better; but I have used that form only in the name *Dwarrowdelf*, to represent the name of Moria in the Common Speech: *Phurunargian*. For that meant ‘Dwarf-delving’ and yet was already a word of antique form. But Moria is an Elvish name, and given without love; for the Eldar, though they might at need, in their bitter wars with the Dark Power and his servants, contrive fortresses underground, were not dwellers in such places of choice. They were lovers of the green earth and the lights of heaven; and Moria in their tongue means the Black Chasm. But the Dwarves themselves, and this name at least was never kept secret, called it *Khazad-dûm*, the Mansion of the Khazâd; for such is their own name for their own race, and has been so, since Aulë gave it to them at their making in the deeps of time.

*Elves* has been used to translate both *Quendi*, ‘the speakers’, the High-elven name of all their kind, and *Eldar*, the name of the Three Kindreds that sought for the Undying Realm and came there at the beginning of Days (save the *Sindar* only). This old word was indeed the only one available, and was once fitted to apply to such memories of this people as Men preserved, or to the makings of Men’s minds not wholly dissimilar. But it has been diminished, and to many it may now suggest fancies either pretty or silly, as unlike to the Quendi of old as are butterflies to the swift falcon—not that any of the Quendi ever possessed wings of the body, as unnatural to them as to Men. They were a race high and beautiful, the older Children of the world, and among them the Eldar were as kings, who now are gone: the People of the Great Journey, the People of the Stars. They were tall, fair of skin and grey-eyed, though their locks were dark, save in the golden house of Finarfin,<sup>444</sup> and their voices had more melodies than any mortal voice that now is heard. They were valiant, but the history of those that returned to Middle-earth in exile was grievous; and though it was in far-off days crossed by the fate of the

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<sup>443</sup> This linguistic procedure does not imply that the Rohirrim closely resembled the ancient English otherwise, in culture or art, in weapons or modes of warfare, except in a general way due to their circumstances: a simpler and more primitive people living in contact with a higher and more venerable culture, and occupying lands that had once been part of its domain.

<sup>444</sup> These words describing characters of face and hair in fact applied only to the Noldor: see *The Book of Lost Tales, Part One*, p. 44.

Fathers, their fate is not that of Men. Their dominion passed long ago, and they dwell now beyond the circles of the world, and do not return.

### ***Note On Three Names: Hobbit, Gamgee, And Brandywine***

*Hobbit* is an invention. In the Westron the word used, when this people was referred to at all, was *banakil*, ‘halfling’. But at this date the folk of the Shire and of Bree used the word *kuduk*, which was not found elsewhere. Meriadoc, however, actually records that the King of Rohan used the word *kûd-dûkan*, ‘hole-dweller’. Since, as has been noted, the Hobbits had once spoken a language closely related to that of the Rohirrim, it seems likely that *kuduk* was a worn-down form of *kûd-dûkan*. The latter I have translated, for reasons explained, by *holbytla*; and *hobbit* provides a word that might well be a worn-down form of *holbytla*, if that name had occurred in our own ancient language.

*Gamgee*. According to family tradition, set out in the Red Book, the surname *Galbasi*, or in reduced form *Galpsi*, came from the village of *Galabas*, popularly supposed to be derived from *galab-*, ‘game’ and an old element *bas-*, more or less equivalent to our *wick*, *wich*. *Gamwich* (pronounced *Gammidge*) seemed therefore a very fair rendering. However, in reducing *Gammidge* to *Gamgee*, to represent *Galpsi*, no reference was intended to the connexion of Samwise with the family of Cotton, though a jest of that kind would have been hobbit-like enough, had there been any warrant in their language.

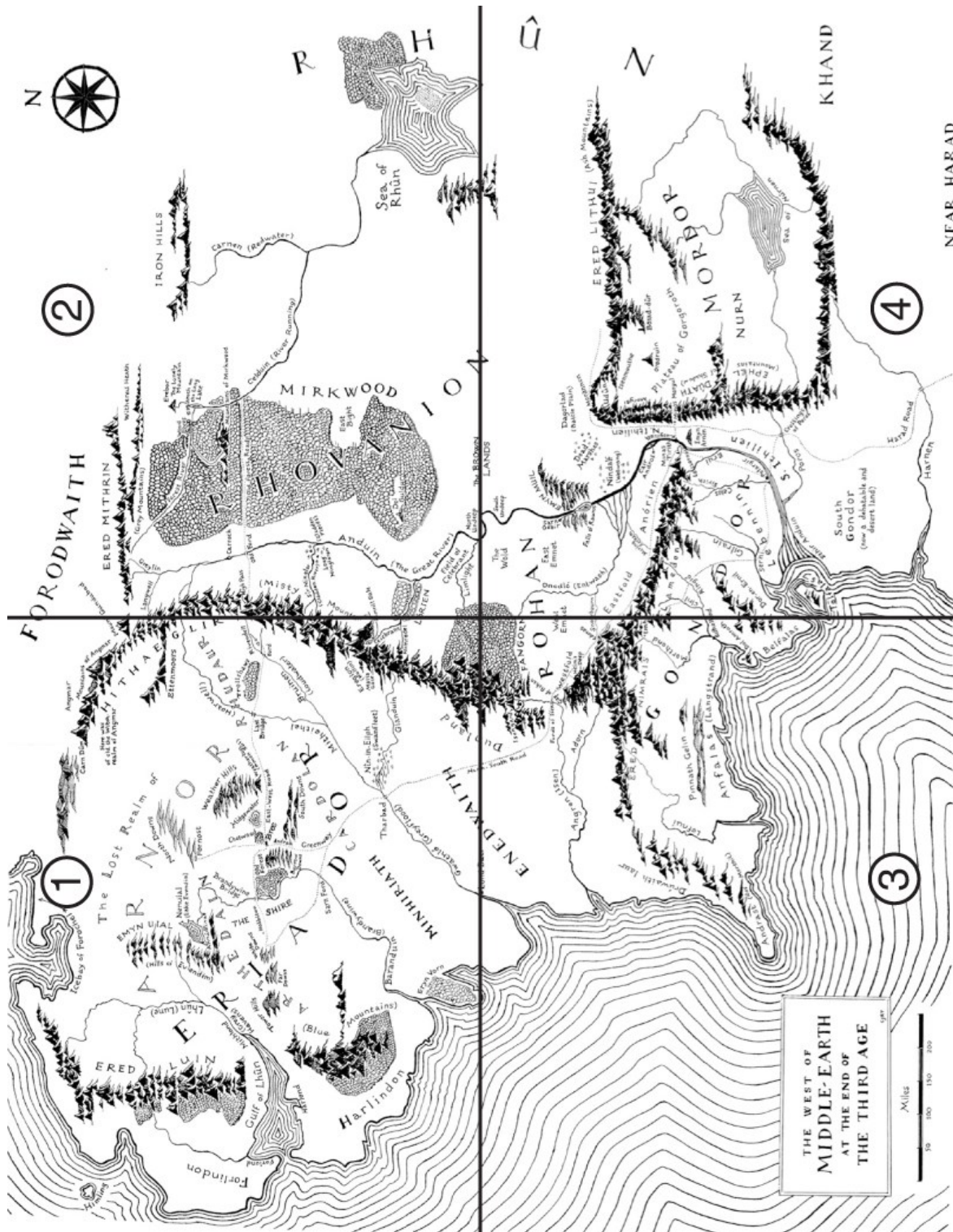
Cotton, in fact, represents *Hlothran*, a fairly common village-name in the Shire, derived from *hloth*, ‘a two-roomed dwelling or hole’, and *ran(u)*, a small group of such dwellings on a hill-side. As a surname it may be an alteration of *hlothram(a)*, ‘cottager’. *Hlothram*, which I have rendered Cotman, was the name of Farmer Cotton’s grandfather.

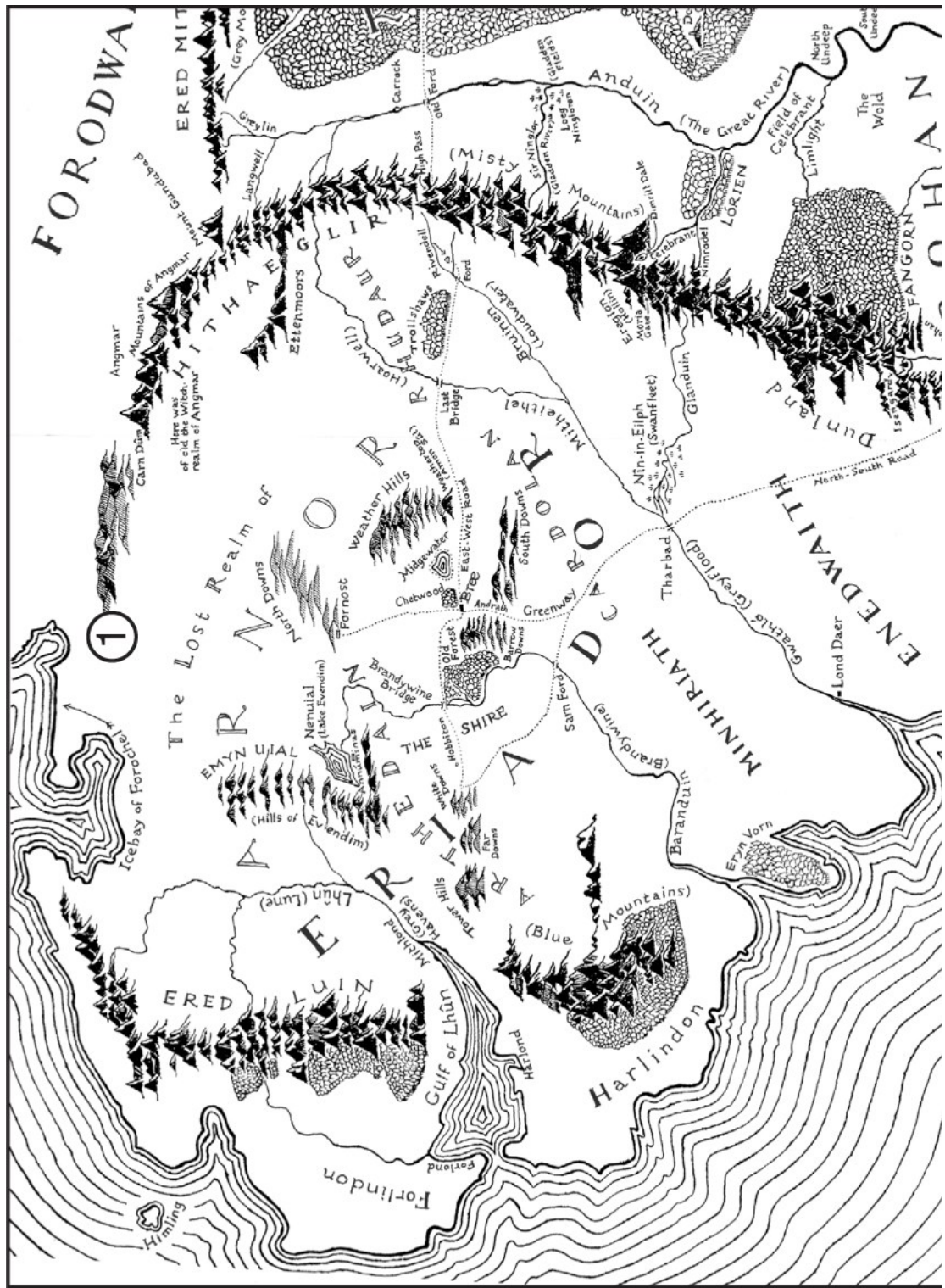
*Brandywine*. The hobbit-names of this river were alterations of the Elvish *Baranduin* (accented on *and*), derived from *baran*, ‘golden brown’ and *duin*, ‘(large) river’. Of *Baranduin* Brandywine seemed a natural corruption in modern times. Actually the older hobbit-name was *Branda-nîn*, ‘border-water’, which would have been more closely rendered by Marchbourn; but by a jest that had become habitual, referring again to its colour, at this time the river was usually called *Bralda-hîm*, ‘heady ale’.

It must be observed, however, that when the Oldbucks (*Zaragamba*) changed their name to Brandybuck (*Brandagamba*), the first element meant ‘borderland’, and Marchbuck would have been nearer. Only a very bold hobbit would have ventured to call the Master of Buckland *Braldagamba* in his hearing.



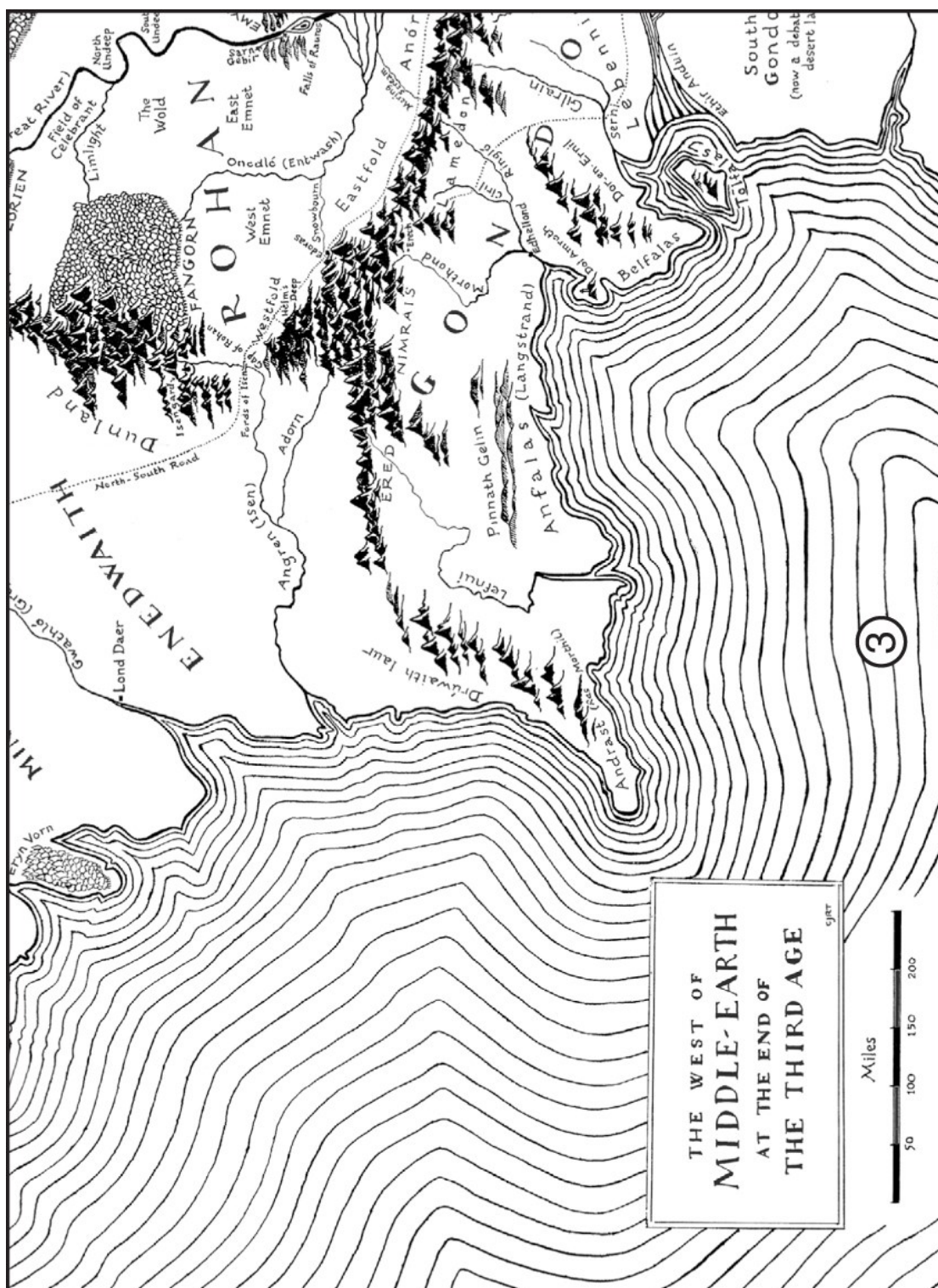
## Maps



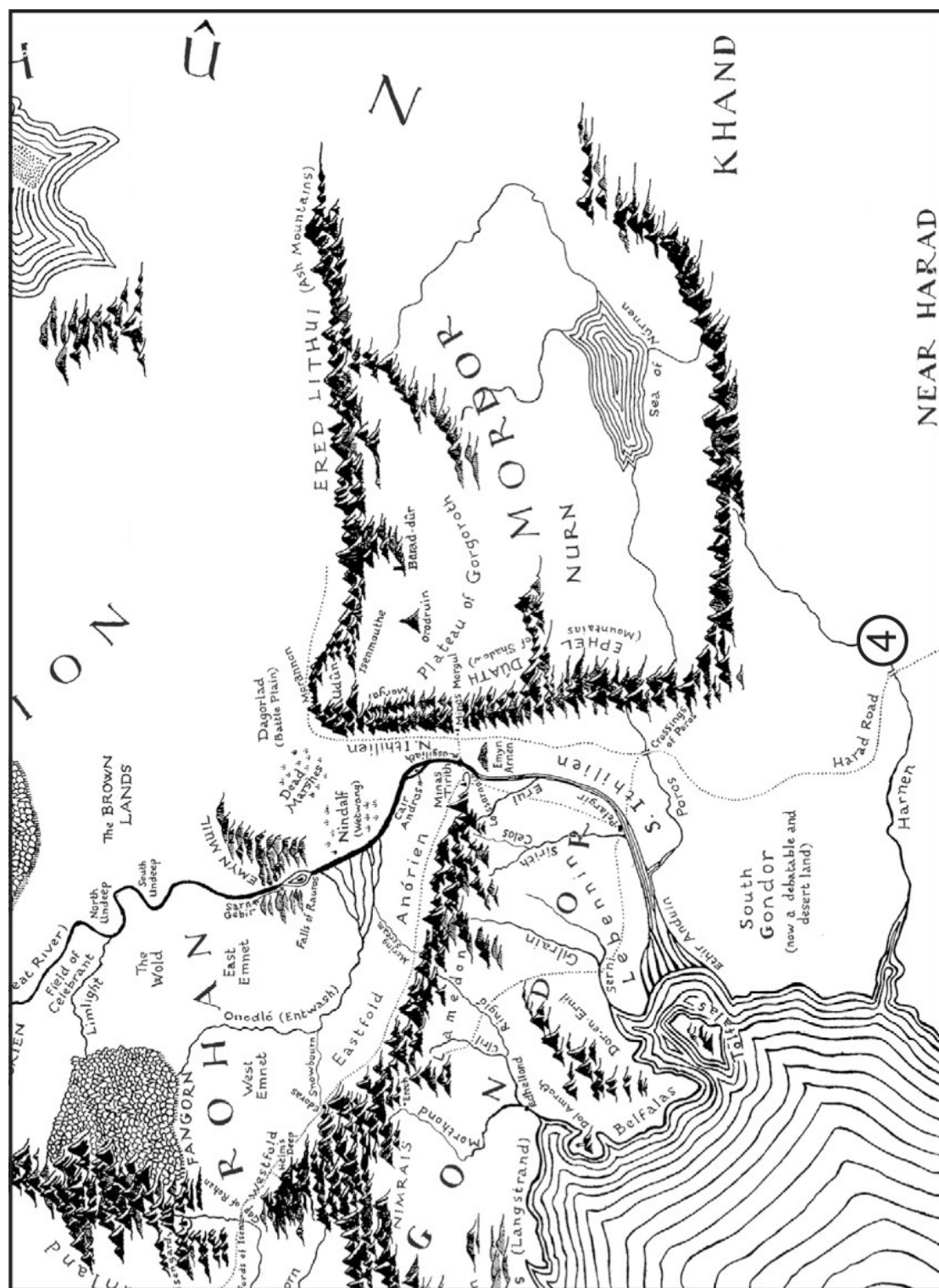












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## NARN I CHÎN HÚRIN: APPENDIX



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## (I) The Evolution Of The Great Tales

These interrelated but independent stories had from far back stood out from the long and complex history of Valar, Elves and Men in Valinor and the Great Lands; and in the years that followed his abandonment of the *Lost Tales* before they were completed my father turned away from prose composition and began work on a long poem with the title *Túrin son of Húrin and Glórund the Dragon*, later changed in a revised version to *The Children of Húrin*. This was in the earlier 1920s, when he held appointments at the University of Leeds. For this poem he employed the ancient English alliterative metre (the verse form of *Beowulf* and other Anglo-Saxon poetry), imposing on modern English the demanding patterns of stress and ‘initial rhyme’ observed by the old poets: a skill in which he achieved great mastery, in very different modes, from the dramatic dialogue of *The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth* to the elegy for the men who died in the battle of the Pelennor Fields. The alliterative *Children of Húrin* was by far the longest of his poems in this metre, running to well over two thousand lines; yet he conceived it on so lavish a scale that even so he had reached no further in the narrative than the assault of the Dragon on Nargothrond when he abandoned it. With so much more of the *Lost Tale* still to come it would have needed on this scale many more thousands of lines; while a second version, abandoned at an earlier point in the narrative, is about double the length of the first version to that same point.

In that part of the legend of the Children of Húrin that my father achieved in the alliterative poem the old story in *The Book of Lost Tales* was substantially extended and elaborated. Most notably, it was now that the great underground fortress-city of Nargothrond emerged, and the wide lands of its dominion (a central element not only in the legend of Túrin and Niënor but in the history of the Elder Days of Middle-earth), with a description of the farmlands of the Elves of Nargothrond that gives a rare suggestion of the ‘arts of peace’ in the ancient world, such glimpses being few and far between. Coming south along the river Narog Túrin and his companion (Gwindor in the text in this book) found the lands near the entrance to Nargothrond to all appearance deserted:

. . . they came to a country kindly tended;  
through flowery frith and fair acres  
they fared, and found of folk empty  
the leas and leasows and the lawns of Narog,  
the teeming tilth by trees enfolded  
twixt hills and river. The hoes unrecked  
in the fields were flung, and fallen ladders  
in the long grass lay of the lush orchards;  
every tree there turned its tangled head  
and eyed them secretly, and the ears listened  
of the nodding grasses; though noontide glowed  
on land and leaf, their limbs were chilled.

And so the two travellers came to the doors of Nargothrond, in the gorge of the Narog:

there steeply stood the strong shoulders  
of the hills, o’erhanging the hurrying water;  
there shrouded in trees a sheer terrace,  
wide and winding, worn to smoothness,  
was fashioned in the face of the falling slope.  
Doors there darkly dim gigantic  
were hewn in the hillside; huge their timbers,

*and their posts and lintels of ponderous stone.*

Seized by Elves they were haled through the portal, which closed behind them:

*Ground and grumbled on its great hinges  
the door gigantic; with din ponderous  
it clanged and closed like clap of thunder,  
and echoes awful in empty corridors  
there ran and rumbled under roofs unseen;  
the light was lost. Then led them on  
down long and winding lanes of darkness  
their guards guiding their groping feet,  
till the faint flicker of fiery torches  
flared before them; fitful murmur  
as of many voices in meeting thronged  
they heard as they hastened. High sprang the roof.  
Round a sudden turning they swung amazed,  
and saw a solemn silent conclave,  
where hundreds hushed in huge twilight  
neath distant domes darkly vaulted  
them wordless waited.*

But in the text of *The Children of Húrin* given in this book we are told [no more than this](#):

*And now they arose, and departing from Eithel Ivrin they journeyed southward along the banks of Narog, until they were taken by scouts of the Elves and brought as prisoners to the hidden stronghold.*

*Thus did Túrin come to Nargothrond.*

How did this come about? In what follows I shall try to answer that question.

It seems virtually certain that all that my father wrote of his alliterative poem on Túrin was accomplished at Leeds, and that he abandoned it at the end of 1924 or early in 1925; but why he did so must remain unknown. What he then turned to is however not mysterious: in the summer of 1925 he embarked on a new poem in a wholly different metre, octosyllabic rhyming couplets, entitled *The Lay of Leithian*, ‘Release from Bondage’. Thus he took up now another of the tales that he described years later, in 1951, as I have already noted, as full in treatment, independent, and yet linked to ‘the general history’; for the subject of *The Lay of Leithian* is the legend of Beren and Lúthien. He worked on this second long poem for six years, and in its turn abandoned it, in September 1931, having written more than 4000 lines. As does the alliterative *Children of Húrin* which it succeeded and supplanted, this poem represents a substantial advance in the evolution of the legend from the original *Lost Tale* of Beren and Lúthien.

While *The Lay of Leithian* was in progress, in 1926, he wrote a ‘Sketch of the Mythology’, expressly intended for R.W. Reynolds, who had been his teacher at King Edward’s school in Birmingham, ‘to explain the background of the alliterative version of Túrin and the Dragon’. This brief manuscript, which would run to some twenty printed pages, was avowedly written as a synopsis, in the present tense and in a succinct style; and yet it was the starting-point of the subsequent ‘Silmarillion’ versions (though that name was not yet given). But while the entire mythological conception was set out in this text, the tale of Túrin has very evidently pride of place—and indeed the title in the manuscript is ‘Sketch of the mythology with especial reference to the “Children of Húrin”’, in keeping with his purpose in writing it.

In 1930 there followed a much more substantial work, the *Quenta Noldorinwa* (the History of the Noldor: for the history of the Noldorin Elves is the central theme of ‘*The Silmarillion*’). This was directly derived from the ‘Sketch’, and while much enlarging the earlier text and writing in a more finished manner, my father nonetheless still saw the *Quenta* very much as a *summarising* work, an epitome of far richer narrative

conceptions: as is in any case clearly shown by the sub-title that he gave to it, in which he declared that it was ‘a *brief history* [of the Noldor] drawn from the Book of Lost Tales’.

It is to be borne in mind that at that time the *Quenta* represented (if only in a somewhat bare structure) the full extent of my father’s ‘imagined world’. It was not the history of the First Age, as it afterwards became, for there was as yet no Second Age, nor Third Age; there was no Númenor, no hobbits, and of course no Ring. The history ended with the Great Battle, in which Morgoth was finally defeated by the other Gods (the Valar), and by them ‘thrust through the Door of Timeless Night into the Void, beyond the Walls of the World’; and my father wrote at the end of the *Quenta*: ‘Such is *the end of the tales* of the days before the days in the Northern regions of the Western world.’

Thus it will seem strange indeed that the *Quenta* of 1930 was nonetheless the only completed text (after the ‘Sketch’) of ‘*The Silmarillion*’ that he ever made; but as was so often the case, external pressures governed the evolution of his work. The *Quenta* was followed later in the 1930s by a new version in a beautiful manuscript, bearing at last the title *Quenta Silmarillion, History of the Silmarilli*. This was, or was to be, much longer than the preceding *Quenta Noldorinwa*, but the conception of the work as essentially a *summarising* of myths and legends (themselves of an altogether different nature and scope if fully told) was by no means lost, and is again defined in the title: ‘The *Quenta Silmarillion*. . . . This is a *history in brief* drawn from many older tales; for all the matters that it contains were of old, and still are among the Eldar of the West, recounted more fully in other histories and songs.’

It seems at least probable that my father’s view of *The Silmarillion* did actually arise from the fact that what may be called the ‘*Quenta* phase’ of the work in the 1930s began in a condensed synopsis serving a particular purpose, but then underwent expansion and refinement in successive stages until it lost the appearance of a synopsis, but nonetheless retaining, from the form of its origin, a characteristic ‘evenness’ of tone. I have written elsewhere that ‘the compendious or epitomising form and manner of *The Silmarillion*, with its suggestion of ages of poetry and “lore” behind it, strongly evokes a sense of “untold tales”, even in the telling of them; “distance” is never lost. There is no narrative urgency, the pressure and fear of the immediate and unknown event. We do not actually see the Silmarils as we see the Ring.’

However, the *Quenta Silmarillion* in this form came to an abrupt and, as it turned out, a decisive end in 1937. *The Hobbit* was published by George Allen and Unwin on 21 September of that year, and not long afterwards, at the invitation of the publisher, my father sent in a number of his manuscripts, which were delivered in London on 15 November 1937. Among these was the *Quenta Silmarillion*, so far as it then went, ending in the middle of a sentence at the foot of a page. But while it was gone he continued the narrative in draft form as far as Túrin’s flight from Doriath and his taking up the life of an outlaw:

*passing the borders of the realm he gathered to himself a company of such houseless and desperate folk as could be found in those evil days lurking in the wild; and their hands were turned against all who came in their path, Elves, Men, or Orcs.*

This is the forerunner of the passage, in the text in this book [p. 98](#), at the beginning of *Túrin among the Outlaws*.

My father had reached these words when the *Quenta Silmarillion* and the other manuscripts were returned to him; and three days later, on 19 December 1937, he wrote to Allen and Unwin saying: ‘I have written the first chapter of a new story about Hobbits—“A long expected party”’

It was at this point that the continuous and evolving tradition of *The Silmarillion* in the summarising, *Quenta* mode came to an end, brought down in full flight, at Túrin’s departure from Doriath. The further history from that point remained during the years that followed in the simple, compressed, and undeveloped form of the *Quenta* of 1930, frozen, as it were, while the great structures of the Second and Third Ages arose with the writing of *The Lord of the Rings*. But that further history was of cardinal importance in the ancient legends, for the concluding stories (deriving from the original *Book of Lost Tales*) told of the disastrous history of Húrin, father of Túrin, after Morgoth released him, and of the ruin of the Elvish kingdoms of Nargothrond, Doriath, and Gondolin, of which Gimli chanted in the mines of Moria many thousands of years afterwards.



*The world was fair, the mountains tall,  
In Elder Days before the fall  
Of mighty kings in Nargothrond  
And Gondolin, who now beyond  
The Western Seas have passed away. . . .*

And this was to be the crown and completion of the whole: the doom of the Noldorin Elves in their long struggle against the power of Morgoth, and the parts that Húrin and Túrin played in that history; ending with the tale of Eärendil, who escaped from the burning ruin of Gondolin.

When, many years later, early in 1950, *The Lord of the Rings* was finished, my father turned with energy and confidence to ‘the Matter of the Elder Days’, now become ‘the First Age’; and in the years immediately following he took out many old manuscripts from where they had long lain. Turning to *The Silmarillion*, he covered at this time the beautiful manuscript of the *Quenta Silmarillion* with corrections and expansions; but that revision ceased in 1951 before he reached the story of Túrin, where the *Quenta Silmarillion* was abandoned in 1937 with the advent of ‘the new story about Hobbits’.

He began a revision of the *Lay of Leithian* (the poem in rhyming verse telling the story of Beren and Lúthien that was abandoned in 1931) that soon became almost a new poem, of much greater accomplishment; but this petered out and was ultimately abandoned. He embarked on what was to be a long saga of Beren and Lúthien in prose, closely based on the rewritten form of the Lay; but that too was abandoned. Thus his desire, shown in successive attempts, to render the first of the ‘great tales’ on the scale that he sought was never fulfilled.

At that time also he turned again at last to the ‘great tale’ of the Fall of Gondolin, still extant only in the *Lost Tale* from some thirty-five years before and in the few pages devoted to it in the *Quenta Noldorinwa* of 1930. This was to be the presentation, when he was at the height of his powers, in close narrative and in all its bearings, of the extraordinary tale that he had read to the Essay Society of his college at Oxford in 1920, and which remained throughout his life a vital element in his imagination of the Elder Days. The special link with the tale of Túrin lies in the brothers Húrin, father of Túrin, and Huor, father of Tuor. Húrin and Huor in their youth entered the Elvish city of Gondolin, hidden within a circle of high mountains, as is told in *The Children of Húrin*; and afterwards, in the battle of Unnumbered Tears, they met again with Turgon, King of Gondolin, and he said to them: ‘Not long now can Gondolin remain hidden, and being discovered it must fall.’ And Huor replied: ‘Yet if it stands only a little while, then out of your house shall come the hope of Elves and Men. This I say to you, lord, with the eyes of death: though we part here for ever, and I shall not look on your white walls again, from you and from me a new star shall arise.’

This prophecy was fulfilled when Tuor, first cousin to Túrin, came to Gondolin and wedded Idril, daughter of Turgon; for their son was Eärendil: the ‘new star’, ‘hope of Elves and Men’, who escaped from Gondolin. In the prose saga of *The Fall of Gondolin* that was to be, begun probably in 1951, my father recounted the journey of Tuor and his Elvish companion, Voronwë, who guided him; and on the way, alone in the wilderness, they heard a cry in the woods:

*And as they waited one came through the trees, and they saw that he was a tall Man, armed, clad in black, with a long sword drawn; and they wondered, for the blade of the sword also was black, but the edges shone bright and cold.*

*That was Túrin*, hastening from the sack of Nargothrond; but Tuor and Voronwë did not speak to him as he passed, and ‘they knew not that Nargothrond had fallen, and this was Túrin son of Húrin, the Blacksword. Thus only for a moment, and never again, did the paths of those kinsmen, Túrin and Tuor, draw together.’

In the new tale of Gondolin my father brought Tuor to the high place in the Encircling Mountains from where the eye could travel across the plain to the Hidden City; and there, grievously, he stopped, and never went further. And so in *The Fall of Gondolin* likewise he failed of his purpose; and we see neither Nargothrond nor Gondolin with his later vision.

I have said elsewhere that ‘with the completion of the great “intrusion” and departure of *The Lord of the Rings*, it seems that he returned to the Elder Days with a desire to take up again the far more ample scale with which



he had begun long before, in *The Book of Lost Tales*. The completion of the *Quenta Silmarillion* remained an aim; but the “great tales”, vastly developed from their original forms, *from which its later chapters should be derived*, were never achieved.’ These remarks are true of the ‘great tale’ of *The Children of Húrin* as well; but in this case my father achieved much more, even though he was never able to bring a substantial part of the later and hugely extended version to final and finished form.

At the same time as he turned again to the *Lay of Leithian* and *The Fall of Gondolin* he began his new work on *The Children of Húrin*, not with Túrin’s childhood, but with the latter part of the story, the culmination of his disastrous history after the destruction of Nargothrond. This is the text in this book from *The Return of Túrin to Dor-lómin* to his death. Why my father should have proceeded in this way, so unlike his usual practice of starting again at the beginning, I cannot explain. But in this case he left also among his papers a mass of later but undated writing concerned with the story from Túrin’s birth to the sack of Nargothrond, with great elaboration of the old versions and expansion into narrative previously unknown.

By far the greater part of this work, if not all of it, belongs to the time following the actual publication of *The Lord of the Rings*. In those years *The Children of Húrin* became for him the dominant story of the end of the Elder Days, and for a long time he devoted all his thought to it. But he found it hard now to impose a firm narrative structure as the tale grew in complexity of character and event; and indeed in one long passage the story is contained in a patchwork of disconnected drafts and plot-outlines.

Yet *The Children of Húrin* in its latest form is the chief narrative fiction of Middle-earth after the conclusion of *The Lord of the Rings*; and the life and death of Túrin is portrayed with a convincing power and an immediacy scarcely to be found elsewhere among the peoples of Middle-earth. For this reason I have attempted in this book, after long study of the manuscripts, to form a text that provides a continuous narrative from start to finish, without the introduction of any elements that are not authentic in conception.



## (2) The Composition Of The Text

In *Unfinished Tales*, published more than a quarter of a century ago, I presented a partial text of the long version of this tale, known as the *Narn*, from the Elvish title *Narn i Chîn Húrin*, the *Tale of the Children of Húrin*. But that was one element in a large book of various content, and the text was very incomplete, in keeping with the general purpose and nature of the book: for I omitted a number of substantial passages (and one of them very long) where the *Narn* text and that in the much briefer version in *The Silmarillion* are very similar, or where I decided that no distinctive ‘long’ text could be provided.

The form of the *Narn* in this book therefore differs in a number of ways from that in *Unfinished Tales*, some of them deriving from the far more thorough study of the formidable complex of manuscripts that I made after that book was published. This led me to different conclusions about the relations and sequence of some of the texts, chiefly in the extremely confusing evolution of the legend in the period of ‘Túrin among the Outlaws’. A description and explanation of the composition of this new text of *The Children of Húrin* follows here.

An important element in all this is the peculiar status of the published *Silmarillion*; for as I have mentioned in the first part of this [Appendix](#) my father abandoned the *Quenta Silmarillion* at the point that he had reached (Túrin’s becoming an outlaw after his flight from Doriath) when he began *The Lord of the Rings* in 1937. In the formation of a narrative for the published work I made much use of *The Annals of Beleriand*, originally a ‘Tale of Years’, but which in successive versions grew and expanded into annalistic narrative in parallel with the successive ‘*Silmarillion*’ manuscripts, and which extended to the freeing of Húrin by Morgoth after the deaths of Túrin and Niënor.

Thus the first passage that I omitted from the version of the *Narn i Chîn Húrin* in *Unfinished Tales* ([p. 58](#) and [note 64](#)) is the account of the sojourn of Húrin and Huor in Gondolin in their youth; and I did so simply because the tale is told in *The Silmarillion* ([pp. 158-9](#)). But my father did in fact write two versions: one of them was expressly intended for the opening of the *Narn*, but was very closely based on a passage in *The Annals of Beleriand*, and indeed for most of its length differs little. In *The Silmarillion* I used both texts, but here I have followed the *Narn* version.

The second passage that I omitted from the *Narn* in *Unfinished Tales* ([pp. 65-6](#) and [note 65](#)) is the account of the Battle of Unnumbered Tears, an omission made for the same reason; and here again my father wrote two versions, one in the *Annals*, and a second, much later but with the *Annals* text in front of him, and for the most part closely followed. This second narrative of the great battle was, again, expressly intended as a constituent element in the *Narn* (the text is headed *Narn II*, i.e. the second section of the *Narn*), and states at the outset ([here](#) in the text in this book): ‘Here there shall be recounted only those deeds which bear upon the fate of the House of Hador and the children of Húrin the Steadfast.’ In pursuit of this my father retained from the *Annals* account only the description of the ‘westward battle’ and the destruction of the host of Fingon; and by this simplification and reduction of the narrative he altered the course of the battle as told in the *Annals*. In *The Silmarillion* I of course followed the *Annals*, though with some features taken from the *Narn* version; but in this book I have kept to the text that my father thought appropriate to the *Narn* as a whole.

From *Túrin in Doriath* the new text is a good deal changed in relation to that in *Unfinished Tales*. There is here a range of writing, much of it very rough, concerned with the same narrative elements at different stages of development, and in such a case it is obviously possible to take different views on how the original material should be treated. I have come to think that when I composed the text in *Unfinished Tales* I allowed myself more editorial freedom than was necessary. In this book I have reconsidered the original manuscripts and reconstituted the text, in many (usually very minor) places restoring the original words, introducing sentences

or brief passages that should not have been omitted, correcting a few errors, and making different choices among the original readings.

As regards the structure of the narrative in this period of Túrin's life, from his flight out of Doriath to the lair of the outlaws on Amon Rûdh, my father had certain narrative 'elements' in mind: the trial of Túrin before Thingol; the gifts of Thingol and Melian to Beleg; the maltreatment of Beleg by the outlaws in Túrin's absence; the meetings of Túrin and Beleg. He moved these 'elements' in relation to each other, and placed passages of dialogue in different contexts; but found it difficult to compose them into a settled 'plot'—'to find out what really happened'. But it seems now clear to me, after much further study, that my father did achieve a satisfying structure and sequence for this part of the story before he abandoned it; and also that the narrative in much reduced form that I composed for the published *Silmarillion* conforms to this—but with one difference.

In *Unfinished Tales* there is a third gap in the narrative on p. 96: the story breaks off at the point where Beleg, having at last found Túrin among the outlaws, cannot persuade him to return to Doriath ([here](#) in the new text), and does not take up again until the outlaws encounter the Petty-dwarves. Here I referred again to *The Silmarillion* for the filling of the gap, noting that there follows in the story Beleg's farewell to Túrin and his return to Menegroth 'where he received the sword Anglachel from Thingol and *lembas* from Melian'. But it is in fact demonstrable that my father rejected this; for 'what really happened' was that Thingol gave Anglachel to Beleg after the trial of Túrin, when Beleg first set off to find him. In the present text therefore the gift of the sword is [placed at that point](#), and there is no mention there of the gift of *lembas*. In the later passage, when Beleg returned to Menegroth after the finding of Túrin, there is of course no reference to Anglachel in the new text, but only to Melian's gift.

This is a convenient point to notice that I have omitted from the text two passages that I included in *Unfinished Tales* but which are parenthetical to the narrative: these are the history of how the Dragon-helm came into the possession of Hador of Dor-lómin (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 75), and the origin of Saeros (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 77). It seems, incidentally, certain from a closer understanding of the relations of the manuscripts that my father rejected the name *Saeros* and replaced it by *Orgol*, which by 'linguistic accident' coincides with Old English *orgol*, *orgel* 'pride'. But it seems to me too late now to remove *Saeros*.

The major lacuna in the narrative as given in *Unfinished Tales* (p. 104) is filled in the new text on pages 141 to 181, from the end of the section *Of Mîm the Dwarf* and through *The Land of Bow and Helm*, *The Death of Beleg*, *Túrin in Nargothrond*, and *The Fall of Nargothrond*.

There is a complex relationship in this part of the 'Túrin saga' between the original manuscripts, the story as it is told in *The Silmarillion*, the disconnected passages collected in the appendix to the *Narn* in *Unfinished Tales*, and the new text in this book. I have always supposed that it was my father's general intention, in the fullness of time, when he had achieved to his satisfaction the 'great tale' of Túrin, to derive from it a much briefer form of the story in what one may call 'the *Silmarillion* mode'. But of course this did not happen; and so I undertook, now more than thirty years ago, the strange task of trying to simulate what he did not do: the writing of a 'Silmarillion' version of the latest form of the story, but deriving this from the heterogeneous materials of the 'long version', the *Narn*. That is [Chapter 21](#) in the published *Silmarillion*.

Thus the text in this book that fills the long gap in the story in *Unfinished Tales* is derived from the same original materials as is the corresponding passage in *The Silmarillion* (pp. 204-15), but they are used for a different purpose in each case, and in the new text with a better understanding of the labyrinth of drafts and notes and their sequence. Much in the original manuscripts that was omitted or compressed in *The Silmarillion* remains available; but where there was nothing to be added to the *Silmarillion* version (as in the tale of the death of Beleg, derived from the *Annals of Beleriand*) that version is simply repeated.

In the result, while I have had to introduce bridging passages here and there in the piecing together of different drafts, there is no element of extraneous 'invention' of any kind, however slight, in the longer text here presented. The text is nonetheless artificial, as it could not be otherwise: the more especially since this great body of manuscript represents a continual evolution in the actual story. Drafts that are essential to the formation of an uninterrupted narrative may in fact belong to an earlier stage. Thus, to give an example from an earlier point, a primary text for the story of the coming of Túrin's band to the hill of Amon Rûdh, the dwelling place

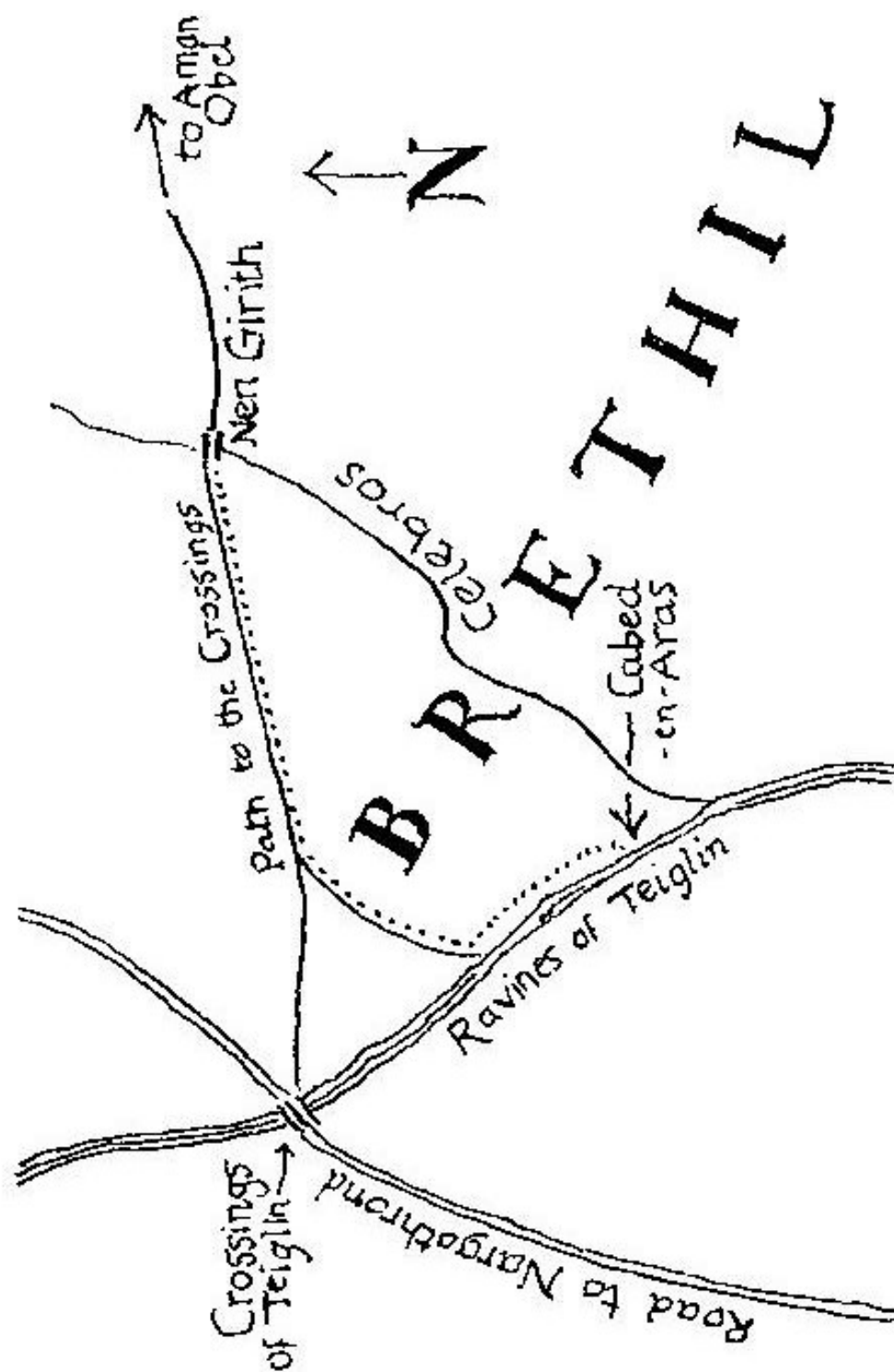
that they found upon it and their life there, and the ephemeral success of the land of Dor-Cúarthol, was written before there was any suggestion of the Petty-dwarves; and indeed a fully-developed description of Mîm's house beneath the summit appears before Mîm himself.

In the remainder of the story, from Túrin's return to Dor-lómin, to which my father gave a finished form, there are naturally very few differences from the text in *Unfinished Tales*. But there are two matters of detail in the account of the attack on Glaurung at Cabed-en-Aras where I have emended the original words and which should be explained.

The first concerns the geography. [It is said](#) that when Túrin and his companions set out from Nen Girith on the fateful evening they did not go straight towards the Dragon, lying on the further side of the ravine, but took first the path towards the Crossings of Teiglin; and 'then, before they came so far, they turned southward by a narrow track' and went through the woods above the river towards Cabed-en-Aras. As they approached, in the original text of the passage, 'the first stars glimmered in the east behind them'.

When I prepared the text for *Unfinished Tales* I did not observe that this could not be right, since they were certainly not moving in a westerly direction, but east, or southeast, away from the Crossings, and the first stars in the east must have been before them, not behind them. When discussing this in *The War of the Jewels* (1994, p. 157) I accepted the suggestion that the 'narrow track' going southward turned again westward to reach the Teiglin. But this seems to me now to be improbable, as being without point in the narrative, and that a much simpler solution is to emend 'behind them' to 'before them', as I have done in the new text.

The sketch map that I drew in *Unfinished Tales* ([p. 149](#)) to illustrate the lie of the land is not in fact well oriented. It is seen from my father's [map](#) of Beleriand, and is so reproduced in my [map](#) for *The Silmarillion*, that Amon Obel was almost due east from the Crossings of Teiglin ('the moon rose beyond Amon Obel', [p. 241](#)), and the Teiglin was flowing south-east or south-southeast in the ravines. I have now redrawn the sketch [map](#), and have entered also the approximate place of Cabed-en-Aras ([it is said in the text](#) that 'right in the path of Glaurung there lay now one of these gorges, by no means the deepest, but the narrowest, just north of the inflow of Celebros').



The second matter concerns the story of the slaying of Glaurung at the crossing of the ravine. There are here a draft and a final version. In the draft, Túrin and his companions climbed up the further side of the chasm until they came beneath the brink; they hung there as the night passed, and Túrin 'strove with dark dreams of dread in which all his will was given to clinging and holding'. When day came Glaurung prepared to cross at a point 'many paces to the northward', and so Túrin had to climb down to the river-bed and then up the cliff again to get beneath the Dragon's belly.

**In the final version** Túrin and Hunthor were only part way up the further side when Túrin said that they were wasting their strength in climbing up now, before they knew where Glaurung would cross; 'they halted therefore and waited'. It is not said that they descended from where they were when they ceased to climb, and the passage concerning Túrin's dream 'in which all his will was given to clinging' reappears from the draft text.

But in the revised story there was no need for them to cling: they could and surely would have descended to the bottom and waited there. In fact, this is what they did: it is said in the final text (*Unfinished Tales*, p. 134) that they were not standing in Glaurung's path and that Túrin 'clambered along the water-edge to come beneath him'. It seems then that the final story carries an unneeded trait from the previous draft. To give it coherence I have **emended** 'since they were not standing right in Glaurung's path' to 'since they were not right in Glaurung's path', and 'clambered along the water-edge' to 'clambered along the cliff'.

These are small matters in themselves, but they clarify what are perhaps the most sharply visualised scenes in the legends of the Elder Days, and one of the greatest events.



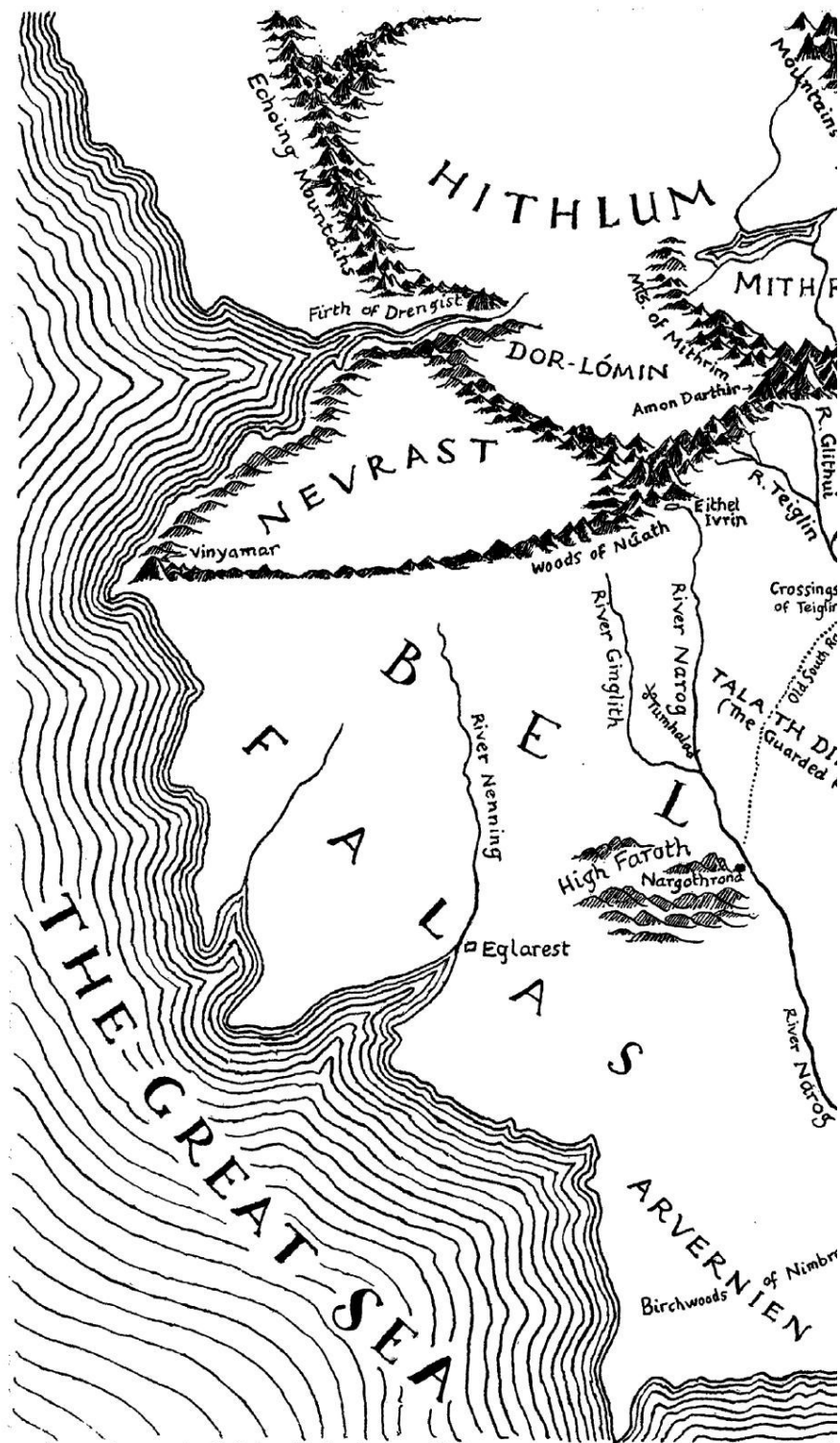
### (3) Map

#### Note On The Map

This map is closely based on that in the published *Silmarillion*, which was itself derived from the map that my father made in the 1930s, and which he never replaced, but used for all his subsequent work. The formalised, and obviously very selective, representations of mountains, hills and forests are imitated from his style.

In this redrawing I have introduced certain differences, intended to simplify it and to make it more expressly applicable to the tale of *The Children of Húrin*. Thus it does not extend eastward to include Ossiriand and the Blue Mountains, and certain geographical features are omitted; while (with a few exceptions) only names that actually occur in the text of the tale are marked.



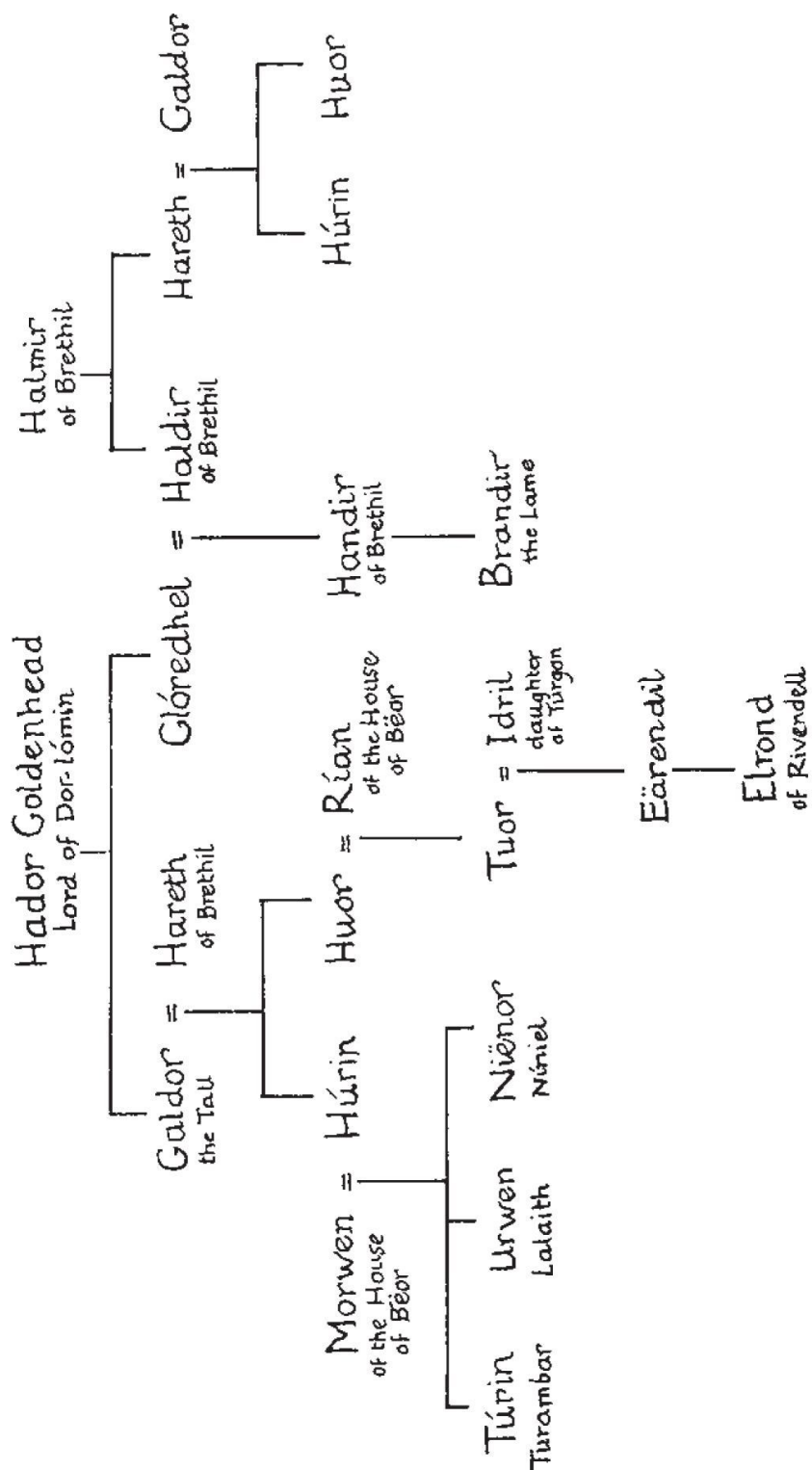




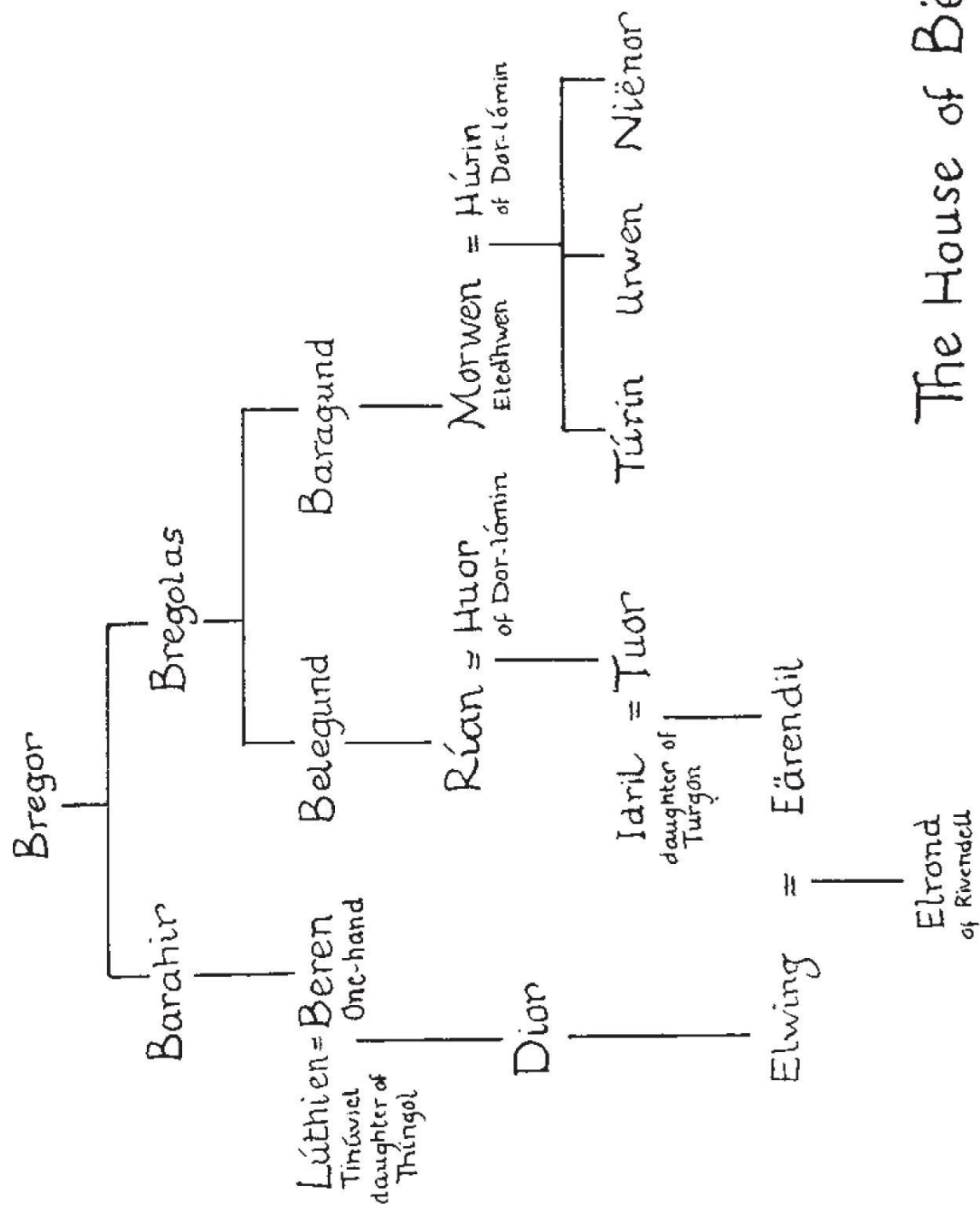




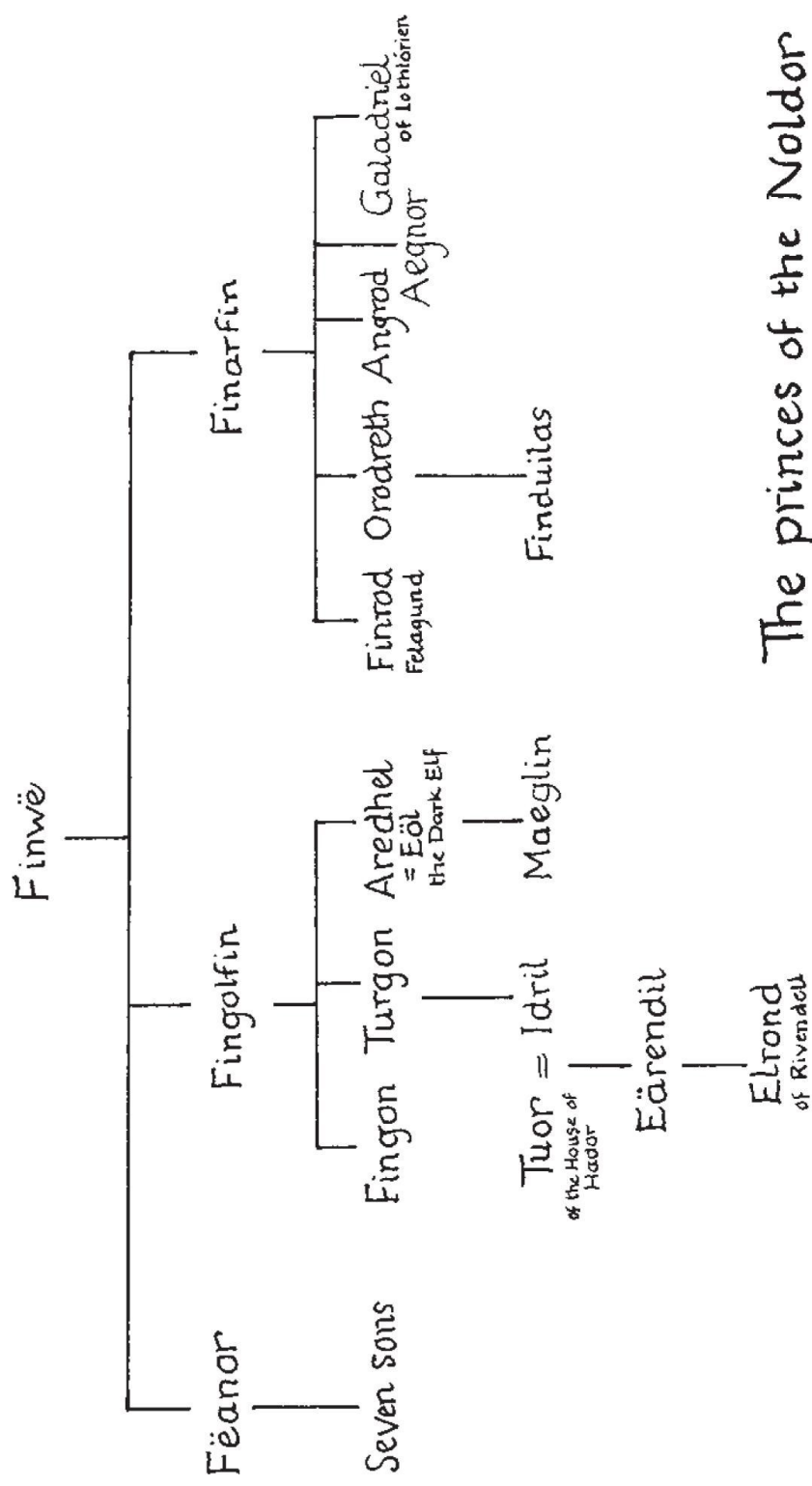
## (4) Genealogies



The House of Hador & the People of Haleth



## The House of Bëor



The princes of the Noldor

[illegible]

# INDEX OF NAMES



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## Note

Refers to this unofficial compilation only.

This Index Of Names is a combination of those that appear in the official HarperCollins Kindle versions of *The Silmarillion*, *Unfinished Tales* and *Narn I Chîn Húrin*. Where entries were duplicated, generally the longest or at least the most descriptive version has been retained, with additional information added from shorter or less descriptive versions where appropriate. A number of entries have been added by myself (e.g., *Fellowship of the Ring*, *The Gwaihir*, *Shelob*, *Torech Ungol*, and a few others). P.L.



## Note From The Index Of Names In *The Silmarillion*

Since the number of names in the book is very large, this index provides, in addition to page-references [page references omitted from this compilation as most electronic reading devices are searchable by keyword. P.L.], a short statement concerning each person and place. These statements are not epitomes of all that is said in the text, and for most of the central figures in the narrative are kept extremely brief; but such an index is inevitably bulky, and I have reduced its size in various ways.

The chief of these concerns the fact that very often the English translation of an Elvish name is also used as the name independently; thus for example the dwelling of King Thingol is called both *Menegroth* and ‘The Thousand Caves’ (and also both together). In most such cases I have combined the Elvish name and its translated meaning under one entry, with the result that the page-references are not restricted to the name that appears as the heading (e.g., those under *Echoriath* include those to ‘Encircling Mountains’). The English renderings are given separate headings, but only with a simple direction to the main entry, and only if they occur independently. Words in inverted commas are translations; many of these occur in the text (as *Tol Eressëa*, ‘the Lonely Isle’), but I have added a great many others. Information about some names that are not translated is contained in the Appendix.

With the many titles and formal expressions in English whose Elvish originals are not given, such as ‘the Elder King’ and ‘the Two Kindreds’, I have been selective, but the great majority are registered. The references are in intention complete (and sometimes include pages where the subject of the entry occurs but is not actually mentioned by name) except in a very few cases where the name occurs very frequently indeed, as Beleriand, Valar. Here the word *passim* is used, but selected references are given to important passages; and in the entries for some of the Noldorin princes the many occurrences of the name that relate only to their sons or their houses have been eliminated.

References to *The Lord of the Rings* are by title of the volume, book, and chapter.



## Note From The Index Of Names In *Unfinished Tales*

This Index, as noted in the [Introduction](#), covers not only the main texts but also the Notes and Appendices, since much original material appears in these latter. As a result a good many references are trivial, but I have thought it more useful, as it is certainly easier, to aim at completeness. The only intentional exceptions are a very few cases (as Morgoth, Númenor) where I have used the word *passim* to cover certain sections of the book, and the absence of references for Elves, Men, Orcs, and Middle-earth. In many cases the references include pages where a person or place is mentioned but not by name (thus the mention on [p. 299](#) of ‘the haven where Círdan was lord’ is given under Mithlond). Asterisks (\*) are used to indicate names, nearly a quarter of the total, that have not been published in my father’s works (they are thus also set against the names, listed in the footnote on [p. 399](#), that appeared on Miss Pauline Baynes’ map of Middle-earth). The brief defining statements are not restricted to matters actually mentioned in the book; and occasionally I have added notes on the meaning of hitherto untranslated names.

This Index is not a model of consistency in presentation, but its deficiency in this respect may be partly excused in view of the interlacing ramification of names (including variant translations, partial translations, names that are equivalent in reference but not in meaning), which makes such consistency extremely difficult or impossible to achieve: as may be seen from such a series as Eilenaer, Halifirien, Amon Anwar, Anwar, Hill of Anwar, Hill of Awe, Wood of Anwar, Firienholt, Firien Wood, Whispering Wood. As a general rule I have included references for translations of Elvish names under the Elvish entry (as Langstrand under [Anfalas](#)), with a cross-reference, but I have departed from this in particular cases, where the ‘translated’ names (as [Mirkwood](#), [Isengard](#)) are generally used and familiar.





## A

**Adanedhel:**—‘Elf-Man’, name given to *Túrin* in *Nargothrond*.

**Adorn:**—Tributary of the *river Isen*, forming with it the western bounds of *Rohan*. (The name is ‘of a form suitable to *Sindarin*, but not interpretable in that language. It must be supposed to be of pre-*Númenórean* origin, adapted to *Sindarin*.’)

**\*Adrahil (1):**—A commander of the forces of *Gondor* against the *Wainriders* in Third Age 1944; called ‘of *Dol Amroth*’, and presumably an ancestor of *Adrahil (2)*.

**Adrahil (2):**—Prince of *Dol Amroth*, father of *Imrahil*.

**Adûnaic:**—The language of *Númenor*. *Númenórean* tongue, speech.

**Adûnakhôr:**—‘Lord of the West’, name taken by the twentieth King of *Númenor*, the first to do so in the *Adûnaic* (*Númenórean*) tongue; his name in *Quenya* was *Herunúmen*.

**Adurant:**—The sixth and most southerly of the tributaries of *Gelion* in *Ossiriand*. The name means ‘double stream’, referring to its divided course about the island of *Tol Galen*.

**\*Aeglos (1):**—‘Snowthorn’, a plant that grew on *Amon Rúdh*.

**Aeglos (2):**—‘Snow-point’, the spear of *Gil-galad* (as a word-formation the same as the preceding).

**Aegnor:**—The fourth son of *Finarfin*, who with his brother *Angrod* held the northern slopes of *Dorthonion*; slain in the *Dagor Bragollach*. The name means ‘Fell Fire’.

**Aelin-uial:**—The region of marshes and pools where the river *Aros* flowed into *Sirion*. Translated *Twilit Meres* or *Meres of Twilight*.

**Aerandir:**—‘Sea-wanderer’, one of the three mariners who accompanied *Eärendil* on his voyages.

**Aerin:**—Kinswoman of *Húrin* in *Dor-lómin*; taken as wife by *Brodda* the *Easterling*; aided *Morwen* after the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

**Aftercomers:**—The Younger *Children of Ilúvatar*, *Men*; translation of *Hildor*.

**Agarwaen:**—‘Blood-stained’, name given to himself by *Túrin* when he came to *Nargothrond*.

**\*Agathurush:**—*Adûnaic* translation of the name *Gwathló*.

**\*Aghan:**—The *Drûg* (*Driedain*) in the story of ‘*The Faithful Stone*’.

**Aglarond:**—‘The Glittering Cavern’ of *Helm’s Deep* in *Ered Nimrais*; used also in reference to the fortress more strictly called the *Hornburg*, at the entrance to *Helm’s Deep*. See *Glæmscrafu*.

**Aglon:**—‘The Narrow Pass’, between *Dorthonion* and the heights to the west of *Himring*.

**\*Ailinel:**—The elder of *Tar-Aldarion’s* sisters.

**Ainulindalë:**—‘The Music of the *Ainur*’, also called *The (Great) Music*, *The (Great) Song*. Also the name of the account of Creation said to have been composed by *Rúmil* of *Tirion* in the *Elder Days*.

**Ainur:**—‘The Holy Ones’ (singular *Ainu*), the first beings created by *Ilúvatar*, who were before the *World*: the *Valar* and the *Maiar* (‘spirits of the same order as the *Valar* but of less degree’).

**\*Aiwendil:**—‘Lover of Birds’, *Quenya* name of *Radagast* the *Wizard*.

**Akallabêth**:—‘The Downfallen’, *Adûnaic* (*Númenórean*) word equivalent in meaning to *Quenya Atalantë*. Also the title of the account of the *Downfall* of *Númenor*.

**Al(a)táriel**:—‘Maiden crowned with a radiant garland’ (see Appendix to *The Silmarillion*, entry *kal-*), *Quenya* and *Telerin* forms of the name *Galadriel*.

\***Alatar**:—One of the *Blue Wizards* (*Ithryn Luin*).

**Alcarinquë**:—‘The Glorious’, name of a star.

**Alcarondas**:—The great ship of *Ar-Pharazôn* in which he sailed to *Aman*.

**Aldarion**:—See *Tar-Aldarion*.

**Aldaron**:—‘Lord of Trees’, a *Quenya* name of the *Vala Oromë*; cf. *Tauron*.

\***Aldburg**:—The dwelling of *Éomer* in the Folde (*Rohan*), where *Eorl the Young* had his house.

**Aldor**:—Third King of *Rohan*, son of *Brego* son of *Eorl the Young*.

**Aldudénië**:—‘Lament for the *Two Trees*’, made by a *Vanyarin Elf* named *Elemmirë*.

**Alfirin**:—A small white flower, also called *uilos* and *simbelmynë* (*Evermind*).

\***Algund**:—*Man* of *Dor-lómin*, one of the outlaw-band (*Gaurwaith*) that *Túrin* joined.

**Almaren**:—The first abode of the *Valar* in *Arda*, before the second onslaught of *Melkor*: an isle in a great lake in the midst of *Middle-earth*.

\***Almarian**:—Daughter of the *Númenórean* mariner *Vëantur*, Queen of *Tar-Meneldur* and mother of *Tar-Aldarion*.

\***Almiel**:—The younger of *Tar-Aldarion*’s sisters.

**Alqualondë**:—‘Haven of the Swans’, chief city and haven of the *Teleri* on the coast of *Aman*.

**Aman**:—‘Blessed, free from evil’, the name of the land in the West, beyond the *Great Sea*, in which the *Valar* dwelt after they had left the *Isle of Almaren*. Often referred to as *the Blessed Realm*. See *Undying Lands*.

**Amandil (1)**:—See *Tar-Amandil*.

**Amandil (2)**:—‘Lover of *Aman*’; the last *Lord of Andúnië* in *Númenor*, descendant of *Elros* and father of *Elendil* the Tall; set out on a voyage to *Valinor* and did not return.

**Amarië**:—*Vanyarin Elf*, beloved of *Finrod Felagund*, who remained in *Valinor*.

\***Amdir**:—King of *Lorien*, slain in the *Battle of Dagorlad*; father of *Amroth*. See *Malgad*.

**Amlach**:—Son of *Imlach* son of *Marach*; a leader of dissension among the *Men* of *Estolad* who, repenting, took service with *Maedhros*.

**Amon Amarth**:—‘Mount Doom’, the name given to *Orodruin* when its fires awoke again after *Sauron*’s return from *Númenor*.

\***Amon Anwar**:—*Sindarin* name of *Halifirien*, seventh of the beacons of *Gondor* in *Ered Nimrais*. Translated *Hill of Awe* and partially as *Hill of Anwar*; also simply *Anwar*. See *Eilenaer*, *Halifirien*, *Wood of Anwar*.

\***Amon Dathir**:—A peak in the range of *Ered Wethrin* south of *Dor-lómin*.

**Amon Dîn**:—‘The Silent Hill’, first of the beacons of *Gondor* in *Ered Nimrais*.

**Amon Ereb**:—‘The Lonely Hill’ (also simply *Ereb*), between *Ramdal* and the river *Gelion* in East *Beleriand*.

**Amon Ethir**:—The great earthwork raised by *Finrod Felagund* a league to the east of the doors of *Nargothrond*. Translated *the Spyhill* or *the Hill of Spies*.

**Amon Gwareth**:—The hill upon which *Gondolin* was built, in the midst of the plain of *Tumladen*.

\***Amon Lanc**:—‘The Naked Hill’ in the south of *Greenwood the Great*, afterwards called *Dol Guldur*.

**Amon Obel:**—A hill in the midst of the *Forest of Brethil*, on which was built *Ephel Brandir*.

**Amon Rûdh:**—‘The Bald Hill’, a lonely height in the lands south of *Brethil*; abode of *Mîm*, and lair of *Túrin*’s outlaw band. See *Sharbhund*.

**Amon Sûl:**—‘Hill of the Wind’, in the Kingdom of *Arnor*; a round bare hill at the southern end of the *Weather Hills* in *Eriador*. Called in *Bree* *Weather-top*.

**Amon Uilos:**—*Sindarin* name of *Oiolossë*.

**Amras:**—Twin-brother of *Amrod*, youngest of the sons of *Fëanor*; slain with *Amrod* in the attack on *Eärendil*’s people at the Mouths of *Sirion*.

**Amrod:**—See *Amras*.

**Amroth:**—*Sindarin* Elf, King of *Lorien*, lover of *Nimrodel*; drowned in the *Bay of Belfalas*. The country of *Amroth* (coast of *Belfalas* near *Dol Amroth*). *Amroth’s Haven*, see *Edhellond*.

**Anach:**—Pass leading down from *Taur-nu-Fuin* (*Dorthonion*) at the western end of *Ered Gorgoroth*.

**Anadûnê:**—‘Westernesse’: name of *Númenor* in the *Adûnaic* (*Númenórean*) tongue (see *Númenor*).

**Anar:**—*Quenya* name of the Sun.

**\*Anardil (1):**—The given name of *Tar-Aldarion* with suffix of endearment, *Anardilya*.

**Anardil (2):**—The sixth King of *Gondor*.

**Anárion (1):**—See *Tar-Anárion*.

**Anárion (2):**—Younger son of *Elendil*, who with his father and his brother *Isildur* escaped from the Drowning of *Númenor* and founded in *Middle-earth* the *Númenórean* realms in exile; lord of *Minas Anor*; slain in the siege of *Barad-dûr*. *Heir of Anárion*.

**Anarríma:**—Name of a constellation.

**Ancalagon:**—Greatest of the winged *Dragons* of *Morgoth*, destroyed by *Eärendil*.

**Ancalimë:**—See *Tar-Ancalimë*. The name was also given by *Aldarion* to the tree from *Eressëa* that he planted in *Armenelos*.

**Andor:**—‘*Land of Gift*’: *Númenor*.

**Andram:**—‘The Long Wall’, name of the dividing fall running across *Beleriand*.

**\*Andrast:**—‘Long Cape’, the mountainous promontory between the rivers *Isen* and *Lefnui*. See *Ras Morthil*, *Drúwaith Iaur*.

**\*Andrath:**—‘Long Climb’, defile between the *Barrow-downs* and the *South Downs* through which the *North-South Road* (*Greenway*) passed.

**\*Andróg:**—*Man* of *Dor-lómin*, a leader of the outlaw-band (*Gaurwaith*) that *Túrin* joined.

**Androth:**—Caves in the hills of *Mithrim* where *Tuor* dwelt with the *Grey-elves* and afterwards as a solitary outlaw.

**Anduin:**—‘The Long River’ east of the *Misty Mountains*; also *the River*, *the Great River*. Frequently in *the Vale(s) of Anduin*. See *Ethir Anduin*, *Langflood*.

**Andúnië:**—‘Sunset’, city and haven on the west coast of *Númenor*. *Bay of Andúnië*. Lord(s) of *Andúnië*.

**\*Andustar:**—The western promontory of *Númenor*. Translated *the Westlands*. *Lady of the Westlands*, *Erendis*.

**Anfalas:**—Fief of *Gondor*; coastal region between the mouths of the rivers *Lefnui* and *Morthond*. In *Westron* translated *Langstrand*.

**Anfauglir:**—A name of the wolf *Carcharoth*, translated in the text as ‘Jaws of Thirst’.

**Anfauglith:**—Name of the plain of *Ard-galen* after its desolation by *Morgoth* in the *Dagor Bragollach*; translated in the text as ‘the Gasping Dust’. Cf. *Dor-nu-Fauglith*.

**Angainor:**—The chain wrought by *Aulë* with which *Melkor* was twice bound.

**Angband:**—‘Iron Prison, Hell of Iron’, the great dungeon-fortress of *Morgoth* in the Northwest of *Middle-earth*. *The Siege of Angband*.

**\*Angelimar:**—Twentieth Prince of *Dol Amroth*, grandfather of *Imrahil*.

**Anghabar:**—‘Iron-delvings’, a mine in the *Encircling Mountains* about the plain of *Gondolin*.

**Anglachel:**—The sword made from meteoritic iron that *Thingol* received from *Eöl* and which he gave to *Beleg*; after its reforging for *Túrin* named *Gurthang*.

**Angmar:**—The Witch-realm ruled by the *Lord of the Nazgûl* at the northern end of the *Misty Mountains*.

**\*Angren:**—*Sindarin* name of the *Isen* (also *Sîr Angren*, *River Isen*). See *Athrad Angren*.

**Angrenost:**—*Sindarin* name translated as *Iron Fortress*. *Númenórean* fortress on the west borders of *Gondor*, afterwards inhabited by the *Wizard Curunír* (*Saruman*); see *Isengard*.

**Angrim:**—Father of *Gorlim* the Unhappy.

**Angrist:**—‘Iron-cleaver’, the knife made by *Telchar* of *Nogrod*, taken from *Curufin* by *Beren* and used by him to cut the *Silmaril* from *Morgoth’s* crown.

**Angrod:**—The third son of *Finarfin*, who with his brother *Aegnor* held the northern slopes of *Dorthonion*; slain in the *Dagor Bragollach*.

**Anguirel:**—*Eöl’s* sword, made of the same metal as *Anglachel*.

**Annael:**—*Grey-elf* of *Mithrim*, fosterfather of *Tuor*.

**Annatar:**—‘Lord of Gifts’, name given to himself by *Sauron* in the Second Age, in that time when he appeared in a fair form among the *Eldar* who remained in *Middle-earth*. See *Artano*, *Aulendil*.

**Annon-in-Gelydh:**—Entrance to a subterranean watercourse in the western hills of *Dor-lómin*, leading to *Cirith Ninniach*. Translated *Gate of the Noldor*.

**Annúminas:**—‘Tower of the West’ (*i.e.* of Westnesse, *Númenor*), ancient seat of the Kings of *Arnor* beside Lake Nenuial; afterwards restored by King *Elessar*.

**Anor:**—See *Minas Anor*.

**Anórien:**—Region of *Gondor* north of *Ered Nimrais*.

**Anor-stone, Stone of Anor:**—The *palantír* of *Minas Anor*.

**\*Anwar:**—See *Amon Anwar*.

**Apanónar:**—‘The Afterborn’, an *Elvish* name for *Men*.

**Aradan:**—*Sindarin* name of *Malach*, son of *Marach*.

**Aragorn:**—Thirty-ninth Heir of *Isildur* in the direct line; King of the reunited realms of *Arnor* and *Gondor* after the *War of the Ring*; wedded *Arwen*, daughter of *Elrond*. See *Elessar (2)*, *Elfstone*, *Strider*, *Thorongil*.

**Araman:**—Barren wasteland on the coast of *Aman*, between the *Pelóri* and the Sea, extending northward to the *Helcaraxë*.

**\*Arandor:**—The ‘Kingsland’ of *Númenor*.

**\*Arandur:**—‘King’s servant, minister’, *Quenya* term for the *Stewards* of *Gondor*.

**Aranel:**—Name of *Dior Thingol’s* Heir.

**Aranrúth:**—‘King’s Ire’, the name of *Thingol’s* sword. Aranrúth survived the ruin of *Doriath* and was possessed by the Kings of *Númenor*.

**Aranwë:**—*Elf* of *Gondolin*, father of *Voronwë*.

**Aranwion:**—son of *Aranwë*.

**Aratan:**—Second son of *Isildur*, slain with him at the *Gladden Fields*.

**Aratar:**—‘The Exalted’, the eight *Valar* of greatest power.

**Arathorn:**—Father of *Aragorn*.

**Arda:**—‘The Realm’, name of the Earth as the Kingdom of *Manwë*.

**Ard-galen:**—The great grassy plain north of *Dorthonion*, called after its desolation *Anfauglith* and *Dor-nu-Fauglith*. The name means ‘the Green Region’; cf. *Calenardhon* (*Rohan*).

**Aredhel:**—‘Noble *Elf*’, the sister of *Turgon* of *Gondolin*, who was ensnared by *Eöl* in *Nan Elmoth* and bore to him *Maeglin*; called also *Ar-Feiniel*, the White Lady of the *Noldor*, the White Lady of *Gondolin*.

**Argonath:**—‘King-stones’, the Pillars of the Kings, great carvings of *Isildur* and *Anárion* on the *Anduin* at the entrance to the northern bounds of *Gondor*.

**Arien:**—A *Maia*, chosen by the *Valar* to guide the vessel of the Sun.

**Arkenstone:**—The great jewel of the *Lonely Mountain*.

**Armenelos:**—City of the Kings in *Númenor*.

**Arminas:**—*Noldorin Elf*, who with *Gelmir* came upon *Tuor* at *Annon-in-Gelydh*, and afterwards went to *Nargothrond* to warn *Orodreth* of its peril.

**Arnor:**—‘Land of the King’, the northern realm of the *Númenóreans* in *Middle-earth*, established by *Elendil* after his escape from the Drowning of *Númenor*. *The North(ern) Kingdom, Northern Realm*.

**Aros:**—The southern river of *Doriath*.

**Arossiach:**—The Fords of *Aros*, near the north-eastern edge of *Doriath*.

\***Arroch:**—The horse of *Húrin* of *Dor-lómin*.

**Artamir:**—Elder son of *Ondoher* King of *Gondor*; slain in battle with the *Wainriders*.

\***Artanis:**—Name given to *Galadriel* by her father.

\***Artano:**—‘High-smith’, name given to himself by *Sauron* in the Second Age. See *Annatar*, *Aulendil*.

**Arthad:**—One of the twelve companions of *Barahir* on *Dorthonion*.

**Arthedain:**—One of the three kingdoms into which *Arnor* was divided in the ninth century of the Third Age; bounded by the rivers *Baranduin* and *Lhûn*, extending eastwards to the *Weather Hills*, and with its chief place at *Fornost*.

\***Arthórien:**—Region between the rivers *Aros* and *Celon* in the east of *Doriath*.

**Arvedui:**—‘Last-king’ of *Arthedain*, drowned in the Bay of Forochel.

**Arvernien:**—The coastlands of *Middle-earth* west of *Sirion’s* mouths. Cf. *Bilbo’s* song in *Rivendell*: ‘*Eärendil* was a mariner that tarried in Arvernien. . . .’ (*The Fellowship of the Ring*).

**Arwen:**—Daughter of *Elrond* and Celebrían; wedded to *Aragorn*; Queen of *Gondor*.

\***Ar-Abattârik:**—*Adûnaic* name of *Tar-Ardamin*.

**Ar-Adûnakhôr:**—Twentieth Ruler of *Númenor*; named in *Quenya Tar-Herunúmen*.

\***Ar-Belzagar:**—*Adûnaic* name of *Tar-Calmacil*.



**Ar-Feiniel:**—See *Aredhel*.

**Ar-Gimilzôr:**—Twenty-third King of *Númenor*, persecutor of the *Elendili*. Named in *Quenya Tar-Telemnar*.

**Ar-Inziladûn:**—*Adûnaic* name of *Tar-Palantir*.

**Ar-Pharazôn:**—‘The Golden’, twenty-fifth and last King of *Númenor*; named in *Quenya Tar-Calion*; captor of *Sauron*, by whom he was seduced; commander of the great fleet that went against *Aman*.

**Ar-Sakalthôr:**—Twenty-second Ruler of *Númenor* and father of *Ar-Gimilzôr*; named in *Quenya Tar-Falassion*.

**Ar-Zimraphel:**—*Adûnaic* name of *Tar-Miriel*.

**Ar-Zimrathôn:**—Twenty-first Ruler of *Númenor*; named in *Quenya Tar-Hostamir*.

**Ascar:**—The most northerly of the tributaries of *Gelion* in *Ossiriand* (afterwards called *Rathlóriel*). The name means ‘rushing, impetuous’.

**\*Asgon:**—*Man* of *Dor-lómin*, who aided *Túrin’s* escape after the slaying of *Brodda*.

**Astaldo:**—‘The Valiant’, name of the *Vala Tulkas*.

**Atalantë:**—‘The Downfallen’, *Quenya* word equivalent in meaning to *Akallabêth*.

**Atanamir:**—See *Tar-Atanamir*.

**Atanatar Alcarin:**—(‘The Glorious’), sixteenth King of *Gondor*.

**Atanatári:**—‘Fathers of *Men*’; see *Atani*.

**Atani:**—‘The Second People’, *Men* (singular *Atan*). Since in *Beleriand* for a long time the only *Men* known to the *Noldor* and *Sindar* were those of the *Three Houses* of the *Elf-friends*, this name (in the *Sindarin* form *Adan*, plural *Edain*) became specially associated with them, so that it was seldom applied to other *Men* who came later to *Beleriand*, or who were reported to be dwelling beyond the Mountains. But in the speech of *Ilúvatar* the meaning is ‘*Men* (in general)’.

**\*Athrad Angren:**—*Sindarin* name (also in plural form *Ethraid Engrin*) of the *Fords of Isen*.

**Aulë:**—One of the great *Valar* (see *Aratar*), the smith and master of crafts, spouse of *Yavanna*. Adjective *Aulëan*. Children of *Aulë*, the *Dwarves*.

**\*Aulendil:**—‘Servant of *Aulë*’, name given to himself by *Sauron* in the Second Age. See *Annatar*, *Artano*.

**Avallónë:**—Haven and city of the *Eldar* on *Tol Eressëa*, so named, according to the *Akallabêth*, ‘for it is of all cities the nearest to *Valinor*’.

**Avari:**—‘The Unwilling, the Refusers’, the name given to all those *Elves* who refused to join the westward march from *Cuiviénen*. See *Eldar*, *Dark Elves* and *Wild Elves*.

**Avathar:**—‘The Shadows’, the forsaken land on the coast of *Aman* south of the Bay of *Eldamar*, between the *Pelóri* and the Sea, where *Melkor* met *Ungoliant*.

**Azaghâl:**—Lord of the *Dwarves* of *Belegost*; wounded *Glaurung* in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*, and was killed by him.

**Azanulbizar:**—The valley below the East-gate of *Moria* where in Third Age 2799 was fought the great battle that ended the *War of the Dwarves and the Orcs*. See *Nanduhirion*.

**Azog:**—*Orc* of *Moria*; slayer of *Thrór*, and slain himself by *Dáin Ironfoot* in the *Battle of Azanulbizar*.



## B

**Bag-End:**—Dwelling at *Hobbiton* in the *Shire* of *Bilbo Baggins*, and later of *Frodo Baggins* and *Samwise Gamgee*.

**Baggins:**—A family of *Hobbits* of the *Shire*. With reference to *Bilbo Baggins*.

**Balan:**—The name of *Bëor the Old* before he took service with *Finrod*.

**Balar, Bay of:**—The great bay to the south of *Beleriand* into which the river *Sirion* flowed. See also *Isle of Balar*.

**Balar, Isle of:**—Island in the *Bay of Balar*, said to have been the eastern horn of *Tol Eressëa* that broke away, where *Cirdan* and *Gil-galad* dwelt after the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*. *Balar*.

**Balchoth:**—An *Easterling* people akin to the *Wainriders* whose invasion of *Calenardhon* in Third Age 2510 was crushed at the *Battle of the Field of Celebrant*.

**Balin:**—*Dwarf* of the *House of Durin*; companion of *Thorin Oakenshield*, and afterwards for a brief time Lord of *Moria*.

**Balrog:**—‘Demon of Might’, *Sindarin* form (*Quenya* *Valarauko*) of the name of the demons of fire that served *Morgoth*. See *Gothmog*.

**\*Barach:**—A forester of the *People of Haleth* in the story of ‘*The Faithful Stone*’.

**Barad Eithel:**—‘Tower of the Well’, the fortress of the *Noldor* at *Eithel Sirion*.

**Barad Nimras:**—‘White Horn Tower’, raised by *Finrod Felagund* on the cape west of *Eglarest*.

**Barad-dûr:**—‘The Dark Tower’ of *Sauron* in *Mordor*. Lord of *Barad-dûr*, *Sauron*.

**Baragund:**—Father of *Morwen* the wife of *Húrin* and cousin of *Beren*; nephew of *Barahir* and one of his twelve companions on *Dorthonion*.

**Barahir:**—Father of *Beren*; brother of *Bregolas*. Rescued *Finrod Felagund* in the *Dagor Bragollach*, and received from him his ring; slain on *Dorthonion*. For the later history of the *Ring of Barahir*, which became an heirloom of the House of *Isildur*, see *The Lord of the Rings* Appendix A (I, iii & I, iv), also Appendix B (The Third Age, year 2980) and *Unfinished Tales*, note 94.

**Baran:**—Elder son of *Bëor the Old*.

**Baranduin:**—‘The Brown River’ in *Eriador*, flowing into the Sea south of the *Blue Mountains*; the *Brandywine* of the *Shire* in *The Lord of the Rings*.

**Bar-en-Danwedh:**—‘House of Ransom’, the name that *Mîm* gave to his dwelling on *Amon Rúdh* when he yielded it to *Túrin*. See *Echad i Sedryn*.

**\*Bar-en-Nibin-noeg:**—‘House of the *Petty-dwarves*’, *Mîm*’s dwelling on *Amon Rúdh*.

**Bar Erib:**—A stronghold in *Dor-Cúarthol*, not far south of *Amon Rúdh*.

**Barrow-downs:**—Downs east of the *Old Forest*, on which were great burial-mounds said to have been built in the First Age by the forefathers of the *Edain* before they entered *Beleriand*. See *Tyrn Gorthad*.

**Barrow-wights:**—Evil spirits dwelling in the burial-mounds on the *Barrow-downs*.

**Battle of Azanulbizar:**—See *Azanulbizar*.

**Battle of *Dagorlad*:**—See *Dagorlad*.

**Battle of *Dale*:**—Battle of the *War of the Ring* in which *Sauron*'s northern army defeated the *Men* of *Dale* and the *Dwarves* of *Erebor*.

**Battle of the *Camp*:**—The victory of *Eärnil II* of *Gondor* over the *Wainriders* in *Ithilien* in Third Age 1944.

**Battle of the *Field of Celebrant*:**—See *Field of Celebrant*.

**\*Battle of the *Gwathló*:**—The rout of *Sauron* by the *Númenóreans* in Second Age 1700.

**Battle of the *Hornburg*:**—Assault on the *Hornburg* by the army of *Saruman* in the *War of the Ring*.

**Battle of the *Pelennor (Fields)*:**—See *Pelennor*.

**\*Battle of the *Plains*:**—The defeat of *Narmacil II* of *Gondor* by the *Wainriders* in the lands south of *Mirkwood* in Third Age 1856.

**Battle of *Tumhalad*:**—See *Tumhalad*.

**Battle of *Unnumbered Tears*:**—See *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

**Battle *Plain*:**—See *Dagorlad*.

**Battles of *Beleriand*:**—The first battle. The second battle (the Battle-under-Stars): see *Dagor-nuin-Giliath*. The third battle (the Glorious Battle): see *Dagor Aglareb*. The fourth battle (the Battle of Sudden Flame): see *Dagor Bragollach*. The fifth battle (Unnumbered Tears): see *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*. *The Great Battle*.

**Battles of the *Fords of Isen*:**—Two battles fought during the *War of the Ring* between *Riders of Rohan* and *Saruman's* forces out of *Isengard*.

***Bauglir*:**—‘The Constrainer’, name given to *Morgoth*.

**Bay of *Balar*:**—See *Balar*, *Bay of*.

**Bay of *Belfalas*:**—See *Belfalas*.

***Beleg*:**—Elf of *Doriath*; a great archer, and chief of *Thingol's* march-wardens; friend and companion of *Túrin*, by whom he was slain. Called *Cúthalion*, translated (*the*) *Strongbow*.

***Belegaer*:**—‘The Great Sea’ of the West, between *Middle-earth* and *Aman*. *The Great Sea* in many other passages called simply *the Sea*, also called *the Western Sea* and *the Great Water*.

***Belegost*:**—‘Great Fortress’, one of the two cities of the *Dwarves* in the *Blue Mountains*; translation into *Sindarin* of *Dwarvish Gabilgathol*. See *Mickleburg*.

***Belegund*:**—Father of *Rían* wife of *Huor*; brother of *Baragund*, nephew of *Barahir* and one of his twelve companions on *Dorthonion*.

***Beleriand*:**—The name was said to have signified ‘the country of *Balar*’, and to have been given at first to the lands about the mouths of *Sirion* that faced the *Isle of Balar*. Later the name spread to include all the ancient coast of the Northwest of *Middle-earth* south of the *Firth of Drengist*, and all the inner lands south of *Hithlum* and eastwards to the feet of the *Blue Mountains*, divided by the river *Sirion* into East and West Beleriand. Beleriand was broken in the turmoils at the end of the First Age, and invaded by the sea, so that only *Ossiriand* (*Lindon*) remained. Adjective *Beleriandic*.

***Belfalas*:**—Fief of *Gondor*; coastal region looking on to the great bay of the same name. *Bay of Belfalas*.

***Belthil*:**—‘Divine radiance’, the image of *Telperion* made by *Turgon* in *Gondolin*.

***Belthroning*:**—The bow of *Beleg Cúthalion*, which was buried with him.

***Bëor*:**—Called *the Old*; leader of the first *Men* to enter *Beleriand*; vassal of *Finrod Felagund*; progenitor of the House of Bëor (called also the Eldest House of *Men* and The First House of the *Edain*); see *Balan*. *House of, People of, Bëor, Bëorian(s)*.



**Beornings:**—*Men* of the upper Vales of *Anduin*.

**Bereg:**—Grandson of *Baran* son of *Bëor the Old* (this is not stated in the text); a leader of dissension among the *Men* of *Estolad*; went back over the mountains into *Eriador*.

**\*Beregari:**—*Man* from the Westlands of *Númenor*, descended from the House of *Bëor*; father of *Erendis*.

**Beren (1):**—Son of *Barahir* of the House of *Bëor*; cut a *Silmaril* from *Morgoth's* crown to be the bride-price of *Lúthien Thingol's* daughter, and was slain by *Carcharoth* the wolf of *Angband*; but returning from the dead, alone of mortal *Men*, lived afterwards with *Lúthien* on *Tol Galen* in *Ossiriand*, and fought with the *Dwarves* at *Sarn Athrad*. Great-grandfather of *Elrond* and *Elros* and ancestor of the *Númenórean* Kings. Called after his return from *Angband* *Erchamion*, translated *One-hand*; and *Camlost*, 'Empty-handed'.

**Beren (2):**—Nineteenth Ruling *Steward of Gondor*, who gave the keys of *Orthanc* to *Saruman*.

**\*Bereth:**—Sister of *Baragund* and *Belegund* and ancestress of *Erendis*.

**Berúthiel:**—Queen of *Tarannon Falastur*, twelfth King of *Gondor*.

**Bilbo Baggins:**—*Hobbit* of the *Shire*, finder of the One Ring. See *Baggins*.

**Black Captain:**—See *Lord of the Nazgûl*.

**\*Black Easterling:**—See *Khamûl*.

**Black Gate:**—See *Morannon*.

**\*Black King:**—See *Morgoth*.

**Black Land:**—See *Mordor*.

**Black Riders:**—See *Nazgûl*.

**Black Sword:**—*Túrin's* name in *Nargothrond*; also the sword itself. See *Gurthang*, *Mormegil*.

**Black Years:**—

**Blessed Realm:**—See *Aman*.

**Blue Mountains:**—The great mountain chain between *Beleriand* and *Eriador* in the *Elder Days*. See *Ered Lindon* and *Ered Luin*.

**Blue Ring:**—See *Vilya*.

**Blue Wizards:**—See *Ithryn Luin*.

**Book of the Kings:**—One of the chronicles of *Gondor*.

**Book of the Stewards:**—See *Stewards of Gondor*.

**Bór:**—A chieftain of the *Easterlings*, follower with his three sons of *Maedhros* and *Maglor*.

**Borlach:**—One of the three sons of *Bór*; slain with his brothers in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

**Borlad:**—One of the three sons of *Bór*; see *Borlach*.

**Boromir (1):**—Great-grandson of *Bëor the Old*, grandfather of *Barahir* father of *Beren*; first lord of *Ladros*.

**Boromir (2):**—Elder son of *Denethor II*, *Steward of Gondor*; one of the *Fellowship of the Ring*.

**Boron:**—Father of *Boromir (1)*.

**\*Borondir:**—Called *Udalraph*, 'the Stirrupless'; rider of *Minas Tirith* who brought the message of *Cirion* to *Eorl* asking for his aid.

**Borthand:**—One of the three sons of *Bór*; see *Borlach*.

**\*Bough of Return:**—See *oiolairë*.

**Bow of Bregor, The:**—Preserved in *Númenor*.

**Bracegirdles:**—A family of *Hobbits* of the *Shire*.

**Bragollach:**—See *Dagor Bragollach*.

**Brand:**—Third King of *Dale*, grandson of Bard the Bowman; slain in the *Battle of Dale*.

**Brandir:**—Called the Lame; ruler of the *People of Haleth* in *Brethil* after the death of *Handir* his father, at the time of the coming of *Túrin Turambar*, by whom he was slain. Called by *Túrin Club-foot*.

**Brandywine:**—See *Baranduin*.

**Bree:**—The principal village of the Bree-land at the crossing of the *Númenórean* roads in *Eriador*.

**Brego:**—Second King of *Rohan*, son of *Eorl the Young*.

**Bregolas:**—Brother of *Barahir* and father of *Baragund* and *Belegund*; *Morwen's* grandfather; slain in the *Dagor Bragollach*.

**Bregor:**—Father of *Barahir* and *Bregolas*.

**Brethil:**—Forest between the rivers *Teiglin* and *Sirion* in *Beleriand*, dwelling-place of the *Haladin* (the *People of Haleth*). *Men of, People of, Brethil*; and see *Woodmen*. *Black Thorn of Brethil*, see *Gurthang*.

**Bridge of Esgalduin:**—See *Iant Iaur*.

**Brilthor:**—‘Glittering Torrent’, the fourth of the tributaries of *Gelion* in *Ossiriand*.

**Brithiach:**—Ford over *Sirion* north of the *Forest of Brethil*.

**Brithombar:**—The northernmost of the *Havens* of the *Falas* on the coast of *Beleriand*.

**Brithon:**—River flowing into the *Great Sea* at *Brithombar*.

**Brodna:**—*Easterling* in *Hithlum* after the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad* who took as wife *Aerin*, kinswoman of *Húrin*; slain by *Túrin*. Called *the Incomer*.

**Brown Lands:**—The desolate region between *Mirkwood* and the *Eryn Muil*.

**Bruinen:**—River in *Eriador*, tributary (with the *Mitheithel*) of the *Gwathló*; translated *Loudwater*. *Ford of Bruinen*, below *Rivendell*.

**Bucklebury Ferry:**—Ferry across the *Brandywine River* between Bucklebury and the Marish.

**Bywater:**—Village in the *Shire* a few miles south-east of *Hobbiton*.



## C

**Cabed Naeramarth:**—‘Leap of Dreadful Doom’, name given to *Cabed-en-Aras* after *Nienor* leaped from its cliffs.

**Cabed-en-Aras:**—Deep gorge in the river *Teiglin*, where *Túrin* slew *Glaurung* and where *Nienor* leaped to her death. Translated *the Deer’s Leap*. See *Cabed Naeramarth*.

**Cair Andros:**—Island in the river *Anduin* north of *Minas Tirith* fortified by *Gondor* for the defence of *Anórien*.

**Calacirya:**—‘Cleft of Light’, the pass made in the mountains of the *Pelóri*, in which was raised the green hill of *Túna*.

**Calaquendi:**—‘*Elves* of the Light’, those *Elves* who lived or had lived in *Aman* (the *High Elves*). See *Moriquendi* and *Dark Elves*.

**Calenardhon:**—‘The Green Province’, name of *Rohan* when it was the northern part of *Gondor*; cf. *Ard-galen*.

**Calenhad:**—Sixth of the beacons of *Gondor* in *Ered Nimrais*. (The name probably meant ‘green space’, with reference to the flat turf-covered crown of the hill: *had* being derived, with the usual mutation in combinations, from *sad*, ‘place, spot’.)

**Calimehtar:**—Thirtieth King of *Gondor*, victor over the *Wainriders* on the *Dagorlad* in Third Age 1899.

**\*Calmindon:**—The ‘Light-tower’ on *Tol Uinen* in the Bay of *Rómenna*.

**Camlost:**—See *Beren (1)*.

**Caradhras, Pass of:**—The pass over the *Misty Mountains* called ‘Redhorn Gate’, beneath Caradhras (Redhorn, Barazinbar), one of the Mountains of *Moria*.

**Caragdûr:**—The precipice on the north side of *Amon Gwareth* (the hill of *Gondolin*) from which *Eöl* was cast to his death.

**Caranthir:**—The fourth son of *Fëanor*, called the Dark; ‘the harshest of the brothers and the most quick to anger’; ruled in *Thargelion*; slain in the assault on *Doriath*.

**Caras Galadhon:**—‘City of the Trees’, chief dwelling of the *Elves* of *Lorien*.

**Carcharoth:**—The great wolf of *Angband* that bit off the hand of *Beren* bearing the *Silmaril*; slain by *Huan* in *Doriath*. The name is translated in the text as ‘the Red Maw’. See also *Anfauglir*.

**Cardolan:**—Region in the south of *Eriador*, one of the three kingdoms into which *Arnor* was divided in the ninth century of the Third Age; bounded in the west by the *Baranduin* and in the north by the *East Road*.

**Carn Dûm:**—Chief fortress of *Angmar*.

**Carnen:**—‘Redwater’, river flowing down from the *Iron Hills* to join the *River Running*.

**Carnil:**—Name of a (red) star.

**Carrock:**—A rocky islet in the upper *Anduin*. See *Ford of Carrock*.

**Celduin:**—River flowing from the *Lonely Mountain* to the *Sea of Rhûn*. Translated *River Running*.

**Celeborn (1):**—‘Tree of Silver’, name of the Tree of *Tol Eressëa*, a scion of *Galathilion*.

**Celeborn (2):**—Kinsman of *Thingol*; wedded *Galadriel* and with her remained in *Middle-earth* after the end of the First Age. Lord of *Lothlórien*. (For the meaning of the name see p. 346-7.) See *Teleporno*.

**Celebrant:**—River rising in Mirrormere and flowing through *Lothlórien* to join *Anduin*. Translated *Silverlode*. See *Field of Celebrant*.

**Celebrían:**—Daughter of *Celeborn* and *Galadriel*, wedded to *Elrond*.

**Celebrimbor:**—‘Hand of Silver’, son of *Curufin*, who remained in *Nargothrond* when his father was expelled. In the Second Age greatest of the smiths of *Eregion*; maker of the *Three Rings* of the *Elves*; slain by *Sauron*.

**Celebrindal:**—‘Silverfoot’; see *Idril*.

**Celegorm:**—The third son of *Fëanor*, called the Fair; until the *Dagor Bragollach* lord of the region of *Himlad* with *Curufin* his brother; dwelt in *Nargothrond* and imprisoned *Lúthien*; master of *Huan* the wolfhound; slain by *Dior* in *Menegroth*.

**Celon:**—River flowing southwest from the *Hill of Himring*, a tributary of *Aros*. The name means ‘stream flowing down from heights’.

**Celos:**—One of the rivers of *Lebennin* in *Gondor*; tributary of the Sirith. (‘The name must be derived from the root *kelu*—‘flow out swiftly’, formed with an ending -sse, -ssa, seen in *Quenya* *kelussë*, ‘freshet, water falling out swiftly from a rocky spring.’)

**Ceorl:**—*Rider of Rohan* who brought news of the Second *Battle of the Fords of Isen*.

**Cerin Amroth:**—‘*Amroth’s Mound*’ in *Lorien*.

**Cermië:**—*Quenya* name of the seventh month according to the *Númenórean* calendar, corresponding to July.

**Children of Aulë:**—The *Dwarves*.

**Children of Earth:**—*Elves* and *Men*.

**Children of Ilúvatar:**—Also *Children of Eru*; translations of *Híni Ilúvataro*, *Eruhíni*; the *Firstborn* and the Followers, *Elves* and *Men*. Also *The Children*, *Children of the Earth*, *Children of the World*.

**Circles of the World:**—

**Círdan:**—‘The Shipwright’; *Telerin Elf*, lord of the *Falas* (coasts of West *Beleriand*); at the destruction of the *Havens* after the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad* escaped with *Gil-galad* to the *Isle of Balar*; during the Second and Third Ages keeper of the *Grey Havens* in the *Gulf of Lhûn*; at the coming of *Mithrandir* entrusted to him *Narya*, the Ring of Fire.

**Cirion:**—Twelfth Ruling *Steward of Gondor*, who granted *Calenardhon* to the *Rohirrim* after the *Battle of the Field of Celebrant* in Third Age 2510. *Chronicle of, Tale of, Cirion and Eorl. Oath of Cirion*; words of the oath.

\***Cirith Dúath:**—‘Shadow Cleft’, former name of *Cirith Ungol*.

\***Cirith Forn en Andrath:**—‘The High-climbing Pass of the North’ over the *Misty Mountains* east of *Rivendell*. Called *the High Pass* and *the Pass of Imladris*.

**Cirith Ninniach:**—‘Rainbow Cleft’, name given by *Tuor* to the ravine leading from the western hills of *Dor-lómin* to the *Firth of Drengist*; see *Annon-in-Gelydh*.

**Cirith Thoronath:**—‘Eagles’ Cleft’, a high pass in the mountains north of *Gondolin*, where *Glorfindel* fought with a *Balrog* and fell into the abyss.

**Cirith Ungol:**—‘Spider’s Cleft’, pass over the *Ephel Dúath* above *Minas Morgul*. See *Cirith Dúath*.

**Cirth:**—The Runes, first devised by *Daeron* of *Doriath*.

\***Ciryatur:**—*Númenórean* admiral commanding the fleet sent by *Tar-Minastir* to the aid of *Gil-galad* against *Sauron*.

**Ciryon:**—Third son of *Isildur*, slain with him at the *Gladden Fields*.

**Common Speech:**—See *Westron*.

**Corollairë:**—‘The Green Mound’ of the *Two Trees* in *Valinor*; also called *Ezellohar*.

**Corsairs of Umbar:**—See *Umbar*.

**Cotton, Farmer:**—Tolman Cotton, *Hobbit* of *Bywater*.

**Council of Elrond:**—Council held at *Rivendell* before the departure of the *Fellowship of the Ring*.

**Council, The:**—In various references: the Council of the Sceptre (the King’s Council of *Númenor*); the Council of *Gondor*; the *White Council*.

**Crissaegrim:**—The mountain-peaks south of *Gondolin*, where were the eyries of *Thorondor*.

**Crossings of Teiglin:**—Fords where the old South Road from the Pass of *Sirion* to *Nargothrond* crossed the *Teiglin* in the southwest of the *Forest of Brethil*

**Cuiviénen:**—‘Water of Awakening’, the lake in *Middle-earth* where the first *Elves* awoke, and where they were found by *Oromë*.

**Culúrien:**—A name of *Laurelin*.

**Curufin:**—The fifth son of *Fëanor*, called the Crafty; father of *Celebrimbor*. For the origin of his name see *Fëanor*; and for his history see *Celegorm*.

**Curufinwë:**—See *Fëanor*.

**\*Curumo:**—The name of *Curunír* (*Saruman*) in *Quenya*.

**Curunír:**—‘The one of cunning devices’, *Sindarin* name of *Saruman*, one of the *Istari* (*Wizards*); also *Curunír’Lân*, *Saruman* the White. See *Curumo*.

**Cúthalion:**—‘Strongbow’, see *Beleg*.



**Daeron:**—Minstrel and chief loremaster of King *Thingol* and friend (or kinsman) of *Saeros*; deviser of the Cirth (Runes); enamoured of *Lúthien* and twice betrayed her.

**Dagnir Glaurunga:**—‘*Glaurung’s* Bane’, *Túrin*.

**Dagnir:**—One of the twelve companions of *Barahir* on *Dorthonion*.

**Dagor Aglareb:**—‘The Glorious Battle’, third of the great battles in the *Wars of Beleriand*.

**Dagor Bragollach:**—‘The Battle of Sudden Flame’ (also simply *the Bragollach*), fourth of the great battles in the *Wars of Beleriand*, in which the Siege of *Angband* was ended.

**\*Dagor Dagorath:**—The last battle that would be fought before the End.

**Dagorlad:**—‘Battle Plain’, east of *Emyn Muil* and near the *Dead Marshes*, site of the great battle between *Sauron* and the *Last Alliance* of *Elves* and *Men* at the end of the Second Age. *Battle of Dagorlad*. Later battles on the Dagorlad: the victory in Third Age 1899 of King *Calimehtar* over the *Wainriders*, the defeat and death of King *Ondoher* in Third Age 1944.

**Dagor-nuin-Giliath:**—‘The Battle-under-Stars’, the second battle in the *Wars of Beleriand*, fought in *Mithrim* after the coming of *Fëanor* to *Middle-earth*.

**Dáin Ironfoot:**—Lord of the *Dwarves* of the *Iron Hills*, afterwards *King under the Mountain*; slain in the *Battle of Dale*.

**Dairuin:**—One of the twelve companions of *Barahir* on *Dorthonion*.

**Dale:**—Country of the Bardings about the feet of Mount *Erebor*, allied with the Kingdom of the *Dwarves* under the Mountain. See *Battle of Dale*.

**Dark Elves:**—In the language of *Aman* all *Elves* that did not cross the *Great Sea* were Dark *Elves* (*Moriquendi*), and the term is sometimes used thus, when *Caranthir* called *Thingol* a *Dark Elf* it was intended opprobriously, and was especially so, since *Thingol* had been to *Aman* ‘and was not accounted among the *Moriquendi*’. But in the period of the Exile of the *Noldor* it was often used of the *Elves* of *Middle-earth* other than the *Noldor* and the *Sindar*, and is then virtually equivalent to *Avari*. Different again is the title *Dark Elf* of the *Sindarin Elf Eöl*, but *Turgon* no doubt meant that *Eöl* was of the *Moriquendi*. See *Avari*.

**\*Dark Lands:**—Term for *Middle-earth* in *Númenor*.

**Dark Lord:**—*Morgoth*, *Sauron*.

**Dark Plague:**—See *Great Plague*.

**Dark Power:**—See *Sauron*.

**Dark Years:**—The years of the dominion of *Sauron* in the Second Age.

**Days of Flight:**—See *Black Years*.

**Dead Marshes:**—Wide stagnant marshes south-east of *Emyn Muil*, in which the slain of the *Battle of Dagorlad* were seen.

**Dead Men of Dunharrow:**—See *Dunharrow*.

**Déagol:**—A *Stoor* of the Vales of *Anduin*, finder of the *One Ring*.

**Deathless Lands:**—See *Undying Lands*.



**\*Deeping, The:**—Apparently synonymous with *Deeping-coomb*.

**Deeping-coomb:**—The valley leading up to *Helm's Deep*.

**\*Deeping-road:**—Road running northwards from the *Deeping-coomb* to join the *Great Road* east of the *Fords of Isen*. (cf. 'the branch going to the *Hornburg*'.)

**Deeping-stream:**—Stream flowing out of *Helm's Deep* down into *Westfold*.

**\*Deer's Leap:**—See *Cabed-en-Aras*.

**Deldúwath:**—One of the later names of *Dorthonion* (*Taur-nu-Fuin*), meaning 'Horror of Night-shadow'.

**Denethor (1):**—Son of *Lenwë*; leader of the *Nandorin Elves* that came over the *Blue Mountains* and dwelt in *Ossiriand*; slain on *Amon Ereb* in the *First Battle of Beleriand*.

**Denethor (2):**—Twenty-sixth and last Ruling *Steward of Gondor*, the second of the name; Lord of *Minas Tirith* at the time of the *War of the Ring*; father of *Boromir* and *Faramir*.

**Déor:**—Seventh King of *Rohan*.

**Dimbar:**—The land between the rivers *Sirion* and *Mindeb*.

**Dimrill Dale:**—See *Nanduhirion*.

**Dimrost:**—The falls of *Celebros* in the *Forest of Brethil*; translated in the text as 'the Rainy Stair'. Afterwards called *Nen Girith*.

**Dior:**—Called *Aranel*, and also *Eluchil* 'Thingol's Heir'; son of *Beren* and *Lúthien* and father of *Elwing*, *Elrond's* mother; came to *Doriath* from *Ossiriand* after the death of *Thingol*, and received the *Silmaril* after the death of *Beren* and *Lúthien*; slain in *Menegroth* by the sons of *Fëanor*.

**Dírhavel:**—*Man* of *Dor-lómin*, author of the *Narn i Hîn Húrin*.

**\*Dírnaith:**—Wedge-shaped battle-formation used by the *Dúnedain*.

**Dispossessed:**—The House of *Fëanor*.

**Dol Amroth:**—Stronghold on a promontory of *Belfalas*, named after *Amroth* King of *Lorien*. With reference to the Lords or Princes of Dol Amroth. See *Angelimar*, *Adrahil (1) & (2)*, *Imrahil*.

**Dol Baran:**—'Gold-brown Hill', a hill at the southern end of the *Misty Mountains*, where *Peregrin Took* looked into the *palantir* of *Orthanc*.

**Dol Guldur:**—'Hill of Sorcery', a treeless height in the south-west of *Mirkwood*, fastness of the Necromancer before he was revealed as *Sauron* returned. See *Amon Lanc*.

**Dolmed:**—'Wet Head', a great mountain in the *Ered Luin*, near the *Dwarf*-cities of *Nogrod* and *Belegost*.

**Dor Caranthir:**—'Land of *Caranthir*'; see *Thargelion*.

**Dor Daedeloth:**—'Land of the Shadow of Horror', the land of *Morgoth* in the north.

**Dor Dínen:**—'The Silent Land', where nothing dwelt, between the upper waters of *Esgalduin* and *Aros*.

**Dor Firn-i-Guinar:**—'Land of the Dead that Live', name of that region in *Ossiriand* where *Beren* and *Lúthien* dwelt after their return.

**Dor-Cúarthol:**—'Land of Bow and Helm', name of the country defended by *Beleg* and *Túrin* from their lair on *Amon Rúdh*.

**Dor-en-Ernîl:**—'Land of the Prince', in *Gondor* west of the river *Gilrain*.

**Doriath:**—'Land of the Fence' (*Dor Iâth*), referring to the *Girdle of Melian*, earlier called *Eglador*; the kingdom of *Thingol* and *Melian* in the forests of *Neldoreth* and *Region*, ruled from *Menegroth* on the river *Esgalduin*. Also called *the Hidden Kingdom* and *the Guarded Realm*.

**Dorlas:**—*Man* of *Brethil*; went with *Túrin* and *Hunthor* to the attack on *Glaurung*, but withdrew in fear; slain by *Brandir*. *Wife of Dorlas*.

**Dor-lómin:**—Region in the south of *Hithlum*, the territory of *Fingon*, given as a fief to the House of *Hador*; the home of *Húrin* and *Morwen*. *Mountains of Dor-lómin*, that part of *Ered Wethrin* that formed the southern fence of *Hithlum*. *Lady of Dor-lómin*, *Morwen*; *Lord of Dor-lómin*, *Húrin*, *Túrin*. *Dragon of Dor-lómin*, see *Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin*.

**Dor-nu-Faughlith:**—‘Land under Choking Ash’; see *Anfauglith*.

**Dorthonion:**—‘Land of Pines’, the great forested highlands on the northern borders of *Beleriand*, afterwards called *Taur-nu-Fuin*. Cf. *Treebeard’s* song in *The Two Towers*: ‘To the pine-trees upon the highlands of Dorthonion I climbed in the Winter. . . .’

**Downfall (of Númenor):**—See *Akallabêth*.

**Downs:**—Referring to the White Downs in the Westfarthing of the *Shire*.

**Dragon(s):**—See *Ancalagon*, *Glaurung*, *Smaug*.

**Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin:**—Heirloom of the House of *Hador*, worn by *Túrin*; also called *the Helm of Hador*. *Dragon of Dor-lómin*; *Dragonhead of the North*.

**\*Dramborleg:**—The great axe of *Tuor*, preserved in *Númenor*.

**Draugluin:**—The great werewolf slain by *Huan* at *Tol-in-Gaurhoth*, and in whose form *Beren* entered *Angband*.

**Drengist:**—The long firth piercing *Ered Lómin*, the *Echoing Mountains* on the west of *Hithlum*, between *Lammoth* and *Nevrast*.

**Drúadan Forest:**—Forest in *Anórien* at the eastern end of *Ered Nimrais*, where a remnant of the *Drúedain* or ‘Wild *Men*’ survived in the Third Age. See *Tawar-in-Drúedain*.

**\*Drúath:**—The *Drúedain*. (Singular *Drú*, plural also *Drúin*; *Sindarin* forms derived from the native name *Drughu*). See *Róg*, *Rú*.

**\*Drúedain:**—*Sindarin* name (from *Drú* + *adan*, plural *edain*) of the ‘Wild *Men*’ of *Ered Nimrais* (and of the *Forest of Brethil* in the First Age). Called *Wild Men*; *Woses*; and see *Púkel-men*.

**\*Drûg(s), Drû(g)-folk:**—The *Drúedain*.

**\*Drúwaith Iaur:**—‘The old wilderness of the *Drû-folk*’ in the mountainous promontory of *Andrast*. Called *the Old Púkel-wilderness* and *Old Púkel-land*.

**Dry River:**—The bed of the river that once flowed out under the *Encircling Mountains* from the primeval lake to join *Sirion* where was afterwards *Tumladen*, the plain of *Gondolin*.

**Duilwen:**—The fifth of the tributaries of *Gelion* in *Ossiriand*.

**Dúnedain:**—(Singular *Dúnadan*). ‘The *Edain* of the West’, the *Númenóreans*. *Star of the Dúnedain*.

**Dungortheb:**—For *Nan Dungortheb*, ‘Valley of Dreadful Death’, between the precipices of *Ered Gorgoroth* and the *Girdle of Melian*.

**Dunharrow:**—Fortified refuge in *Ered Nimrais* above *Harrowdale*, approached by a climbing road at each turn of which were set the statues called *Púkel-men*. *Dead Men of Dunharrow*, *Men of Ered Nimrais* who were cursed by *Isildur* for breaking their oath of allegiance to him.

**Dúnhere:**—*Rider of Rohan*, Lord of *Harrowdale*; fought at the *Fords of Isen* and at the *Pelennor Fields*, where he was slain.

**Dunland:**—A country about the west-skirts of the *Misty Mountains* at their far southern end, inhabited by the *Dunlendings*.



**Dunlendings:**—Inhabitants of *Dunland*, remnants of an old race of *Men* that once lived in the valleys of *Ered Nimrais*; akin to the *Dead Men of Dunharrow* and to the *Bree*-landers. *The Dunlending*, *Saruman's* agent, the 'squint-eyed southerner' in the inn at *Bree*. Adjectives *Dunlending*, and *Dunlendish*.

**Durin I:**—Eldest of the *Seven Fathers of the Dwarves* and Lord of the *Dwarves* of *Khazad-dûm* (*Moria*). *Heir of Durin*, *Thorin Oakenshield*. *Durin's Folk*; *Durin's House*, *House of Durin*.

**Dwarf-road:**

—(i) The road leading down into *Beleriand* from the cities of *Nogrod* and *Belegost* and crossing *Gelion* at the ford of *Sarn Athrad*.

—(ii) Translating *Men-i-Naugrim*, a name of the *Old Forest Road* (see *Roads*).

**Dwarrowdelf:**—'Delving of the *Dwarves*'; translation of *Khazad-dûm* (*Hadhodrond*).

**Dwarves:**—See *Children of Aulë*. Referring to the *Petty-dwarves*: *Seven Fathers of the Dwarves*: For the *Necklace of the Dwarves* see *Nauglamír*. For the *Seven Rings of the Dwarves* see *Rings of Power*. See also *Naugrim*.

**\*Dweller in the Deep, of the Deep:**—See *Ulmo*.

**Dwimordene:**—'Phantom-vale', name of *Lorien* among the *Rohirrim*.



**Eä:**—The World, the material Universe; *Eä*, meaning in *Elvish* ‘It is’ or ‘Let it be’, was the word of *Ilúvatar* when the World began its existence.

**Eagles:**—Of the Crissaegrim. Of *Númenor*; see also *Witnesses of Manwë*. With reference to *Gwaihir*, who rescued *Gandalf* from *Orthanc*.

**\*Eambar:**—Ship built by *Tar-Aldarion* for his dwelling-place, on which was the Guildhouse of the *Venturers*. (The name doubtless means ‘Sea-dwelling’.)

**Eärendil:**—Called ‘*Halfelven*’, ‘the Blessed’, ‘the Bright’, and ‘the Mariner’; son of *Tuor* and *Idril Turgon’s* daughter; escaped from the sack of *Gondolin* and wedded *Elwing* daughter of *Dior* at the Mouths of *Sirion*; sailed with her to *Aman* and pleaded for help against *Morgoth*; set to sail the skies in his ship *Vingilot* bearing the *Silmaril* that *Beren* and *Lúthien* brought out of *Angband*. The name means ‘Lover of the Sea’. *The Stone of Eärendil*, the *Elessar*.

**\*Eärendur (1):**—Younger brother of *Tar-Elendil*, born in the year 361 of the Second Age.

**Eärendur (2):**—Fifteenth *Lord of Andúnië* in *Númenor*, brother of *Lindórië*, grand-mother of *Tar-Palantir*.

**Eärendur (3):**—Tenth King of *Arnor*.

**Eärnil II:**—Thirty-second King of *Gondor*, victor over the *Haradrim* and the *Wainriders* in Third Age 1944.

**Eärnur:**—Son of *Eärnil II*; thirty-third and last King of *Gondor*, in whom the line of *Anárion* came to its end. Died in *Minas Morgul*.

**Eärrámë:**—‘Sea-wing’, the name of *Tuor’s* ship.

**Eärwen:**—Daughter of King *Olwë* of *Alqualondë*, *Thingol’s* brother; wife of *Finarfin*, and mother of *Finrod*, *Orodreth*, *Angrod*, *Aegnor*, and *Galadriel*.

**\*East Bight:**—The great indentation in the eastern border of *Mirkwood*. See *Narrows of the Forest*.

**East Road, East-West Road:**—See *Roads*.

### **Easterlings:**

—(i) In the First Age, *Men* who entered *Beleriand* in the time after the *Dagor Bragollach*, fought on both sides in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*, and were afterwards given *Hithlum* as a dwelling-place by *Morgoth*, where they oppressed the remnant of the People of *Hador*. Called in *Hithlum* *Incomers*.

—(ii) In the Third Age, a general term for the waves of *Men* driving in upon *Gondor* from the eastern regions of *Middle-earth* (see *Wainriders*, *Balchoth*).

**Eastfarthing:**—One of the divisions of the *Shire*.

**Eastfold:**—A part of *Rohan* on the northern slopes of *Ered Nimrais*, east of *Edoras*. (The element *fold* is derived from Anglo-Saxon *folde* ‘earth, ground, land, region’, as also in *The Folde*.)

**East-mark:**—The eastern half of *Rohan* in the military organisation of the *Rohirrim*, bounded from the *West-mark* by the *Snowbourn* and the *Entwash*. *Marshal of the East-mark*; *Muster of the East-mark*.

**\*Echad i Sedryn:**—(also *the Echad*) ‘Camp of the Faithful’, name given to *Mîm’s* house on *Amon Rûdh*.

**Echoing Mountains:**—See *Ered Lómin*.

**Echoriath:**—‘The *Encircling Mountains*’ encircling *Tumladen*, the plain of *Gondolin*. *Ered en Echoriath*; the *Encircling Mountains*; *Mountains of Turgon*.

**Ecthelion (1):**—*Elf* of *Gondolin*, called Lord of the Fountains and Warden of the Great Gate, who in the sack of the city slew and was slain by *Gothmog* Lord of *Balrogs*.

**Ecthelion (2):**—Twenty-fifth Ruling *Steward of Gondor*, the second of the name; father of *Denethor II*.

**Edain:**—(Singular *Adan*). The *Men* of the *Three Houses* of the *Elf-friends* (*Quenya Atani*). See *Adanedhel*, *Drúedain*, *Dúnedain*.

**\*Edhellond:**—The ‘Elf-haven’ in *Belfalas* near the confluence of the rivers *Morthond* and *Ringló*, north of *Dol Amroth*. Called *Amroth’s haven*.

**\*Edhelrim, Eledhrim:**—‘The *Elves*’; *Sindarin* *edhel*, *eledh* and collective plural ending *rim* (see Appendix to *The Silmarillion*, entry *êl*, *elen*).

**Edoras:**—‘The Courts’, name in the *Mark-speech* of the royal town of *Rohan* on the northern edge of *Ered Nimrais*. *Muster of Edoras*.

**Edrahil:**—Chief of the *Elves* of *Nargothrond* who accompanied *Finrod* and *Beren* on their quest, and died in the dungeons of *Tol-in-Gaurhoth*.

**Egalmoth:**—Eighteenth Ruling *Steward of Gondor*.

**Eglador:**—The former name of *Doriath*, before it was encompassed by the *Girdle of Melian*; probably connected with the name *Eglath*.

**Eglarest:**—The southernmost of the *Havens* of the *Falas* on the coast of *Beleriand*.

**Eglath:**—‘The Forsaken People’, name given to themselves by the *Telerin Elves* who remained in *Beleriand* seeking for *Elwë* (*Thingol*) when the main host of the *Teleri* departed to *Aman*.

**Eilenach:**—Second of the beacons of *Gondor* in *Ered Nimrais*, the highest point of the *Drúadan Forest*.

**\*Eilenaer:**—Pre-*Númenórean* name (related to *Eilenach*) of *Amon Anwar* (*Halifirien*).

**Eilinel:**—The wife of *Gorlim* the Unhappy.

**Eithel Ivrin:**—‘Ivrin’s Well’, the source of the river *Narog* beneath *Ered Wethrin*.

**Eithel Sirion:**—‘*Sirion’s* Well’, in the eastern face of *Ered Wethrin*, where was the great fortress of *Fingolfin* and *Fingon* (see *Barad Eithel*).

**\*Eket:**—Short broad-bladed sword.

**Ekkaia:**—*Elvish* name of the Outer Sea, encircling *Arda*; referred to also as *the Outer Ocean* and *the Encircling Sea*.

**Elanor (1):**—A small golden star-shaped flower that grew both in *Tol Eressëa* and in *Lothlórien*.

**Elanor (2):**—Daughter of *Samwise Gamgee*, named after the flower.

**\*Elatan of Andúnië:**—*Númenórean*, husband of *Silmarien*, father of *Valandil* first *Lord of Andúnië*.

**Elbereth:**—The usual name of *Varda* in *Sindarin*, ‘Star-Queen’; cf. *Elentári*.

**Eldalië:**—‘The Elven-folk’, equivalent to *Eldar*.

**\*Eldalondë:**—‘Haven of the Eldar’ in the *Bay of Eldanna* at the mouth of the river *Nunduinë* in *Númenor*; called ‘the Green’.

**Eldamar:**—‘Elvenhome’, the region of *Aman* in which the *Elves* dwelt; also the great Bay of the same name.

**\*Eldanna:**—Great bay in the west of *Númenor*, so called ‘because it faced towards *Eressëa*’ (i.e. *Elda(r)*+suffix *-(n)na* of movement towards, cf. *Elenna*, *Rómenna*).

**Eldar:**—According to *Elvish* legend the name *Eldar* ‘People of the Stars’ was given to all the *Elves* by the *Vala Oromë*. It came however to be used to refer only to the *Elves* of the Three Kindreds (*Vanyar*, *Noldor*, and *Teleri*) who set out on the great westward march from *Cuiviénen* (whether or not they remained in *Middle-earth*), and to exclude the *Avári*. The *Elves* of *Aman*, and all *Elves* who ever dwelt in *Aman*, were called the *High Elves* (*Tareldar*) and *Elves* of the Light (*Calaquendi*); see *Dark Elves*, *Úmanyar*. See also entry *Elves*.

**Eldarin:**—Of the *Eldar*; used in reference to the language(s) of the *Eldar*. The occurrences of the term in fact refer to *Quenya*, also called High Eldarin and High-elven; see *Quenya*.

**Elder Children:**—The *Elves*. See *Children of Ilúvatar*.

**Elder Days:**—The First Age; also called *the Eldest Days*.

**Elder King:**—See *Manwë*. (Title claimed by *Morgoth*.)

**\*Eledhrim:**—See *Edhelrim*.

**Eledhwen:**—‘Elfsheen’; see *Morwen (1)*.

**\*Elemmakil:**—*Elf* of *Gondolin*, captain of the guard of the outer gate.

**Elemmirë (1):**—Name of a star.

**Elemmirë (2):**—*Vanyarin Elf*, maker of the *Aldudënië*, the Lament for the *Two Trees*.

**Elendë:**—A name of *Eldamar*.

**Elendil:**—Son of *Amandil*, last *Lord of Andúnië*, descended from *Eärendil* and *Elwing* but not of the direct line of the Kings of *Númenor*; escaped with his sons *Isildur* and *Anárion* from the Drowning of *Númenor* and founded the *Númenórean* realms in *Middle-earth*; slain with *Gil-galad* in the otherthrow of *Sauron* at the end of the Second Age. Called *the Tall* and *the Faithful* (*Voronda*). The name may be interpreted either as ‘Elf-friend’ (cf. *Elendili*) or as ‘Star-lover’. *Heir(s) of Elendil*, *House of Elendil*. *Star of Elendil*, see *Elendilmir*. *The Elendil Stone*, the *palantír* of *Eryn Beraid*.

**Elendili:**—‘*Elf-friends*’, name given to those *Númenóreans* who were not estranged from the *Eldar* in the days of *Tar-Ancalimon* and later kings; also called *the Faithful*.

**Elendilmir:**—The white gem borne as the token of royalty on the brows of the Kings of *Arnor* (for the two jewels of this name). *Star of Elendil*, *Star of the North*, *of the North-kingdom*.

**Elendur:**—Eldest son of *Isildur*, slain with him at the *Gladden Fields*.

**Elenna:**—A (*Quenya*) name of *Númenor*, ‘Starwards’, from the guidance of the *Edain* by *Eärendil* on their voyage to *Númenor* at the beginning of the Second Age.

**\*Elenna-nórë:**—‘The land named Starwards’, *Númenor*; fuller form of the name *Elenna* found in *The Silmarillion* and *The Lord of the Rings*.

**Elentári:**—‘Star-Queen’, a name of *Varda* as maker of the Stars. She is called thus in *Galadriel’s* lament in *Lorien*, *The Fellowship of the Ring* II 8. Cf. *Elbereth*, *Tintallë*.

**\*Elentirmo:**—‘Star-watcher’, name of *Tar-Meneldur*.

**Elenwë:**—Wife of *Turgon*; perished in the crossing of the *Helcaraxë*.

**Elerrína:**—‘Crowned with Stars’, a name of *Taniquetil*.

**Elessar (1):**—A great green jewel of healing power made in *Gondolin* for *Idril Turgon’s* daughter, who gave it to *Eärendil* her son; the *Elessar* that *Arwen* gave to *Aragorn* being either *Eärendil’s* jewel returned or another. *The Stone of Eärendil*, *the Elfstone*.

**Elessar (2):**—The name foretold for *Aragorn* by *Olórin*, and the name in which he became King of the reunited realm. *The Elfstone*.

**\*Elestirnë:**—See *Tar-Elestirnë*.

**Elf-friends:**—The *Men* of the *Three Houses* of *Bëor*, *Halet*, and *Hador*, the *Edain*. In the *Akallabêth* and in *Of the Rings of Power* used of those *Númenóreans* who were not estranged from the *Eldar*; see *Atani*, *Edain*, *Elendili*.

**Elfhelm:**—*Rider of Rohan*; with *Grimbold* leader of the *Rohirrim* at the Second *Battle of the Fords of Isen*; routed the invaders of *Anórien*; under King *Éomer* Marshal of the *East-mark*.

**Elfstone:**—See *Elessar* (1) and (2).

**Elfwine the Fair:**—Son of *Éomer* King of *Rohan* and *Lothíriel*, daughter of *Imrahil* Prince of *Dol Amroth*.

**\*Elmo:**—*Elf* of *Doriath*, younger brother of *Elwë* (*Thingol*) and *Olwë* of *Alqualondë*; according to one account grandfather of *Celeborn*.

**Elostirion:**—Tallest of the White Towers on *Emyn Beraid*, in which was placed the *palantír* called the *Elendil* Stone.

**Elrond:**—Son of *Eärendil* and *Elwing*, brother of *Elros Tar-Minyatur*; at the end of the First Age chose to belong to the *Firstborn*, and remained in *Middle-earth* until the end of the Third Age; master of *Imladris* (*Rivendell*), and keeper of *Vilya*, the Ring of Air, which he received from *Gil-galad*. The name means ‘Star-dome’. Called *Master Elrond* and *Elrond Halfelven*. See *Council of Elrond*.

**Elros:**—Son of *Eärendil* and *Elwing*, brother of *Elrond*; at the end of the First Age chose to be numbered among *Men*, and became the first King of *Númenor* (called *Tar-Minyatur*), living to a very great age. The name means ‘Star-foam’. *The Line of Elros, descendants of Elros*.

**Elu Thingol:**—*Sindarin* form of *Elwë Singollo*. See *Thingol*.

**Eluchíl:**—‘Heir of *Elu* (*Thingol*)’, name of *Dior*, son of *Beren* and *Lúthien*. See *Dior*.

**Eluréd:**—Elder son of *Dior*; perished in the attack on *Doriath* by the sons of *Fëanor*. The name means the same as *Eluchíl*.

**Elurín:**—Younger son of *Dior*; perished with his brother *Eluréd*. The name means ‘Remembrance of *Elu* (*Thingol*)’.

**Elvenhome:**—See *Eldamar*.

**Elves:**—See *Children of Ilúvatar*, *Eldar*, *Dark Elves*. *Elves of the Light*: see *Calaquendi*. *Elves’ New Year*.

**Elwë:**—Surnamed *Singollo*, ‘Grey mantle’; leader with his brother *Olwë* of the hosts of the *Teleri* on the westward journey from *Cuiviénen*, until he was lost in *Nan Elmoth*; afterwards Lord of the *Sindar*, ruling in *Doriath* with *Melían*; received the *Silmaril* from *Beren*; slain in *Menegroth* by the *Dwarves*. Called (*Elu*) *Thingol* in *Sindarin*. See *Dark Elves*, *Thingol*.

**Elwing:**—Daughter of *Dior*, who escaping from *Doriath* with the *Silmaril* wedded *Eärendil* at the Mouths of *Sirion* and went with him to *Valinor*; mother of *Elrond* and *Elros*. The name means ‘Star-spray’; see *Lanthir Lamath*.

**Emeldir:**—Called the Man-hearted; wife of *Barahir* and mother of *Beren*; led the women and children of the House of *Bëor* from *Dorthonion* after the *Dagor Bragollach*. (She was herself also a descendant of *Bëor the Old*, and her father’s name was *Beren*; this is not stated in the text.)

**\*Emerië:**—Region of sheep pasturage in the *Mittalmar* (Inlands) of *Númenor*. *The White Lady of Emerië, Erendis*.

**\*Emerwen (Aranel):**—‘(Princess) Shepherdess’, name given to *Tar-Ancalimë* in her youth.

**Emyn Beraid:**—Hills in the west of *Eriador* on which were built the White Towers. Translated *Tower Hills*. See *Elostirion*.

**\*Emyn Duir:**—‘Dark Mountains’, the Mountains of *Mirkwood*. See *Emyn-nu-Fuin*.



**Emyn Muil:**—‘Drear Hills’, folded, rocky, and (especially on the east side) barren hill-country about Nen Hithoel (‘Mist-cool Water’) above *Rauros* falls.

**\*Emyn-nu-Fuin:**—‘Mountains under Night’, later name of the Mountains of *Mirkwood*. See *Emyn Duir*.

**Enchanted Isles:**—The islands set by the *Valar* in the *Great Sea* eastwards of *Tol Eressëa*, at the time of the *Hiding of Valinor*. See *Shadowy Isles*.

**Encircling Mountains:**—The mountains encircling *Tumladen*, the plain of *Gondolin*. See *Echoriath*.

**Encircling Sea:**—See *Ekkaia*.

**Endor:**—‘Middle Land’, *Middle-earth*.

**Enedwaith:**—‘Middle-folk’, between the rivers *Greyflood* (*Gwathló*) and *Isen*.

**Enemy, (The):**—Name given to *Morgoth*; and to *Sauron*.

**\*Enerdhil:**—Jewel-smith of *Gondolin*.

**Engwar:**—‘The Sickly’, one of the *Elvish* names for *Men*.

**Ents:**—See *Enyd*, *Onodrim*.

**Entulessë:**—‘Return’, the ship in which *Vëantur* the *Númenórean* achieved the first voyage to *Middle-earth*.

**Entwade:**—Ford over the *Entwash*.

**Entwash:**—River flowing through *Rohan* from *Fangorn Forest* to the Nindalf. See *Onodló*.

**Entwood:**—Name in *Rohan* of *Fangorn Forest*.

**Enyd:**—*Sindarin* name for *Ents* (plural of *Onod*, see *Onodló*, *Onodrim*).

**\*Eofor:**—Third son of *Brego* the second king of *Rohan*; ancestor of *Éomer*.

**\*Éoherë:**—Term used by the *Rohirrim* for the full muster of their cavalry (for the meaning see p. 408.)

**Éöl:**—Called the *Dark Elf*; the great smith who dwelt in *Nan Elmoth*, and took *Aredhel Turgon’s* sister to wife; friend of the *Dwarves*; maker of the sword *Anglachel* (*Gurthang*); father of *Maeglin*; put to death in *Gondolin*.

**Éomer:**—Nephew and fosterson of King *Théoden*; at the time of the *War of the Ring* Third Marshal of the Mark; after *Théoden’s* death eighteenth King of *Rohan*; friend of King *Elessar*.

**\*Éomund (1):**—Chief captain of the host of the *Éothéod* at the time of the Ride of *Eorl*.

**Éomund (2):**—Chief Marshal of the Mark of *Rohan*; wedded *Théodwyn* sister of *Théoden*; father of *Éomer* and *Éowyn*.

**Éönwë:**—One of the mightiest of the *Maia*r, called the Herald of *Manwë*; leader of the host of the *Valar* in the attack on *Morgoth* at the end of the First Age.

**Éored:**—A body of the *Riders* of the *Éothéod*.

**Eorl the Young:**—Lord of the *Éothéod*; rode from his land in the far North to the aid of *Gondor* against the invasion of the *Balchoth*; received *Calenardhon* in gift from *Cirion Steward of Gondor*; first King of *Rohan*. Called *Lord of the Éothéod*, *Lord of the Riders*, *Lord of the Rohirrim*, *King of Calenardhon*, *King of the Mark of the Riders*. *Chronicle of*, *Tale of*, *Cirion and Eorl*; *Oath of Eorl*; words of the oath.

**Eorlings:**—The people of *Eorl*, the *Rohirrim*; with Anglo-Saxon plural ending, *Eorlingas*.

**Éothéod:**—Name of the people afterwards called the *Rohirrim*, and also of their land (see p. 408). *Riders*, *Horsemen, of the North*.

**Éowyn:**—Sister of *Éomer*, wife of *Faramir*; slayer of the *Lord of the Nazgûl* in the *Battle of the Pelennor Fields*.

**\*Epessë:**—An ‘after-name’ received by one of the *Eldar* in addition to the given names (*essi*).

**Ephel Brandir**:—‘The encircling fence of *Brandir*’, dwellings of the *Men of Brethil* upon *Amon Obel*; also called *the Ephel*.

**Ephel Dúath**:—‘Fence of Shadow’, the mountain-range between *Gondor* and *Mordor*; also called *the Mountains of Shadow*.

**Erchamion**:—See *Beren (I)*.

**Erebor**:—An isolated mountain to the east of the northernmost parts of *Mirkwood*, where was the Kingdom of the *Dwarves* under the Mountain and the lair of *Smaug*. *The Lonely Mountain*.

**Erech**:—A hill in the west of *Gondor*, where was the Stone of *Isildur*.

**Ered Engrin**:—‘The Iron Mountains’ in the far north.

**Ered Gorgoroth**:—‘The Mountains of Terror’, the vast precipices northward of *Nan Dungortheb* in which *Taur-nu-Fuin* fell southward; also called *the Gorgoroth*.

**Ered Lindon**:—‘The Mountains of *Lindon*’, another name for *Ered Luin*, the *Blue Mountains*.

**Ered Lithui**:—‘Ash Mountains’, forming the northern border of *Mordor*.

**Ered Lómin**:—‘Echoing Mountains’, forming the west-fence of *Hithlum*. *The Echoing Mountains of Lammoth*.

**Ered Luin**:—The great mountain-chain (also called *Ered Lindon*) separating *Beleriand* from *Eriador* in the *Elder Days*, and after the destruction at the end of the First Age forming the north-western coastal range of *Middle-earth*. Translated *the Blue Mountains*; called *the Western Mountains*.

**Ered Mithrin**:—‘Grey Mountains’, extending from east to west north of *Mirkwood*.

**Ered Nimrais**:—The *White Mountains* (*nimrais*, ‘white horns’), the great range from east to west south of the *Misty Mountains*.

**Ered Wethrin**:—The great curving mountain-range bordering *Anfauglith* (*Ard-galen*) on the west and on the south forming the barrier between *Hithlum* and West *Beleriand*. Translated *Mountains of Shadow* and *Shadowy Mountains*.

**Eregion**:—‘Land of Holly’ (called by *Men Hollin*); *Noldorin* realm in the Second Age by *Galadriel* and *Celeborn*, in close association with *Khazad-dûm*, at the western feet of the *Misty Mountains*; where the *Elven Rings* were made. Destroyed by *Sauron*.

**Ereinion**:—‘Scion of Kings’, the son of *Fingon*, known always by his surname *Gil-galad*.

**Erelas**:—Fourth of the beacons of *Gondor* in *Ered Nimrais*. (Probably a pre-*Númenórean* name; although the name is *Sindarin* in style it has no suitable meaning in that language. ‘It was a green hill without trees, so that neither *er*, ‘single’ nor *las(s)* ‘leaf’ seem applicable.’)

**Erellont**:—One of the three mariners who accompanied *Eärendil* on his voyages.

**\*Erendis**:—Wife of *Tar-Aldarion* (‘the Mariner’s Wife’), between whom there was great love that turned to hatred; mother of *Tar-Ancalimë*. Called *the Lady of the Westlands* and *the White Lady of Emerië*; see also *Tar-Elestirne* and *Uinéniel*.

**Eressëa**:—‘The Lonely Isle’ in the Bay of *Eldamar*. See *Tol Eressëa*.

**Eriador**:—The land between the *Misty Mountains* and the *Blue*, in which lay the Kingdom of *Arnor* (and also the *Shire* of the *Hobbits*).

**Erkenbrand**:—*Rider of Rohan*, Master of *Westfold* and the *Hornburg*; under King *Éomer* Marshal of the *Westmark*.

**Eru**:—‘The One’, ‘He that is Alone’: *Ilúvatar*. (*Eru Ilúvatar*), *The One*. *The Hallow of Eru* on the *Meneltarma*. Also in *Children of Eru*.

**\*Eruhantalë**:—‘Thanksgiving to *Eru*’, the autumn feast in *Númenor*.

**\*Erukermë:**—‘Prayer to *Eru*’, the spring feast in *Númenor*.

**\*Erulaitälë:**—‘Praise of *Eru*’, the midsummer feast in *Númenor*.

**\*Eryn Galen:**—The great forest usually given the translated name *Greenwood the Great*.

**Eryn Lasgalen:**—‘Wood of Greenleaves’, name given to *Mirkwood* after the *War of the Ring*.

**\*Eryn Vorn:**—‘Dark Wood’, the great cape on the coast of *Minhiriath* south of the mouth of the *Baranduin*.

**Esgalduin:**—The river of *Doriath*, dividing the forests of *Neldoreth* and *Region*, and flowing into *Sirion*. The name means ‘River under Veil’.

**Estë:**—One of the *Valier*, the spouse of *Irmo* (*Lórien*); her name means ‘Rest’.

**\*Estelmo:**—*Elendur*’s esquire, who survived the disaster of the *Gladden Fields*.

**Estolad:**—The land south of *Nan Elmoth* in East *Beleriand* where the *Men* of the followings of *Bëor* and *Marach* dwelt after they had crossed the *Blue Mountains*; translated in the text as ‘the Encampment’.

**Ethir Anduin:**—‘Outflow of *Anduin*’, the delta of the *Great River* in the *Bay of Belfalas*.

**\*Ethraid Engrin:**—*Sindarin* name (also in singular form *Athrad Angren*) of the *Fords of Isen*.

**Evendim:**—See *Nenuial*.

**Evermind:**—See *simbelmynë*.

**\*Evil Breath:**—A wind out of *Angband* that brought sickness to *Dor-lómin*, from which *Túrin*’s sister *Urwen* (*Lalaith*) died.

**Exiles, (The):**—The *Noldor* who rebelled against the *Valar* and returned to *Middle-earth* from *Aman*.

**Ezellohar:**—The Green Mound of the *Two Trees of Valinor*; also called *Corollairë*.





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**Faelivrin:**—Name given to *Finduilas* by *Gwindor*.

**Fair Folk:**—The *Eldar*.

**Faithful, (The):**

—(i) Those *Númenóreans* who were not estranged from the *Eldar* and continued to reverence the *Valar* in the days of *Tar-Ancalimon* and later kings.

—(ii) ‘The Faithful’ of the Fourth Age. See *Elendili*.

**Falas:**—The western coasts of *Beleriand*, south of *Nevrast*. *Havens of the Falas*.

**Falastur:**—‘Lord of the Coasts’, name of *Tarannon*, twelfth King of *Gondor*.

**Falathar:**—One of the three mariners who accompanied *Eärendil* on his voyages.

**Falathrim:**—The *Telerin Elves* of the *Falas*, whose lord was *Círdan*.

**Fallohides:**—One of the three peoples into which the *Hobbits* were divided, described in the *Prologue (1)* to *The Lord of the Rings*.

**Falmari:**—The Sea-*elves*; name of the *Teleri* who departed from *Middle-earth* and went into the West.

**Fangorn:**

—(i) The oldest of the *Ents* and the guardian of *Fangorn Forest*. Translated *Treebeard*.

—(ii) The Forest of Fangorn, at the south-eastern end of the *Misty Mountains*, about the upper waters of the rivers *Entwash* and *Limlight*. See *Entwood*.

**Far Harad:**—See *Harad*.

**Faramir (1):**—Younger son of *Ondoher* King of *Gondor*; slain in battle with the *Wainriders*.

**Faramir (2):**—Younger son of *Denethor II*, *Steward of Gondor*; Captain of the Rangers of *Ithilien*; after the *War of the Ring* Prince of *Ithilien* and *Steward of Gondor*.

**Faroath:**—See *Taur-en-Faroath*.

**Fëanor:**—Eldest son of *Finwë* (the only child of *Finwë* and *Míriel*), half-brother of *Fingolfin* and *Finarfin*; greatest of the *Noldor*, and leader in their rebellion; deviser of the Fëanorian script; maker of the *Silmarils* and of the *palantíri*; slain in *Mithrim* in the Dagornuin-Giliath soon after his return to *Middle-earth*. His name was *Curufinwë* (*curu* ‘skill’), and he gave this name to his fifth son, *Curufin*; but he was himself known always by his mother’s name for him, *Fëanáro* ‘Spirit of Fire’, which was given the *Sindarin* form *Fëanor*. See *Sons of Fëanor*.

**Fëanturi:**—‘Masters of Spirits’, the *Valar Námo* (*Mandos*) and *Irmo* (*Lórien*). See *Nurufantur*, *Olofantur*.

**Felagund:**—The name by which King *Finrod* was known after the establishment of *Nargothrond*; it was *Dwarvish* in origin (*felak-gundu* ‘cave-hewer’, but translated in the text as ‘Lord of Caves’). See *Finrod*.

**Felaráf:**—The horse of *Eorl the Young*.

**Fellowship of the Ring, The:**—The Nine Walkers who set out from *Rivendell* after the *Council of Elrond*: the *Hobbits Frodo Baggins*, *Samwise Gamgee*, *Meriadoc Brandybuck* and *Peregrin Took*; the dwarf *Gimli*; the *Elf Legolas*; the *Men Aragorn* and *Boromir*; and the *Wizard Gandalf*.

**Fell Winter:**—The winter of the year 495 from the rising of the Moon, after the fall of *Nargothrond*.

**Fenmarch:**—Region of *Rohan* west of the Mering Stream.

**Ferny:**—A family of *Men* in *Bree*. *Bill Ferny*.

**Field of *Celebrant*:**—Partial translation of *Parth Celebrant*. The grasslands between the rivers *Silverlode* (*Celebrant*) and *Limlight*; in restricted sense of *Gondor*, the land between the lower *Limlight* and *Anduin*. *Field of Celebrant* is often used of the *Battle of the Field of Celebrant*, the victory of *Cirion* and *Eorl* over the *Balchoth* in Third Age 2510, references to which are included here. (*Celebrant*).

**Fili:**—*Dwarf* of the *House of Durin*; nephew and companion of *Thorin Oakenshield*; slain in the Battle of Five Armies.

**Finarfin:**—Third son of *Finwë*, the younger of *Fëanor's* half-brothers; remained in *Aman* after the Flight of the *Noldor* and ruled the remnant of his people in *Tirion*; father of *Finrod Felagund*, *Orodreth*, *Angrod*, *Aegnor*, and *Galadriel*. Alone among the *Noldorin* princes he and his descendants had golden hair, derived from his mother *Indis*, who was a *Vanyarin Elf* (see *Vanyar*). Many other occurrences of the name of *Finarfin* relate to his house, kin, people, or children.

**Finduilas (1):**—Daughter of *Orodreth*, second King of *Nargothrond*; loved by *Gwindor*; captured in the sack of *Nargothrond*, killed by *Orcs* at the *Crossings of Teiglin* and buried in the *Haudh-en-Elleth*.

**Finduilas (2):**—Daughter of *Adrahil*, Prince of *Dol Amroth*; wife of *Denethor II*, *Steward of Gondor*, mother of *Boromir* and *Faramir*.

**Fingolfin:**—Second son of *Finwë*, the elder of *Fëanor's* half-brothers; High King of the *Noldor* in *Beleriand*, dwelling in *Hithlum*; slain by *Morgoth* in single combat; father of *Fingon*, *Turgon*, and *Aredhel*. Many other occurrences of the name of *Fingolfin* relate to his sons or his people.

**Fingon:**—The eldest son of *Fingolfin*, called the Valiant; rescued *Maedhros* from *Thangorodrim*; High King of the *Noldor* after the death of his father; father of *Gil-galad*; slain by *Gothmog* in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

**Finrod:**—The eldest son of *Finarfin*, called ‘the Faithful’ and ‘the Friend of *Men*’. Founder and King of *Nargothrond*, whence his name *Felagund*; encountered in *Ossiriand* the first *Men* to cross the *Blue Mountains*; rescued by *Barahir* in the *Dagor Bragollach*; redeemed his oath to *Barahir* by accompanying *Beren* on his quest; slain in defence of *Beren* in the dungeons of *Tol-in-Gaurhoth*.

**Finwë:**—Leader of the *Noldor* on the westward journey from *Cuiviénen*; King of the *Noldor* in *Aman*; father of *Fëanor*, *Fingolfin*, and *Finarfin*; slain by *Morgoth* at *Formenos*. Other references are to his sons or his house.

**Firien Wood:**—In full *Halifirien Wood*; in *Ered Nimrais* about the Mering Stream and on the slopes of the *Halifirien*. Also called *Firienholt*; *the Whispering Wood*; and *the Wood of Anwar*.

\***Firien-dale:**—Cleft in which the Mering Stream rose.

\***Firienholt:**—Another name for the *Firien Wood*, of the same meaning.

**Fírimar:**—‘Mortals’, one of the *Elvish* names for *Men*.

**Firstborn, (The):**—The Elder *Children of Ilúvatar*, the *Elves*.

**Firth of Drengist:**—See *Drengist*.

**Flet:**—Old English word meaning ‘floor’; a *talán*.

**Folcwine:**—Fourteenth King of *Rohan*, great-grandfather of *Théoden*; reconquered the west-march of *Rohan* between *Adorn* and *Isen*.

**Folde:**—A region of *Rohan* about *Edoras*, part of the King’s Lands.

**Followers, (The):**—The Younger *Children of Ilúvatar*, *Men*; translation of *Hildor*.

**Ford of Carrock:**—Ford over *Anduin* between the *Carrock* and the east bank of the river; but probably here referring to the *Old Ford*, where the *Old Forest Road* crossed *Anduin*, south of the Ford of *Carrock*.

**Ford of Stones:**—See *Sarn Athrad*.

**Fords of Aros:**—See *Arossiach*.

**Fords of Isen:**—Crossing of the *Isen* by the great *Númenórean* road linking *Gondor* and *Arnor*; called in *Sindarin Athrad Angren* and *Ethraid Engrin*; see also *Battles of the Fords of Isen*.

**Fords of the Poros:**—Crossing of the *River Poros* on the *Harad* Road.

**Forest River:**—River flowing from *Ered Mithrin* through northern *Mirkwood* and into the Long Lake.

**Forest Road:**—See *Roads*.

**Formenos:**—‘Northern Fortress’, the stronghold of *Fëanor* and his sons in the north of *Valinor*, built after the banishment of *Fëanor* from *Tirion*.

**Fornost:**—‘Northern Fortress’, in full *Fornost Erain* ‘Norbury of the Kings’; *Númenórean* city on the North Downs in *Eriador* and later seat of the Kings of *Arnor* after the abandonment of Annúminas.

\***Forostar:**—The northern promontory of *Númenor*. Translated *the Northlands, the north country*.

**Forsaken Elves:**—See *Eglath*.

\***Forthwini:**—Son of *Marhwini*; leader of the *Éothéod* in the time of King *Ondoher* of *Gondor*.

\***Forweg:**—*Man* of *Dor-lómin*, captain of the outlaw-band (*Gaurwaith*) that *Túrin* joined; slain by *Túrin*.

**Fréaláf:**—Tenth King of *Rohan*, nephew of *King Helm Hammerhand*.

**Freca:**—A vassal of *King Helm Hammerhand*, slain by him.

\***Free Men of the North:**—See *Northmen*.

**Frodo Baggins:**—*Hobbit* of the *Shire*; the Ringbearer in the *War of the Ring*.

**Frumgar:**—Leader of the northward migration of the *Éothéod* out of the Vales of *Anduin*.

**Fuinur:**—A renegade *Númenórean* who became mighty among the *Haradrim* at the end of the Second Age.



**Gabilgathol:**—See *Belegost*.

\***Galadhon:**—Father of *Celeborn*.

**Galadhrim:**—The *Elves* of *Lorien*.

\***Galador:**—First Lord of *Dol Amroth*, son of Imrazôr the *Númenórean* and the *Elf Mithrellas*.

**Galadriel:**—Daughter of *Finarfin* and sister of *Finrod Felagund*; one of the leaders of the *Noldorin* rebellion against the *Valar*; wife of *Celeborn* of *Doriath*, with whom she remained in *Middle-earth* after the end of the First Age; keeper of Nenya, the Ring of Water, in *Lothlórien*. Lady of *Lothlórien*. Called *Lady of the Noldor*, *Lady of the Golden Wood*, *the White Lady*; see also *Al(a)táriel*, *Artanis*, *Nerwen*.

\***Galathil:**—Brother of *Celeborn* and father of Nimloth the mother of *Elwing*.

**Galathilion:**—The White Tree of *Tirion*, the image of *Telperion* made by *Yavanna* for the *Vanyar* and the *Noldor*.

**Galdor:**—Called *the Tall*; son of *Hador* Goldenhead and Lord of *Dor-lómin* after him; father of *Húrin* and *Huor*; slain at *Eithel Sirion*.

**Galvorn:**—The metal devised by *Eöl*.

**Gamgee:**—A family of *Hobbits* of the *Shire*. See *Elanor (2)*, *Hamfast*, *Samwise*.

\***Gamil Zirak:**—Called *the Old*; *Dwarf* smith, master of *Telchar* of *Nogrod*.

**Gandalf:**—The name among *Men* of *Mithrandir*, one of the *Istari* (*Wizards*), member of the *Fellowship of the Ring*. *Gandalf* ('*Elf* of the Wand') was his name among *Northern Men*. See *Olórin*, *Mithrandir*, *Incánus*, *Tharkûn*, *Greyhame*.

**Gap of Calenardhon:**—See *Rohan*, *Gap of Rohan*.

**Gap of Rohan, the Gap:**—The opening, some 20 miles wide, between the last end of the *Misty Mountains* and the north-thrust spur of the *White Mountains*, through which flowed the *river Isen*. *Gap of Calenardhon*.

**Gate of the Noldor:**—See *Annon-in-Gelydh*.

\***Gates of Mordor:**—See *Morannon*.

**Gates of Summer:**—A great festival of *Gondolin*, on the eve of which the city was assaulted by the forces of *Morgoth*.

\***Gaurwaith:**—The outlaw-band on the western borders of *Doriath* that *Túrin* joined, and of which he became the captain. Translated *Wolf-men*.

**Gelion:**—The great river of East *Beleriand*, rising in *Himring* and Mount *Rerir* and fed by the rivers of *Ossiriand* flowing down from the *Blue Mountains*.

**Gelmir (1):**—*Elf* of *Nargothrond*, brother of *Gwindor*, captured in the *Dagor Bragollach* and afterwards put to death in front of *Eithel Sirion*, as a provocation to its defenders, before the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

**Gelmir (2):**—*Noldorin Elf* of the people of *Angrod*, who with Arminas came upon *Tuor* at *Annon-in-Gelydh* and afterwards went to *Nargothrond* to warn *Orodreth* of its peril.

\***Gethron:**—*Man* of *Húrin's* household who with Grithnir accompanied *Túrin* to *Doriath* and afterwards returned to Dorlómin.

**Ghân-buri-Ghân:**—Chieftain of the *Driedain* or ‘Wild Men’ of *Druadan Forest*. *Ghân*.

**Gildor:**—One of the twelve companions of *Barahir* on *Dorthonion*.

**Gil-Estel:**—‘Star of Hope’, *Sindarin* name for *Eärendil* bearing the *Silmaril* in his ship *Vingilot*.

**Gil-galad:**—‘Star of Radiance’, the name by which Ereinion son of *Fingon* was known. After the death of *Turgon* he became the last High King of the *Noldor* in *Middle-earth*, and remained in *Lindon* after the end of the First Age; leader with *Elendil* of the *Last Alliance* of *Elves* and *Men* and slain with him in combat with *Sauron*. Called *King of the Elves*. *Land of Gil-galad*, *Lindon*. See *Ereinion*.

**\*Gilmith:**—Sister of *Galador*, first Lord of *Dol Amroth*.

**Gilrain:**—River of *Lebennin* in *Gondor* flowing into the *Bay of Belfalas* west of *Ethir Anduin*.

**Gimilkhâd:**—Younger son of *Ar-Gimilzôr* and *Inzilbêth*; father of *Ar-Pharazôn*, last King of *Númenor*.

**\*Gimilzagar:**—Second son of *Tar-Calmacil*.

**Gimli:**—*Dwarf* of the *House of Durin*, son of Glóin; one of the *Fellowship of the Ring*.

**Gimilzôr:**—See *Ar-Gimilzôr*.

**Ginglith:**—River in West *Beleriand* flowing into the *Narog* above *Nargothrond*.

**Girdle of Melian:**—See *Melian*.

**Gladden:**—River flowing down from the *Misty Mountains* and joining *Anduin* at the *Gladden Fields*; translation of *Sindarin* *Sîr Ninglor*.

**Gladden Fields:**—Partial translation of *Sindarin* *Loeg Ningloron*; the great stretches of reed and iris (gladden) where the *Gladden* River joined *Anduin*, where *Isildur* was slain and the One Ring lost.

**Glamdring:**—*Gandalf's* sword.

**Glamhoth:**—*Sindarin* word for *Orcs*.

**Glanduin:**—‘Border-river’, flowing westwards from the *Misty Mountains*; forming in the Second Age the southern boundary of *Eregion* and in the Third a part of the southern boundary of *Arnor*. See *Nin-in-Eilph*.

**\*Glanhîr:**—‘Boundary-stream’, *Sindarin* name of the *Mering Stream*.

**Glaurung:**—The first of the *Dragons* of *Morgoth*; in the *Dagor Bragollach*, the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*, and the sack of *Nargothrond*; cast his spell upon *Túrin* and *Nienor*; slain by *Túrin* at *Cabed-en-Aras*. Called also *the Dragon*. *The (Great) Worm*; *Worm of Morgoth*; *Great Worm of Angband*; *Gold-worm of Angband*.

**Glingal:**—‘Hanging Flame’, the image of *Laurelin* made by *Turgon* in *Gondolin*.

**Glirhuin:**—A minstrel of *Brethil*.

**\*Glithui:**—River flowing down from *Ered Wethrin* and joining *Teiglin* north of the inflow of *Malduin*.

**Glóin:**—*Dwarf* of the *House of Durin*, companion of *Thorin Oakenshield*; father of *Gimli*.

**Glóredhel:**—Daughter of *Hador* Lórindol of *Dor-lómin* and sister of *Galdor*; wedded *Haldir* of *Brethil*.

**Glorfindel (1):**—*Elf* lord of *Gondolin*, who fell to his death in Cirith Thoronath in combat with a *Balrog* after the escape from the sack of the city. The name means ‘Golden-haired’.

**Glorfindel (2):**—*Elf* of *Rivendell*.

**\*Glornan:**—See *Lorien*.

**\*Glæmscrafu:**—‘Caves of Radiance’, name in *Rohan* of *Aglarond*.

**Golden Tree (of Valinor):**—See *Laurelin*.

**Golden Wood:**—See *Lorien*.



**Gollum:**—See *Sméagol*.

**Golodhrim:**—The *Noldor*. Golodh was the *Sindarin* form of *Quenya* Noldo, and -rim a collective plural ending; cf. *Annon-in-Gelydh*, the Gate of the *Noldor*.

**\*Golug:**—*Orc* name for the *Noldor*.

**Gondolin:**—‘The Hidden Rock’ (see *Ondolindë*), secret city of King *Turgon* surrounded by the *Encircling Mountains* (Echoriath). Destroyed by *Morgoth*. Called *the Hidden City*, *the Hidden Kingdom*, and *the Hidden Realm*.

**Gondolindrim:**—The people of *Gondolin*. Called *the Hidden People*.

**Gondor:**—‘Land of Stone’, name of the southern *Númenórean* kingdom in *Middle-earth*, established by *Isildur* and *Anárion*. *City of Gondor*: *Minas Tirith*. *The Southern Realm*, *South Kingdom*, *Kingdom of the South*. *Gondorian(s)* (cf. *Great People of the West*).

**Gonnhirrim:**—‘Masters of Stone’, a *Sindarin* name for the *Dwarves*.

**Gorgoroth (1):**—See *Ered Gorgoroth*.

**Gorgoroth (2):**—A plateau in *Mordor*, between the converging Mountains of Shadow and Mountains of Ash.

**Gorlim:**—Called the Unhappy; one of the twelve companions of *Barahir* on *Dorthonion*, who was ensnared by a phantom of his wife Eilinel and revealed to *Sauron* the hiding-place of *Barahir*.

**Gorthaur:**—The name of *Sauron* in *Sindarin*.

**Gorthol:**—‘Dread Helm’, the name that *Túrin* took as one of the Two Captains in the land of *Dor-Cúarthol*.

**Gothmog:**—Lord of *Balrogs*, high-captain of *Angband*, slayer of *Fëanor*, *Fingon*, and Ecthelion. (The same name was borne in the Third Age by the Lieutenant of *Minas Morgul*; *The Return of the King*.)

**\*Great Captain:**—See *Tar-Aldarion*.

**\*Great Haven:**—See *Lond Daer*.

**\*Great Isle:**—See *Númenor*.

**Great Journey:**—The westward march of the *Eldar* from *Cuiviénen*.

**Great Lands:**—See *Middle-earth*.

**\*Great Middle Haven:**—See *Lond Daer*.

**\*Great Mound:**—See *Haudh-en-Ndengin*.

**Great Plague:**—The plague that spread out of *Rhovanion* into *Gondor* and *Eriador* in Third Age 1636. *The Dark Plague*.

**Great River:**—See *Anduin*. *Vale of the Great River*. Also *Sirion*, *Gelion*.

**Great Road:**—See *Roads*.

**Great Sea:**—See *Belegaer*.

**Great Song:**—The *Music of the Ainur*, in which the *World* was begun.

**Great Worm:**—See *Glaurung*.

**Greater *Gelion*:**—One of the two tributary branches of the river *Gelion* in the north, rising in Mount *Rerir*.

**Green-elves:**—Translation of *Laiquendi*; the *Nandorin Elves* of *Ossiriand*.

**Greenway:**—Name in *Bree* in the later Third Age for the little-used *North-South Road*, especially the stretch near *Bree*. See *Roads*.

**Greenwood (the Great):**—Translation of *Eryn Galen*; the old name of *Mirkwood*, the great forest east of the *Misty Mountains*,

**Grey Havens:**—See *(The) Havens*, *Mithlond*.

**\*Grey Messenger, Grey Pilgrim, Grey Wanderer:**—See *Mithrandir*.

**Grey Mountains:**—See *Ered Mithrin*.

**Grey-elves:**—Name given to the *Eldar* who remained in *Beleriand* and did not cross the *Great Sea* into the West. See *Sindar*.

**Grey-eleven tongue:**—See *Sindarin*.

**Greyflood:**—See *Gwathló*.

**Greyhame:**—‘Greymantle’, *Gandalf’s* name in *Rohan*.

**\*Greylin:**—Name given by the *Éothéod* to a river flowing from *Ered Mithrin* to join *Anduin* near its source. (The second element of the name must be Anglo-Saxon *hlynn*, ‘torrent’, the literal meaning of which was probably ‘the noisy one’.)

**Greymantle:**—See *Singollo*, *Thingol*.

**Gríma:**—Counsellor of King *Théoden* and agent of *Saruman*. Called *(the) Wormtongue*.

**Grimbold:**—*Rider of Rohan*, from *Westfold*; with *Elfhelm* leader of the *Rohirrim* at the Second *Battle of the Fords of Isen*; died on the *Pelessor Fields*.

**Grinding Ice:**—See *Helcaraxë*.

**\*Grithnir:**—*Man* of *Húrin’s* household who with *Gethron* accompanied *Túrin* to *Doriath*, where he died.

**Grond:**—The great mace of *Morgoth*, with which he fought *Fingolfin*; called the Hammer of the Underworld. The battering-ram used against the Gate of *Minas Tirith* was named after it (*The Return of the King*).

**Guarded Plain:**—See *Talath Dirnen*.

**Guarded Realm:**—See *Valinor*; also *Doriath*.

**\*Guild of Venturers:**—See *Venturers*.

**\*Guild of Weaponsmiths:**—(In *Númenor*).

**Gulf of Lhûn:**—See *Lhûn*.

**Guilin:**—*Elf* of *Nargothrond*, father of *Gwindor* and *Gelmir*.

**Gundor:**—Younger son of *Hador Lórindol*, lord of *Dor-lómin*, slain with his father at *Eithel Sirion* in the *Dagor Bragollach*.

**Gurthang:**—‘Iron of Death’, name of *Beleg’s* sword *Anglachel* after it was reforged for *Túrin* in *Nargothrond*, and from which he was named *Mormegil*, *Blacksword*. Called the *Black Thorn of Brethil*.

**Gwaeron:**—*Sindarin* name of the third month ‘in the reckoning of the *Edain*’, the ‘windy month’, March. (With Gwaeron cf. the name of the eagle *Gwaihir*, ‘Windlord’.) See *Súlimë*.

**Gwaihir:**—‘Windlord’, greatest of all the Eagles of the North, who rescued *Gandalf* from *Orthanc*, and with his brother Landroval and Meneldor the swift rescued *Frodo Baggins* and *Samwise Gamgee* from Mount Doom.

**Gwaith-i-Mirdain:**—‘People of the Jewel-smiths’, name of the fellowship of craftsmen in *Eregion*, greatest of whom was *Celebrimbor*; also simply *Mirdain*. *House of the Mirdain*.

**\*Gwathir:**—‘River of Shadow’, earlier name of the *Gwathló*.

**Gwathló:**—River formed by the junction of *Mitheithel* and *Glanduin*, the boundary between *Minhiriath* and *Enedwaith*. In *Westron* called Greyflood. See *Battle of the Gwathló*; *Gwathir*, *Agathurush*.

**Gwindor:**—*Elf* of *Nargothrond*, brother of *Gelmir*; enslaved in *Angband*, but escaped and aided *Beleg* in the rescue of *Túrin*; brought *Túrin* to *Nargothrond*; loved *Finduilas Orodreth’s* daughter; slain in the *Battle of Tumhalad*.



**Hadhodrond:**—The *Sindarin* name of *Khazad-dûm* (*Moria*).

**Hador:**—Called *Lórindol*, ‘Goldenhead’, also Hador the Golden-haired; lord of *Dor-lómin*, vassal of *Fingolfin*; father of *Galdor* father of *Húrin* and *Huor*; slain at *Eithel Sirion* in the *Dagor Bragollach*. The House of Hador was called the Third House of the *Edain*. *House of, people of, kindred of, Hador; son of Hador, Galdor; heir of (the House of) Hador, Túrin. Helm of Hador, see Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin.*

**Haladin:**—The second people of *Men* to enter *Beleriand*; afterwards called *the People of Haleth*, dwelling in the *Forest of Brethil*, also *the Men of Brethil*.

**Haldad:**—Leader of the *Haladin* in their defence against the attack on them by *Orcs* in *Thargelion*, and slain there; father of the *Lady Haleth*.

**Haldan:**—Son of *Haldar*; leader of the *Haladin* after the death of the *Lady Haleth*.

**Haldar:**—Son of *Haldad* of the *Haladin*, and brother of the *Lady Haleth*; slain with his father in the *Orc*-raid on *Thargelion*.

**Haldir:**—Son of *Halmir* of *Brethil*; wedded *Glóredhel* daughter of *Hador* of *Dor-lómin*; slain in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

**Haleth:**—Called the Lady Haleth; leader of the *Haladin* (who were named from her the *People of Haleth*) from *Thargelion* to the lands west of *Sirion*. *House of, People of, Folk of, Men of, Haleth. See Brethil, Halethrim.*

**\*Halethrim:**—The *People of Haleth*.

**Halfelven:**—Translation of *Sindarin* *Peredhel*, plural *Peredhil*, applied to *Elrond* and *Elros*, and to *Eärendil*.

**Halflings:**—*Hobbits*; translation of *Sindarin* *periannath*. *Land of the Halflings; Halflings' Leaf. See Perian.*

**Halifirien:**—‘Holy Mount’, name in *Rohan* of *Amon Anwar*. *Halifirien Wood. See Eilenaer.*

**Halimath:**—The ninth month in the *Shire* Calendar. See *Yavannië, Ivanneth*.

**\*Hallacar:**—Son of *Hallatan* of *Hyarastorni*; wedded *Tar-Ancalimë*, first Ruling Queen of *Númenor*, with whom he was at strife. See *Mámandil*.

**Hallas:**—Son of *Cirion*; thirteenth Ruling *Steward of Gondor*; deviser of the names *Rohan* and *Rohirrim*.

**\*Hallatan:**—Lord of *Hyarastorni* in the *Mittalmar* (Inlands) of *Númenor*; cousin of *Tar-Aldarion*. Called *the Sheep-lord*.

**Halmir:**—Lord of the *Haladin*, father of *Haldir*.

**Halls of Awaiting:**—The Halls of *Mandos*.

**Halmir:**—Lord of the *Haladin*, son of Haldan, father of *Haldir*; with *Beleg* of *Doriath* defeated the *Orcs* that came south from the Pass of *Sirion* after the *Dagor Bragollach*.

**Háma:**—Captain of the household of King *Théoden*.

**Hamfast Gamgee:**—*Sam Gamgee's* father. (The name *Hamfast* is Anglo-Saxon *ham-fæst*, literally ‘home-fixed’, ‘home-firm’.) Called *Gaffer Gamgee* and *the Gaffer*.

**Handir:**—Son of *Haldir* and *Glóredhel*, father of *Brandir* the Lame; lord of the *Haladin* after *Haldir's* death; slain in *Brethil* in battle with *Orcs*.



**Harad:**—‘The South’, used vaguely of countries far south of *Gondor* and *Mordor*. *Near Harad*; *Far Harad*.

**Haradrim:**—The *Men* of *Harad* (‘the South’), the lands south of *Mordor*.

**Haradwaith:**—‘South-folk’, the *Harad*.

**Hareth:**—Daughter of *Halmir* of *Brethil*, wedded *Galdor* of *Dor-lómin*; mother of *Húrin* and *Huor*.

**Harfoots:**—One of the three peoples into which the *Hobbits* were divided (see *Fallohides*).

**Harlindon:**—*Lindon* south of the *Gulf of Lhûn*.

**Harrowdale:**—Valley at the head of the *Snowbourn*, under the walls of *Dunharrow*.

**Hathaldir:**—Called *the Young*; one of the twelve companions of *Barahir* on *Dorthonion*.

**Hathol:**—Father of *Hador Lórindol*.

**\*Hatholdir:**—*Man* of *Númenor*, friend of *Tar-Meneldur*; father of *Orchaldor*.

**Haudh-en-Arwen:**—‘The Ladybarrow’, the burial-mound of *Haleth* in the *Forest of Brethil*.

**Haudh-en-Elleth:**—The mound in which *Finduilas* of *Nargothrond* was buried near the *Crossings of Teiglin*. (It is not clear what relation *Elleth*, rendered ‘Elf-maid’ and always so spelt, bears to *Eledh*, ‘Elda’ seen in *Morwen’s* name *Eledhwen*.) Translated *Mound of the Elfmaid*.

**Haudh-en-Ndengin:**—‘Mound of the Slain’ in the desert of *Anfauglith*, where were piled the bodies of the *Elves* and *Men* that died in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*. *The Great Mound*.

**Haudh-en-Nirnaeth:**—‘Mound of Tears’, another name for *Haudh-en-Ndengin*.

**Havens, (The):**—*Brithombar* and *Eglarest* on the coast of *Beleriand*: The Havens of *Sirion* at the end of the First Age. The *Grey Havens* (*Mithlond*) in the *Gulf of Lhûn*. *Alqualondë*, the *Haven of the Swans* or *Swanhaven*, is also called simply *The Haven*.

**Helcar:**—The Inland Sea in the northeast of *Middle-earth*, where once stood the mountain of the lamp of *Illuin*; the mere of *Cuiviënen* where the first *Elves* awoke is described as a bay in this sea.

**Helcaraxë:**—The strait between *Araman* and *Middle-earth*; also referred to as *the Grinding Ice*.

**Helevorn:**—‘Black Glass’, a lake in the north of *Thargelion*, below Mount *Rerir*, where *Caranthir* dwelt.

**Helluin:**—The star Sirius.

**Helm of Hador:**—See *Dragon-helm of Dor-lómin*.

**Helm:**—King Helm Hammerhand, ninth King of *Rohan*. See *Helm’s Deep*.

**Helm’s Deep:**—A deep gorge near the north-western end of *Ered Nimrais*, at the entrance to which was built the *Hornburg* (see *Pictures by J. R. R. Tolkien*, 1979, no. 26); named after King *Helm*, who took refuge from his enemies there in the *Long Winter* of Third Age 2758-9.

**\*Henderch:**—*Man* from the Westlands of *Númenor*, a mariner of *Tar-Aldarion*.

**Henneth Annûn:**—‘Window of the Sunset’, name of a cave behind a waterfall in *Ithilien*.

**\*Heren Istarion:**—‘Order of *Wizards*’.

**\*Herucalmo:**—Husband of *Tar-Vanimeldë*, the third Ruling Queen of *Númenor*; after her death usurped the throne, taking the name of Tar-Anducal.

**Herumor:**—A renegade *Númenórean* who became mighty among the *Haradrim* at the end of the Second Age.

**Herunúmen:**—‘Lord of the West’, *Quenya* name of *Ar-Adûnakhôr*. See *Tar-Herunúmen*.

**Hidden City:**—See *Gondolin*.

**Hidden Kingdom:**—Name given both to *Gondolin* and to *Doriath*. *Hidden King*, see *Turgon*.

**Hidden People, Hidden Realm:**—See *Gondolindrim*, *Gondolin*.

**High Elves:**—See *Eldar*.

**High Faroth:**—See *Taur-en-Faroth*.

**High Pass:**—See *Cirith Forn en Andrath*.

**High Speech:**—See *Quenya*.

**High-elven:**—See *Quenya*.

**Hildifons Took:**—One of *Bilbo Baggins*' uncles.

**Hildor:**—‘The Followers’, ‘The Aftercomers’, *Elvish* name for *Men*, as the Younger *Children of Ilúvatar*.

**Hildórien:**—The land in the east of *Middle-earth* where the first *Men* (*Hildor*) awoke.

**\*Hill of Anwar, \*Hill of Awe:**—See *Amon Anwar*.

**Himlad:**—‘Cool Plain’, the region where *Celegorm* and *Curufin* dwelt south of the Pass of *Aglon*.

**Himring:**—The great hill west of *Maglor's Gap* on which was the stronghold of *Maedhros*; translated in the text as ‘Ever-cold’.

**\*Hirilondë:**—‘Haven-finder’, great ship built by *Tar-Aldarion*. See *Turuphanto*.

**Hirilorn:**—The great beech-tree in *Doriath* with three trunks, in which *Lúthien* was imprisoned. The name means ‘Tree of the Lady’.

**Hirilómë:**—‘Land of Mist’, *Quenya* name of *Hithlum*.

**Hisimë:**—*Quenya* name of the eleventh month according to the *Númenórean* calendar, corresponding to November. See *Hithui*.

**Hithaeglin:**—‘Line of Misty Peaks’: *Sindarin* name of the *Misty Mountains*, or Mountains of Mist. (The form *Hithaeglin* on the map to *The Lord of the Rings* is an error.)

**Hither Lands:**—*Middle-earth* (also called the *Outer Lands*).

**Hithlum:**—‘Land of Mist’, the region bounded on the east and south by *Ered Wethrin* and on the west by *Ered Lómin*; see *Hirilómë*.

**Hithui:**—*Sindarin* name of the eleventh month. See *Hisimë*.

**Hoarwell:**—See *Mittheithel*.

**Hobbiton:**—Village in the Westfarthing of the *Shire*, home of *Bilbo Baggins*.

**Hobbits:**—Called the *Little People*; see also *Halflings*, *Perian*, *Shire-folk*.

**Hollin:**—See *Eregion*.

**Hollowbold:**—Translation of *Nogrod*: ‘hollow dwelling’ (early English *bold*, noun related to the verb *build*).

**Holman Greenhand:**—*Hobbit* of the *Shire*, *Bilbo Baggins*' gardener.

**\*Holy Mountain:**—See *Meneltarma*. (In *The Silmarillion* the Holy Mountain is *Taniquetil*.)

**Hornburg:**—Fortress in *Rohan* at the entrance to *Helm's Deep*. See *Battle of the Hornburg*; *Aglarond*, *Súthburg*.

**Huan:**—The great wolfhound of *Valinor* that *Oromë* gave to *Celegorm*; friend and helper of *Beren* and *Lúthien*; slew and slain by *Carcharoth*. The name means ‘great dog, hound’.

**Hunthor:**—*Man* of the *Haladin* in *Brethil* who accompanied *Túrin* in his attack on *Glaurung* at *Cabed-en-Aras* and was killed there by a falling stone.

**Huor:**—Son of *Galdor* of *Dor-lómin*, husband of *Rían* and father of *Tuor* father of *Eärendil*; went to *Gondolin* with *Húrin* his brother; slain in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

**Huorns:**—The ‘trees’ that came to the *Battle of the Hornburg* and entrapped the *Orcs*. (The name is doubtless *Sindarin*, containing *orn*, ‘tree’. Cf. Meriadoc’s words in *The Two Towers*: ‘They still have voices, and can speak with the *Ents*—that is why they are called Huorns, *Treebeard* says.’)

**Húrin (1):**—Called *Thalion*, translated *the Steadfast*, son of *Galdor* of *Dor-lómin*, husband of *Morwen* and father of *Túrin* and *Nienor*; Lord of *Dor-lómin*, vassal of *Fingon*; went with *Huor* his brother to *Gondolin*; captured by *Morgoth* in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*, but defied him, and was set by him on *Thangorodrim* for many years; after his release slew *Mím* in *Nargothrond* and brought the *Nauglamír* to King *Thingol*. *Tale of the Children of Húrin*.

**Húrin (2):**—Húrin of Eryn Arn, Steward of King *Minardil*, from whom derived the House of the *Stewards* of *Gondor*.

**\*Hyarastorni:**—Lands of the lordship of *Hallatan* in the *Mittalmar* (Inlands) of *Númenor*.

**Hyarmendacil I:**—‘South-victor’, fifteenth King of *Gondor*.

**Hyarmentir:**—The highest mountain in the regions south of *Valinor*.

**\*Hyarnustar:**—‘Southwestlands’, the south-western promontory of *Númenor*.

**\*Hyarrostar:**—‘Southeastlands’, the south-eastern promontory of *Númenor*.



## I

**Iant Iaur:**—‘The Old Bridge’ over the *Esgalduin* on the northern borders of *Doriath*; also called *the Bridge of Esgalduin*.

**\*Ībal:**—A boy of *Emerië* in *Númenor*, son of *Ulbar*, a mariner of *Tar-Aldarion*.

**Ibun:**—One of the sons of *Mím* the *Petty-dwarf*.

**Idril:**—Called *Celebrindal*, ‘Silverfoot’; the daughter (and only child) of *Turgon* and *Elenwë*; wife of *Tuor*, mother of *Eärendil*, with whom she escaped from *Gondolin* to the Mouths of *Sirion*; departed thence with *Tuor* into the West.

**Illuin:**—One of the Lamps of the *Valar* made by *Aulë*. Illuin stood in the northern part of *Middle-earth*, and after the overthrow of the mountain by *Melkor* the Inland Sea of *Helcar* was formed there.

**Ilmarë:**—A *Maia*, the handmaid of *Varda*.

**Ilmen:**—The region above the air where the stars are.

**Ilúvatar:**—‘Father of All’, *Eru*. (*Eru Ilúvatar*). See *Children of Ilúvatar*.

**Imlach:**—Father of *Amlach*.

**Imladris:**—*Sindarin* name of *Rivendell* (literally, ‘Deep Dale of the Cleft’), *Elrond*’s dwelling in a valley of the *Misty Mountains*. *Pass of Imladris*, see *Cirith Forn en Andrath*.

**Imrahil:**—Lord of *Dol Amroth* at the time of the *War of the Ring*.

**\*Imrazôr:**—Called ‘the *Númenórean*’; took to wife the *Elf Mithrellas*; father of *Galador* first Lord of *Dol Amroth*.

**Incánus:**—Name given to *Gandalf* ‘in the South’.

**\*Incomers:**—See *Easterlings*, *Brodda*.

**Indis:**—*Vanyarin Elf*, close kin of *Ingwë*; second wife of *Finwë*, mother of *Fingolfin* and *Finarfin*.

**\*Indor:**—*Man* of *Dor-lómin*, father of *Aerin*.

**\*Inglor:**—Rejected name of *Finrod*.

**Ingwë:**—Leader of the *Vanyar*, the first of the three hosts of the *Eldar* on the westward journey from *Cuiviénen*. In *Aman* he dwelt upon *Taniquetil*, and was held High King of all the *Elves*.

**Inziladûn:**—Elder son of *Ar-Gimilzôr* and *Inzilbêth*; afterwards named *Tar-Palantir*. See *Ar-Inziladûn*. As name of a formal design; see *Númellótë*.

**Inzilbêth:**—Queen of *Ar-Gimilzôr*; of the house of the *Lords of Andúnië*; mother of *Inziladûn* (*Tar-Palantir*).

**\*Írimon:**—The given name of *Tar-Meneldur*.

**Irmo:**—*Vala*, ‘master of visions and dreams’, commonly called *Lórien* from the name of his dwelling in *Valinor*. See *Fëanturi*, *Olofantur*.

**Iron Hills:**—Range east of the *Lonely Mountain* and north of the *Sea of Rhûn*.

**Iron Mountains:**—See *Ered Engrin*.

**Isen:**—River flowing from the *Misty Mountains* through *Nan Curunír* (the Wizard's Vale) and across the *Gap of Rohan*; translation (to represent the language of *Rohan*) of *Sindarin Angren*. See *Fords of Isen*.

**Isengar Took:**—One of *Bilbo Baggins*' uncles.

**Isengard:**—*Númenórean* stronghold in the valley called, after its occupation by the *Wizard Curunír* (*Saruman*), *Nan Curunír*, at the southern end of the *Misty Mountains*; translation (to represent the language of *Rohan*) of *Sindarin Angrenost*. *Ring of Isengard*, *Circle of Isengard*, referring to the great circular wall surrounding the inner plain, in the centre of which was *Orthanc*. *Isengarders*.

**Isil:**—*Quenya* name of the Moon.

**Isildur:**—Elder son of *Elendil*, who with his father and his brother *Anárion* escaped from the Drowning of *Númenor* and founded in *Middle-earth* the *Númenórean* realms in exile; lord of *Minas Ithil*; cut the *Ruling Ring* from *Sauron's* hand; slain by *Orcs* in the *Anduin* when the Ring slipped from his finger. *Heir of Isildur* (= *Aragorn*); *Ring of Isildur*; *Scroll of Isildur*; 'Tradition of Isildur'; *Isildur's wife*.

\***Isilmë:**—Daughter of *Tar-Elendil*, sister of *Silmarien*.

\***Isilmo:**—Son of *Tar-Súrion*; father of *Tar-Minastir*.

**Isle of Balar:**—See *Balar, Isle of*.

**Isle of Kings, Isle of Westernesse:**—See *Númenor*.

**Istari:**—The *Maiar* who were sent from *Aman* in the Third Age to resist *Sauron*; *Sindarin Ithryn* (see *Ithryn Luin*). Translated *Wizards*. See *Heren Istarion*. Also *Curunír*, *Saruman*; *Mithrandir*, *Gandalf*, *Olórin*; *Radagast*.

\***Ithilbor:**—*Nandorin Elf*, father of *Saeros*.

**Ithilien:**—Territory of *Gondor*, east of *Anduin*; in the earliest time the possession of *Isildur* and ruled from *Minas Ithil*. *North Ithilien*; *South Ithilien*.

**Ithil-stone, Stone of Ithil:**—The *palantír* of *Minas Ithil*.

\***Ithryn Luin:**—The two *Istari* who went into the East of *Middle-earth* and never returned (singular *ithron*). Translated *Blue Wizards*. See *Alatar*, *Pallando*.

**Ivanneth:**—*Sindarin* name of the ninth month. See *Yavannië*.

**Ivrin:**—The lake and falls beneath *Ered Wethrin* where the river *Narog* rose. *Pools of Ivrin*. See *Eithel Ivrin*.



**Kelvar:**—An *Elvish* word retained in the speeches of *Yavanna* and *Manwë*: ‘animals, living things that move’.

**Kementári:**—‘Queen of the Earth’, a title of *Yavanna*.

**\*Khamûl:**—*Nazgûl*, second to the *Chief*; dwelt in *Dol Guldur* after its reoccupation in Third Age 2951. Called *the Shadow of the East, the Black Easterling*.

**Khand:**—Land south-east of *Mordor*.

**Khazâd:**—The name of the *Dwarves* in their own language (*Khuzdul*).

**Khazad-dûm:**—The great mansions of the *Dwarves* of *Durin’s* race in the *Misty Mountains* (*Hadhodrond, Moria*). See *Khazâd*; *dûm* is probably a plural or collective, meaning ‘excavations, halls, mansions’.

**Khîm:**—One of the sons of *Mîm* the *Petty-dwarf*, slain by *Andróg’s* arrow.

**King under the Mountain:**—Ruler of the *Dwarves* of *Erebor*. *Kingdom, Kingship, under the Mountain; Mountain Kingdom*.

**King’s Heir (of *Númenor*):**—

**King’s Lands:**

—(i) In *Rohan*.

—(ii) *Kingsland* in *Númenor*, see *Arandor*.

**King’s *Men*:**—*Númenóreans* hostile to the *Eldar* and the *Elendili*. *King’s Party*.

**Kingdom of the South:**—See *Gondor*. Kingdoms of the *Dúnedain, Arnor* and *Gondor*.

**King of *Calenardhon*:**—See *Eorl*.

**Kings of *Men*:**—See *Númenóreans*.

**Kinslaying:**—The slaying of the *Teleri* by the *Noldor* at *Alqualondë*.

**Kirinki:**—Small scarlet-plumaged birds of *Númenor*.



## L

\***Labadal**:—*Túrin's* name in childhood for *Sador*; translated *Hopafoot*.

**Ladros**:—The lands to the north-east of *Dorthonion* that were granted by the *Noldorin* Kings to the *Men* of the House of *Bëor*.

**Lady of *Dor-lómin***:—*Morwen*; see *Dor-lómin*.

**Lady of the Golden Wood**:—See *Galadriel*.

\***Lady of the *Noldor***:—See *Galadriel*.

\***Lady of the Westlands**:—See *Erendis*.

**Laer Cú *Beleg***:—‘The Song of the Great Bow’, made by *Túrin* at *Eithel Ivrin* in memory of *Beleg Cúthalion*.

**Laiquendi**:—‘The *Green-elves*’ of *Ossiriand*.

\***Lairelossë**:—‘Summer-snow-white’, fragrant evergreen tree brought to *Númenor* by the *Eldar* of *Eressëa*.

**Lalaith**:—‘Laughter’, name by which *Urwen Húrin's* daughter, who died in childhood, was called, from the stream that flowed past *Húrin's* house. See *Nen Lalaith*.

**Lamedon**:—Region about the upper waters of the rivers *Ciril* and *Ringló* under the southern slopes of *Ered Nimrais*.

**Lammoth**:—‘The Great Echo’, region north of the *Firth of Drengist*, between *Ered Lómin* and the Sea, named from the echoes of *Morgoth's* cry in his struggle with *Ungoliant*.

\***Land of Gift**:—See *Númenor*, *Yôzâyan*.

**Land of the Star**:—*Númenor*; translation of *Quenya Elenna-nórë* in the Oath of *Cirion*.

**Land of Shadow**:—See *Mordor*.

**Land of the Dead that Live**:—See *Dor Firn-i-Guinar*.

**Land of the Star**:—*Númenor*.

**Land of Willows**:—See *Nan-tathren*.

\***Langflood**:—Name of *Anduin* among the *Éothéod*.

**Langstrand**:—See *Anfalas*.

\***Langwell**:—‘Source of the *Langflood*’, name given by the *Éothéod* to the river from the northern *Misty Mountains* which after its junction with *Greylin* they called *Langflood (Anduin)*.

**Lanthir Lamath**:—‘Waterfall of Echoing Voices’, where *Dior* had his house in *Ossiriand*, and after which his daughter *Elwing* (‘Star-spray’) was named.

\***Lár**:—A league (very nearly three miles).

\***Larnach**:—One of the *Woodmen* in the lands south of *Teiglin*. Daughter of *Larnach*.

**Last Alliance**:—The league made at the end of the Second Age between *Elendil* and *Gil-galad* to defeat *Sauron*; also *the Alliance, the War of the (Last) Alliance*.

**Laurelin**:—‘Song of Gold’, the younger of the *Two Trees of Valinor*. Called *the Tree of the Sun, the Golden Tree of Valinor*.



**Laurelindórinan:**—‘Valley of Singing Gold’, see *Lorien*.

**Laurenandë:**—See *Lorien*.

**\*Laurinquë:**—Yellow-flowered tree of the *Hyarrostar* in *Númenor*.

**Lay of Leithian:**—The long poem concerning the lives of *Beren* and *Lúthien* from which the prose account in *The Silmarillion* was derived. *Leithian* is translated ‘Release from Bondage’.

**Lebennin:**—‘Five Rivers’ (those being Erui, Sirith, *Celos*, *Serni*, and *Gilrain*), land between *Ered Nimrais* and *Ethir Anduin*; one of the ‘faithful fiefs’ of *Gondor*.

**Lefnui:**—River flowing to the sea from the western end of *Ered Nimrais*. (The name means ‘fifth’, *i.e.* after Erui, Sirith, *Serni*, and *Morthond*, the rivers of *Gondor* that flowed into *Anduin* or the *Bay of Belfalas*.)

**Legolas:**—*Sindarin Elf* of Northern *Mirkwood*, son of *Thranduil*; one of the *Fellowship of the Ring*.

**Legolin:**—The third of the tributaries of *Gelion* in *Ossiriand*.

**Lembas:**—*Sindarin* name of the waybread of the *Eldar* (from earlier *lenn-mbass*, ‘journey-bread’; in *Quenya* *coimas*, ‘life-bread’). *Waybread (of the Elves)*.

**Lenwë:**—The leader of the *Elves* from the host of the *Teleri* who refused to cross the *Misty Mountains* on the westward journey from *Cuiviénen* (the *Nandor*); father of *Denethor*.

**Léod:**—Lord of the *Éothéod*, father of *Eorl the Young*.

**Lhûn:**—River in the west of *Eriador* issuing in the *Gulf of Lhûn*. Frequently in an adapted spelling *Lune*.

**Limlight:**—River flowing from *Fangorn Forest* to *Anduin* and forming the extreme north-bound of *Rohan*. (For the perplexed origin of the name and its other forms (*Limlaith*, *Limlich*, *Limliht*, *Limlint*.)

**Linaewen:**—‘Lake of birds’, great mere in *Nevrast*.

**Lindar:**—‘The Singers’, name of the *Teleri* for themselves.

**Lindon:**—A name of *Ossiriand* in the First Age. After the tumults at the end of the First Age the name Lindon was retained for the lands west of the *Blue Mountains (Ered Lindon)* that still remained above the Sea. *The green land of the Eldar; the land of Gil-galad*.

**Lindórië:**—Sister of *Eärendur* fifteenth *Lord of Andúnië*, mother of *Inzilbêth* mother of *Tar-Palantir*.

**\*Lindórinand:**—See *Lórien (2)*.

**\*Lisgardh:**—Land of reeds at the Mouths of *Sirion*.

**\*Lissuin:**—A fragrant flower of *Tol Eressëa*.

**Little Gelion:**—One of the two tributary branches of the river *Gelion* in the north, rising in the *Hill of Himring*.

**Little People:**—See *Hobbits*.

**Loa:**—The *Elvish* solar year.

**Loeg Ningloron:**—‘Pools of the golden water-flowers’; see *Gladden Fields*.

**Lómelindi:**—*Quenya* word meaning ‘dusk-singers’, nightingales.

**Lómion:**—‘Son of Twilight’, the *Quenya* name that *Aredhel* gave to *Maeglin*.

**Lond Daer:**—*Númenórean* harbour and shipyards in *Eriador*, at the mouth of the *Gwathló*, established by *Tar-Aldarion*, who called it *Vinyalondë*. Translated *the Great Haven*; also called *Lond Daer Enedh*, ‘the Great Middle Haven’.

**Lonely Isle:**—See *Tol Eressëa*.

**Lonely Mountain:**—See *Erebor*, *King under the Mountain*.



**Long Lake:**—The lake south of *Erebor* into which flowed both the *Forest River* and the *River Running*, and on which Esgaroth (Lake Town) was built.

**Long Winter:**—The winter of Third Age 2758-9.

**Lord of *Dor-lómin*:**—*Húrin*, *Túrin*; see *Dor-lómin*.

**Lord of Morgul:**—See *Lord of the Nazgûl*, *Minas Morgul*.

**Lord of the *Nazgûl*:**—Called also *Chieftain of the Ringwraiths*, *the (Black) Captain*, *Lord of Morgul*, *the Witch-king*.

**Lord of Waters:**—See *Ulmo*.

**Lords of *Andúnië*:**—See *Andúnië*.

**Lords of the West:**—See *Valar*.

**Lórellin:**—The lake in *Lórien* in *Valinor* where the *Vala Estë* sleeps by day.

**Lorgan:**—Chief of the *Easterlings* in *Hithlum* after the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*, by whom *Tuor* was enslaved.

**Lórien (1):**—The name of the dwelling in *Valinor* of the *Vala* properly called *Irmo*, but who was himself usually called Lórien.

**Lórien (2):**—The land of the *Galadhrim* ruled by *Celeborn* and *Galadriel* between *Celebrant* and *Anduin*. Probably the original name of this land was altered to the form of the *Quenya* name Lórien of the gardens of the *Vala Irmo* in *Valinor*. In *Lothlórien* the *Sindarin* word *loth*, ‘flower’, is prefixed. Many other forms of the name are recorded: *Nandorin* *Lórinand* (*Quenya* *Laurenandë*, *Sindarin* *Glornan*, *Nan Laur*), derived from older *Lindórinand*, ‘Vale of the Land of Singers’; *Laurelindórinan*, ‘Valley of Singing Gold’. Called *the Golden Wood*; and see *Dwimordene*, *Lothlórien*.

**\*Lórinand:**—See *Lórien* (2).

**Lóringol:**—‘Goldenhead’; see *Hador*.

**Losgar:**—The place of the burning of the ships of the *Teleri* by *Fëanor*, at the mouth of the *Firth of Drengist*.

**Lossarnach:**—Region in the north-east of *Lebennin* about the sources of the river Erui. (The name is stated to mean ‘Flowery Arnach’, Arnach being a pre-*Númenórean* name.)

**Lótessë:**—*Quenya* name of the fifth month according to the *Númenórean* calendar, corresponding to May. See *Lothron*.

**Lothíriel:**—Daughter of *Imrahil* of *Dol Amroth*; wife of King *Éomer* of *Rohan* and mother of *Elfwine the Fair*.

**Lothlann:**—‘The wide and empty’, the great plain north of the March of *Maedhros* to the east of *Dorthonion* (*Taur-nu-Fuin*).

**Lothlórien:**—‘Lórien of the Blossom’; the name *Lórien* with the *Sindarin* word *loth*, ‘flower’ prefixed. See *Lórien* (2).

**Lothron:**—*Sindarin* name of the fifth month. See *Lótessë*.

**Loudwater:**—See *Bruinen*.

**Luinil:**—Name of a star (one shining with a blue light).

**Lumbar:**—Name of a star.

**Lune:**—Spelling of *Lhûn*.

**Lúthien:**—The daughter of King *Thingol* and *Melían* the *Maia*, who after the fulfilment of the Quest of the *Silmaril* and the death of *Beren* chose to become mortal and to share his fate. See *Tinúviel*.



## M

**Mablung:**—Elf of *Doriath*, chief captain of *Thingol*, friend of *Túrin*; called ‘of the Heavy Hand’ (which is the meaning of the name *Mablung*); slain in *Menegroth* by the *Dwarves*. Also called *the Hunter*.

**Maedhros:**—The eldest son of *Fëanor*, called the Tall; rescued by *Fingon* from *Thangorodrim*; held the *Hill of Himring* and the lands about; formed the *Union of Maedhros* that ended in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*; bore one of the *Silmarils* with him to his death at the end of the First Age.

**Maeglin:**—‘Sharp Glance’, son of *Eöl* ‘the *Dark Elf*’ and *Aredhel Turgon’s* sister, born in *Nan Elmoth*; became mighty in *Gondolin*, and betrayed it to *Morgoth*; slain in the sack of the city by *Tuor*. See *Lómion*.

**Maggot, Farmer:**—*Hobbit* of the *Shire*, farming in the Marish near the *Bucklebury Ferry*.

**Maglor:**—The second son of *Fëanor*, a great singer and minstrel; held the lands called *Maglor’s Gap*; at the end of the First Age seized with *Maedhros* the two *Silmarils* that remained in *Middle-earth*, and cast the one that he took into the Sea.

**Maglor’s Gap:**—The region between the northern arms of *Gelion* where there were no hills of defence against the North.

**Magor:**—Son of *Malach Aradan*; leader of the *Men* of the following of *Marach* who entered West *Beleriand*.

**Mahal:**—The name given to *Aulë* by the *Dwarves*.

**Máhanaxar:**—The Ring of Doom outside the gates of *Valmar*, in which were set the thrones of the *Valar* where they sat in council.

**Mahtan:**—A great smith of the *Noldor*, father of *Nerdanel* the wife of *Fëanor*.

**Maiar:**—(Singular *Maia*). *Ainur* of lesser degree than the *Valar*.

**Malach:**—Son of *Marach*; given the *Elvish* name *Aradan*.

\***Malantur:**—*Númenórean*, descendant of *Tar-Elendil*.

**Malduin:**—A tributary of the *Teiglin*; the name probably means ‘Yellow River’.

\***Malgadal:**—King of *Lorien*, slain in the *Battle of Dagorlad*; apparently identical with *Amdir*.

**Malinalda:**—‘Tree of Gold’, a name of *Laurelin*.

\***Malinornë:**—*Quenya* form of *Sindarin mallorn*.

**Mallorn:**—Name of the great trees with golden flowers brought from *Tol Eressëa* to *Eldalondë* in *Númenor*, and afterwards grown in *Lothlórien*. *Quenya malinornë*, plural *malinorni*.

**Mallos:**—A golden flower of *Lebennin*.

\***Mámandil:**—Name given to himself by *Hallacar* in his first encounters with *Ancalimë*.

**Mandos:**—The place of the dwelling in *Aman* of the *Vala* properly called *Námo*, the Judge, though this name was seldom used, and he himself was usually referred to as Mandos. Named as *Vala*. Named as the place of his dwelling (including *Halls of Mandos*; also *Halls of Awaiting*, *Houses of the Dead*). *Curse of Mandos*; *Doom of Mandos*; *Doom of the Noldor*; *Second Prophecy of Mandos*.

**Manwë:**—The chief of the *Valar*, called also *Súlimo*, the *Elder King*, the *Ruler of Arda*.

**Marach:**—Leader of the third host of *Men* to enter *Beleriand*, ancestor of *Hador Lórindol*.

**March of *Maedhros*:**—The open lands to the north of the head-waters of the river *Gelion*, held by *Maedhros* and his brothers against attack on East *Beleriand*; also called *the eastern March*.

**Mardil:**—First Ruling *Steward of Gondor*. Called *Voronwë*, ‘the Steadfast’ and *the Good Steward*.

\***Marhari:**—Leader of the *Northmen* in the *Battle of the Plains*, where he was slain; father of *Marhwini*.

\***Marhwini:**—‘Horse-friend’, leader of the *Northmen* (*Éothéod*) who settled in the Vales of *Anduin* after the *Battle of the Plains*, and ally of *Gondor* against the *Wainriders*.

**Mark, (The):**—Name among the *Rohirrim* for their own country. *Riddermark*; *Mark of the Riders*; *Marshals of the Mark*. See *East-mark*, *West-mark*.

**Master of Doom:**—See *Turambar*.

**Mar-nu-Falmar:**—‘The Land under the Waves’, name of *Númenor* after the *Downfall*.

**Mearas:**—The horses of *Rohan*.

**Melian:**—A *Maia*, who left *Valinor* and came to *Middle-earth*; afterwards the Queen of King *Thingol* in *Doriath*, about which she set a girdle of enchantment, the *Girdle of Melian*; mother of *Lúthien*, and foremother of *Elrond* and *Elros*. *Girdle of Melian*.

**Melkor:**—The *Quenya* name for the great rebellious *Vala*, the beginning of evil, in his origin the mightiest of the *Ainur*; afterwards named *Morgoth*, *Bauglir*, the *Dark Lord*, the *Enemy*, etc. The meaning of *Melkor* was ‘He who arises in Might’; the *Sindarin* form was *Belegûr*, but it was never used, save in a deliberately altered form *Belegurth*, ‘Great Death’. After the rape of the *Silmarils* usually called *Morgoth*.

**Men of the Sea:**—See *Númenóreans*.

**Men:**—*Atani*, *Children of Ilúvatar*, *Easterlings*.

**Menegroth:**—‘The Thousand Caves’, the hidden halls of *Thingol* and *Melian* on the river *Esgalduin* in *Doriath*.

**Menel:**—High heaven, the region of the stars.

**Meneldil:**—Son of *Anárion* and third King of *Gondor*.

**Meneldur:**—See *Tar-Meneldur*.

**Menelmacar:**—‘Swordsman of the Sky’, the constellation Orion.

**Meneltarma:**—Mountain in the midst of *Númenor*, on whose summit was the Hallow of *Eru Ilúvatar* (see *Eru*). (unnamed, in *Tuor’s* dream). Translated *Pillar of the Heavens* (*the Pillar*). Called also *the Holy Mountain*, *the Hallowed Mountain of the Númenóreans*.

\***Men-i-Naugrim:**—‘Way of the *Dwarves*’, a name of the *Old Forest Road*. Translated *Dwarf Road*.

**Meres of Twilight:**—See *Aelin-uial*.

**Mereth Aderthad:**—The ‘Feast of Reuniting’ held by *Fingolfin* near the Pools of *Ivrin*.

**Meriadoc Brandybuck:**—*Hobbit* of the *Shire*, one of the *Fellowship of the Ring*.

**Mering Stream:**—‘Boundary Stream’, flowing down from *Ered Nimrais* to join the *Entwash*, and forming the boundary between *Rohan* and *Gondor*; in *Sindarin* called *Glanhîr*.

\***Methed-en-Glad:**—‘End of the Wood’, a stronghold in *Dor-Cúarthol* at the edge of the forest south of *Teiglin*.

**Mickleburg:**—Translation of *Belegost*: ‘great fortress’.

**Middle-earth:**—The lands to the east of the *Great Sea*; also called *the Hither Lands*, *the Outer Lands*, *the Great Lands*, and *Endor*.

**Mîm:**—The *Petty-dwarf*, in whose house (*Bar-en-Danwedh*) on *Amon Rûdh Túrin* dwelt with the outlaw-band, and by whom their lair was betrayed to the *Orcs*; slain by *Húrin* in *Nargothrond*.

**Minalcar:**—See *Rómendacil II*.

**Minardil:**—Twenty-fifth King of *Gondor*.

**Minas Anor:**—‘Tower of the Sun’ (also simply *Anor*), afterwards called *Minas Tirith*; the city of *Anárion*, at the feet of *Mount Mindolluin*. See *Anor-stone*.

**Minas Ithil:**—‘Tower of the Moon’, afterwards called *Minas Morgul*; the city of *Isildur*, built on a shoulder of the *Ephel Dúath*. See *Ithil-stone*.

**Minas Morgul:**—‘Tower of Sorcery’ (also simply *Morgul*), name of *Minas Ithil* after its capture by the *Ringwraiths*. See *Lord of Morgul*.

**Minas Tirith (1):**—‘Tower of Watch’, built by *Finrod Felagund* on *Tol Sirion*; see *Tol-in-Gaurhoth*.

**Minas Tirith (2):**—Later name of *Minas Anor*. Called *the City of Gondor*. *The Hallows of Minas Tirith*; *the White Tower* of Minas Tirith. See *Mundburg*.

**Minastir:**—See *Tar-Minastir*.

**Mindeb:**—A tributary of *Sirion*, between *Dimbar* and the *Forest of Neldoreth*.

**Mindolluin:**—‘Towering Blue-head’, the great mountain behind *Minas Anor*.

**Mindon Eldaliéva:**—‘Lofty Tower of the *Eldalië*’, the tower of *Ingwë* in the city of *Tirion*; also simply *the Mindon*.

**Minhiriath:**—‘Between the Rivers’, region of *Eriador* between *Baranduin* and *Gwathló*.

**\*Minohtar:**—Nephew of King *Ondoher*; slain in *Ithilien* in Third Age 1944 in battle with the *Wainriders*.

**Min-Rimmon:**—‘Peak of the Rimmon’ (a group of crags), fifth of the beacons of *Gondor* in *Ered Nimrais*.

**Mirdain:**—See *Gwaith-i-Mirdain*.

**Miriel (1):**—The first wife of *Finwë*, mother of *Fëanor*; died after *Fëanor’s* birth. Called Serindë ‘the Broideress’.

**Miriel (2):**—Daughter of *Tar-Palantir*, forced into marriage by *Ar-Pharazôn*, and as his queen named *Ar-Zimraphel*; also called *Tar-Miriel*.

**Mirkwood:**—The great forest east of the *Misty Mountains*, earlier called *Eryn Galen*, *Greenwood the Great*. See *Taur-nu-Fuin*, *Taur-e-Ndaedelos*, *Eryn Lasgalen*; *Mountains of Mirkwood*. See *Greenwood the Great*.

**Miruvor:**—The cordial of the *Eldar*.

**Misty Mountains:**—Great mountain-range of *Middle-earth* running north and south and forming the eastern boundary of *Eriador*. See *Hithaeglim*.

**Mitheithel:**—River of *Eriador* flowing from the Ettendales to join the *Bruinen* (Loudwater). Translated *Hoarwell*.

**Mithlond:**—The *Havens* of the *Eldar* on the *Gulf of Lhûn*, ruled by *Círdan*; also referred to as *the Havens*. Translated *the Grey Havens*.

**Mithrandir:**—*Elvish* name of *Gandalf (Olórin)*, one of the *Istari (Wizards)* among the *Elves* of *Middle-earth*. Translated *the Grey Pilgrim*, *the Grey Wanderer*; cf. also *the Grey Messenger*

**\*Mithrellas:**—*Elf* of *Lorien*, companion of *Nimrodel*; taken to wife by Imrazôr the *Númenórean*; mother of *Galador* first Lord of *Dol Amroth*.

**Mithril:**—The metal known as ‘*Moria-silver*’, found also in *Númenor*.

**Mithrim**—The name of the great lake in the east of *Hithlum*, and also of the region about it and of the mountains to the west, separating Mithrim from *Dor-lómin*. The name was originally that of the *Sindarin Elves* who dwelt there.

**\*Mittalmar:**—The central region of *Númenor*, translated *Inlands*.

**Morannon:**—The main (northern) entry to *Mordor*. Translated *the Black Gate*; called also *the Gates of Mordor*. Watch-towers of the Morannon; see *Towers of the Teeth*.

**Mordor:**—‘The Black Land’, also called *the Land of Shadow*; *Sauron’s* realm east of the mountains of the *Ephel Dúath*.

**Morgai:**—‘Black Fence’, inner ridge much lower than the *Ephel Dúath* and separated from it by a deep trough; the inner ring of the fences of *Mordor*.

**Morgoth:**—‘The Black Enemy’, later name of *Melkor*, the great rebellious *Vala*, in his origin the mightiest of the Powers, first given to him by *Fëanor* after the rape of the *Silmarils*. See *Melkor*. Called *the Black King*; *the Dark Lord*; *the Enemy*; *Bauglir*; and by the *Drúedain* *the Great Dark One*.

**Morgul, Lord of:**—See *Lord of the Nazgûl*, *Minas Morgul*.

**Morgul:**—See *Minas Morgul*.

**Moria:**—‘The Black Chasm’, later name for *Khazad-dûm* (*Hadhodrond*), the great works of the *Dwarves* of *Durin’s* race under the *Misty Mountains*. East-gate of Moria; West-gate. See *Khazad-dûm*.

**Moriquendi:**—‘*Elves* of the Darkness’; see *Dark Elves*.

**Mormegil:**—Name given to *Túrin* as captain of the host of *Nargothrond* on account of his sword (see *Gurthang*), and used afterwards in *Brethil*. Translated *Blacksword* (also written *Black Sword*) with reference to the Black Sword itself.

**Morthond:**—‘Black-root’, river rising in a dark valley in the mountains due south of *Edoras*, called *\*Mornan*, not only because of the two high mountains between which it lay, but because through it passed the road from the Gate of the *Dead Men*, and living men did not go there.

**Morwen (1):**—Daughter of *Baragund* (nephew of *Barahir* father of *Beren*), wife of *Húrin* and mother of *Túrin* and *Nienor*. See *Eledhwen* (translated in the text as ‘Elfsheen’), *Lady of Dor-lómin* (in entry *Dor-lómin*).

**Morwen (2) of Lossarnach:**—A lady of *Gondor*, akin to Prince *Imrahil*; wife of King *Thengel* of *Rohan*.

**Mound of the Elf-maid:**—See *Haudh-en-Elleth*.

**Mount Doom:**—See *Amon Amarth*.

**Mountain Kingdom:**—See *King under the Mountain*.

**Mountain of Fire:**—See *Orodruin*.

**Mountains of Dor-lómin:**—See *Dor-lómin*.

**Mountains of Mirkwood:**—See *Eryn Duir*, *Eryn-nu-Fuin*.

**Mountains of Shadow:**—See *Ered Wethrin*.

**\*Mountains of Turgon:**—See *Echoriath*.

**Mountains:**—of *Aman*, of Defence, see *Pelóri*; of the East, see *Orocarni*; of Iron, see *Ered Engrin*; of Mist, see *Hithaeglin*; of Mithrim, see *Mithrim*; of Shadow, see *Ered Wethrin* and *Ephel Dúath*; of Terror, see *Ered Gorgoroth*.

**Mourning:**—See *Nienor*.

**Mundburg:**—‘Guardian Fortress’, name in *Rohan* of *Minas Tirith*.

**Music of the Ainur:**—See *Ainulindalë*.





**Nahar:**—The horse of the *Vala Oromë*, said by the *Eldar* to be so named on account of his voice.

**Naith of Lorien:**—The ‘Triangle’ or ‘Gore’ of *Lorien*, land at the angle of *Celebrant* and *Anduin*.

**Námo:**—A *Vala*, one of the *Aratar*; usually named *Mandos*, the place of his dwelling. *Námo* means ‘Ordainer, Judge’. See *Fëanturi*, *Nurufantur*.

**Nan Dungorthëb:**—Also *Dungorthëb*; translated in the text as ‘Valley of Dreadful Death’. The valley between the precipices of *Ered Gorgoroth* and the *Girdle of Melian*.

**Nan Elmoth:**—The forest east of the river *Celon* where *Elwë (Thingol)* was enchanted by *Melian* and lost; afterwards the dwelling-place of *Eöl*.

**\*Nan Laur:**—See *Lórien (2)*.

**Nandor:**—*Elves* from the host of the *Teleri* who refused to cross the *Misty Mountains* on the Great Journey from *Cuiviénen*, but of whom a part, led by *Denethor*, came long afterwards over the *Blue Mountains* and dwelt in *Ossiriand* (the *Green-elves*); for those who remained east of the *Misty Mountains* see *Silvan Elves*. Adjective *Nandorin*.

**Nanduhirion:**—The glen about Mirrormere between the arms of the *Misty Mountains* into which the Great Gates of *Moria* opened; translated *Dimrill Dale*. *The Battle of Nanduhirion*; see *Azanulbizar*.

**Nan-tathren:**—‘Willow-vale’, translated as ‘the Land of Willows’, where the river *Narog* flowed into *Sirion*. In *Treebeard’s* song in *The Two Towers* *Quenya* forms of the name are used: *in the willow-meads of Tasarinan*; *Nan-tasarion*.

**Narbeleth:**—*Sindarin* name of the tenth month. See *Narquelië*.

**Nardol:**—‘Fiery head’, third of the beacons of *Gondor* in *Ered Nimrais*.

**Nargothrond:**—‘The great underground fortress on the river *Narog*’, founded by *Finrod Felagund* and destroyed by *Glaurung*; also the realm of Nargothrond extending east and west of *Narog*. See *Narog*.

**Narmacil I:**—Seventeenth King of *Gondor*.

**Narmacil II:**—Twenty-ninth King of *Gondor*, slain in the *Battle of the Plains*.

**Narn i Hîn Húrin:**—‘The Tale of the Children of *Húrin*’, the long lay from which *Chapter 21* was derived; ascribed to the poet Dírhalval, a *Man* who lived at the *Havens* of *Sirion* in the days of *Eärendil* and perished in the attack of the sons of *Fëanor*.

**Narn:**—Signifies a tale made in verse, but to be spoken and not sung.

**Narog:**—The chief river of West *Beleriand*, rising at *Ivrin* under *Ered Wethrin* and flowing into *Sirion* near its mouths in *Nan-tathren*. *People of Narog*, the *Elves* of *Nargothrond*. *Sources of Narog*; *Vale of Narog*; *People of Narog*; *Lord of Narog*.

**Narquelië:**—‘Sun-fading’, *Quenya* name of the tenth month according to the *Númenórean* calendar, corresponding to October. See *Narbeleth*.

**\*Narrows of the Forest:**—The ‘waist’ of *Mirkwood* caused by the indentation of the *East Bight*.

**Narsil:**—The sword of *Elendil*, made by *Telchar* of *Nogrod*, that was broken when *Elendil* died in combat with *Sauron*; from the shards it was reforged for *Aragorn* and named *Andúril*.

**Narsilion:**—The Song of the Sun and Moon.

**Narvi:**—*Dwarf* of *Khazad-dûm*, maker of the West-gate, close friend of *Celebrimbor* of *Eregion*.

**Narya:**—One of the *Three Rings* of the *Elves*, borne by *Círdan* and afterwards by *Mithrandir*. Called *The Ring of Fire*; *the Red Ring*; *the Third Ring*.

**Nauglamír:**—‘The Necklace of the *Dwarves*’, made for *Finrod Felagund* by the *Dwarves*, brought by *Húrin* out of *Nargothrond* to *Thingol*, and the cause of his death.

**Naugrim:**—‘The Stunted People’, *Sindarin* name for the *Dwarves*.

**Nazgûl:**—The slaves of the *Nine Rings of Men* and chief servants of *Sauron*. *Ringwraiths*; (*Black*) *Riders*; *the Nine*. See *Lord of the Nazgûl*. See *Ring-wraiths*.

**Near Harad:**—See *Harad*.

**Necklace of the Dwarves:**—See *Nauglamír*.

**Neithan:**—Name given to himself by *Túrin* among the outlaws, translated as ‘The Wronged’ (literally ‘one who is deprived’).

**Neldoreth:**—The great beech-forest forming the northern part of *Doriath*; called *Taur-na-Neldor* in *Treebeard’s* song in *The Two Towers*.

**\*Nellas:**—*Elf* of *Doriath*, friend of *Túrin* in his boyhood; bore witness against *Saeros* in the trial of *Túrin* before *Thingol*.

**Nen Girith:**—‘Shuddering Water’, name given to *Dimrost*, the falls of *Celebros* in the *Forest of Brethil*.

**\*Nen Lalaith:**—Stream rising under *Amon Dathir*, a peak in *Ered Wethrin*, and flowing past *Húrin’s* house in *Dor-lómin*. See *Lalaith*.

**Nénar:**—Name of a star.

**Nénimë:**—*Quenya* name of the second month according to the *Númenórean* calendar, corresponding to February. See *Nínui*.

**Nenning:**—River in West *Beleriand*, reaching the Sea at the *Haven of Eglarest*.

**Nenuial:**—‘Lake of Twilight’ in *Eriador* where the river *Baranduin* rose, between the arms of the Hills of Evendim (*\*Eryn Uial*) north of the *Shire*, beside which the oldest *Númenórean* seat of Annúminas was built. Translated *Evendim*.

**Nenya:**—One of the *Three Rings* of the *Elves*, the Ring of Water, borne by *Galadriel*; also called *the Ring of Adamant*, *the White Ring*.

**Nerdanel:**—Called the Wise; daughter of Mahtan the smith, wife of *Fëanor*.

**\*Nerwen:**—Name given to *Galadriel* by her mother.

**Nessa:**—One of the *Valier*, the sister of *Oromë* and spouse of *Tulkas*.

**\*Nessamelda:**—Fragrant evergreen tree brought to *Númenor* by the *Eldar* of *Eressëa*. (The name perhaps means ‘beloved of Nessa’, one of the *Valier*; cf. *vardarianna*, *yavannamírë*.)

**Nevrast:**—The region south-west of *Dor-lómin*, beyond *Ered Lómin*, where *Turgon* dwelt before his departure to *Gondolin*. The name, meaning ‘Hither Shore’, was originally that of all the northwestern coast of *Middle-earth* (the opposite being *Haerast* ‘the Far Shore’, the coast of *Aman*).

**\*Nibin-noeg, Nibin-nogrim:**—The *Petty-dwarves*. *Bar-en-Nibinnoeg*; *Moors of the Nibin-noeg*. See *Noegyth Nibin*.

**Nienna:**—One of the *Valier*, numbered among the *Aratar*; Lady of pity and mourning, the sister of *Mandos* and *Lórien*.

**Nienor**:—‘Mourning’, the daughter of *Húrin* and *Morwen* and sister of *Túrin*; spell-bound by *Glaurung* at *Nargothrond* and in ignorance of her past wedded *Túrin* in *Brethil* in her name *Níniel*; cast herself into the *Teiglin*. see *Níniel*.

**Nimbrethil**:—Birch-woods in Arvernien in the south of *Beleriand*. Cf. *Bilbo’s* song at *Rivendell*: ‘He built a boat of timber felled in Nimbrethil to journey in. . . .’ (*The Fellowship of the Ring*).

**Nimloth (1)**:—The White Tree of *Númenor*, of which a fruit taken by *Isildur* before it was felled grew into the White Tree of *Minas Ithil*. *Nimloth*, ‘White Blossom’ is the *Sindarin* form of *Quenya Ninquelótë*, one of the names of *Telperion*.

**Nimloth (2)**:—*Elf* of *Doriath* who wedded *Dior Thingol’s* Heir; mother of *Elwing*; slain in *Menegroth* in the attack by the sons of *Fëanor*.

**Nimphelos**:—The great pearl given by *Thingol* to the lord of the *Dwarves* of *Belegost*.

**Nimrodel (1)**:—‘Lady of the White Grotto’, *Elf* of *Lorien*, beloved of *Amroth*, who dwelt beside the falls of *Nimrodel* until she went south and was lost in *Ered Nimrais*.

**Nimrodel (2)**:—Mountain stream falling into the *Celebrant* (*Silverlode*), named from *Nimrodel* the *Elf* who dwelt beside it.

**\*Nindamos**:—Chief settlement of the fishermen on the southern coast of *Númenor*, at the mouths of *Siril*.

**Nine Walkers, (The)**:—The *Fellowship of the Ring*.

**Nine, (The)**:—See *Nazgûl*.

**Níniel**:—‘Tear-maiden’, the name that *Túrin*, ignorant of their relationship, gave to his sister *Nienor*.

**\*Nîn-in-Eilph**:—‘Waterlands of the Swans’, great fens of the lower reaches of the river called in its upper course *Glanduin*. Translated *Swanfleet*.

**Ninquelótë**:—‘White Blossom’, a name of *Telperion*; see *Nimloth (1)*.

**Nínui**:—*Sindarin* name of the second month. See *Nénimë*.

**Niphredil**:—A white flower that bloomed in *Doriath* in starlight when *Lúthien* was born. It grew also on *Cerin Amroth* in *Lothlórien* (*The Fellowship of the Ring*).

**Nirnaeth Arnoediad**:—The Battle of ‘Unnumbered Tears’, the name given to the ruinous fifth battle in the *Wars of Beleriand*, described in *The Silmarillion Chapter 20*; also called simply *the Nirnaeth*.

**\*Nísimaldar**:—Land about the Haven of *Eldalondë* in western *Númenor*; translated in the text as *the Fragrant Trees*.

**\*Nísinen**:—Lake in the river *Nunduinë* in western *Númenor*.

**Nivrim**:—That part of *Doriath* that lay on the west bank of *Sirion*.

**Noegyth Nibin**:—The *Petty-dwarves*. See *Nibin-noeg* (see also under *Dwarves*).

**Nogothrim**:—The *Dwarves*. (See Appendix to *The Silmarillion*, entry *naug*.)

**Nogrod**:—One of the two cities of the *Dwarves* in the *Blue Mountains*; translation into *Sindarin* of *Dwarvish Tumunzahar*. See *Hollowbold*.

**\*Noirinan**:—Valley at the southern feet of the *Meneltarma* at the head of which were the tombs of the Kings and Queens of *Númenor*. Translated *Valley of the Tombs*.

**Noldolantë**:—‘The Fall of the *Noldor*’, a lament made by *Maglor* son of *Fëanor*.

**Noldor**:—(Singular *Noldo*). The Deep *Elves*, the *Loremasters*; the second of the Three Kindreds of the *Eldar* on the Great Journey from *Cuiviénen*, led by *Finwë*, whose history is the chief matter of *The Silmarillion*. The name (*Quenya* *Noldo*, *Sindarin* *Golodh*) meant ‘the Wise’ (but wise in the sense of possessing knowledge, not in the sense of possessing sagacity, sound judgement). *High King of the Noldor*; *Gate of the Noldor*, see *Annon-*



*in-Gelydh*; *High Speech of the Noldor*, see *Quenya*; *Lady of the Noldor*, see *Galadriel*; lamps of the Noldor, and see *Fëanor*. Adjective *Noldorin*

\***Nólimon**:—Name given to *Vardamir*, son of *Elros* (for the meaning see Appendix to *The Silmarillion*, entry *gûl*).

**Nóm, Nómîn**:—‘Wisdom’ and ‘the Wise’, the names that the *Men* of *Bëor’s* following gave to *Finrod* and his people in their own tongue.

\***North Cape**:—The end of the *Forostar*, the northern promontory of *Númenor*.

**North Downs**:—Hills in *Eriador* north of the *Shire*, where was built the *Númenórean* city of *Fornost*.

**North(ern) Kingdom, Northern Realm**:—See *Arnor*.

**Northern Waste**:—Region of cold in the far North of *Middle-earth* (also called *Forodwaith*, see *Introduction*).

**Northfarthing**:—One of the divisions of the *Shire*.

\***Northlands (of Númenor)**:—See *Forostar*.

**Northmen**:—The horsemen of *Rhovanion*, allies of *Gondor*, ancestrally related to the *Edain*; from them derived the *Éothéod*; with reference to the *Rohirrim*. Free *Men of the North*.

**North-South Road**:—See *Roads*.

\***Núath, Woods of**:—Woods extending westward from the upper waters of the river *Narog*.

**Nulukkizdîn**:—*Dwarvish* name of *Nargothrond*.

\***Númellótë**:—‘Flower of the West’=*Inziladûn*.

\***Númendil**:—Seventeenth Lord of *Andúnië*.

**Númenor**:—(In full *Quenya* form *Númenórë*.) ‘Westerness’, ‘Westland’, the great island prepared by the *Valar* as a dwelling-place for the *Edain* after the ending of the First Age. Called also *Anadûnê*, *Andor*, *Elenna*, the Great Isle, Isle of Kings, Isle of Westerness, *Land of Gift*, *Land of the Star*; and after its downfall *Akallabêth*, *Atalantë*, and *Mar-nu-Falmar*. See *Akallabêth*, *Elenna-nórë*, *Yôzâyan*. Reference to the *Downfall of Númenor* is given separately.

**Númenóreans**:—The *Men* of *Númenor*, called also *Dúnedain*. *Kings of Men*; *Men of the Sea* and see *Dúnedain*. *Númenórean tongue, speech*, see *Adûnaic*.

\***Númerrámar**:—‘West-wings’, the ship of *Vëantur* in which *Aldarion* made his first voyage to *Middle-earth*.

\***Nunduinë**:—River in the west of *Númenor*, flowing into the sea at *Eldalondë*.

\***Núneth**:—Mother of *Erendis*.

**Núrnen**:—‘Sad Water’, inland sea in the south of *Mordor*.

**Nurtalë Valinóreva**:—‘The Hiding of *Valinor*’.

\***Nurufantur**:—One of the *Fëanturi*; the earlier ‘true’ name of *Mandos*, before it was replaced by *Námo*. See *Olofantur*.



**\*Oghor-hai:**—Name given to the *Drúedain* by *Orcs*.

**Ohtar:**—‘Warrior’, esquire of *Isildur*, who brought the shards of *Elendil’s* sword to *Imladris*.

**\*Oiolairë:**—‘Ever-summer’, an evergreen tree brought to *Númenor* by the *Eldar* of *Eressëa*, from which was cut the Bough of Return set upon the *Númenórean* ships. (*Corollairë*, the Green Mound of the Trees in *Valinor*, was also called *Coron Oiolairë*: Appendix to *The Silmarillion*, entry *coron*). *Bough of Return*.

**Oiolossë:**—‘Ever-snow-white’, the most common name among the *Eldar* for *Taniquetil*, the Mountain of *Manwë* in *Aman*, rendered into *Sindarin* as *Amon Uilos*; but according to the *Valaquenta* it was ‘the uttermost tower of *Taniquetil*’. See *Amon Uilos*, *Taniquetil*.

**Oiomúre:**—A region of mists near to the *Helcaraxë*.

**\*Old Company:**—Name given to the original members of *Túrin’s* band in *Dor-Cúarthol*.

**Old Ford:**—Ford over *Anduin* on the *Old Forest Road*. See *Ford of Carrock*.

**Old Forest Road:**—See *Roads*.

**Old Forest:**—The ancient forest extending eastwards from the borders of Buckland.

**\*Old Púkel-land, Old Púkel-wilderness:**—See *Drúwaith Iaur*.

**Old Took:**—Gerontius Took, *Hobbit* of the *Shire*, grandfather of *Bilbo Baggins* and great-great-grandfather of *Peregrin Took*.

**\*Olofantur:**—One of the *Fëantúri*; the earlier ‘true’ name of *Lórien*, before it was replaced by *Irmo*. See *Nurufantur*.

**Olórin:**—A *Maia*, one of the *Istari* (*Wizards*); *Gandalf’s* name in *Valinor*. *Mithrandir*, *Gandalf*, and cf. *The Two Tower*: ‘Olórin I was in my youth in the West that is forgotten’.

**Olvar:**—An *Elvish* word retained in the speeches of *Yavanna* and *Manwë* in *The Silmarillion* Chapter 2, meaning ‘growing things with roots in the earth’.

**Olwë:**—Leader together with his brother *Elwë* (*Thingol*) of the hosts of the *Teleri* on the westward journey from *Cuiviënen*; lord of the *Teleri* of *Alqualondë* in *Aman*.

**Ondohér:**—Thirty-first King of *Gondor*, slain in battle with the *Wainriders* in Third Age 1944.

**Ondolindë:**—‘Stone Song’, the original *Quenya* name of *Gondolin*.

**\*Ondosto:**—A place in the *Forostar* (Northlands) of *Númenor*, probably particularly associated with the stone-quarries of the region (*Quenya* *ondo* ‘stone’).

**\*Onodló:**—*Sindarin* name of the river *Entwash*.

**Onodrim:**—*Sindarin* name for *Ents*. See *Enyd*.

**\*Orchaldor:**—*Númenórean*, husband of *Ailinel* the sister of *Tar-Aldarion*; father of *Soronto*.

**Orcs:**—Creatures of *Morgoth*. *Orc-men* of *Isengard*.

**Order of Wizards:**—See *Heren Istarion*.

**Orfalch Echor:**—The great ravine through the *Encircling Mountains* by which *Gondolin* was approached; also simply *the Orfalch*.

**\*Orleg:**—A man of *Túrin's* outlaw-band, slain by *Orcs* on the road to *Nargothrond*.

**Ormal:**—One of the Lamps of the *Valar* made by *Aulë*. Ormal stood in the south of *Middle-earth*.

**Orocarni:**—The Mountains of the East of *Middle-earth* (the name means ‘the Red Mountains’).

**Orodreth:**—The second son of *Finarfin*; warden of the tower of *Minas Tirith* on *Tol Sirion*; King of *Nargothrond* after the death of *Finrod* his brother; father of *Finduilas*; slain in the *Battle of Tumhalad*. Lord of *Narog*.

**Orodruin:**—‘Mountain of Blazing Fire’ in *Mordor*, in which *Sauron* forged the Ruling Ring; called also *Amon Amarth*, ‘Mount Doom’.

**Oromë:**—A *Vala*, one of the *Aratar*; called *the great hunter, the Lord of Forests*, leader of the *Elves* from *Cuiviënen*, spouse of *Vána*. The name means ‘Horn-blowing’ or ‘Sound of Horns’, cf. *Valaróma*; in *The Lord of the Rings* it appears in the *Sindarin* form *Araw*.

**Oromet:**—A hill near the haven of *Andúnië* in the west of *Númenor*, on which was built the tower of *Tar-Minastir*.

**\*Oropher:**—King of the *Silvan Elves* in *Greenwood the Great*; slain in the *War of the Last Alliance*; father of *Thranduil*.

**\*Orrostar:**—‘Eastlands’, the eastern promontory of *Númenor*.

**Orthanc:**—‘Forked Height’, the great *Númenórean* tower in the Circle of *Isengard*, afterwards the abode of *Saruman*. *Orthanc-stone, Stone of Orthanc*, the *palantir* of Orthanc.

**Osgiliath:**—‘Fortress of the Stars’, the chief city of ancient *Gondor*, on either side of the river *Anduin*. *Stone of Osgiliath*, the *palantir*.

**Ossë:**—A *Maia*, vassal of *Ulmo*, with whom he entered the waters of *Arda*; lover and instructor of the *Teleri*.

**Ossiriand:**—‘Land of Seven Rivers’ (these being *Gelion* and its tributaries flowing down from the *Blue Mountains*), the land of the *Green-elves*. Cf. *Treebeard's* song in *The Two Towers*: ‘I wandered in Summer in the elm-woods of Ossiriand. Ah! the light and the music in the Summer by the Seven Rivers of Ossir!’ See *Lindon*.

**Ost-in-Edhil:**—‘Fortress of the Eldar’, the city of the *Elves* in *Eregion*.

**Ostoher:**—Seventh King of *Gondor*.

**Outer Lands:**—*Middle-earth* (also called *the Hither Lands*).

**Outer Sea:**—See *Ekkaia*.



**Palantíri:**—(Singular *palantír*). ‘Those that watch from afar’, the seven Seeing Stones brought by *Elendil* and his sons from *Númenor*; made by *Fëanor* in *Aman*. Frequently referred to as *the Stone(s)*

\***Palarran:**—‘Far-Wanderer’, a great ship built by *Tar-Aldarion*.

\***Pallando:**—One of the *Blue Wizards* (*Ithryn Luin*).

\***Parmaitë:**—Name given to *Tar-Elendil*. (*Quenya* *parma* ‘book’; the second element is no doubt *-maitë* ‘-handed’, cf. *Tar-Telemmaitë*).

**Parth Celebrant:**—‘Field (grassland) of *Silverlode*’; *Sindarin* name usually translated *Field of Celebrant*.

**Parth Galen:**—‘Green Sward’, a grassy place on the northern slopes of Amon Hen by the shore of Nen Hithoel.

**Pass of Caradhras:**—See *Caradhras*.

**Pass of Imladris:**—See *Cirith Forn en Andrath*.

**Pelargir:**—‘Garth of Royal Ships’, the *Númenórean* haven above the delta of *Anduin*.

**Pelendur:**—*Steward of Gondor*.

**Pelennor (Fields):**—‘Fenced Land’, the ‘townlands’ of *Minas Tirith*, guarded by the wall of Rammas Echor, on which was fought the greatest battle of the *War of the Ring*.

**Pelóri:**—‘The fencing or defensive heights’, called also *the Mountains of Aman* and *the Mountains of Defence*; the mountains on the coast of *Aman* raised by the *Valar* after the destruction of their dwelling on *Almaren*; ranging in a crescent from north to south, close to the eastern shores of *Aman*.

**People of Haleth:**—See *Haladin* and *Haleth*.

**Peregrin Took:**—*Hobbit* of the *Shire*, one of the *Fellowship of the Ring*. Called *Pippin*.

**Perian:**—*Sindarin* word translated *Halfling*; plural *periannath*. See *Hobbits*.

**Petty-dwarves:**—A race of *Dwarves* in *Beleriand* of whom *Mîm* and his two sons were the last survivors. Translation of *Noegyth Nibin*. See also under *Dwarves*, *Nibin-noeg*, *Noegyth Nibin*.

**Pharazôn:**—See *Ar-Pharazôn*.

**Pillar, (The):**—See *Meneltarma*.

**Pippin:**—See *Peregrin Took*.

**Poros:**—River flowing down from the *Ephel Dúath* to join *Anduin* above its delta. See *Fords of the Poros*.

**Powers, (The):**—The *Valar*.

**Prophecy of the North:**—The Doom of the *Noldor*, uttered by *Mandos* on the coast of *Araman*.

**Púkel-men:**—Name in *Rohan* for the images on the road to *Dunharrow*, but also used as a general equivalent to *Driëdain*. See *Old Púkel-land*.



**Quendi:**—Original *Elvish* name for *Elves* (of every kind, including the *Avári*), meaning ‘Those that speak with voices’.

**Quenta Silmarillion:**—‘The History of the *Silmarils*.’

**Quenya:**—The ancient tongue, common to all *Elves*, in the form that it took in *Valinor*; brought to *Middle-earth* by the *Noldorin* exiles, but abandoned by them as a daily speech save in *Gondolin*, especially after the edict of King *Thingol* against its use. Also referred to as *Eldarin*; *High Eldarin*; *High-elven*; *the tongue of Valinor*; *the speech of the Elves of Valinor*; *the tongue of the Noldor*; *the High Speech of the Noldor*, *the High Speech of the West*.



**Radagast:**—One of the *Istari* (*Wizards*). See *Aiwendil*.

**Radhruin:**—One of the twelve companions of *Barahir* on *Dorthonion*.

**\*Ragnir:**—A blind servant of *Húrin's* house in *Dor-lómin*.

**Ragnor:**—One of the twelve companions of *Barahir* on *Dorthonion*.

**Ramdal:**—‘Wall’s End’ (see *Andram*), where the dividing fall across *Beleriand* ceased.

**Rána:**—‘The Wanderer’, a name of the Moon among the *Noldor*.

**\*Ranga:**—*Númenórean* measure, a full pace, slightly longer than a yard.

**Rangers:**—The *Dúnedain* of the North after the end of the North Kingdom, secret guardians of *Eriador*.

**\*Ras Morthil:**—A name of *Andrast*.

**Rath Dínen:**—‘The Silent Street’ in *Minas Tirith*.

**Rathlóriel:**—‘Golden-bed’, later name for the river *Ascar*, after the treasure of *Doriath* was sunk in it.

**Rauros:**—‘Roaring Spray’, the great falls in the river *Anduin*.

**Red Arrow:**—The ‘war-arrow’ sent from *Gondor* to *Rohan* as a token of the need of *Minas Tirith*.

**Red Eye:**—The emblem of *Sauron*.

**Red Ring, (the):**—See *Narya*.

**Region:**—The dense forest forming the southern part of *Doriath*.

**Rerir:**—Mountain to the north of *Lake Helevorn*, where rose the greater of the two tributary branches of *Gelion*.

**Rhosgobel:**—The dwelling of *Radagast* at the edge of *Mirkwood* near the *Carrock*. (The name is stated to mean ‘russet ‘town’(i.e. enclosure)’.)

**Rhovanion:**—Wilderland, the great region east of the *Misty Mountains*. *King of Rhovanion*, *Vidugavia*.

**Rhudaur:**—Region in the north-east of *Eriador*, one of the three kingdoms into which *Arnor* was divided in the ninth century of the Third Age, lying between the *Misty Mountains*, the Ettenmoors, and the *Weather Hills*.

**Rhûn:**—‘East’, used generally of the lands of the further East of *Middle-earth*. *Sea of Rhûn*.

**Rían:**—Daughter of *Belegund* (nephew of *Barahir*, the father of *Beren*) and cousin of *Morwen*; wife of *Huor* *Húrin's* brother and mother of *Tuor*; after *Huor's* death died of grief on the *Haudh-en-Ndengin*.

**Riddermark:**—See *Mark, (The)*.

**Riders:**

—(i) See *Éothéod*.

—(ii) *Riders of Rohan*, see *Rohirrim*.

—(iii) *Black Riders*, see *Nazgûl*.

**Ring of Doom:**—See *Máhanaxar*.

**Ringil:**—The sword of *Fingolfin*.

**Ringló:**—River in *Gondor*, joining the *Morthond* north-east of *Dol Amroth*. (It is stated that the Ringló ‘drew its first waters from a high snowfield that fed an icy tarn in the mountains. If this at seasons of snow-melting spread into a shallow-lake it would account for the name, another of the many that refer to a river’s source.’ See *Gwathló*.)

**Rings of Power (The Rings):**—*The Ring, the One Ring, the Great Ring, the Ruling Ring, the Ring of Power, Gollum’s Ring, Ring of Isildur, Nine Rings of Men; Seven Rings of the Dwarves, the last of the Seven; Three Rings of the Elves:* (see also *Narya*, the Ring of Fire, *Nenya*, the Ring of Adamant, and *Vilya*, the Ring of Sapphire). *Fellowship of the Ring, War of the Ring; the Ringbearer. Ringwraiths:* See *Nazgûl*.

**Ringwil:**—The stream that flowed into the river *Narog* at *Nargothrond*.

**Ringwraiths:**—The slaves of the *Nine Rings of Men* and chief servants of *Sauron*; also called *Nazgûl* and *Úlairi*.

**Rivendell:**—Translation of *Sindarin Imladris*; *Elrond’s* dwelling in a deep valley of the *Misty Mountains*.

**River Running:**—See *Celduin*.

**Rivil:**—Stream falling northwards from *Dorthonion* and flowing into *Sirion* in the Fen of Serech. *Rivil’s Well*.

### **Roads:**

(1) In *Beleriand* in the *Elder Days*:—

—(i) The highway from *Tol Sirion* to *Nargothrond* by the *Crossings of Teiglin*; called *the old South Road*.

—(ii) *The East Road*, from *Mount Taras* in the West, crossing *Sirion* at the *Brithiach* and *Aros* at the *Arossiach*, perhaps leading to *Himring*.

—(iii) See *Dwarf-road* (i).

(2) East of the *Blue Mountains*:—

—(i) The great *Númenórean* road linking the *Two Kingdoms*, by *Tharbad* and the *Fords of Isen*; called *the North-South Road* and (east of the *Fords of Isen*) *the West Road*; also *the Great Road, the Royal Road, the horse-road, the Greenway*.

—(ii) The branch road from (i) going to the *Hornburg* (see *Deeping-road*).

—(iii) The road from *Isengard* to the *Fords of Isen*.

—(iv) The *Númenórean* road from the *Grey Havens* to *Rivendell*, traversing the *Shire*; called *the East-West Road, the East Road*.

—(v) The road descending from the *Pass of Imladris*, crossing *Anduin* at the *Old Ford*, and traversing *Mirkwood*; called *the Old Forest Road, the Forest Road* and *Men-i-Naugrim, the Dwarf-road* (ii).

—(vi) *Númenórean* roads east of *Anduin*: the road through *Ithilien* called *the North Road*; roads east and north from the *Morannon*.

**Rochallor:**—The horse of *Fingolfin*.

**\*Rochan(d):**—See *Rohan*.

**\*Rochon Methestel:**—‘Rider of the Last Hope’, the name of a song made concerning *Borondir Udalraph*.

**\*Róg:**—The actual name (plural *Rógin*) of the *Drúedain* in the language of the *Rohirrim*, represented by the translation *Woses*.

**Rohan:**—Form in *Gondor* of the *Sindarin* name *Rochan(d)*, ‘the Horse-country’, the great grassy plain originally the northern part of *Gondor*, and then called *Calenardhon*. See *Mark, (The); Gap of Rohan; Rohirrim*.

**Rohirrim:**—‘The Horse-lords’ of *Rohan*. *Riders of Rohan*. See *Eorlings, Éothéod*.



**Rómendacil I:**—*Tarostar*, eighth King of *Gondor*, who took the title of *Rómendacil* ‘East-victor’ after his repulse of the first attacks on *Gondor* by *Easterlings*.

**Rómendacil II:**—Minalcar, for many years Regent and afterwards nineteenth King of *Gondor*, who took the title of *Rómendacil* after his great defeat of the *Easterlings* in Third Age 1248.

**Rómenna:**—‘Eastwards’, great haven on the east coast of *Númenor*. *Firth of Rómenna*; *Bay of Rómenna*

**Rothinzil:**—*Adûnaic* (*Númenórean*) name of *Eärendil*’s ship *Vingilot*, with the same meaning, ‘Foam-flower’.

**\*Royal Road:**—See *Roads*.

**\*Rú, Rúatan:**—*Quenya* forms derived from the word *Drughu*, corresponding to *Sindarin Drû*, *Drúadan*.

**Rúmil:**—A *Noldorin* sage of *Tirion*, the first deviser of written characters (cf. *The Lord of the Rings* [Appendix E](#)); to him is attributed the *Ainulindalë*.





**Sackville-Baggins:**—Name of a family of *Hobbits* of the *Shire*. *Otho*, *Lotho* (son of *Otho*).

**\*Sador:**—Woodwright, serving-man of *Húrin's* in *Dor-lómin* and friend of *Túrin* in his childhood, by whom he was called *Labadal*; called *Onefoot*.

**Saeros:**—*Nandorin Elf*, one of the chief counsellors of *Thingol* in *Doriath*; insulted *Túrin* in *Menegroth*, and by him pursued to his death.

**Salmar:**—A *Maia* who entered *Arda* with *Ulmo*; maker of *Ulmo's* great horns, the *Ulumíri*.

**Sam(wise) Gamgee:**—*Hobbit* of the *Shire*, one of the *Fellowship of the Ring*, and companion of *Frodo* in *Mordor*. Master Samwise.

**\*Sarchnia Hîn Húrin:**—‘Grave of the Children of *Húrin*’ (*Brethil*).

**Sarn Athrad:**—‘Ford of Stones’, where the *Dwarf-road* from *Nogrod* and *Belegost* crossed the river *Gelion*.

**Sarn Ford:**—Partial translation of *Sarn Athrad*, ‘Ford of Stones’, ford over the *Baranduin* at the extreme southern point of the *Shire*.

**Sarn Gebir:**—‘Stone-spikes’, name of rapids in *Anduin* above the *Argonath*, so called because of upright stake-like spikes of rock at their beginning.

**Saruman:**—‘*Man* of Skill’, name among *Men* of *Curunír* (which it translates), one of the *Istari* (*Wizards*) and the head of their order. See *Curumo*, *Curunír*; *White Messenger*.

**Sauron:**—‘The Abhorred’ (in *Sindarin* called *Gorthaur*); greatest of the servants of *Melkor*, in his origin a *Maia* of *Aulë*. Called the *Dark Lord*, the *Dark Power*, and see *Annatar*, *Artano*, *Aulendil*.

**Sauron's Isle:**—See *Tol Sirion*, *Tol-in-Gaurhoth*.

**Secondborn:**—The Younger *Children of Ilúvatar*, *Men*.

**Seeing Stones:**—See *Palantíri*.

**Serech:**—The great fen north of the Pass of *Sirion*, where the river *Rivil* flowed in from *Dorthonion*.

**Seregon:**—‘Blood of Stone’, a plant with deep red flowers that grew on *Amon Rúdh*.

**Serindë:**—‘The Broideress’; see *Míriel (1)*.

**Serni:**—One of the rivers of *Lebennin* in *Gondor*. (The name is a derivative of *Sindarin* *sern* ‘small stone, pebble’, equivalent of *Quenya* *sarnië* ‘shingle, pebble-bank’. ‘Though Serni was the shorter river its name was continued to the sea after its confluence with *Gilrain*. Its mouth was blocked with shingles, and at any rate in later times ships approaching *Anduin* and making for *Pelargir* went by the eastern side of *Tol Falas* and took the sea-way passage made by the *Númenóreans* in the midst of the Delta of *Anduin*.’)

**Seven Fathers of the Dwarves:**—See *Dwarves*.

**Seven Stones:**—See *Palantíri*.

**Shadowfax:**—The great horse of *Rohan* ridden by *Gandalf* in the *War of the Ring*.

**\*Shadowy Isles:**—Probably a name for the *Enchanted Isles*.

**Shadowy Mountains:**—See *Ered Wethrin*.

**\*Sharbhund:**—Name among the *Petty-dwarves* for *Amon Rúdh*.

**Shelob:**—Great spider, dwelling in *Torech Ungol* above the Stairs of *Cirith Ungol*, who stung and cocooned *Frodo* and who was subsequently wounded by *Sam Gamgee* with Sting. See also *Ungoliant*.

**Shepherds of the Trees:**—*Ents*.

**Shire, (The):**—The chief dwelling-place of *Hobbits* in the west of *Eriador*. *Shire Calendar*, *Reckoning*. *Shire-folk*.

**Sickle of the Valar:**—See *Valacirca*.

**Silmarien:**—Daughter of *Tar-Elendil*, the fourth King of *Númenor*; mother of *Valandil* first *Lord of Andúnië* and ancestress of *Elendil* and his sons *Isildur* and *Anárion*.

**Silmarils:**—The three jewels made by *Fëanor* before the destruction of the *Two Trees of Valinor*, and filled with their light. See *War of the Jewels*.

**Silpion:**—A name of *Telperion*.

**Silvan Elves:**—Also called Woodland *Elves*. They appear to have been in origin those *Nandorin Elves* who never passed west of the *Misty Mountains*, but remained in the Vale of *Anduin* and in *Greenwood the Great*; see *Nandor*. *Silvan Elvish*. *Silvan tongue*. See *Tawarwaith*.

**Silverlode:**—See *Celebrant*.

**Simbelmynë:**—A small white flower, also called *alfirin* and *uilos*. Translated *Evermind*.

**Sindar:**—The *Grey-elves*. The name was applied to all the *Elves* of *Telerin* origin whom the returning *Noldor* found in *Beleriand*, save for the *Green-elves* of *Ossiriand*. The *Noldor* may have devised this name because the first *Elves* of this origin whom they met with were in the north, under the grey skies and mists about Lake *Mithrim*; or perhaps because the *Grey-elves* were not of the Light (of *Valinor*) nor yet of the Dark (*Avari*), but were *Elves of the Twilight*. But it was held to refer to *Elwë's* name *Thingol* (*Quenya* *Sindacollo*, *Singollo*, ‘Grey-cloak’), since he was acknowledged high king of all the land and its peoples. The Sindar called themselves *Edhil*, plural *Edhel*.

**Sindarin:**—The *Elvish* tongue of *Beleriand*, derived from the common *Elvish* speech but greatly changed through long ages from *Quenya* of *Valinor*; acquired by the *Noldorin* exiles in *Beleriand*. Called also *the Grey-elven tongue*, *the tongue of the Elves of Beleriand*, *Tongue of Beleriand*, etc.

**Singollo:**—‘Grey-cloak’, ‘Grey-mantle’; see *Sindar*, *Thingol*.

\***Sîr Angren:**—See *Angren*.

\***Siril:**—The chief river of *Númenor*, flowing southwards from the *Meneltarma*.

**Sirion:**—‘The Great River’ of *Beleriand*, rising at *Eithel Sirion*, flowing from north to south and dividing West from East *Beleriand*. *Falls of Sirion*. *Gates of Sirion*. *Fens of Sirion*; *Havens of Sirion*, *Sirion's Haven*, see *Havens*; *Mouths of Sirion*; *Pass(es) of Sirion*; *Springs of Sirion*; *Vale (Valley) of Sirion*.

\***Sîr Ninglor:**—*Sindarin* name of the *Gladden River*.

**Smaug:**—The great *Dragon* of *Erebor*. In many references called *the Dragon*.

**Sméagol:**—*Gollum*.

**Snowbourn:**—River rising under the Starkhorn and flowing out down *Harrowdale* and past *Edoras*.

**Sons of Fëanor:**—See *Fëanor*, *Maedhros*, *Maglor*, *Celegorm*, *Caranthir*, *Curufin*, *Amrod*, *Amras*. Often referred to as a group, especially after the death of their father.

\***Sorontil:**—‘Eagle-horn’, a great height on the coast of the northern promontory of *Númenor*.

\***Soronto:**—*Númenórean*, son of *Tar-Aldarion's* sister *Ailinel* and cousin of *Tar-Ancalimë*.

**Soronúmë:**—Name of a constellation.

**South Downs:**—Hills in *Eriador* south of *Bree*.

**South Kingdom:**—See *Gondor*.

**South Road:**—The ancient road from *Tol Sirion* to *Nargothrond* by the *Crossings of Teiglin*.

**Southern Realm:**—See *Gondor*.

**Southfarthing:**—One of the divisions of the *Shire*.

**Spyhill:**—See *Amon Ethir*.

**Star (of *Eärendil*):**—See *Eärendil*; *Land of the Star*, see *Númenor*. *Star of Elendil*, *Star of the North (Kingdom)*, See *Elendilmir*.

**Stewards of *Gondor*, Book of the Stewards:**—See *Arandur*.

**Stock:**—A village in the *Shire*, at the north end of the Marish.

**Stone of *Eärendil*:**—See *Elessar (I)*.

**Stone of the Hapless:**—Memorial stone of *Túrin* and *Nienor* by *Cabed Naeramarth* in the river *Teiglin*.

**Stones, (The):**—See *palantíri*.

**Stonewain Valley:**—Valley in the *Driúadan Forest* at the eastern end of *Ered Nimrais*. (The name is a translation of *\*Imrath Gondraich*; *imrath* means ‘a long narrow valley with a road or watercourse running through it lengthwise’.)

**Stoors:**—One of the three peoples into which the *Hobbits* were divided; see *Fallohides*.

**Straight Road, Straight Way:**—The path over the Sea into the Ancient or True West, on which the ships of the *Elves* might still sail after the *Downfall* of *Númenor* and the Changing of the *World*.

**\*Strawheads:**—Contemptuous name among the *Easterlings* in *Hithlum* for the People of *Hador*.

**Strider:**—The name of *Aragorn* in *Bree*.

**Strongbow:**—Name of *Beleg*; see *Cúthalion*.

**Súlimë:**—*Quenya* name of the third month according to the *Númenórean* calendar, corresponding to March. See *Gwaeron*.

**Súlimo:**—Name of *Manwë*, rendered in the *Valaquenta* as ‘Lord of the Breath of *Arda*’ (literally ‘the Breather’).

**Súrion:**—See *Tar-Súrion*.

**\*Súthburg:**—Former name of the *Hornburg*.

**Swanfleet:**—See *Nin-in-Eilph*.

**Swanhaven:**—See *Alqualondë*.

**Swarthy Men:**—See *Easterlings*.



## T

**Talan:**—(Plural *telain*). The wooden platforms in the trees of *Lothlórien* on which the *Galadhrim* dwelt. See *flet*.

**Talath Dirnen:**—The plain north of *Nargothrond*, called *the Guarded Plain*.

**Talath Rhúnen:**—‘The East Vale’, earlier name of *Thargelion*.

**\*Taniquelassë:**—Fragrant evergreen tree brought to *Númenor* by the *Eldar* of *Eressëa*.

**Taniquetil:**—‘High White Peak’, highest of the mountains of the *Pelóri* and the highest mountain of *Arda*, upon whose summit are Ilmarin, the mansions of *Manwë* and *Varda*; also called the White Mountain, the Holy Mountain, and the Mountain of *Manwë*. See *Amon Uilos*, *Oiolossë*.

**Tarannon:**—Twelfth King of *Gondor*. See *Falastur*.

**Taras:**—Mountain on a promontory of *Nevrast*; beneath it was *Vinyamar*, the dwelling of *Turgon* before he went to *Gondolin*.

**\*Taras-ness:**—The headland from which *Mount Taras* rose.

**Tarmasundar:**—‘Roots of the Pillar’, the five ridges extending from the base of the *Meneltarma*.

**Tarn Aeluin:**—The lake on *Dorthonion* where *Barahir* and his companions made their lair, and where they were slain.

**Tarostar:**—Given name of *Rómendacil I*.

**Tar-Alcarin:**—Seventeenth Ruler of *Númenor*.

**Tar-Aldarion:**—Sixth Ruler of *Númenor*, the Mariner King; by the *Guild of Venturers* called *the (Great) Captain*. See *Anardil*.

**Tar-Amandil:**—Third Ruler of *Númenor*, grandson of *Elros Tar-Minyatur*.

**Tar-Anárion:**—Eighth Ruler of *Númenor*, son of *Tar-Ancalimë* and *Hallacar* of *Hyarastorni*. *Daughters of Tar-Anárion*.

**Tar-Ancalimë:**—Seventh Ruler of *Númenor* and the first Ruling Queen, daughter of *Tar-Aldarion* and *Erendis*. See *Emerwen*.

**Tar-Ancalimon:**—Fourteenth King of *Númenor*, in whose time the *Númenóreans* became divided into opposed parties.

**\*Tar-Anducal:**—Name taken as Ruler of *Númenor* by *Herucalmo*, who usurped the throne on the death of *Tar-Vanimeldë* his wife.

**\*Tar-Ardamin:**—Nineteenth Ruler of *Númenor*, called in *Adûnaic* *Ar-Abattârik*.

**Tar-Atanamir:**—Thirteenth Ruler of *Númenor*, called *the Great* and *the Unwilling*, to whom the Messengers of the *Valar* came.

**Tar-Calion:**—*Quenya* name of *Ar-Pharazôn*.

**Tar-Calmacil:**—Eighteenth Ruler of *Númenor*, called in *Adûnaic* *Ar-Belzagar*.

**Tar-Ciryatan:**—Twelfth King of *Númenor*, ‘the Shipbuilder’.

**Tar-Elendil:**—Fourth King of *Númenor*, father of *Silmarien* and *Meneldur*, from whom *Elendil* was descended. See *Parmaitë*.

\***Tar-Elestirnë:**—‘Lady of the Star-brow’, name given to *Erendis*.

\***Tar-Falassion:**—*Quenya* name of *Ar-Sakalthôr*.

**Tar-Herunúmen:**—*Quenya* name of *Ar-Adûnakhôr*.

**Tar-Hostamir:**—*Quenya* name of *Ar-Zimrathôn*.

**Tar-Meneldur:**—Fifth Ruler of *Númenor*, astronomer, father of *Tar-Aldarion*. See *Elentirno*, *Írimon*.

**Tar-Minastir:**—Eleventh King of *Númenor*, who aided *Gil-galad* by sending a fleet against *Sauron*.

**Tar-Minyatur:**—Name of *Elros* as first Ruler of *Númenor*.

**Tar-Míriel:**—Daughter of *Tar-Palantir*; forced into marriage by *Ar-Pharazôn*, and as his queen named in *Adûnaic* *Ar-Zimraphel*. See *Míriel* (2).

**Tar-Palantir:**—Twenty-fourth King of *Númenor*, who repented of the ways of the Kings, and took his name in *Quenya*: ‘He who looks afar’; named in *Adûnaic* (Ar-) *Inziladûn*. See *Inziladûn*.

**Tar-Súrion:**—Ninth Ruler of *Númenor*.

**Tar-Telemmaitë:**—Fifteenth Ruler of *Númenor*, so named (‘Silver-handed’) for his love of silver.

\***Tar-Telemnar:**—*Quenya* name of *Ar-Gimilzôr*.

**Tar-Telperien:**—Tenth Ruler of *Númenor* and the second Ruling Queen.

**Tar-Vanimeldë:**—Sixteenth Ruler of *Númenor* and the third Ruling Queen.

**Taur-e-Ndaedelos:**—‘Forest of the Great Fear’, *Sindarin* name of *Mirkwood*. See *Taur-nu-Fuin*.

**Taur-en-Faroth:**—Wooded highlands to the west of the river *Narog* above *Nargothrond*, also called *the Faroth*; *the High Faroth*.

**Taur-im-Duinath:**—‘The Forest between Rivers’, name of the wild country south of the *Andram* between *Sirion* and *Gelion*.

**Taur-nu-Fuin:**—‘Forest under Night’.

—(i) Later name of *Dorthonion*.

—(ii) A name of *Mirkwood*. See *Taur-e-Ndaedelos*. Cf. *Deldûwath*.

**Tauron:**—‘The Forester’ (translated in the *Valaquenta* ‘Lord of Forests’), a name of *Oromë* among the *Sindar*. Cf. *Aldaron*.

\***Tawar-in-Drúedain:**—The *Drúadan Forest*.

\***Tawarwaith:**—‘The Forest People’, *the Silvan Elves*.

**Teiglin:**—A tributary of *Sirion* rising in the *Shadowy Mountains* and flowing through the *Forest of Brethil*. See *Crossings of Teiglin*, *the Crossings*; where the road to *Nargothrond* crossed the river.

**Telchar:**—The most renowned of the smiths of *Nogrod*, the maker of *Angrist* and (according to *Aragorn* in *The Two Towers*) of *Narsil*.

**Telemnar:**—Twenty-sixth King of *Gondor*.

\***Teleporno:**—High-elven name of *Celeborn* (2).

**Teleri:**—The third and greatest of the three hosts of the *Eldar* on the westward journey from *Cuiviénen*; of whom were the *Elves* of *Alqualondë* in *Aman* and the *Sindar* and *Nandor* in *Middle-earth*, led by *Elwë* (*Thingol*) and *Olwë*. Their own name for themselves was *Lindar*, the Singers; the name *Teleri*, the Last-comers,



the Hindmost, was given to them by those before them on the march. Many of the *Teleri* did not leave *Middle-earth*; the *Sindar* and the *Nandor* were *Telerin Elves* in origin. *The Third Clan*. See *Lindar*.

**Telerin:**—Of the *Teleri*. Of the tongue of the *Teleri*.

**Telperion:**—The elder of the *Two Trees of Valinor* that gave light to *Valinor*. Called *the White Tree*. In *Quenya* *Tyelperion*.

**Telumehtar:**—Twenty-eighth King of *Gondor*; called *Umbardacil* ‘Conqueror of *Umbar*’ after his victory over the *Corsairs* in Third Age 1810.

**Telumendil:**—Name of a constellation.

**Thain’s Book:**—A copy of the Red Book of Westmarch made at the request of King *Elessar* and brought to him by the Thain *Peregrin Took* when he retired to *Gondor*; much annotated afterwards in *Minas Tirith*.

**Thalion:**—Steadfast, Strong’; see *Húrin (1)*.

**Thalos:**—The second of the tributaries of *Gelion* in *Ossiriand*.

**\*Thangail:**—‘Shield-fence’, a battle-formation of the *Dúnedain*.

**Thangorodrim:**—‘Mountains of Tyranny’, reared by *Morgoth* above *Angband*; broken down in the Great Battle at the end of the First Age.

**Tharbad:**—River-port and town where the *North-South Road* crossed the river *Gwathló*, ruined and deserted at the time of the *War of the Ring*. *Bridge of Tharbad*.

**Thargelion:**—‘The Land beyond *Gelion*’, between Mount *Rerir* and the river *Ascar*, where *Caranthir* dwelt; called also *Dor Caranthir* and *Talath Rhûnen*.

**Tharkûn:**—‘Staff-man’, *Dwarves*’ name for *Gandalf*.

**Thengel:**—Sixteenth King of *Rohan*, father of *Théoden*.

**Théoden:**—Seventeenth King of *Rohan*, slain in the *Battle of the Pelennor Fields*.

**Théodred:**—Son of *Théoden* King of *Rohan*; slain in the First *Battle of the Fords of Isen*.

**Théodwyn:**—Daughter of *Thengel* King of *Rohan*, mother of *Éomer* and *Éowyn*.

**Thingol:**—‘Grey-cloak’, ‘Grey-mantle’ (in *Quenya Sindacollo*, *Singollo*), the name by which *Elwë* (*Sindarin Elu*), leader with his brother *Olwë* of the host of the *Teleri* from *Cuiviénen* and afterwards King of *Doriath*, was known in *Beleriand*; also called the Hidden King. See *Elu*, *Elwë*.

**Thorin Oakenshield:**—*Dwarf* of the *House of Durin*, King in exile, leader of the expedition to *Erebor*; slain in the Battle of Five Armies.

**Thorondor:**—‘King of Eagles.’ Cf. *The Return of the King*: ‘old Thorondor, who built his eyries in the inaccessible peaks of the *Encircling Mountains* when *Middle-earth* was young’. See *Crissaegrim*.

**Thorongil:**—‘Eagle of the Star’, name of *Aragorn* in *Gondor* when he served *Ecthelion (2)*.

**Thousand Caves:**—See *Menegroth*.

**Thrain I:**—*Dwarf* of the *House of Durin*, first *King under the Mountain*.

**Thrain II:**—*Dwarf* of the *House of Durin*, King in exile, father of *Thorin Oakenshield*; died in the dungeons of *Dol Guldur*.

**Thranduil:**—*Sindarin Elf*, King of the *Silvan Elves* in the north of *Greenwood the Great* (*Mirkwood*); father of *Legolas*, who was of the *Fellowship of the Ring*.

**Three Houses (of the *Edain*):**—The Houses of *Bëor*, *Haleth*, and *Hador*.

**Thrór:**—*Dwarf* of the *House of Durin*, *King under the Mountain* at the coming of *Smaug*, father of *Thrain II*; killed in *Moria* by the *Orc Azog*.

**\*Thurin:**—Name given to *Túrin* in *Nargothrond* by *Finduilas*; translated *the Secret*.

**Thuringwethil:**—‘Woman of Secret Shadow’, the messenger of *Sauron* from *Tol-in-Gaurhoth* who took the form of a great bat, and in whose shape *Lúthien* entered *Angband*.

**Tilion:**—A *Maia*, steersman of the Moon.

**Tintallë:**—‘The Kindler’, a name of *Varda* as maker of the Stars. She is called thus in *Galadriel’s* lament in *Lórien*, *The Fellowship of the Ring* II 8. Cf. *Elbereth*, *Elentári*.

**Tinúviel:**—The name that *Beren* gave to *Lúthien*: a poetic word for the nightingale, ‘Daughter of Twilight’. See *Lúthien*.

**Tirion:**—‘Great Watch-tower’, the city of the *Elves* on the hill of *Túna* in *Aman*.

**Tol Eressëa:**—‘The Lonely Isle’ (also simply *Eressëa*), on which the *Vanyar* and the *Noldor* and afterwards the *Teleri* were drawn across the ocean by *Ulmo*, and which was at last rooted in the Bay of *Eldamar* near to the coasts of *Aman*. On *Eressëa* the *Teleri* long remained before they went to *Alqualondë*; and there dwelt many of the *Noldor* and the *Sindar* after the ending of the First Age. See *Eressëa*.

**Tol Falas:**—Island in the *Bay of Belfalas* close to *Ethir Anduin*.

**Tol Galen:**—‘The Green Isle’ in the river *Adurant* in *Ossiriand*, where *Beren* and *Lúthien* dwelt after their return.

**Tol Morwen:**—Island in the sea after the drowning of *Beleriand* on which stood the memorial stone of *Túrin*, *Nienor*, and *Morwen*.

**Tol Sirion:**—Island in the river in the Pass of *Sirion* on which *Finrod* built the tower of *Minas Tirith*; after its capture by *Sauron* named *Tol-in-Gaurhoth*.

**Tol Uinen:**—Island in the Bay of *Rómenna* on the east coast of *Númenor*.

**Tol-in-Gaurhoth:**—‘Isle of Werewolves’, later name of *Tol Sirion* after its capture by *Sauron*, the island in the river in the Pass of *Sirion* on which *Finrod* built the tower of *Minas Tirith*. *Sauron’s Isle*.

**Took:**—Name of a family of *Hobbits* in the Westfarthing of the *Shire*. See *Peregrin*, *Hildifons*, *Isengar*, *Old Took*.

**Torech Ungol:**—*Shelob’s* Lair, tunnel above the Stairs of *Cirith Ungol* where dwelt the great spider.

**Tower Hills:**—See *Emyn Beraid*.

**Towers of the Teeth:**—The watchtowers east and west of the *Morannon*.

**Tree of Tol Eressëa:**—See *Celeborn (1)*.

**Treebeard:**—See *Fangorn*.

**Tuilë:**—The first season (‘spring’) in the *loa*.

**Tulkas:**—A *Vala*, the ‘greatest in strength and deeds of prowess’, who came last to *Arda*; also called *Astaldo*.

**Tumhalad:**—Valley in West *Beleriand* between the rivers *Ginglith* and *Narog* where the host of *Nargothrond* was defeated.

**Tumladen:**—‘The Wide Valley’, the hidden vale in the *Encircling Mountains* in the midst of which stood the city of *Gondolin*. (*Tumladen* was afterwards the name of a valley in *Gondor: The Return of the King* V 1.)

**Tumunzahar:**—See *Nogrod*.

**Túna:**—The green hill in the *Calacirya* on which *Tirion*, the city of the *Elves*, was built.

**Tuor:**—Son of *Huor* and *Rían*, cousin of *Túrin*; fostered by the *Grey-elves* of *Mithrim*; with *Voronwë* came to *Gondolin* bearing the message of *Ulmo*; wedded *Idril Turgon’s* daughter, and with her and their son *Eärendil*

escaped from the destruction of the city; in his ship *Eärrámë* set sail into the West. *The Axe of Tuor*, see *Dramborleg*.

**Tûr Haretha**:—The burial-mound of the *Lady Haleth* in the *Forest of Brethil* (see *Haudh-en-Arwen*).

**Turambar**:—Name taken by *Túrin* during his days in the *Forest of Brethil*. Translated *Master of Doom*; and by *Túrin* himself *Master of the Dark Shadow*.

**Turgon**:—Called the Wise; the second son of *Fingolfin*; dwelt at *Vinyamar* in *Nevrast* before he departed in secret to *Gondolin*, which he ruled until his death in the sack of the city; father of *Idril* the mother of *Eärendil*: called (like *Thingol*) *the Hidden King*.

**Túrin**:—Son of *Húrin* and *Morwen*, chief subject of the lay named *Narn i Chîn Húrin*. For his other names see *Neithan*, *Gorthol*, *Agarwaen*, *Thurin*, *Adanedhel*, *Mormegil* (*Black Sword*), *Wildman of the Woods*, *Turambar*.

**\*Turuphanto**:—Translated *the Wooden Whale*, name given to *Aldarion's* ship *Hirilondë* while it was building.

**Twilight Meres, Twilit Meres**:—Region of marshes and pools where the *Aros* flowed into *Sirion*. See *Aelin-uial*.

**Two Kindreds**:—*Elves* and *Men*.

**Two Kingdoms**:—*Arnor* and *Gondor*.

**Two Trees of Valinor**:—See *Laurelin*, *Telperion*.

**Tyrn Gorthad**:—*Sindarin* name of the *Barrow-downs*.





## U

\***Udalraph**:—See *Borondir*.

\***Uilos**:—A small white flower, also called *alfirin* and *simbelmynë* (*Evermind*).

**Uinen**:—*Maia*, the Lady of the Seas, spouse of *Ossë*.

\***Uinendili**:—‘Lovers of *Uinen*’, name given to the *Númenórean Guild of Venturers*.

\***Uinéniel**:—‘Daughter of *Uinen*’, name given to *Erendis* by *Valandil Lord of Andúnië*.

**Úlairi**:—See *Ring-wraiths*.

\***Ulbar**:—*Númenórean*, a shepherd in the service of *Hallatan* of *Hyarastorni* who became a mariner of *Tar-Aldarion*. *Ulbar’s* wife.

**Uldor**:—Called *the Accursed*; a leader of the *Easterlings*, son of Ulfang the Black; slain by *Maglor* in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

**Ulfang**:—Called the Black; a chieftain of the *Easterlings*, who with his three sons followed *Caranthir*, and proved faithless in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

**Ulfast**:—Son of Ulfang the Black, slain by the sons of *Bór* in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

**Ulmo**:—A *Vala*, one of the *Aratar*, called *Lord of Waters* and *King of the Sea*. The name was interpreted by the *Eldar* to mean ‘The Pourer’ or ‘The Rainer’.

\***Ulräd**:—A member of the outlaw-band (*Gaurwaith*) that *Túrin* joined.

**Ulumúri**:—The great horns of *Ulmo* made by the *Maia Salmar*.

**Ulwarth**:—Son of Ulfang the Black, slain by the sons of *Bór* in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

**Úmanyar**:—Name given to those *Elves* who went on the westward journey from *Cuiviénen* but did not reach *Aman*: ‘Those not of *Aman*’, beside *Amanyar* ‘Those of *Aman*’.

**Úmarth**:—‘Ill-fate’, a fictitious name for his father given out by *Túrin* in *Nargothrond*.

**Umbar**:—Great natural haven and fortress of the *Númenóreans* south of the *Bay of Belfalas*; held for most of the Third Age by men of diverse origin hostile to *Gondor*, known as the *Corsairs of Umbar*.

**Umbardacil**:—See *Telumehtar*.

\***Undeeps**:—The two great westward bends of *Anduin*, called the *North and South Undeeps*, between the *Brown Lands* and the *Wold of Rohan*.

**Underking**:—(In *Rohan*).

**Undying Lands**:—*Aman* and *Eressëa*; also called *the Deathless Lands*.

**Undying Realm**:—See *Valinor*.

\***Úner**:—‘Noman’.

**Ungoliant**:—The great spider, destroyer with *Melkor* of the Trees of *Valinor*. *Shelob* in *The Lord of the Rings* was the ‘last child of Ungoliant to trouble the unhappy world’ (*The Two Towers*).

**Union of Maedhros**:—The league formed by *Maedhros* to defeat *Morgoth* that ended in the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

***Unnumbered Tears:***—The battle of *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

***Úrimë:***—*Quenya* name of the eighth month according to the *Númenórean* calendar, corresponding to August.

***Urthel:***—One of the twelve companions of *Barahir* on *Dorthonion*.

***Uruks:***—Anglicized form of *Uruk-hai* of the Black Speech; a race of *Orcs* of great size and strength.

***Urulóki:***—*Quenya* word meaning ‘fire-serpent’, *Dragon*.

***\*Urwen:***—Daughter of *Húrin* and *Morwen* who died in childhood; called *Lalaith*, ‘Laughter’.

***Utumno:***—The first great stronghold of *Melkor*, in the north of *Middle-earth*, destroyed by the *Valar*.



**Vairë:**—‘The Weaver’, one of the *Valier*, the spouse of *Námo Mandos*.

**Valacar:**—Twentieth King of *Gondor*, whose marriage to *Vidumavi* of the *Northmen* led to the civil war of the Kin-strife.

**Valacirca:**—‘The Sickle of the *Valar*’, name of the constellation of the Great Bear.

**Valandil (1):**—Son of *Silmarien*; first *Lord of Andúnië*. Wife of *Valandil*.

**Valandil (2):**—Youngest son of *Isildur*; third King of *Arnor*.

**Valaquenta:**—‘Account of the *Valar*’, a short work treated as a separate entity from *The Silmarillion* proper.

**Valar:**—‘Those with Power’, ‘The Powers’ (singular *Vala*); name given to those great *Ainur* who entered into *Eä* at the beginning of Time, and assumed the function of guarding and governing *Arda*. Called also *the Great Ones*, *the Rulers of Arda*, *the Lords of the West*, *the Lords of Valinor*; see also *Ainur*, *Aratar*.

**Valaraukar:**—‘Demons of Might’ (singular *Valarauko*), *Quenya* form corresponding to *Sindarin Balrog*.

**Valaróma:**—The horn of the *Vala Oromë*.

**Valier:**—‘The Queens of the *Valar*’ (singular *Valië*); a term used only in the *Valaquenta*.

**Valimar:**—See *Valmar*.

**Valinor:**—The land of the *Valar* in *Aman*, beyond the mountains of the *Pelóri*; also called *the Guarded Realm*, *the Undying Realm*. *Valinórean*. *The Darkening of Valinor*.

**\*Valley of the Tombs:**—See *Noirinan*.

**Valmar:**—The city of the *Valar* in *Valinor*; the name also occurs in the form *Valimar*. In *Galadriel’s* lament in *Lorien* (*The Fellowship of the Ring*) *Valimar* is made equivalent to *Valinor*.

**Vána:**—One of the *Valier*, the sister of *Yavanna* and spouse of *Oromë*; called *the Ever-young*.

**Vanyar:**—The first host of the *Eldar* on the westward journey from *Cuiviénen*, led by *Ingwë*. The name (singular *Vanya*) means ‘the Fair’, referring to the golden hair of the Vanyar; see *Finarfin*.

**Varda:**—‘The Exalted’, ‘The Lofty’; also called *the Lady of the Stars*. Greatest of the *Valier*, the spouse of *Manwë*, dwelling with him on *Taniquetil*. Other names of Varda, as maker of the Stars, were *Elbereth*, *Elentári*, *Tintallë*.

**Vardamir:**—Called *Nólimon* for his love of ancient learning; son of *Elros Tar-Minyatur*; accounted the second Ruler of *Númenor* although he did not ascend the throne.

**\*Vardarianna:**—Fragrant evergreen tree brought to *Númenor* by the *Eldar* of *Eressëa*.

**Vása:**—‘The Consumer’, a name of the Sun among the *Noldor*.

**\*Vëantur:**—Captain of the King’s Ships under *Tar-Elendil*; grandfather of *Tar-Aldarion*; commander of the first *Númenórean* ship to return to *Middle-earth*.

**\*Venturers, Guild of:**—The brotherhood of mariners formed by *Tar-Aldarion*. See *Uinendili*.

**Vidugavia:**—‘Wood-dweller’, Northman, called *King of Rhovanion*.

**Vidumavi:**—‘Wood-maiden’, daughter of *Vidugavia*; wedded *Valacar* King of *Gondor*.

**Vilya:**—One of the *Three Rings* of the *Elves*, the Ring of Air, borne by *Gil-galad* and afterwards by *Elrond*; also called *the Blue Ring*, *The Ring of Sapphire*.

**Vingilot:**—(In full *Quenya* form *Vingilótë*). ‘Foam-flower’, the name of *Eärendil’s* ship; see *Rothinzil*.

**\*Vinyalondë:**—‘New Haven’, *Númenórean* harbour established by *Tar-Aldarion* at the mouth of the river *Gwathló*; afterwards called *Lond Daer*.

**Vinyamar:**—The house of *Turgon* in *Nevrast* under *Mount Taras*. The meaning is probably ‘New Dwelling’.

**Víressë:**—*Quenya* name of the fourth month according to the *Númenórean* calendar, corresponding to April.

**Voronwë (1):**—‘The Steadfast’, *Elf* of *Gondolin*, the only mariner to survive from the seven ships sent into the West after the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*; met with *Tuor* at *Vinyamar* and guided him to *Gondolin*.

**Voronwë (2):**—Name of *Mardil Steward of Gondor*.



**Wainriders:**—An *Easterling* people who invaded *Gondor* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of the Third Age.

**War of the (Last) Alliance:**—See *Last Alliance*.

**War of the *Dwarves* and the *Orcs*:**—War between the *Dwarves* and the *Orcs*, which ended in the great *Battle of Azanulbizar* (*Nanduhirion*) before the East-gate of *Moria* in the year 2799.

**War of the Jewels:**—The *Wars of Beleriand* fought by the *Noldor* for the recovery of the *Silmarils*.

**War of the Ring:**—See *Rings of Power*.

**Watchful Peace:**—The period lasting from Third Age 2063, when *Sauron* left *Dol Guldur*, until 2460, when he returned.

**Weather Hills:**—Hills in *Eriador*, of which *Amon Sûl* (*Weathertop*) was the southernmost.

**Weathertop:**—See *Amon Sûl*.

**West Road:**—See *Roads*.

**Westernesse:**—Translation of *Númenor*; *Isle of Westernesse*. See *Anadûnê*, *Númenor*.

**Westfarthing:**—One of the divisions of the *Shire*.

**Westfold:**—Region of *Rohan*, the slopes and fields between Thrihyrne (the peaks above the *Hornburg*) and *Edoras*. *Muster of Westfold*.

**Westlands:**

—(i) Of *Númenor*, see *Andustar*.

—(ii) Of *Middle-earth*, a very general expression, referring broadly to the lands west of *Anduin*.

**\*West-mark:**—The western half of *Rohan* in the military organisation of the *Rohirrim* (see *East-mark*). *Muster of the West-mark*; *Marshal of the West-mark*.

**Westron:**—The common tongue of the North-west of *Middle-earth*, described in *Appendix F* to *The Lord of the Rings*, and represented by modern English. *Common Speech*.

**\*Whispering Wood:**—See *Firien Wood*.

**White Council:**—The Council of the *Wise* in the Third Age formed to oppose *Sauron*, meeting at intervals from Third Age 2463 to 2953; usually referred to as *the Council*. For a much earlier Council of the *Wise* also called *the White Council* see p. 239-240 and note 148.

**White Lady:**

—(i) *The White Lady*, see *Galadriel*.

—(ii) *The White Lady of the Noldor*, *the White Lady of Gondolin*, see *Aredhel*.

—(ii) *The White Lady of Emerië*, see *Erendis*.

**\*White Messenger:**—*Saruman*.

**White Mountain:**—See *Taniquetil*.

**White Mountains:**—See *Ered Nimrais*.

**White Ring:**—See *Nenya*.

**White Tree:**

—(i) Of *Valinor*, see *Telperion*, *Galathilion*

—(ii) Of *Tol Eressëa*, see *Celeborn (I)*.

—(iii) Of *Númenor*, see *Nimloth (I)*. The White Trees of *Minas Ithil* and *Minas Anor*.

**\*Wild Elves:**—*Mîm*'s term for *Dark Elves* (*Avari*).

**\*Wild Lands:**—Term used in *Rohan* for the lands west of the *Gap*.

**Wild Men:**

—(i) The *Drúedain*.

—(ii) General term for *Easterling Men* from beyond *Anduin*.

**Wildman of the Woods:**—Name adopted by *Túrin* when he first came among the *Men of Brethil*.

**Wilwarin:**—Name of a constellation. The word meant 'butterfly' in *Quenya*, and the constellation was perhaps Cassiopeia.

**Wise, (The):**—The *Istari* and the greatest *Eldar* of *Middle-earth*. See *White Council*.

**Witch-king:**—See *Lord of the Nazgûl*, *Angmar*.

**\*Witnesses of Manwë:**—The *eagles* of the *Meneltarma*.

**Wizards:**—See *Istari*, *Heren Istarion*, *Order of Wizards*.

**Wold:**—A region of *Rohan*, the northern part of the Eastemnet (Anglo-Saxon *emnet* 'plain').

**Wolf, (The):**—*Carcharoth*, the Wolf of *Angband*.

**\*Wolf-folk:**—Name given to the *Easterlings* of *Dor-lómin*.

**\*Wolf-men:**—See *Gaurwaith*.

**Wolfriders:**—*Orcs* or *Orc*-like beings mounted on wolves.

**\*Wood of Anwar:**—See *Firien Wood*, *Amon Anwar*.

**Woodhall:**—A village in the *Shire*, at the foot of the Woody End slopes.

**Woodland Elves:**—See *Silvan Elves*.

**Woodmen:**

—(i) Dwellers in the woods south of *Teiglin*, harried by the *Gaurwaith*.

—(ii) The *Men of Brethil*.

—(iii) In *Greenwood the Great*.

**Wormtongue:**—See *Gríma*.

**Woses:**—See *Drúedain*.



**Yavanna:**—‘Giver of fruits’; one of the *Valier*, numbered among the *Aratar*; the spouse of *Aulë*; called also *Kementári*.

**\*Yavannamírë:**—‘Jewel of *Yavanna*’, a fragrant evergreen tree with scarlet fruit, brought to *Númenor* by the *Eldar* of *Eressëa*.

**Yavannië:**—*Quenya* name of the ninth month according to the *Númenórean* calendar, corresponding to September. See *Ivanneth*.

**Year of Lamentation:**—The year of the *Nirnaeth Arnoediad*.

**Yestarë:**—The first day of the *Elvish* solar year (*loa*).

**Younger Children:**—*Men*. See *Children of Ilúvatar*.

**\*Yôzâyan:**—*Adûnaic* name for *Númenor*, ‘*Land of Gift*’.

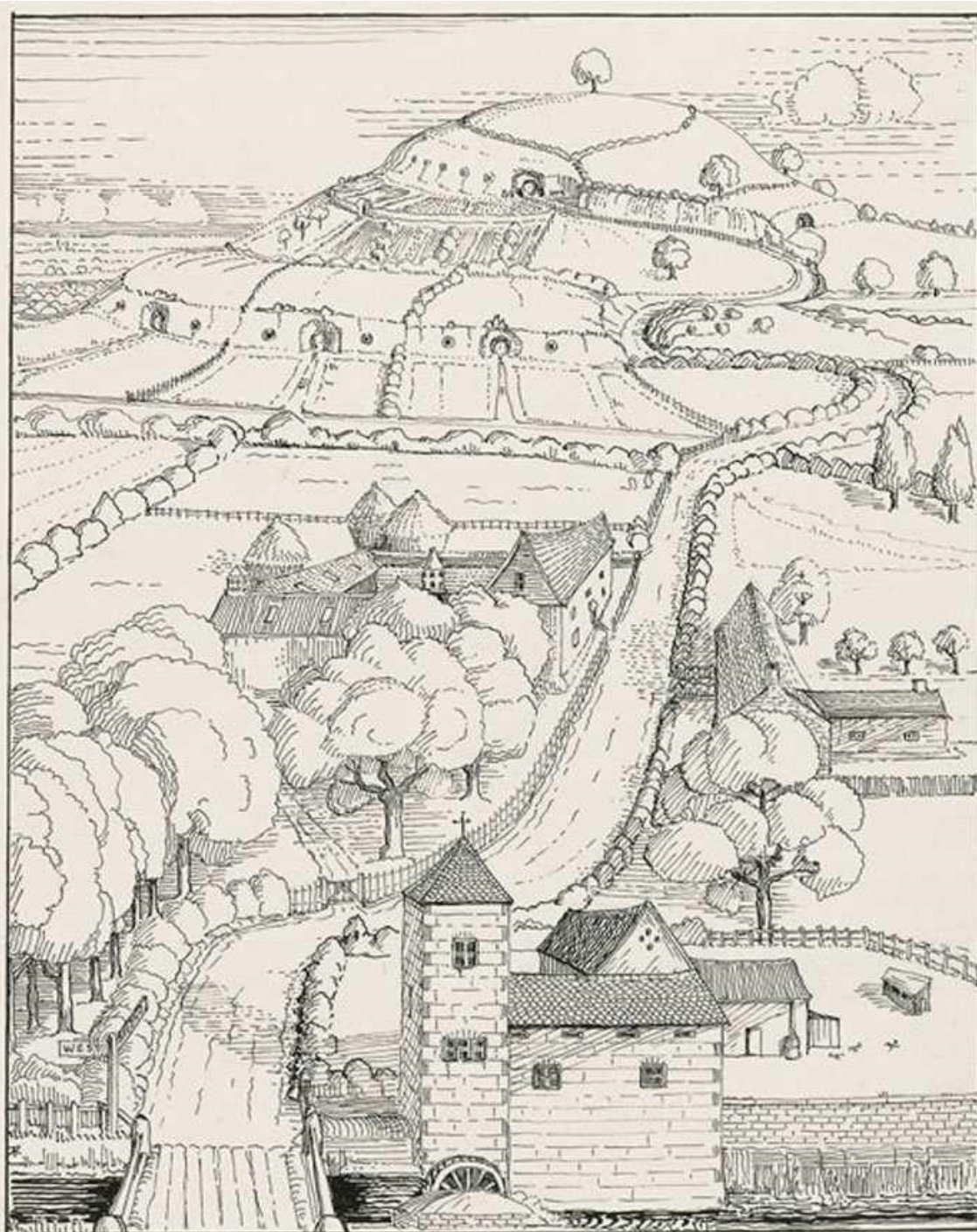


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\**Zamîn*:—Old woman in the service of *Erendis*.

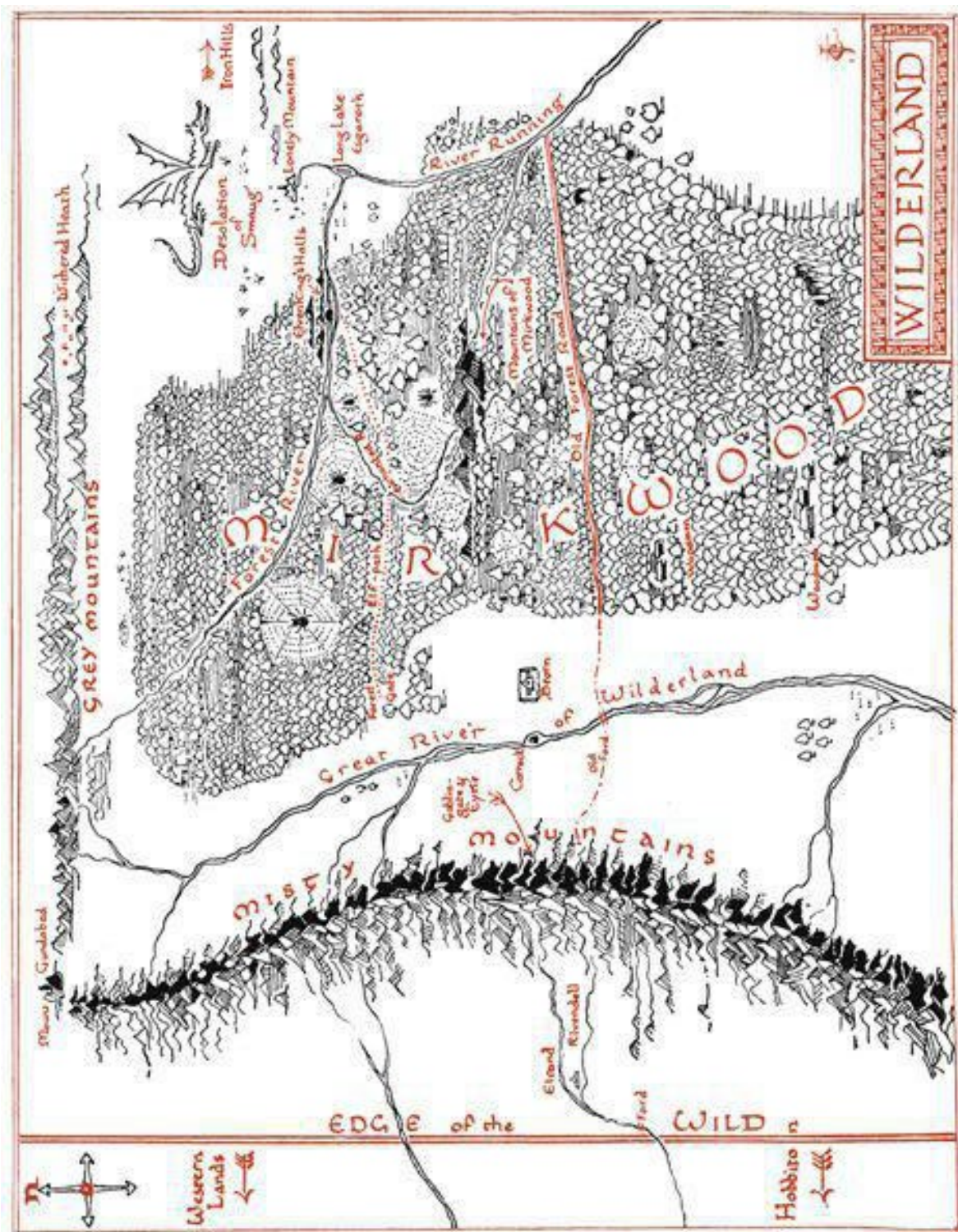


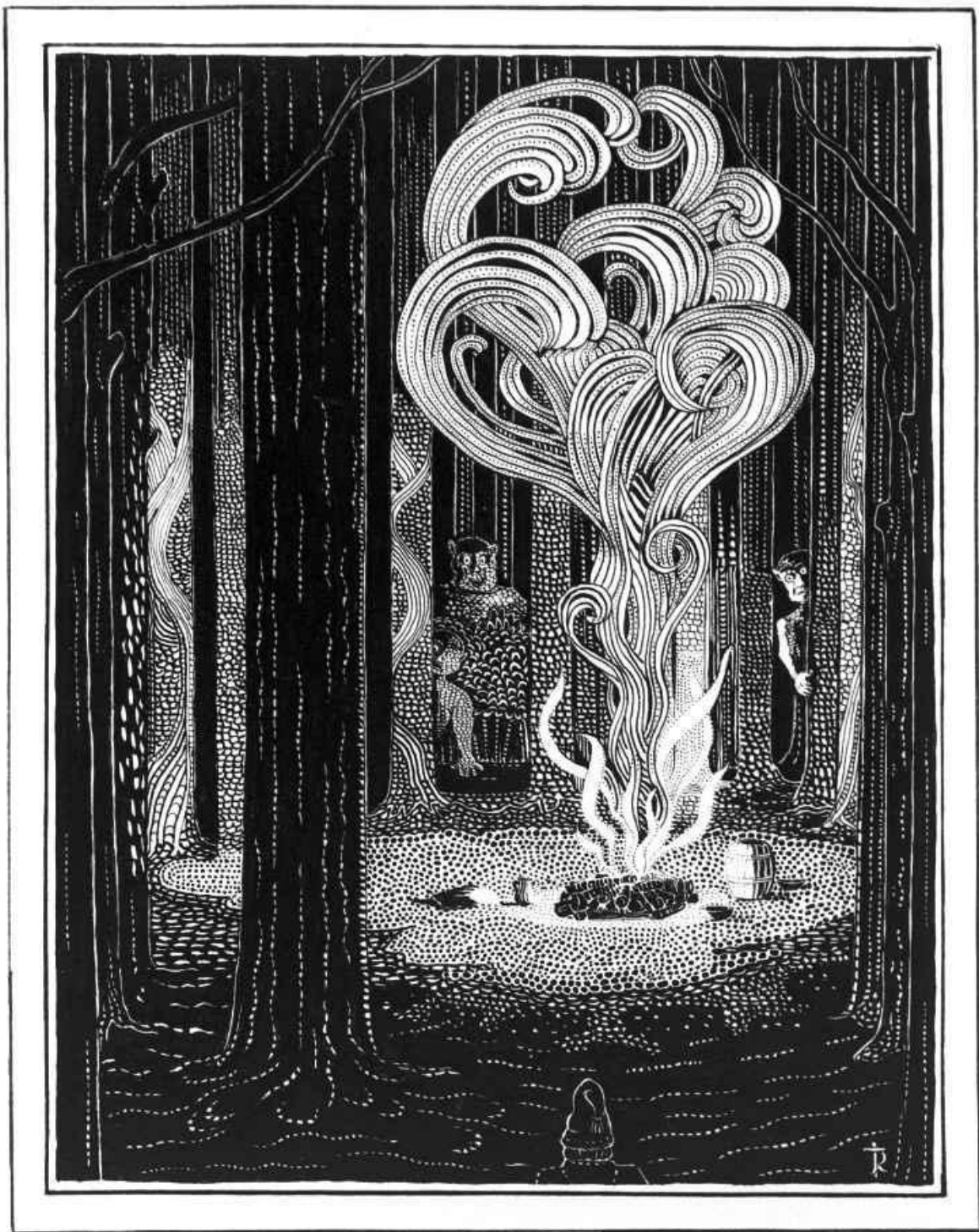
## The Hobbit, Alternative Images



The Hill: Hobbiton across the Water.

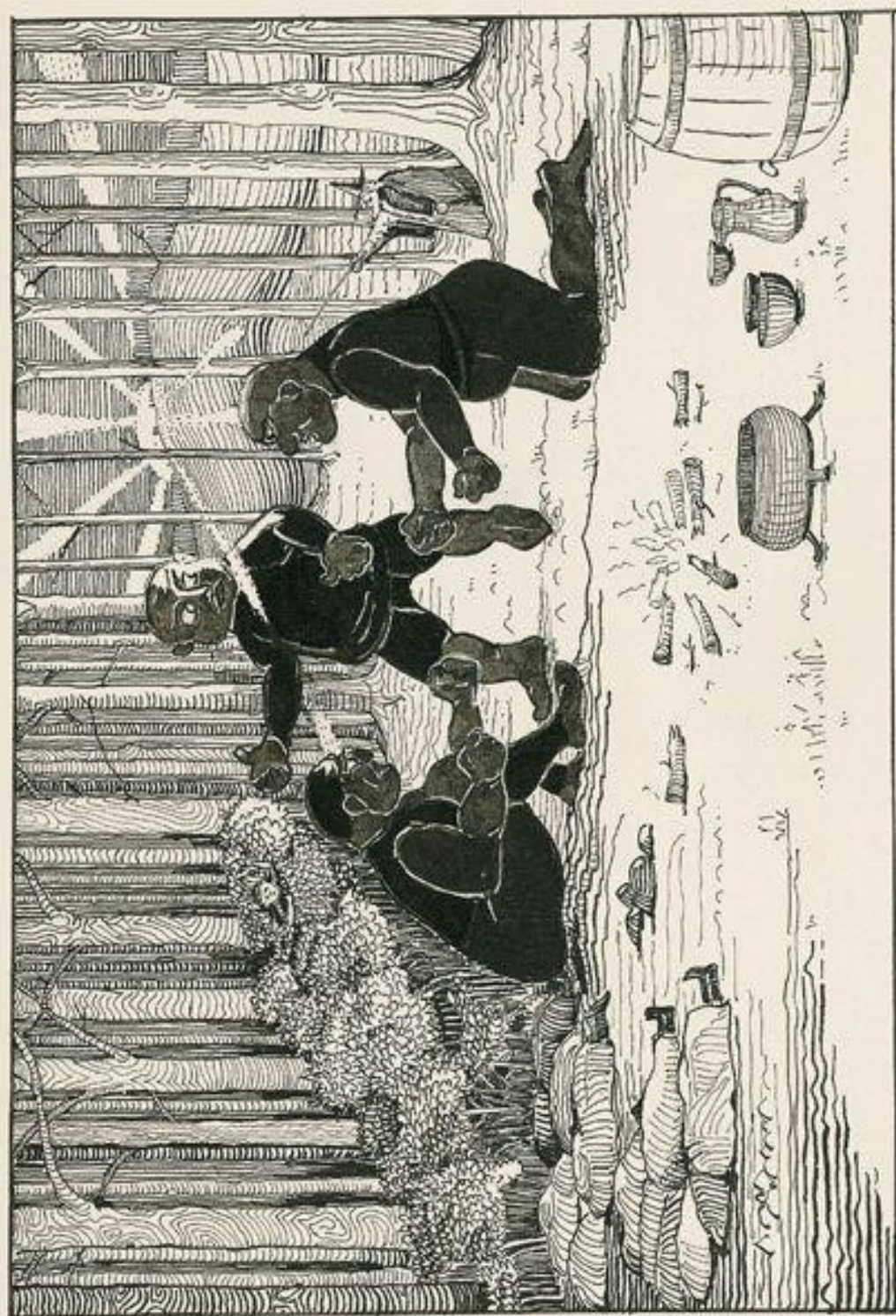




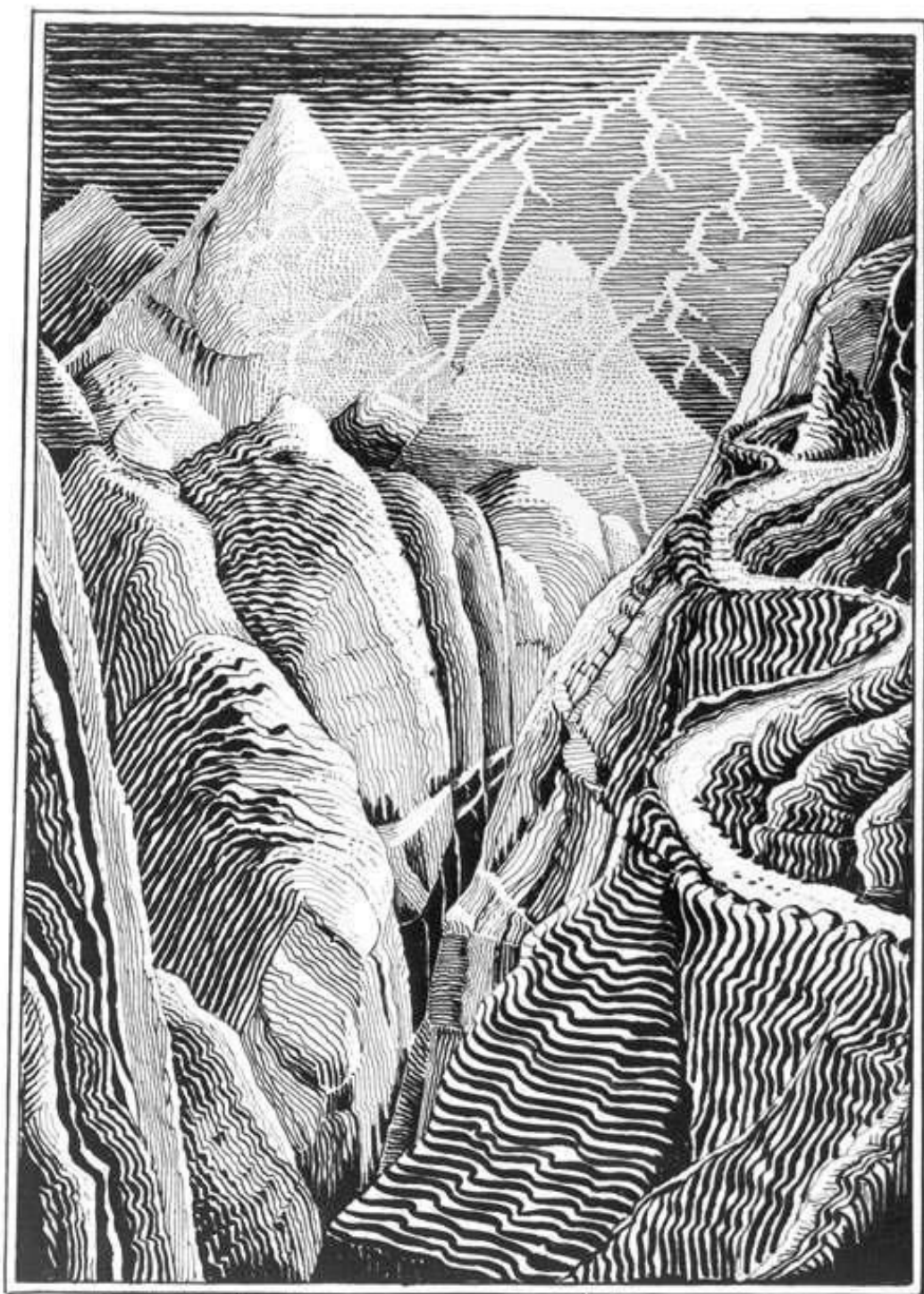


.The Trolls.



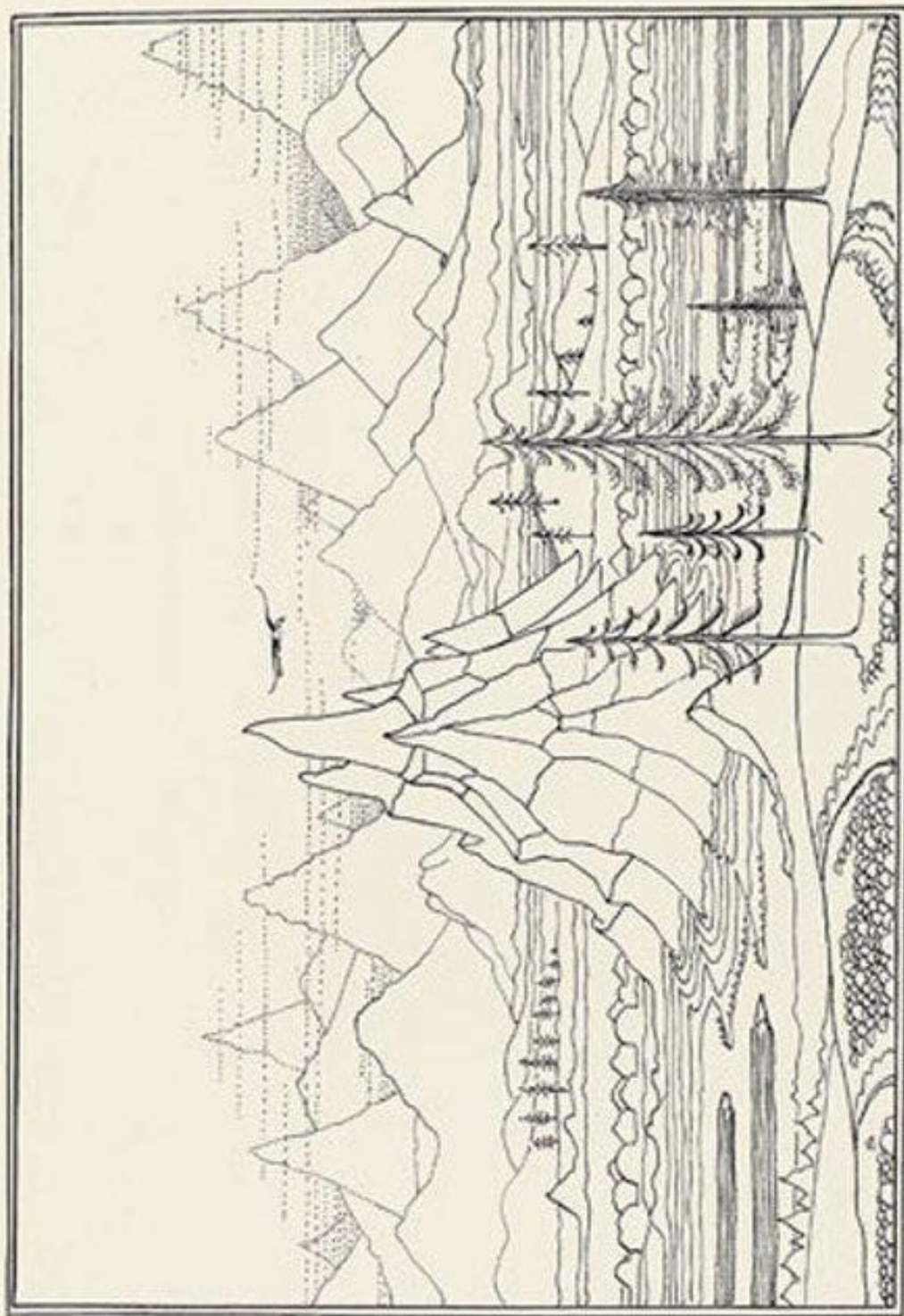


The Three Trolls are turned to Stone

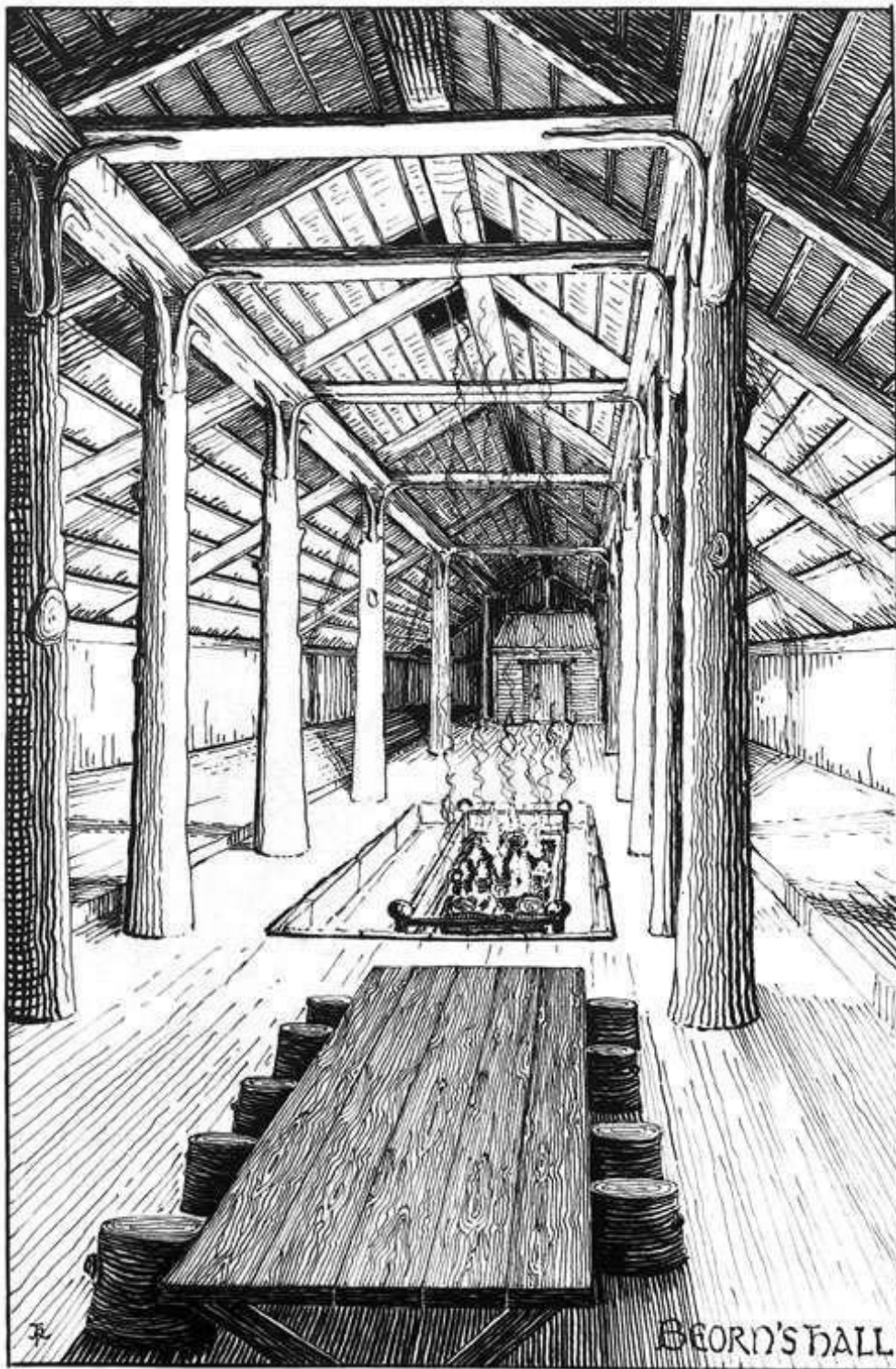


The Mountain-path

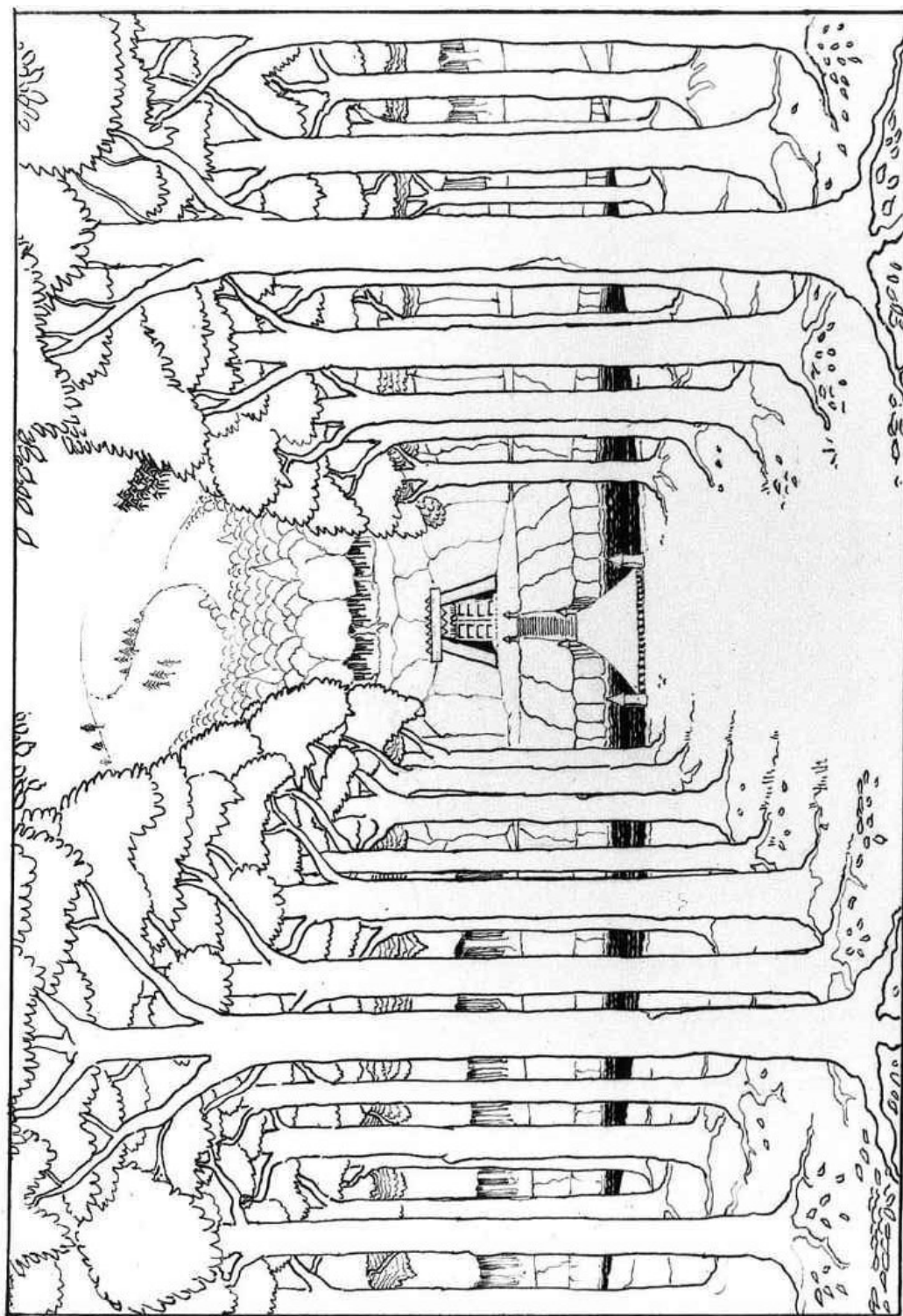




The Misty Mountains looking West from the  
Cynric towards Goblin Gate

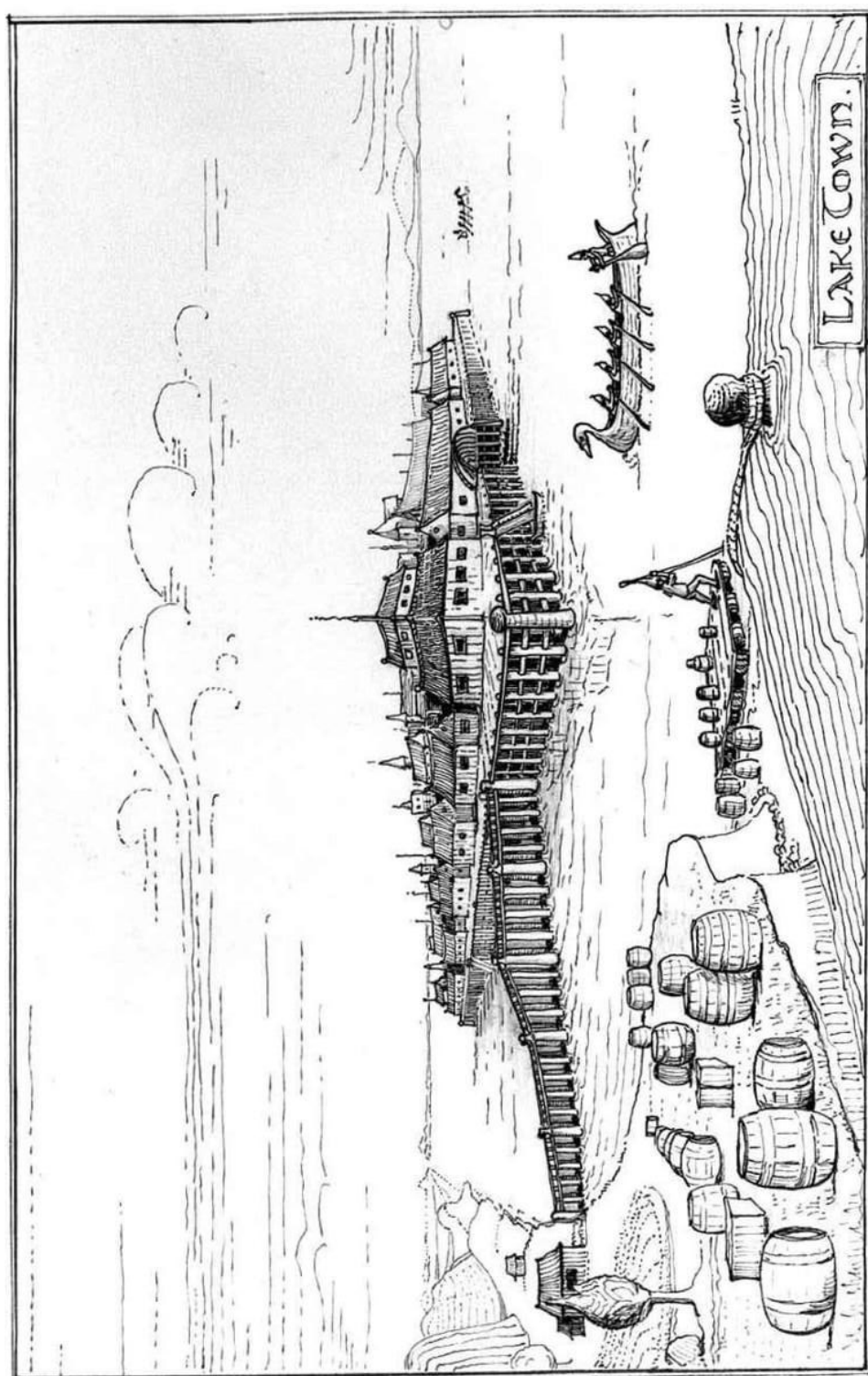


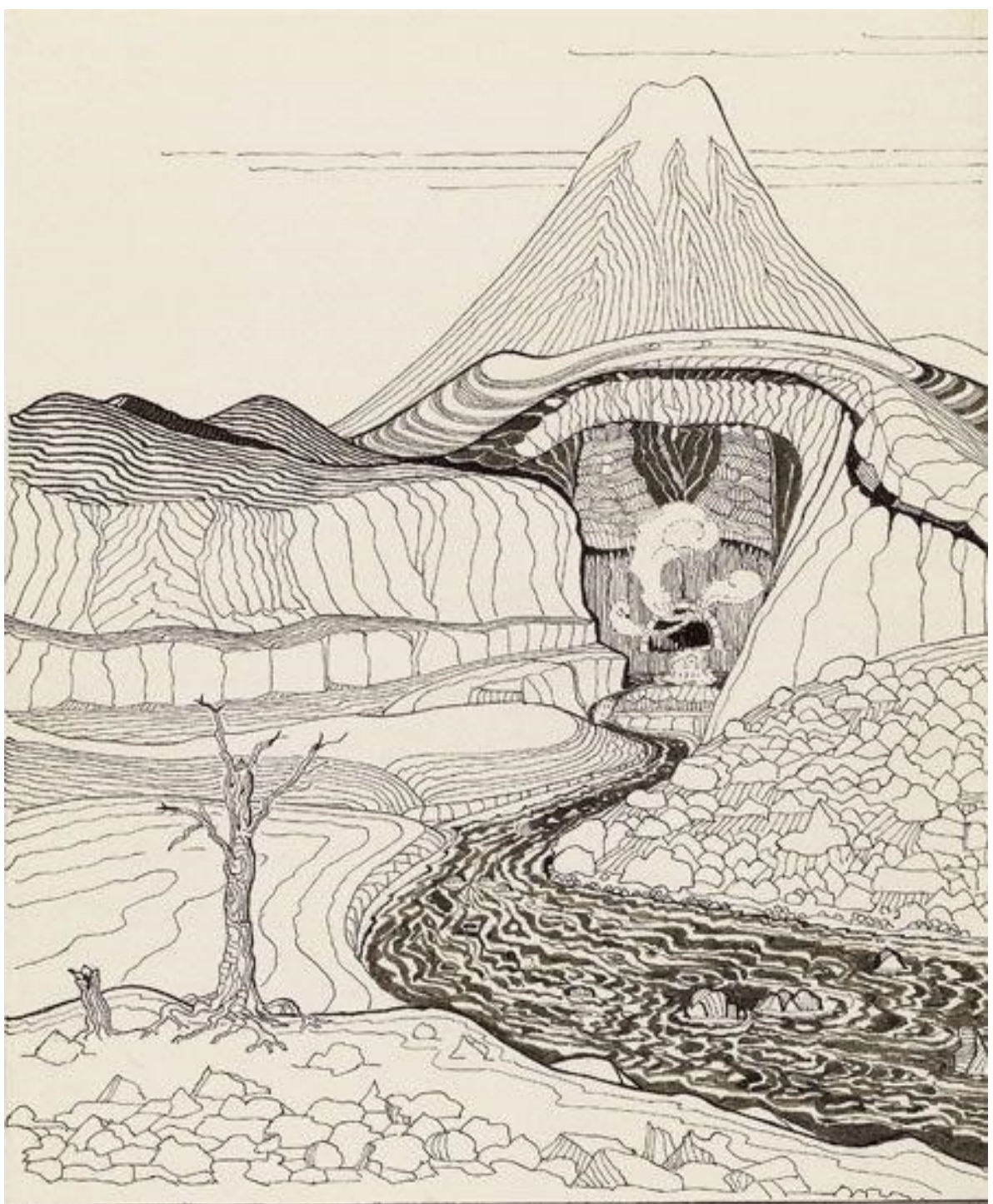
BEORN'S HALL



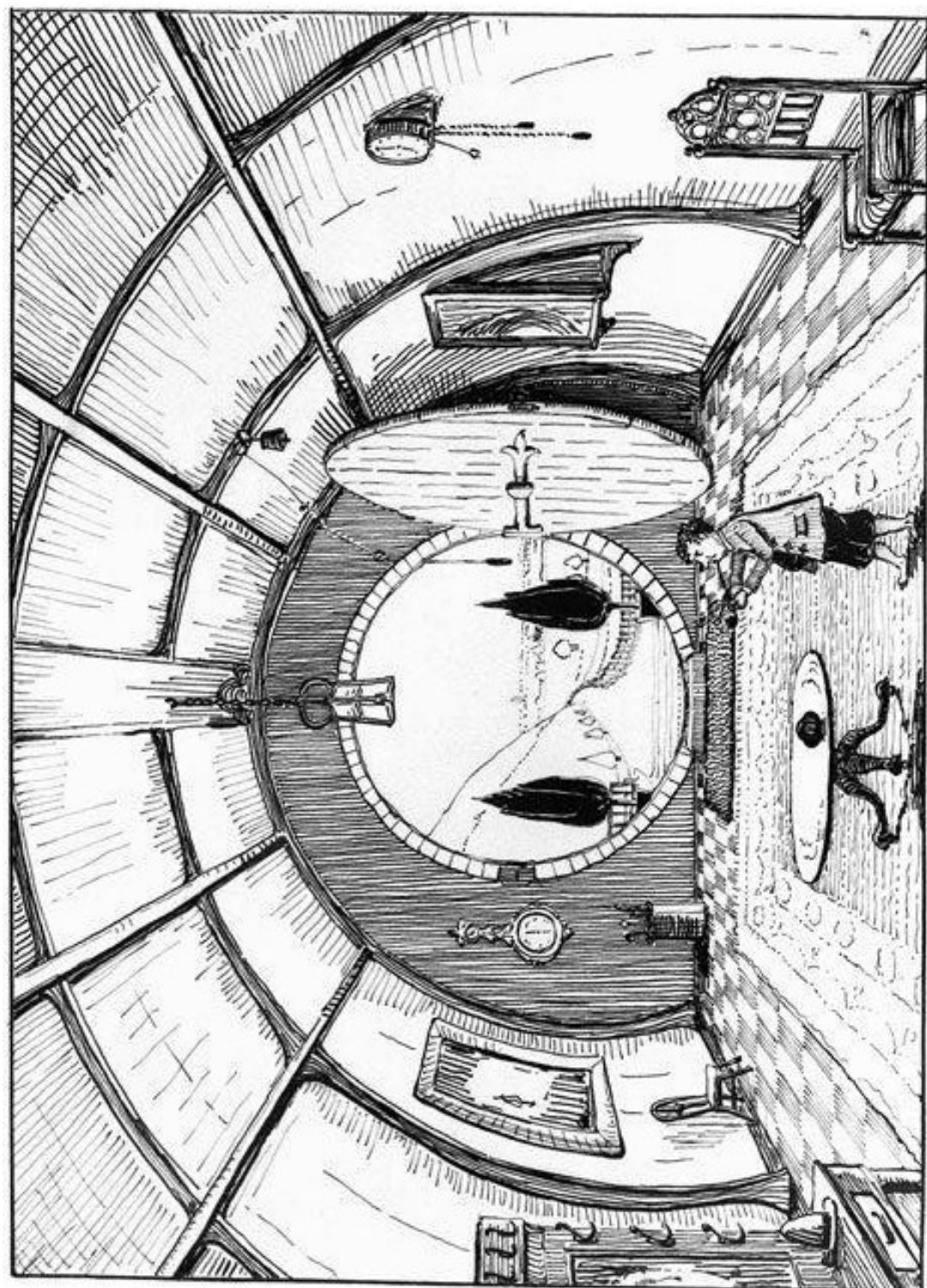
The ElvenKing's Gate.





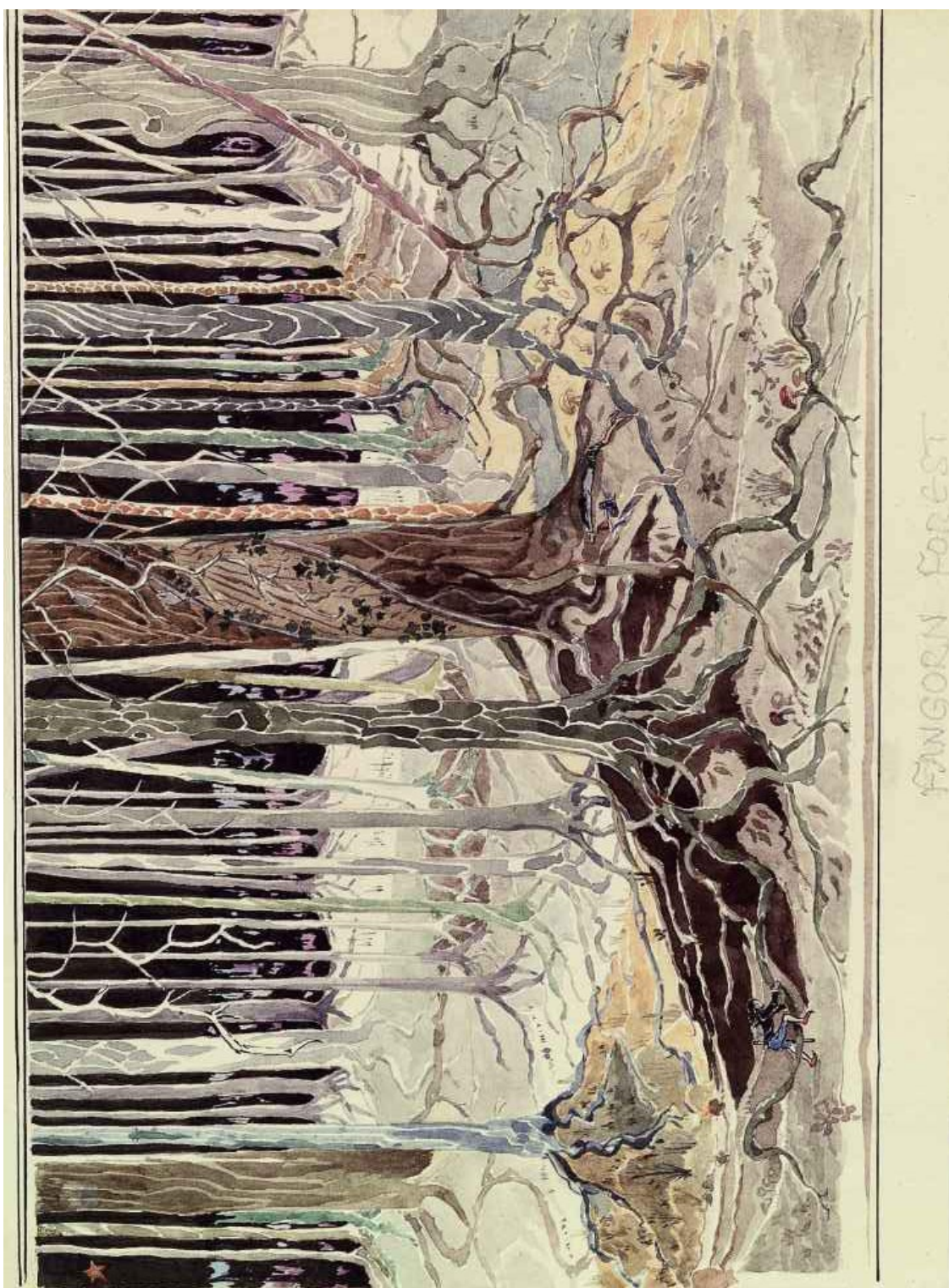


. The Front Gate .

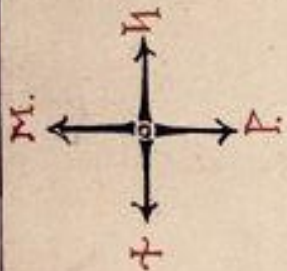
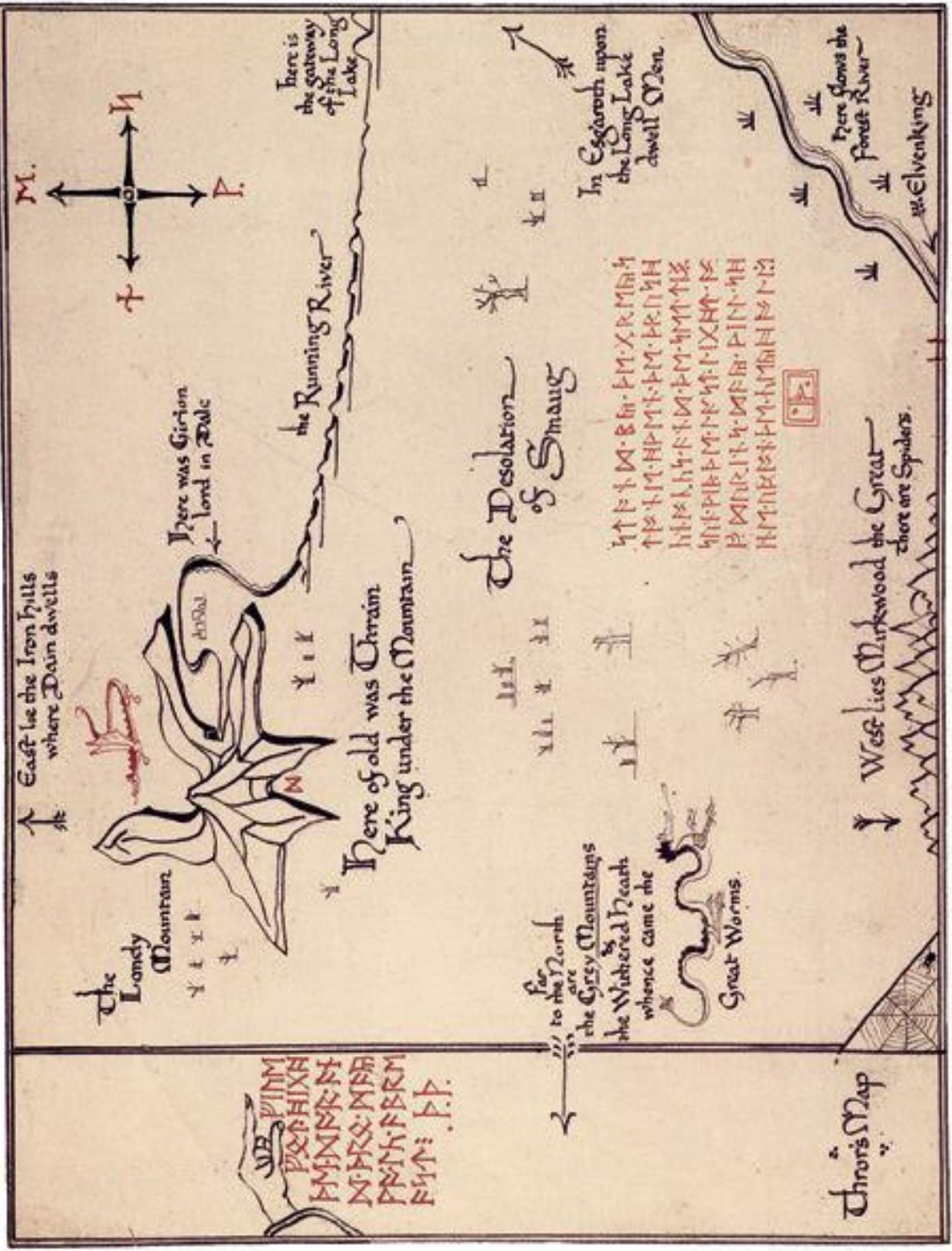


The Hall at Bag-End, Residence of  
B. Baggins Esquire









East lie the Iron Hills  
where Dain dwells

The Lonely  
Mountain

Here was Girion  
lord in Dale

Here is  
the gateway  
of the Long  
Lake

the Running River

Here of old was Thrain  
King under the Mountain

The Desolation  
of Smaug

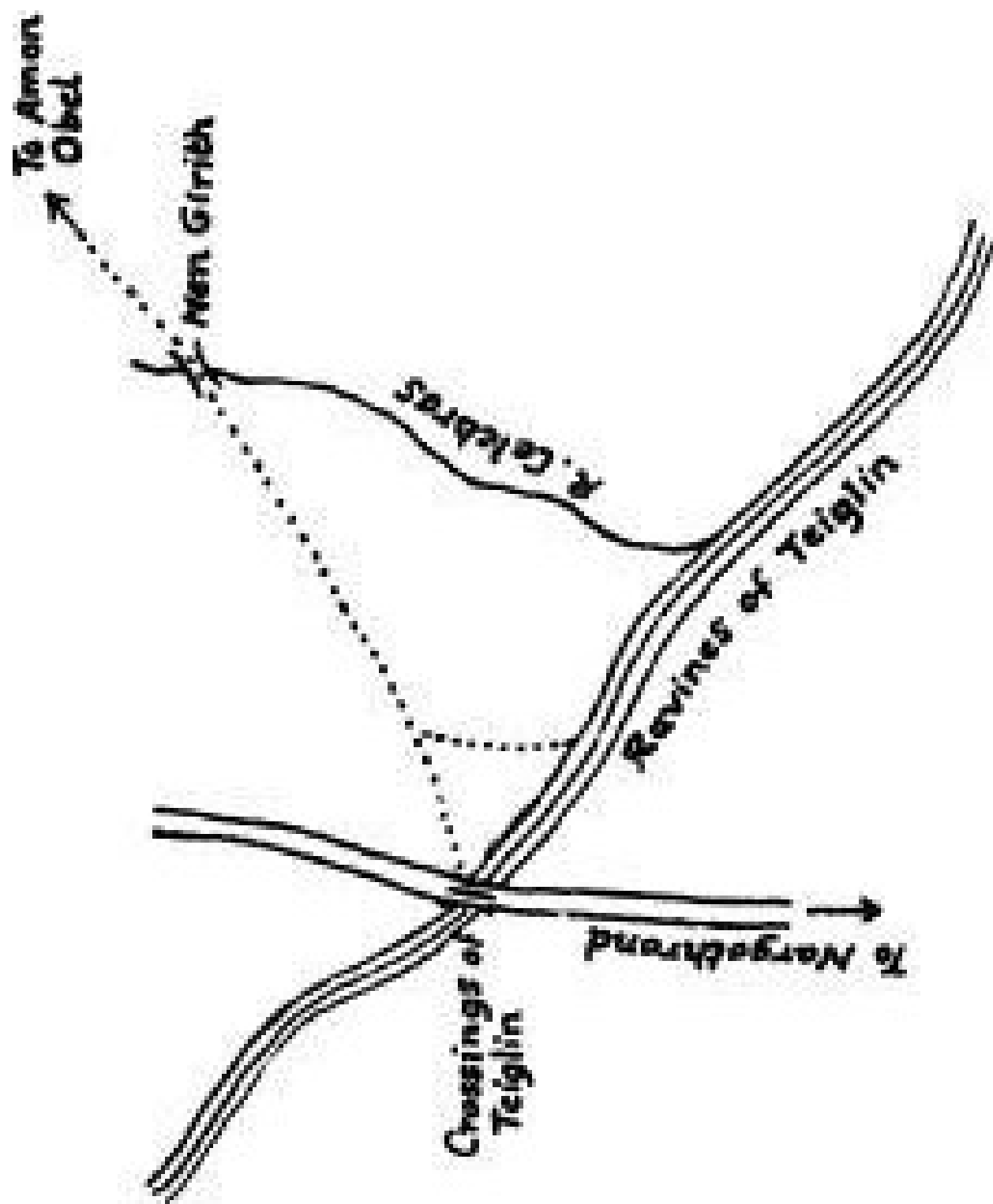
Far to the North  
are the Grey Mountains  
the Withered Heath  
whence came the  
Great Worms.

In Esgaroth upon  
the Long Lake  
dwell Men.

Thror's Map

West lies Mirkwood the Great  
there are Spiders.

Here flows the  
Forest River  
the Elvenking



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## ENDNOTES

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